

PARISH OF GODALMING

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD

ON THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2023

- * Town Mayor (Cllr Duce)
- * Deputy Town Mayor (Cllr PS Rivers)

* Councillor Adam	* Councillor Kiehl
* Councillor Clayton	0 Councillor Martin
* Councillor Crooks	* Councillor PMA Rivers
0 Councillor Crowe	* Councillor Steel
0 Councillor Downey	* Councillor Taylor
* Councillor Follows	* Councillor Thomson
* Councillor Heagin	* Councillor Weightman
0 Councillor Holliday	* Councillor Williams

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

414. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 November 2023 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

415. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

416. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Kiehl declared an other registerable interest in Agenda Item 9 on the grounds his son attends The Wharf Nursery and remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor Heagin declared an other registerable interest in Agenda Item 9 on the grounds she volunteers at Citizens' Advice and remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillors Follows, Weightman, Taylor & Kiehl declared a Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 18 and left the Chamber whilst the item was debated.

Councillor Clayton declared a Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 18 and remained in the Chamber whilst the item was debated but did not vote on the item.

417. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 5.

418. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

419. RECEIPT OF OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

On 7 November 2023, Godalming Town Council received legal opinion from the National Association of Local Councils regarding Dependents & Carers Allowance and the General Power of Competence – which was considered as part of Min No 431-23 below.

Confirmation was received from the Land Registry that on 11 November 2023 Eashing Cemetery was registered to Godalming Town Council – Title Number SY718354.

On 22 November Godalming Town Council received a letter from Waverley Hoppa Community Transport relating to the Council's decision regarding Service Level Agreements (letter tabled at the meeting).

420. RECEIPT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Members received Chair's reports of the following Committees:

Environment & Planning Committee – Cllr Kiehl

Full Council received a report from the Chair of the Environment & Planning Committee on the work of the committee since the last Full Council meeting, including a recommendation for Full Council to resolve to agree match funding of £3,400 in support of a CCIF grant application.

Full Council resolved to agree match funding of £3,400 in support of a CCIF grant application.

Policy & Management Committee – Cllr Follows

Full Council received a report from the Chair of the Policy & Management Committee on the work of the committee since the last Full Council meeting. Members noted that the budget and precept element of the Policy & Management Committee's report would be dealt as a separate agenda item.

Staffing Committee – Cllr Heagin

Full Council received a report from the Chair of the Staffing Committee on the work of the committee since the last Full Council meeting. Members were informed that part of the Staffing Committee report is to be considered as a separate agenda item in open session with an additional item to be considered in exempt session.

421. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The reports of the following committees setting out decisions taken pursuant to delegated powers were RECEIVED:

	Meetings Dated
Environment & Planning	2 November 2023 23 November 2023
Policy & Management Committee	2 November 2023 23 November 2023

422. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Recommendations:

- a. Full Council resolved to authorise the signing of the SLA between Godalming Town Council and The Wharf Nursery for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028.
- b. Full Council resolved to agree expenditure of £12,000 at a rate of £3,000 per annum in support of a Service Level Agreement between Godalming Town Council and The Wharf Nursery for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028.
- c. Full Council resolved to authorise the signing of the SLA between Godalming Town Council and The Farncombe Day Centre for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028.
- d. Full Council resolved to agree expenditure of £30,000 at a rate of £7,500 per annum in support of a Service Level Agreement between Godalming Town Council and The Farncombe Day Centre for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028
- e. Full Council resolved to authorise the signing of the SLA between Godalming Town Council and Citizens' Advice South-West Surrey for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028.
- f. Full Council resolved to agree expenditure of £140,000 at a rate of £35,000 per annum in support of a Service Level Agreement between Godalming Town Council and Citizens' Advice South-West Surrey for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028.

Members noted that the Policy & Management Committee had approved the draft SLA for The Wharf Nursery and, subject to acceptance of terms by the service provider, recommended Full Council authorises the Town Clerk to sign the SLA on behalf of Godalming Town Council, which provides £3,000 pa financial support from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028. The Service Provider indicated acceptance of the terms of the SLA.

Members noted that the Policy & Management Committee approved the draft SLA for the Farncombe Day Centre and, subject to acceptance of terms by the service provider, recommended Full Council authorises the Town Clerk to sign the SLA on behalf of Godalming Town Council, which provides £7,500 pa financial support from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028. Following minor clarification regarding service provision during public holidays and Christmas shutdown period, the Service Provider accepted the terms of the SLA.

Members noted the Policy & Management Committee approved a draft SLA for the Citizens' Advice South-West Surrey and, subject to acceptance of terms by the service provider, recommended Full Council authorises the Town Clerk to sign the SLA on behalf of Godalming Town Council, which provides £35,000 pa financial support from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028. Following further discussion with the service provider to clarify reporting and feedback requirements, Members approved an updated SLA.

Members also noted that the Policy & Management Committee resolved to adjust the proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 to reflect an increase to the grants budget cost centre by an amount equal to the increased sum in the agreed SLA support and to adjust the non-SLA grants budget by CPI. Those increases being reflected in the budget proposal for 2024/25 approved at Minute 425-23 below.

423. 2023-24 NATIONAL SALARY AWARD

Members considered the recommendations of the Staffing Committee and resolved:

- a) Full Council approved the NJC negotiated National Salary Award.
- b) Full Council authorised that any settlement reached by the JNC that is equal to or less than that agreed by the NJC may be signed off for payment by the Town Clerk without the matter first being brought to a scheduled or Extraordinary meeting of the Full Council.

424. FOOTFALL COUNTERS

Members considered the information set out below and resolved to agree:

- a) To fund the provision of footfall data collection for the period 28 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 at a cost of £596.17.
- b) To approve, if necessary and having gained the agreement of the BID board for GTC to be refunded the costs involved, the funding of an additional two months of data collection to allow the BID board to set up its banking arrangements and determine how it wishes to proceed with footfall data collection.

Members noted that Waverley Borough Council had supported the provision of a footfall counter in Godalming since 2021. Initial funding was provided via the Re-opening High Street Fund, with further funding provided from the WBC Economic Development Team.

Whilst the data from the footfall counters has been used by GTC, with weekly and monthly footfall data being posted to the GTC website for all businesses to be able to access, the expectation going forward is for the Godalming BID to fund the footfall counter monitoring so as to collect data in support of marketing and promotion of Godalming BID area. It is to be hoped that as GTC has provided data for all businesses to access, the BID will also provide open access to the data, which will allow GTC to continue to be able to use it to analyse the success of its events, the health of the primary retail centre and the traffic volumes along the High Street.

However, the current contract for data collection expires on 28 January 2024 and the BID does not come into being until 1 April 2024. In order to support the BID and provide it with an opportunity to make its own arrangements for future data collection, Members were requested to resolve to agree to fund the provision of footfall data collection for the period 28 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 at a cost of £596.17. Additionally, having gained the agreement of the BID board for GTC to be refunded the costs involved, Members were requested to resolve to approve the funding of an additional two months of data collection to allow the BID board to set up its banking arrangements and determine how it wishes to proceed with footfall data collection.

425. REVISED ESTIMATES 2023/24 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25

Members considered a report (attached to record minutes) from the Responsible Finance Officer and Full Council resolved to agree:

- a. to approve the revised estimates for the financial year 2023/24;
- b. to approve the budget for the financial year 2024/25; and
- c. to approve a precept requirement of £1,147,744 for the financial year 2024/25, which represents a band D increase of £7.97 per annum (7.36%) setting a band D equivalent at £116.35.

Members also noted the budget forecast projections for period 2025/26 & 2026/27.

426. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Members reviewed and approved the Schedule of Meetings for the Local Government Year 2024/25 (attached to record minutes).

427. STAYCATION LIVE 2023

Members noted that Staycation Live 2023 incurred an overall loss of £13,225. This is the first loss in 11 years resulting from the extreme wet weather that washed out the Saturday and caused the reduced attendance on the Sunday.

The Events Task & Finish Group will be meeting with the organising team at the beginning of January and will report to the Policy & Management Committee with its recommendations for future events.

As per s5.3 of the agreement of 29 June (Min No 119-23 refers) to cover the loss and ensure suppliers are paid, the organising team's fee has been reduced by £2,645, with GTC covering the remaining £10,580 loss from the funds previously committed from the Emerging Projects reserve.

428. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS, ETC.

The following resolution was passed nem con.

THAT THE TOWN CLERK BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN OR WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO HAVE SEALED ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ANY ORDERS, DEEDS OR DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GIVE EFFECT TO ANY OF THE MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE REPORTS RECEIVED AT THIS MEETING OR IN ANY RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.

429. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 15 February 2024 at 6.30pm.

430. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On the completion of this meeting the Mayor invites attendees to the Mayor's Parlour for light refreshments.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM(S) 18, 19 & 20 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E LEGALLY PRIVILEGED INFORMATION AND STAFFING MATTERS

431. RECEIPT OF LEGAL OPINION – DEPENDENTS & CARERS' ALLOWANCE & GENERAL POWERS OF COMPETENCE

Members received legal opinion from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in response to Godalming Town Council's letter of 2 November 2023 (both attached to the record minutes).

Members considered the legal opinion obtained and accepted the advice given. Members authorised its Officers to develop a scheme to be brought back to this Committee for consideration.

Members further authorised the Town Clerk to share the legal opinion gained with other Parish & Town Councils for them to make their own determinations.

432. STAFF RESTUCTURING

Members received a confidential report on staffing structures and other staffing matters from the Chair of the Staffing Committee and agreed the recommendations therein.

433. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND

Members considered the funding agreement for Crown Court Public Toilets Renovation, between The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Godalming Town Council and resolved to agree to authorise the Town Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.