

26/3/24

Minutes of the Full Council

January 23rd, 2024

In attendance: Cllrs Chahal-Holden (Chair), Costa (Vice-Chair), Akhtar, Gaffar, Hodds, Jefcoate, Phull, Raza & Rizvi.

(Note: Cllr Rizvi and Cllr Hodds arrived at 7:10pm, Cllr Gaffar arrived at 7:50pm and Cllr Akhtar at 8:00pm.

Cllr Hodds left the meeting at 8:20pm

Locum Clerk: Kevin O'Brien

Acting Proper Officer: Olga Linkeviciene.

Estimated 25 members of the Public.

60. Apologies for Absence.

- a. Apologies were received from Cllr. Skingsley-Morgan.

61. Declarations of Interest.

- a. There were no declarations of interest.

62. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

- a. It was noted that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of November 30th, 2023 were still "in progress" and would be presented to the next meeting.

63. Public Participation.

A Representative of CROADS spoke about the proposed closure of the Victory Hall and the difficulty in finding an alternative venue. The representative also advised the Council that a TV Company had shown interest in meeting CROADS to discuss the possibility of making a TV film about the Society.

A Representative of the Senior Citizens Group spoke about the unfairness of Non-residents paying the same as rate as Chigwell Residents. Also about the possibility of new furniture and their request to make an annual booking.

Two members of the public spoke about the Muslim Prayer Group not being able to use the Community Hub during the proposed Victory Hall closure.

The Chair advised the meeting that following various representations received before the meeting, the Council had already agreed to make space available for the Muslim Prayer Group in the Community Hub.

A Member of the public spoke about the Council going into Closed Session stating that all matters should be discussed in an Open and Transparent way.

Cllr Jefcoate and the Locum Clerk explained that Parish Councils can only go into "Closed Session" for confidential matters eg Legal Issues, Commercial Contracts or sensitive personnel matters such as employees' terms and conditions and this was the case today. This information was reiterated and expanded upon again just prior to item 11.

64. Finance.

- 64.1 Councillors discussed the recommendations of F&G to increase the charges for the Allotments, Cemetery and Victory Hall and the introduction of an additional category of "Non-Residents" for all three sites and additionally "Commercial" for the Victory Hall. There was a feeling that the "Non-Residents" charges for the Cemetery needed to be looked at further but an acceptance that this should be done in time for the 2025/26 Budget Setting. The Chair proposed the acceptance of the recommendations of F&G and the review of "Non-Residents" charges for the 2025/26 Budget Setting. Seconded by Cllr Jefcoate and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
- 64.2 Councillors discussed the recommendations of F&G relating to the EMRs for 2024/25. The Chair proposed acceptance of the recommendations of F&G; seconded by Cllr Jefcoate and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
- 64.3 Councillors discussed the recommendations of F&G regarding the DRAFT 2024/25 Budget and Precept proposals. Councillors firstly discussed the Precept increase of 5% as recommended F&G. After lengthy discussion it was proposed by the Chair to accept the increase in the precept for 2024/25; seconded by Cllr Jefcoate and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
After further discussion on the DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET, it was proposed by the Chair to accept the recommendation of F&G to increase the Precept by 5%; seconded by Cllr Jefcoate and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
- 64.4 It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to defer this item to a future meeting to allow for further information to be gathered.
- 64.5 Councillors NOTED that the 2023/24 Internal Audit would be carried-out by Heelis & Lodge on 26/1/24.
- 64.6 Councillors discussed and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED the recommendations of F&G regarding virements for Q1 and Q2 of FY 2023/24.
- 64.7 Councillors reviewed and discussed at length a list of proposed expenditure for the Cemetery. It was subsequently UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to (i) refer the matter of purchasing a Mobile Tower and a Pressure Washer to the CAC for further consideration and recommendation, (ii) accept Fitness Air Fresh's repair costs and maintenance agreement (£747.80) and (iii) the appointment of a company to supply and install a replacement dome for the Cemetery main office roof plus the repair of the broken digger will be considered at a future meeting.

65 Victory Hall Health & Safety Matters.

- 65.1 Councillors NOTED that a meeting with CROADS had been held on 12/1/24.
- 65.2 Councillors discussed at length the recommendation of CAC and the H&S Officer that the Victory Hall be closed from 1/2/24 to 31/3/24 inclusive in accordance the recent Fire Risk Assessment. The discussion was wide ranging, incorporating points 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5.
It was subsequently proposed by the Chair; seconded Cllr Rizvi, that (a) the Victory Hall remain open with the exception of the Stage area; (b) a review take place once asbestos sampling had been completed and other investigative work on the electrics; (c) it can be established what "lead-in" time was available for the Kitchen, Main Hall Floor and Windows can be established; and (d) an oversight process could be put in place once all the information was available. UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
- 6.6 Councillors discussed the quotations received for works to be carried-out to the Victory Hall drainage issues following a Dyno-Rod CCTV survey. It was recommended and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that given the urgency of the matter, the Parish Office should ascertain from the quotes how soon they could carry-out the works. It was also UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the Parish Office investigate whether the work would be covered by the Parish Council's insurances.

TD
23/3/24

66 Cemetery Matters.

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to defer this item to a future meeting to allow for further information to be gathered and for F&G to consider rent/lease or buy options for recommendation to FC.

67 Street Lighting.

Councillors discussed at length, the proposal to re-instate all-night Street Lighting during the Winter Months. It was subsequently proposed by the Chair; seconded Cllr Gaffar to re-instate the Street Lighting. The proposal was subsequently DEFEATED by a majority vote of 5 votes to 3 votes.

68 ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD TO THE NEXT MEETING OR ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A DECISION TO BE MADE.

It was requested that the Meetings Calendar for Democratic Year 2024/25 be discussed and agreed at the next Full Council meeting.

69 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

Thursday March 14th, 2024 at 7:00pm in the Parish Council Offices.

70 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to exclude the Public and Press by reason of the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed.

71 CEMETARY & OPEN SPACES.

Councillors NOTED an update on matters relating to the Cemetery & Open Spaces Team. A further update would be provided at a future meeting when additional information is available.

72 EMPLOYMENT MATTERS.

Councillors discussed and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED a course of action for the employment matter.

The meeting was declared closed at 9:20pm.

