

RUGELEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Council Meeting held at the Rugeley Town Council Offices, Taylors Lane, Rugeley, at 8 p.m. on Wednesday 24th September 2014

PRESENT: Councillors J Rowley (Chair)
Mrs.P.Ansell
R.Alexander
Mrs.A.Cooney
D.Gaye
G.Grant
M.Grocott
T.Jones
J.Martin
N.Stanley
A.Williams

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs.L.Florence (Locum Clerk)
4 members of the Public

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs.Mrs.A.Allt, J.Bowater, P.Emery, J.Johnson, G.Martin, Mrs.H.Southwell, A.Wilkinson and Mrs.P.Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declaration of Interests were received.

3. Minutes

To receive for consideration and adoption Minutes of Committee meetings as follows:

- (a) Rose Theatre held on 11th June 2014 – amendment required to record the apologies of Cllr.A.Williams.

Recommended that:

That the Minutes be adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Councillors Mrs.P.Ansell and seconded by Cllr. D.Gaye.



Vote: Unanimous

- (b) Finance and Management Committee held on 11th June 2014.

Recommended that:

That the Minutes be adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Councillor N.Stanely and seconded by Councillor Mrs.P.Ansell.

Vote: Unanimous

- (c) Finance and Management Committee held on 16th July 2014.

Recommended that:

That the Minutes be adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Councillor R.Alexander and seconded by Councillor N.Stanley.

Vote: Unanimous

Councillor T.Jones proposed seconded by Councillor A.Cooney that Standing Orders be moved to enable public participation.

The meeting was informed that the work on Horsefair is almost finished and the County Council have agreed to move the large bicycle signs as they are not necessary.

Funding has been secured from the Power Station towards a Christmas Event and a Newsletter is being circulated in November giving information relating to the event. The Town Council were asked to consider financial support for this years event. Some funding has been given by Councillor Martin and it was suggested that an application be put to the other County Councillor for the area for their support.

Question raised about the electrical supply on the Globe Island and whether this had been removed. Councillor M.Grocott suggested that the Clerk of the Council follow up this enquiry

Recommended that:



The issue of financial support for the Christmas event be put on the next Festival Committee meeting. Proposed Councillor M.Grocott seconded Councillor D.Gaye.

Vote: Unanimous

4. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Chairman wished to record thanks to Councillor N.Stanley for his work on the collation of the standing orders and financial regulations. There have been a number of meetings reviewing these documents and ensuring that they are fit for purpose for Rugeley Town Council. Councillor N.Stanley gave a review of the documents and stated that they were based on the nationally recommended templates by SLCC but have been tailored to recognise the structure of Rugeley Town Council. Councillor N.Stanley wished to thank the Assistant Town Clerk for her support in production of the Orders.

Councillor R.Alexander raised an issue relating to item I under Rules of Debate at meeting regarding the statement pertaining to the right of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate. Councillor N.Stanley gave feedback on this point stating that this was common practice although not as statute it can be changed if members require this.

Recommended that:

The words 'prior to the final speech' be inserted letter I of the Rules of Debate. Proposed Councillor T.Jones and seconded by Councillor M.Grocott.

Vote: Unanimous

Recommended that:

That Council adopt the Standing Orders with the agreed amendments.

Vote: Unanimous

5. Policies

Councillors were asked to consider for adoption the policies relating to Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. Councillor N.Stanley outlined the legal requirement for the Council to have these in place. The policies for adoption conform with ACAS code of practice and is fit for purpose for Rugeley Town Council. Councillor D.Gaye raised the



question whether the Policy was developed more for bigger organisations and should it be tailored more to the structure of the Town Council. Councillor N.Stanley responded by there was a need to have these policies in place but accepted that the Council have fewer employees. In terms of the policy there should be three stages which are investigation, hearing and opportunity of appeal. In each of these processes there would be different Councillors on the panels.

Councillor M..Grocott raised the issue on Page 3 item 2 of the Disciplinary Policy about where/who does the employee report to. Councillor N.Stanley stated that the first part of this document was a statement of intent and that this should be read in conjunction with the Formal Procedures on Page 5.

Councillor T.Jones felt that an amendment under the Grievance Policy should be included to make it clearer. He was suggesting that the words bullying or harassment by employees should be included on Page 1 of the document. He felt that it was important that employees are aware of their rights in terms of this policy. Discussion ensued on why this statement should be included. Councillors themselves have to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Recommended that:

The words bullying or harassment by employees of one or more members. Proposed Councillor T.Jones and seconded by Councillor M.Grocott.

Vote: Unanimous

Recommended that:

The Council adopt the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures with the added amendments.

Vote: Unanimous

6. Exclusion of the Public

The Public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by LGA 1972 Schedule 12 (A) paras 1,2,3 and 4.



7.

Maternity Cover

A paper prepared by the Assistant Town Clerk was circulated to the meeting for consideration. Councillor M.Grocott pointed out that he felt we were considering an interim appt for the position of Clerk and not the Statutory Maternity Pay. Councillor N.Stanley stated that the process for both maternity cover and interim appointments are covered by the newly adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Council have a budget and is required to consider any information pertaining to any interim appointment.

Discussion ensued on the next steps. There was some concern that there had been a delay in this process given that the Council were aware of the impending maternity leave of the Clerk. Councillor D.Gaye stated that one of the delays had been the unavailability of a meeting with the Staffing Committee to consider the matter.

It was agreed that this matter should now be expedited and that information relating to the workload of the Clerk for the next 6 months should be available for the next full Council meeting to enable Councillors to make decisions on the level of hours that requires to be covered within the financial budget available.

Councillor J.Rowley reported that the Clerk prior to going off sick had approached SLCC with regard to a list of locum clerks. Two people had expressed an interest with regard to the position but no further action had been taken.

Councillor N.Stanley stated that whilst it is noted the advice from the SPCA is that there is not a statutory responsibility to advertise, he felt that it would be best practice in terms of equality if some advertisement is considered. This could be through the SPCA and SLCC both of which are immediate followed by a small advert locally which would avoid any risk of discrimination claims.

It was agreed that the interviewing for this interim post will be done by full Council.

Recommended that:

- (a) Advertise as soon as possible via SPCA, SLCC and local advertisement.**



- (b) **Document to be available for next full Council meeting re the workload of the Clerk for the next 6 months to be considered alongside the financial information.**
- (c) **Interviews to be undertaken by Full Council**

Vote: Unanimous

8. Theatre Carpets

A report prepared by the Assistant Town Clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting regarding the status of the outstanding legal issue relating to the Theatre Carpets. A further email received from the Solicitors after circulation of meeting papers was circulated to the meeting.

Discussion ensued on the report and correspondence. There was concern expressed by Councillors about the delay in this matter. The Chairman outlined the issues that had contributed to the delay. Councillors felt that agreement had already been reached at a Council meeting on the 2nd July that the carpet should be replaced and to continue with any legal proceedings against GEM who supplied the carpet. Three quotes had been obtained information of which was included in the report and it was understood that these quotes were for the same quality of carpet but at different prices. Councillor A. Williams raised the matter of the issue being the actual fitting of the carpet that was a problem and not just the quality therefore we should be asking the Companies who have provided the quotes to provide information of public sites where they have previously fitted that we could view to ensure we have the quality of fitting required.

The Solicitors latest letter is advising to accept the £10,000 offered plus a contribution to legal costs. It was pointed out that there is still an ongoing matter with AA Cooling. Councillor N. Stanley stated that this is a secondary claim which Gem could get back from AA Cooling. The primary claim we are deciding on is the replacement carpet with Gem.

It was agreed that there are health and safety issues to the condition of the carpet and action needs to be taken immediately to address the provision of a new carpet. As the three quotes are over the sum of £5,000 full Council needs to



approve the chosen provider for new carpet at its next full council meeting.

Recommended that:

1. We instruct the Solicitors to accept the offer of £10,000 with contribution to legal costs within the timeframe stated.
2. If a favourable response is not received then authorisation for the cheques to be sent regarding Court proceedings.
3. Obtain sample of carpet for next full Council meeting and if possible evidence of fitting service in a public area by the companies.

Proposed by Councillor N.Stanley and seconded by Councillor M.Grocott.

Vote: Unanimous.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date for next Full Council Meeting is Wednesday 1st October at 7.00pm

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.30 p.m.

Signed: 

Dated: 01-10-2014



