

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM
AT THE TOWN HALL

PRESENT:

	The Mayor (Councillor V K Paul)	
	The Deputy Mayor (Councillor G Salmon)	
Councillor Mrs P H Whiting		Councillor H L Jackson
Councillor C O'Rourke		Councillor B Spencer
Councillor S Prosser		Councillor G Kelly
Councillor B Primore		Councillor N Brown
Miss Alicia Schofield (Town Clerk)		David Wicks (Mayor's Sergeant)
Mrs Emily Arrow (Assistant Clerk)		

1 member of the public

24/712. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr Mrs J Bone, Cllr Mrs A Gardner, Cllr Mrs C Reavey, Cllr A M T Reading, Cllr P Tomas. Cllr P McCann gave apology advising it was due to his employment working away from home.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr P McCann's apology and reason for absence be accepted.

24/713. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr H L Jackson – as a member of the Unitary Council he will consider all matters at Unitary level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the Unitary tier. Therefore, he cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Council.

Cllr G Salmon – item 11 2. – is a resident of Larkin Gardens.

24/714. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th August be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record

24/715. **PUBLIC FORUM**

None.

24/716. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported from the following engagements in September:-

- 3rd September –Merchant Navy Day flag raising and speech in the Market Square.
- 7th September – Horticultural Show run by the Tourism Group.
- 7th September – Proms in the Park, Rushden.
- 8th September – St Ives' Civic Service.
- 8th September – Bark in the Park, Rushden.
- 12th September –High Sheriff's Garden Party at Lamport Hall.
- 13th September – Opening of Rushden Feast.
- 14th September – Officially opened the new Swedish Kitchen café on Westfields Terrace.

- 15th September – Hosted the Higham Ferrers Civic Service at St Mary’s Church.

24/717. **TOWN CLERK’S REPORT**

Police Report

Link to crimes for July 2024.

[Local Crime Information for Market Square, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, NN10 8BT - July 2024 \(streetcheck.co.uk\)](https://streetcheck.co.uk)

Please also see attached spreadsheet that tracks this months’ crimes against previous months.

39 crimes for the month of June: -

- Anti-social Behaviour - 9
- Bicycle theft -1
- Criminal Damage / Arson – 4
- Drugs – 1
- Other theft - 1
- Public Order – 2
- Shoplifting – 12
- Vehicle crime -2
- Violence / Sexual offences – 7

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk’s report be received and noted.

24/718. **QUESTIONS**

None.

24/719. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

The Clerk reported from the most recent JAG meeting to announce that the Police had made the decision to no longer support the JAG meetings and they would therefore cease with immediate effect. The council is encouraged to use their appointed Police Liaison Representative to communicate any concerns regarding local crime and other matters.

24/720. **REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

A report was not received but will be circulated to all councillors if and when it is.

24/721. **FINANCE**

24/721.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 24th September 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment of £55,356.01 as at 24th September 2024 be approved for payment.

24/721.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 31st August 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 31st August 2024 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

24/721.3. **To receive and note the budget report as at 31st August 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the budget report as at 31st August 2024 is received and noted.

24/721.4. **To approve the following expenditure:-**

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the annual tree works package is approved with a budget cost of up to £15,000. That a virement of £7,745 is made from 220/4200 Grounds Maintenance to 220/4320 Tree Work to cover the shortfall in the budget.

24/722. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees: -

24/722.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on the 10th September 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 10th September 2024 be received and adopted.

24/722.2. **Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 10th September 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 10th September 2024 be received and adopted.

RESOLVED:

24/722.2.1 **SPORTS AND HIRE FEES REVIEW**

That the current sports and hire fees for 2024-25 remain unchanged for 2025-26, as follows:-

(i) **Sports Clubs and Facility Fees**

- Football Clubs: Football Pitch only - £16 per match. With Changing Rooms - £25 per match. With access to Pavilion for Toilets - £9.50 per match.
- Cricket Club: Cricket Pitch - £220 per season. Changing Rooms - £300 per season. The above charge is per season assuming a match each weekend, additional matches may be charged pro rata at the above rate.
- Tennis Club: - £162.50 per quarter to include all matches, club and coaching sessions and use of the cabin.

(ii) **Casual Hire of Tennis Courts and MUGA**

- Tennis Court Hire - £5 per hour. Half price if a Tennis Club Member.
- Regular users - seasonal fee of £50 per annum.
- MUGA - £10 per hour

(iii) **School Use of Facilities**

Fee for the period after May half term through to the end of summer term period, £300.

(iv) **Sports Pavilion Hire**

Category of Hire	Room Type	Price per Hour (£) (Mondays – Saturdays inclusive)	Price per Hour (£) (Sundays/Public Bank Holidays)
Commercial	Hall 1	£12.50	£18.75
Charity	Hall 1	£10	£15
Community	Hall 1	£9.50	£14.25
Under 13's Party	Hall 1	£8.50	£12.75
Private Function / Party	Hall 1	£11	£16.50

If you are a group, individual or organisation offering free health and wellbeing services to residents of the town, the council will consider offering free use of this facility on a case by case basis.

(v) **Hire of Castle Fields**

The use of Castle Fields for fairs etc. be subject to negotiation by the Clerk, with a minimum fee of £500.

(vi) **Outdoor Events on Town Council owned Open Spaces**

- **Local Community/Charity based in Higham Ferrers** - No charge (but donations accepted for upkeep)
- **Local Community/Charity based outside of Higham Ferrers** - £50 per day.
- **Commercial other** – subject to negotiation by Clerk, minimum of £150 per day.
- **Corporate** – subject to negotiation by Clerk, minimum of £300 per day.
- **Local Government events promoting sports, health and wellbeing for the**

Higham Ferrers community – No charge (but donations accepted for upkeep).

- **Fitness sessions/dance/activity classes** – If there is no fee charged by the hirer to their participants – No charge (but donations accepted for upkeep). If there is a fee charged by the hirer to their participants - £10 per session held.

24/722.2.2 **LARKIN GARDENS PLAY AREAS**

RESOLVED:

That the council adopt the play area adjacent to 57 Larkin Gardens and the play area adjacent to 20 Larkin Gardens subject to agreement on the commuted sums. That the Clerk be delegated to agree the commuted sums within the ranges specified.

24/722.2.3 **BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

RESOLVED:

That the Biodiversity Action Plan be approved.

24/722.2.4 **TREE PLANTING, SAFFRON ROAD RECREATION GROUND**

RESOLVED:

That two 12-14ft Swedish White Beam trees be planted at Saffron Road Recreation Ground with a budget of £750 approved for the cost of the purchase and planting of the trees plus associated stakes, tree ties and metal guards.

24/723. **WORKING PARTIES**

CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING PARTY

24/723.1. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Climate Change Working Party meeting held on the 10th September 2024 be received and noted.

24/723.2. **RESOLVED:**

That the Council run the Bee Squared project in 2025 with seeds pack to be delivered to all schools. Additional packs are to be available for residents to collect from the Town Hall, willing local businesses and organisations. Budget of £1000 for 3000 seed packs.

PUBLIC TOILETS WORKING PARTY

24/723.3. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Public Toilets Working Party meeting held on the 12th September 2024 be received and noted.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

24/723.4. **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on the 19th September 2024 be received and noted.

24/724. **CONSULTATION FOR A PAVEMENT LICENCE**

RESOLVED:

That the council has no objections to the application for a pavement licence received by NNC from Savour the Flavour, 32 High Street, Higham Ferrers.

24/725. **VE DAY 80**

RESOLVED:

That the council take part in the VE Day 80 beacon lighting across the nation. That potential further activities are deferred for consideration at the January 2025 council meeting.

24/726. **TOWN APP**

RESOLVED:

That to promote and encourage download of the Town App. the following initiatives are taken forward:-

- Use of the Town App for the digital Sparkle programme and event information.
- Use of the Town App as part of a Christmas town trail competition.
- Linking promotion of the Town App and the Farmers' Market by a limited offer of a Farmers Market discount voucher for those who have downloaded the app.
- Facebook advertising campaign in the local area.

24/727. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

RESOLVED:

- 24/727.1. That an update on resolution 24/551.2 - *that the council express an interest in a consortium arrangement with Rushden Town Council* - is received and noted.
- 24/727.2. That the council agree to enter a consortium arrangement with Rushden Town Council and Irthlingborough Town Council for the provision of Grounds Maintenance from August 2026. That the council acknowledge that Rushden Town Council, as lead, will manage and supervise the procurement process and award of the contract. That council agree, in principle, that the cost of the contract management and supervision will be split and the council will pay on a pro-rata basis based on the value of the council's element of the contract; and that the cost of the legal fees will be split and the council will pay on a pro-rata basis based on the value of the council's element of the contract.
- 24/727.3. That, subject to agreement on a price increase, the council's preferred option is to pursue an extension of the existing interim arrangement with the current contractor to run for a period of 15 months from 1st April 2025 to August 2026.

24/728. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

None.

Mayor

Date