

**Parish of HIGHAM FERRERS
NOTICE OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT –

A Meeting of the Town Council will be held at the Town Hall, Market Square,
Higham Ferrers on the **SEVENTEENTH day of DECEMBER 2024 at 7.30pm.**

The meeting will be open to the public unless the Council otherwise direct

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies for absence.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and the nature of those interests relating to items on the agenda.
3. **MINUTES**
To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th November 2024.
4. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**
To allow any member of the public to address the meeting for a period of no longer than three minutes each. If the item raised by the member of the public is not on the agenda the Clerk will advise how the issue will be addressed. No decisions can be taken under this item.
5. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**
To receive a verbal report from the Mayor.
6. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**
To receive and note the Town Clerk's Report.
7. **QUESTIONS**
An opportunity for Councillors to ask questions pursuant to standing order 9. (Questions must relate to business of the Town Council and not be related to items of business on the agenda. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.)
8. **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**
To receive reports from Councillors on meetings they have attended as representatives to other bodies.
9. **REPORTS FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS**
To receive written reports from the North Northamptonshire Unitary Councillors.
10. **FINANCE MATTERS**
 - 10.1. To approve accounts for payment as at 17th December 2024.
 - 10.2. To approve the bank account reconciliation as at 30th November 2024.
 - 10.3. To receive and note the budget report as at 30th November 2024.
 - 10.4. To approve the following expenditure:-
 - (i) Servicing of St Mary's Church Clock, 3-year agreement, £806.
11. **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
To receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees:-
 - 11.1. Planning and Development Committee held on the 10th December 2024.
 - 11.2. Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th December 2024.

Recommendations

11.2.1. **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.

11.2.2. **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

11.2.3. **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. This represents a percentage increase of 3.71%.

12. **WORKING PARTIES**

12.1. **CHRISTMAS SPARKLE WORKING PARTY**

To receive and note the minutes of the Christmas Sparkle Working Party meeting held on the 21st November 2024.

13. **BLUE PLAQUE, 12 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.

14. **EXPIRY OF ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE LISTING FOR OPEN SPACE NEAR SCHOOL LANE**

To consider whether to submit an application to register the open space near School Lane as an Asset of Community Value.

15. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES FROM 1st APRIL 2025**

To agree that during the contract procurement period for the Rushden, Irthlingborough and Higham Ferrers Town Council consortium, the current contractor's proposed price be accepted and services appointed for grounds maintenance from 1st April 2025.

To resolve that given the extenuating circumstances council waive Financial Regulations relating to contracts to enable this negotiated price without competition as per regulation clause 11.1 (d), with the reasons for acceptance as negotiated and without competition based on:-

- The need to ensure continuity of grounds maintenance services by 1st April 2025.
- Use of a known and proven contractor to the council who is familiar with and already working for the council with existing knowledge of the sites and schedules.
- Requirement for sufficient time for a new procurement to be undertaken.

16. **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.

17. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

17.1 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on the 12th December 2024.

17.2. *Recommendations*

PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

17.2.1. **Flexible Working Request**

17.2.2. **Recruitment of a replacement Parks, Open Spaces and Facilities Supervisor**

18. **REOPEN THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

19. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

An opportunity for Councillors to report items. No decisions or discussions can be made under this item.

Miss Alicia J Schofield

Town Clerk

A J Schofield

Date: 11th December 2024

The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting. Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 members of the public are permitted to photograph, film, broadcast and report on the meeting, subject to the efficient running of the business and the meeting not being disrupted.