

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor
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DRAFT MINUTES of the **Extra Full Council Meeting** held on Thursday 6th May 2021 at 6.30pm remotely through Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Simpson, Winsor, Chicken, Downe, Alford, Fyfe, Schlanker, Hudson
In attendance: Claire Barnes (Town Clerk), Jeff Ford (RFO), James Cole (District Councillor)

The meeting was being recorded.

EFC2021004 **Note apologies for absence** – Councillors Knight, Shatford, Yakar-Wells and Mills

EFC2021005 **Declarations of interest** – None

EFC2021006 **Propose acceptance of F&GP’s recommendation on streetlighting – (Refer to report below)** – The RFO read out the report. It was questioned if there would be an opportunity to put electric car chargers in some of the new lampposts. **ACTION:** RFO to ask WBC and to find out any costs involved. Cllr Downe will carry out a site visit to see if the locations are potentially suitable.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Winsor

Resolution: Accept the recommendation of F&GP to upgrade, so WBC can adopt, 11 streetlights at a cost of £12,626 using the CIL/EMR funds allocated. To request West Berkshire Council pin-points further upgrades that would be within HTC’s budget.

EFC2021007 **In light of the result of the unsuccessful appeal to continue remote meetings for council business, propose best practice for council decisions during the Covid restrictions – (Refer to the report below)**

After discussion,

Proposed: Cllr Chicken

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Delegate the authority to make payments up to the sum of £50,000 for the month of June (2021). Authority required from RFO, Clerk, Mayor and Chair of F&GP. Payments to be ratified at a future town council meeting.

ACTION: Add to July Full Council agenda, to discuss delegated authority for expenditure in the event of an emergency.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Winsor

Resolution: Set up a working party of councillors for planning decisions to mirror the E&P Committee. The terms of reference would allow for recommendations via Zoom, not decisions. These recommendations would be passed to the Clerk who with the Chair

of E&P and the Mayor would have delegated authority to make decisions, based on the recommendations, and submit them to WBC on behalf of the Council. All decisions should be noted at a full council at a later date.

Meeting closed 7.05pm

**Streetlight Upgrade and Transfer to West Berkshire Council –
Parsonage Lane & Croft Field**

EFC2021006 streetlights

Background

Replacement lights

The Council originally owned 105 streetlights around the town. When West Berkshire Council (WBC) upgraded the lights 4 years ago these lights were excluded from that process.

HTC have agreed to begin the process of upgrading these lights over a period and WBC have agreed to adopt them upon completion.

So far 26 lights in Park Way, Coldharbour Road Tarrant Hill & Atherton Road have been upgraded and adopted by West Berkshire Council.

This leaves 79 remaining HTC responsibility.

The Council has been putting funds aside to funds to cover these upgrades in the annual budgets.

Proposed upgrade and Adoption by West Berkshire Council

At our request West Berkshire Council has come forward with a plan to upgrade 11 streetlights (7 columns & 4 Brackets) in Parsonage Lane & Croft Field. The cost of this upgrade and adoption is £12,626.

We have in Earmarked Reserves / CIL funds £21,251 available for this project.

Financial and Legal implications

None

Recommendation(s)

That Council approves the upgrade of these 11 lights in Parsonage Lane & Croft Field using the CIL / Earmark reserves budget. Total cost £12,626 and further requests West Berkshire Council to pin-point further upgrades within the Council's remaining budget.

Jeff Ford – Responsible Financial Officer
28th April 2021

Hungerford Town Council

Financial Report

Report to: Extra Full Council 6th May 2021

EFC2021007: In light of the result of the unsuccessful appeal to continue remote meetings for council business, propose best practice for council decisions during the Covid restrictions

Background Current legislation to allow remote meetings for council decisions ends on May 7th. Certain covid restrictions are scheduled to remain in place until 21st June however this is uncertain.

Objective Enable council business to continue safely and transparently whilst covid restrictions are in force.

Options to consider: -

- **Increase current delegated limits of expenditure,**
Our Financial regulations, allow the Clerk in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, to agree expenditure up to £5000 and anything above requires full council permission.
Suggest increasing this (possibly to £10,000) whilst Covid restrictions, that impact on the ability for councils and public to meet in person, remain in place
Consider a higher level. Suggest £50,000. RFO(s) and Clerk would support an 'only in the event of an emergency' clause to be added to Financial regs. This would cover e.g. payment runs. Suggest delegated powers to a majority of members of F&GP plus RFO and Clerk.
- **Set up a working party of councillors for planning decisions**
This can mirror the current E&P committee members. The terms of reference would allow for recommendations via Zoom, not decisions. These recommendations would be passed to the Clerk who would have delegated authority to make decisions, based on the recommendations, and submit them to WBC on behalf of the Council. All decisions should be noted at a full council at a later date.
- **Transparency**
Attention should be drawn to the planning applications and decisions on our website via social media.
- **Safety**
Any meeting which generates a significant public interest could be held outside in Croft Field
Smaller socially distanced face to face meetings should only be arranged with a full covid risk assessment

Health & Safety and Legal implications – Covid Risk assessment required when meeting in person

Recommendation(s)

The above suggestions are backed up by HALC, WBC and are being used by other Councils.

Signed: Town Clerk 29/04/2021