

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
HIGHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 17th DECEMBER 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 A M T Reading		Councillor P Tomas
Councillor B Prigmore		Councillor N Brown
Councillor Mrs C Reavey		Councillor S Prosser
Councillor Mrs A Gardner		
Miss Alicia Schofield (Town Clerk)		David Wicks (Mayor's Sergeant)
Mrs Emily Arrow (Assistant Clerk)		

2 members of the public

24/767. **APOLOGIES**
Cllr Mrs J Bone, Cllr P McCann, Cllr G Kelly

24/768. **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 Mrs P H Whiting – item 14, a family member lives in close proximity
Cllr C O'Rourke – item 11, Cllr O'Rourke is a member of the Tourism group

24/769. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th November 2024 be signed by the Chairman as being a true and correct record.

24/770. **PUBLIC FORUM**
A member of the public spoke in support of agenda item 13 – Blue Plaque, Market Square. The member of the public highlighted the importance of the individual proposed to be honoured with a blue plaque and outlined their contribution during the Battle of Britain and after the war. They also referenced that the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain is in September 2025 and this would be good opportunity to mark this occasion with the installation of this blue plaque.

24/771. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The Mayor will give an overview of his latest engagements at the January 2025 meeting.

24/772. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**
Police Report
Link to crimes for October 2024.
<https://www.streetcheck.co.uk/crime/nn108bt>
Please also see attached spreadsheet that tracks this months' crimes against previous months.
57 crimes for the month of October:-

- Anti-social Behaviour – 14
- Bicycle theft - 2
- Criminal damage and arson - 6
- Drugs – 3

- Other theft – 2
- Public Order – 1
- Robbery - 1
- Shoplifting – 8
- Vehicle crime -1
- Violence / Sexual offences – 18
- Other crime - 1

RESOLVED:

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

24/773.

QUESTIONS

None.

24/774.

REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

None.

24/775.

REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS

A report from the Unitary Councillors was circulated via email.

24/776.

FINANCE MATTERS

24/776.1.

To approve accounts for payment as at 17th December 2024

RESOLVED:

That the accounts for payment of £43,167.41 as at 17th December 2024 be approved for payment.

24/776.2.

To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 30th November 2024

RESOLVED:

That the bank account reconciliation as at 30th November 2024 be signed by the Chairman after being checked by Cllr Mrs P H Whiting.

24/776.3.

To approve the following expenditure:-

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a 3-year agreement for the servicing of the St Mary’s Church Clock is entered at a cost of £806.

24/777.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

24/777.1.

Planning and Development Committee held on the 10th December 2024

RESOLVED:

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

24/777.2.

Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th December 2024

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th December 2024 be received and adopted.

RESOLVED:

24/777.2.1.

GRANT APPLICATIONS 2025/26

- (i) **Higham Ferrers Town Bowls Club**
That a grant of £2500 be awarded to the Higham Ferrers Town Bowls Club in 2025/26 towards the cost of maintaining the bowling green and replacement floodlighting.
- (ii) **Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group, Entertainment**
That a grant of £2793 be awarded to the Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group in 2025/26 towards the cost of entertainment at Chichele College.
- (iii) **Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group, Christmas Trees**
That a grant of £1356 be awarded to the Higham Ferrers Tourism, Business and Community Group in 2025/26 towards the cost of supply and install of Christmas trees and lights.
- (iv) **Friends of St Mary’s, Higham Ferrers**

- That a grant of £700 be awarded to Friends of St Mary's Higham Ferrers in 2025/26 towards the cost of Arts Festival dance workshops and performances.
- 24/777.2.2. **BUDGET 2025/26**
That the draft budget 2025/26 be approved as circulated further to the following amendments:
- Reduce the allocation to cost code Grants Made by £3901 with respective increase to EMR Asset/Building maintenance.
 - Reduce 220/4000 Parks and Open Spaces salaries by £11466
 - Increase Grounds Maintenance by £3230 as follows:-
 - Cemetery 200/4200 - £350
 - Burials 200/4205 - £200
 - Churchyard 210/4200 - £70
 - Parks & Open Spaces 220/4200 - £2600
 - Car Parks 230/4200- £10
 - Increase EMR Public Conveniences by £5000
 - Increase EMR Asset/Building Maintenance by £3236
- 24/777.2.3. **PRECEPT 2025/26**
That the precept be set at £535,600 for 2025/26. An increase of £35,600 which equates to an increase of £6.35 per annum or 12p per week for a Band D property on the current council tax base, representing a percentage increase of 3.71%.
- 24/778. **WORKING PARTIES**
24/778.1. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE WORKING PARTY**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the Christmas Sparkle Working Party meeting held on the 21st November 2024 be received and noted.
- 24/779. **BLUE PLAQUE, MARKET SQUARE**
In pursuance of Standing Order 7a, Previous Resolutions, written notice received from Cllr G Salmon, Cllr V Paul, Cllr S Prosser, Cllr N Brown, Cllr B Spencer and Cllr G Kelly for a special motion to reverse resolution 24/700.1.
27th August 2024 - Resolution 24/700.1.
That the council does not support the request for the supply and install of a blue plaque to 12 Market Square to honour Edward Dixon Crew. That future street naming be suggested as a more appropriate means of honour.
RESOLVED:
That the council support the installation of a blue plaque on 12 Market Square to honour Edward Dixon Crew. That council partake in celebrations to mark the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in September 2025.
- 24/780. **EXPIRY OF ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE LISTING FOR OPEN SPACE NEAR SCHOOL LANE**
RESOLVED:
That an application is submitted to register the open space near School Lane as an Asset of Community Value.
- 24/781. **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING TO THE 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 nature of the following items of business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the meeting for the next item.
- 24/782. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
24/782.1. **RESOLVED:**
That the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on the 12th December 2024 are received and adopted.
PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

- 24/782.2. **RESOLVED:**
That the council accept the Flexible Working Request.
- 24/782.3. **RESOLVED:**
That the council begin the process of recruitment of a replacement Parks, Open Spaces and Facilities Supervisor.
- 24/783. **REOPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS**
To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.
- 24/784. **ITEMS TO REPORT**
Cllr G Salmon – Cllr Salmon reported that the agenda item for the blue plaque at 12 Market Square had the support of both the Tourism Group and the owner of the property.
Cllr P Tomas – Cllr Tomas announced he had joined Reform UK.

Mayor

Date