

RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT RUSHDEN HALL ON TUESDAY 16TH APRIL 2024, COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

Present:	Cllr Tracey Smith, Town Mayor		
Councillors:	Richard Lewis Philip Humphrey Andy Mercer Marian Hollomon Cesare Marinaro Paul Harley	David Coleman Adrian Winkle Janet Pinnock Tony Spooner Kaye Rawlins	Melanie Coleman Gill Mercer Cameron Clarke Carol Childs Barbara Jenney
Town Clerk	Vivienne Prodger		

375/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

376/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Steven North, Adrian House and Joe Norris.

Councillor King Lawal, no apologies given.

377/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 25th March 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

378/24 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORT

Welcome Councillors

Well, I cannot believe this is my last Council meeting as Mayor! The last year has flown by and I do appreciate all the support I have received throughout the year. I would like to thank the officers and staff for their help throughout the year, they have kept me on track and sort of under control! I have already presented the Mayor's Secretary with her thank you gift (and made her cry in the process)

The last few weeks have been pretty hectic, with Chains trying to fit in as many events as possible before they hand over. Since our last Council meeting I have attended the following events:-

*Charity Dinner, Mayor of Northampton
Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Festival of Music
Commonwealth Day Ceremony at Rushden
Mayor of Irthlingborough Quiz night
Mayor of Biggleswade Civic Service
Chairman of South Kesteven Civic Dinner Dance
Mayor of Huntingdon Community Charity Event
Mayor of Sandy Civic Service
Opening Community Charity Shop
Mayor of Wellingborough Musical evening*

RBL Presentation to Meghan Graham

Thank you

Cllr Tracey Smith, Town Mayor

379/24 POLICING ISSUES

Councillor Marian Hollomon advised that she had no specific policing issues to report. However, she will be chairing the JAG meeting scheduled for 24th April and reminded members that if they have any policing issues please contact either her or the Town Clerk, so the issues can be brought forward at the JAG meeting.

380/24 LEADER'S ADDRESS

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Following on from last month's address I shall try and continue in an optimistic vein for my penultimate leader's address.

I am pleased to see that the visit by the CEO of North Northants Council, Adele Wylie, took place with our NNC councillors and that a good idea of our problems in the High Street area was I believe successfully transmitted. Fortunately, being on the Ides of March apparently made no difference to the formalities.

On the subject of NNC, I did have reason to look at the agenda papers for a recent NNC meeting the other night and I was amazed to see that there were over 500 pages. This is considerably more than in each of the 3 books I have read this year and I usually take a few weeks on each. I sympathise with our NNC councillors and hope that you will try and simplify the paperwork. There's optimism for you!

Quite the opposite to our last Planning Meeting when only one application came up for discussion. Nonetheless we must continue to work positively with NNC and I am sure eventually Rushden with our Council's continued hard work, will receive some real funding. However, we need projects on the shelf since it is difficult to predict what the next government funding stream will be.

But looking at our list of smaller projects we have no less than 30 which are in various stages of production and with a range of sizes. This is a sure sign that we are always thinking about projects within our capability.

Small amounts of funding can have significant effects for some groups and organisations and I am pleased to see that shop front grants and community grants are still being applied for. I hope, rather personally, that in time more of the old Celebrate Rushden funding will be utilised for new events in the town. Probably needs some additional communications here.

The Council is also one of the few locations where a warm room is open to any member of the public and thanks to the volunteers running it.

As the early members of the Events Working Party continue to move along life's path, it is pleasing to see how the council staff are progressing with the organisation of our main events.

We have another one off event shortly which is 80th anniversary of D Day. I think this shows how well organised we are and how well something completely new is taken on board. I see our events as a very positive aspect of the council with comparatively small financial outlay but which can give pleasure to a large number of our electors and children.

Moving on to the longer term projects, the physical state of the High Street document has been forwarded to senior staff at NNC and could affect any NNC future plans. The survey on the number of flats is now being prepared and updated to cover a longer period of building and conversations. We are still waiting for the final Design Code from Troy and as mentioned last month this should carry some weight. This means the updated Neighbourhood Plan should also be coming albeit the exact situation needs to be clarified.

Manor Park Plan C is progressing well and should benefit from the anticipated improvement in the economy.

As mentioned at the start of the meeting, this is my penultimate Leader's Address. As we now approach the end of the council year I am pleased to say that my hard working and well NNC connected deputy, Cllr Melanie Coleman, will be taking over as your new leader at the AGM next month. Also completing the Coleman double Cllr David Coleman will become the new mayor for the next election year. I wish you both success with as we approach the end of the council year your forthcoming positions and I am sure we are in very capable hands.

And so as I started please remember that there are a lot of positives about our council and these are a good foundation for our future development.

And that concludes my address for this evening. Any questions please?

Many thanks

Richard Lewis

381/24 CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Community Services Committee 26th March 2024

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 26th March 2024

Personnel Committee 2nd April 2024

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 2nd April 2024

Policy & Resources Committee 2nd April 2024

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 2nd April 2024

Planning Consultative Committee 9th April 2024

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 9th April 2024

382/24 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Councillor Barbara Jenney (Personnel Chairman) advised that following a Personnel Meeting the following recommendations had been resolved:-

1. Recommended to Full Council that following a change in job role, Nicola Gibson's job title should now be Assistant to Town Clerk/Events Co-ordinator.
2. Recommended to Full Council that Nicola Gibson is awarded an increase of one scale point to reflect the change in her duties and job title.
3. Recommended to Full Council that all staff are awarded an increment increase of one scale point from April 1st 2024.

Members considered the recommendations and it was

RESOLVED

To accept the above three items recommended by the Personnel Committee.

383/24 UNITARY COUNCIL

Unitary Councillor reports:-

Cllr Barbara Jenney – I have been very busy in my role as Chairman and have attended a large number of Civic events. Since our last Council meeting, I have also chaired a Full Council meeting and attended a Planning Committee (South) meeting.

Councillor Gill Mercer – Since our last Council meeting I have attended Full Council, EAP Active Communities, Health and Wellbeing and Executive Board meetings. Work on the Executive Board has included papers on Adult Social Care, unpaid Carers Strategy and Care Homes.

Councillor Andy Mercer – I have chaired a meeting of Democracy and Standards Committee and attended Full Council, EAP Prosperous Communities and Planning Committee (South) meetings. I also attended a Rushden High Street site meeting with Adele Wylie (CEO) NNC.

Councillor Melanie Coleman – I have attended Full Council, Democracy and Standards, Planning Committee (South) and Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee meetings. I also attended the Rushden High Street visit with Adele Wylie, Jason Smithers and the PCC.

Councillor Jennie Bone – I have been attending Council committee meetings that I am on, including Licensing Panel meetings, a Local Area Partnership meeting and planning training. I have continued to liaise with local residents on matters that have been brought to my attention.

Councillor Bert Jackson – I have continued to attend Council meetings, such as planning. I have corresponded with officers on issues brought to my attention as well. Over recent weeks, I have continued regular walkabouts throughout the ward and have reported any concerns.

Councillor Harriet Pentland – Over the past month, I have continued to attend meetings, including Executive Committee meeting and liaising with local residents. I have chaired the Sustainable Communities EAP and have met with local organisations leading the way on sustainability. As ever, I have been keeping in touch with local residents via email.

384/24 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Community Services Committee 30th January 2024

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on the 30th January 2024 be received and adopted.

Policy and Resources Committee 20th February 2024 [non confidential]

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 20th February 2024 be received and adopted.

Planning Consultative Committee 27th February 2024

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee held on 27th February 2024 be received and adopted.

Planning Consultative Committee 19th March 2024

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee held on 19th March 2024 be received and adopted.

385/24 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential and sensitive nature of the following item of business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting.

386/24 REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Policy and Resources Committee [*confidential section*] 20th February 2024

RESOLVED

That the confidential section of the report of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee [*confidential section*] held on 20th February 2024 be received and adopted.

Town Mayor