

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIGHAM FERRERS**  
**TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024 AT 7.30PM**  
**AT THE TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:**

	The Mayor (Councillor V K Paul)	
Councillor Mrs P H Whiting		Councillor H L Jackson
Councillor C O'Rourke		Councillor B Spencer
Councillor A M T Reading		Councillor G Kelly
Councillor Mrs A Gardner		Councillor N Brown
Councillor Mrs C Reavey		
Miss Alicia Schofield (Town Clerk)		David Wicks (Mayor's Sergeant)
Mrs Emily Arrow (Assistant Clerk)		

6 members of the public

24/729.1. **APOLOGIES**  
Cllr B Prigmore, Cllr G Salmon, Cllr S Prosser, Cllr Mrs J Bone, Cllr P Tomas, Cllr P McCann

24/729.2. **RESOLVED:**  
That the absence of Cllr P McCann from meetings for employment reasons be approved until January 2025 (Local Government Act 1972 s.85(1) and (2))

24/730. **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.

24/731. **MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED:**  
That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> September be signed by the Mayor as being a true and correct record

24/732. **PUBLIC FORUM**  
None.

24/733. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
The Mayor reported from the following engagements in October:-

- 29<sup>th</sup> September – Played in a charity football match.
- 29<sup>th</sup> September – Thrapston Civic Service
- 6<sup>th</sup> October – Rushden Civic Service
- 11<sup>th</sup> October – Thrapston Brass Band Night
- 12<sup>th</sup> October – Wellingborough Gala Night Dinner
- 17<sup>th</sup> October – High Sheriff's Court Civic Ceremony
- 19<sup>th</sup> October – First auditions held for Higham's Got Talent
- 19<sup>th</sup> October – Daventry 80s Disco
- 24<sup>th</sup> October – Civic Celebration of Northamptonshire in Rushden
- 25<sup>th</sup> October – Attended 2 school assemblies to promote Higham's Got Talent
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – Rushden Dinner at Pizzeria Venezia
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – Drinks Reception for Northants Diwali Celebrations
- 27<sup>th</sup> October – Bowls Club Annual Award Night
- 27<sup>th</sup> October – Second auditions held for Higham's Got Talent

24/734. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

**Police Report**

Link to crimes for August 2024.

[Local Crime Information for Market Square, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, NN10 8BT - August 2024](#)

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

52 crimes for the month of August :-

- Anti-social Behaviour – 6
- Burglary -1
- Criminal Damage / Arson – 4
- Drugs – 1
- Other theft – 7
- Possession of weapons -1
- Public Order – 3
- Shoplifting – 10
- Vehicle crime -1
- Violence / Sexual offences – 18

**Arson**

The Clerk advised of the spate of arson in the litter bins at Saffron Road play area and across the Saffron Road Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED:**

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

24/735. **QUESTIONS**

None.

24/736. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

Cllr H L Jackson reported that he and the Deputy Mayor, Cllr G Salmon, attended the NCLAC 77<sup>th</sup> Conference and AGM at Moulton Community Centre on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October. Various appointments were made, including the NCLAC President, Auditor and Directors. A financial report was shared and information about subscription levels. The upcoming election was discussed.

24/737. **REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

A report was circulated from the unitary councillors.

24/738. **FINANCE**

24/738.1. **To approve accounts for payment as at 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the accounts for payment of £42,158.71 as at 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be approved for payment.

24/738.2. **To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the bank account reconciliation as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be signed by the Mayor after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

24/738.3. **To receive and note the budget report as at 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the budget report as at 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 is received and noted.

24/738.4. **To approve the following expenditure:-**

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the council enter a 3 year contract for broadband services at a monthly cost of £37.95 plus a one-off cost of £9.95.
- (ii) That reimbursement to the tenant of the cost for gas pipe replacement works at 5 and 5A College Street be approved at a cost of £2280.

24/738.5. **NCLAC interim internal audit report to the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the NCALC interim internal audit report to the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be received and noted.

24/739. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

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

24/739.1. **Planning and Development Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received and adopted.

24/739.2. **Policy and Resources Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Environment and Recreation Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received and adopted.

**RESOLVED:**

24/739.2.1 **REVIEW OF POLICIES**

- (i) That the following policies be reviewed without change:-

Complaints Procedure

Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour

Whistleblowing Policy

Vehicle Policy

- (ii) **Social Media Policy**

That the Social Media Policy be approved with amendment whereby all references to 'Twitter' become 'X formerly known as Twitter'.

- (iii) **Tree Management and Planting Policy**

That the Tree Management and Planting Policy be approved with amendment whereby all references to 'surveys' become 'inspections' within the section 'Tree Planting' to give commonality of wording throughout the document.

24/740. **WORKING PARTIES**

24/740.1. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received and noted.

24/740.2. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE WORKING PARTY**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Christmas Sparkle Working Party meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be received and noted.

24/740.3. **PUBLIC TOILETS WORKING PARTY**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Public Toilets Working Party meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received and noted.

24/741. **REPAIR TO CHURCHYARD WALL**

**RESOLVED:**

That expenditure be incurred on a structural survey and works to repair the wall between St Mary's Churchyard and the access road to the rear of the Green Dragon and that a budget of £10,000 be agreed to cover the cost of the structural survey and repair work. Cost to be met from EMR Asset Maintenance.

24/742. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT MAPPING REQUIREMENTS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the council incur expenditure of £3125 for the production of digital mapping of the grounds maintenance contract areas, the creation of online interactive mapping of the parks and open spaces and contract areas, and the purchase of GIS software with associated training. That council incur expenditure of £125 per annum for hosting and technical support for the new mapping services. That this procurement relates to 11.1 a. (ii) and (iv) of the

Financial Regulations as it is a specialist service and the contractor is already appointed by the council to provide other forms of mapping services.

24/743. **43 MILLFIELDS BOUNDARY FENCE**

**RESOLVED:**

That the property owner be advised the fence may remain in its current position subject to the property owner entering a Licence to Occupy agreement to regularise their occupation of the council's land. That an annual monitoring system is set up to review all Licence to Occupy agreements made with the council.

24/744. **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED:**

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

24/745. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

24/745.1.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be received and adopted.

24/745.2.

**RESOLVED:**

24/745.2.1

That the salary scale ranges be amended by a 2 point increase as follows:

NAME	CURRENT SALARY SCALE	AMENDED SALARY SCALE
Town Clerk, Alicia Schofield	37-41	37-43
Assistant Clerk, Emily Arrow	18-23	18-25
Administration and Communication Officer, Lauren Houlihan	7-12	7-14
Parks, Open Spaces and Facilities Supervisor, John Algar	7-12	7-14
Administration, Communications and Finance Officer, Donna Anderson	7-12	7-14
Park Warden, Stephen Bridge	5-6	5-8
Cleaner, Jennifer Tuffnail	5-6	5-8

24/745.2.2

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to satisfactory performance reviews the salary scale points from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 be agreed as follows: -

Alicia Schofield, Town Clerk - SCP 41

Emily Arrow, Assistant Clerk – SCP 23

Lauren Houlihan, Administration and Communications Officer - SCP 11

Donna Anderson, Administration, Communications and Finance Officer – SCP 13

John Algar, Parks, Open Spaces and Facilities Supervisor – SCP 9

Stephen Bridge, Park Warden - SCP 7

Jennifer Tuffnail, Cleaner - SCP 7

24/745.2.3

**RESOLVED:**

That the role of Community Connector be extended for a 12 month period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025. That the job description and salary for the Community Connector from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 be as per the current job description and salary.

24/745.2.4

**RESOLVED:**

That volunteers be used to carry out Community Library and Wellbeing Hub administrative work to assist the Community Connector. That expenditure be incurred for a new email address, communityhub@highamferrers-tc.gov.uk, and for a Microsoft basic account at a one-off set up cost of £85 and an on-going monthly cost of £4.90.

24/746. **REOPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED:**

That, the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

24/747.

**ITEMS TO REPORT**

None.

**Mayor**

**Date**