



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 1st OCTOBER 2024
AT GLOBE HOUSE, PRIORY ROAD, ALCESTER.**

Present

Councillors D Henderson (Deputy Mayor), V Blake, C Neal-Sturgess, A Foster, G Forman, D Gordon, A Leask, M Cargill, K Cargill, C Elliott and L Martinson.

In attendance Mrs V Lowe, Town Clerk and Cllr S Juned (District Councillor).

In the absence of the Mayor who was attending the High Sheriff of Warwickshire's Legal Service, the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DISCRETION OF MAYOR

None

District and County Councillors' Reports

(Due to the late arrival of Cllr Juned, this item was taken after item 7 on the agenda)

Cllr Juned (Ward Member for Alcester East) had sent a written report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Town Clerk asked for an update on The Three Tuns. Cllr Juned explained that the owner had reported to SDC that archaeological trenches had been excavated. Cllr Juned had asked officers to visit to confirm this. The owners had also reported that a tender had been accepted for the renovation work. Cllr Neal-Sturgess thanked Cllr Juned for her suggestion of flood warden training.

Cllr Juned had attended a WCC Climate Emergency Partnership meeting and had requested updates from the Environment Agency on Alcester flood defences. She will forward the presentation to the Town Clerk.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs M Bowe (Mayor), W Mills, K Foster, K Greenaway and R Ashfield. Cllr P Daniell (County Councillor) and Cllr J Harmer (Ward Member for Alcester West) were absent.

2. Minutes of Council Meetings

The Deputy Mayor asked Councillors to consider for approval the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 3rd September 2024. The minutes were proposed to be accepted by Cllr K Cargill, seconded by Cllr Forman and approved by Council; they were then signed by the Deputy Mayor.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on the agenda items.

4. Mayor's Report

As the Mayor was absent, he had sent a written report in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the launch of the Rural Enterprise Hub was due to take place on 11th October. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be advertised.

The Deputy Mayor reported that he had attended the Leamington Town Council bowls night.



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5. Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk presented her monthly report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She reported that 1800 packets of wildflower seeds had been distributed as part of the Bee Squared project. There will be a photo competition in the spring to find the best floral display.

The Town Clerk also reported that the new play area fencing was being installed at Jubilee Fields.

6. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Town Clerk reported that Moore had completed the external audit of the AGAR for 2023-2024. Their report had been issued indicating that there were no matters giving cause for concern. There was a matter to be brought to the attention of the Council which was the low level of general reserves. The Town Clerk explained the reason for this and confirmed that a report would be presented at the Finance and General Purposes Committee to explain this in more detail. The Town Clerk reported that she had posted the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit on the notice boards and on the website which completed the process for the financial year 2023-2024.

7. Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that he was satisfied that Committee members approved the minutes from the preceding month, which were then signed. There were no questions about the minutes and no propositions from the Committee.

8. Planning Committee

There had been no Planning Committee meeting in September.

Cllr M Cargill, as Chair, reported that he had proposed a change to procedures for the Committee to reduce some of the bureaucracy associated with dealing with applications. It was hoped that the focus of the committee could then be on the applications themselves.

A number of applications had been considered by email. These included an application to remove the ATM from the Lloyds Bank building. It was assumed that this would be on closure of the bank in June 2025, but this was not clear and councillors reported concern from residents about loss of the ATM.

Cllr Blake updated councillors on the progress towards creation of a Banking Hub. Cllr Blake confirmed that Cash Access UK were in monthly communication with the Council and were still looking for premises. The Town Clerk reported that Cash Access had offered to attend public events in Alcester to explain how the Hub would operate. She will invite them to the Big Breakfast.

Cllr Cargill also reported on the application to convert a garage into accommodation at 20 Henley Street. The committee had objected to this application and it was expected to go to SDC Planning Committee. The Committee had also objected to the latest application to redevelop the Cross Keys into two residential properties due in particular to the lack of parking.



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9. Lead Councillors

9.1 Footpaths

A report from the Deputy Mayor as Lead Councillor had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Deputy Mayor highlighted some associated issues raised in the report. These were some damage to play area surfacing in Jubilee Fields and a broken bench in Abbey Fields. These issues were passed to the Town Clerk for attention.

9.2 Eric Payne Community Centre

A report from Cllr M Cargill had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He confirmed that water usage at the Centre was now back to normal levels. There were no questions raised.

10. Town Council Representatives

Church Street Property Trust – Cllr M Cargill reported that grants had recently been given to Oversley Green Residents Association (for an interpretation board for Oversley Bridge), Alcester Town Council (for the Royal British Legion memorial book) and Alcester Town Council (for the water safety device). Regrettably, one of the trust's properties had been neglected by a tenant resulting in considerable work being required. Together with loss of rent, the trust had incurred a £41,000 loss.

Alcester War Memorial Town Hall – Cllr Forman reminded Councillors that the AGM was on 15th October. The road closure for the guttering work would start on 7th October hopefully lasting for only 3 days (9.30 am to 3.30 pm).

United Charities – Cllr K Cargill reported that there had been considerable interest in the vacant property and interviews would be conducted next week.

Newport's School Foundation – Cllr Neal-Sturgess reported that the charity had closed for applications this year having distributed its annual budget. Applications would reopen in January 2025.

The Greig Hall – Cllr Foster reported that the trustees had met and had welcomed Cllr Martinson as a new trustee. The Hall had suffered its first loss in August but bookings in September were expected to cover this. SDC had finally billed the Hall for gas and electricity which were within expected budgets.

11. Payment of Accounts

The Town Clerk presented the Payment of Accounts for the preceding month. The accounts were proposed to be approved by Cllr M Cargill, seconded by Cllr Forman and carried by Council.

12. Dates of future meetings

Planning Committee - Monday 21st October 2024 at 7 pm.

Finance & General Purposes Committee - Tuesday 29th October 2024 at 7pm.

Full Council - Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7 pm.

All meetings at Globe House.

The Deputy Mayor closed the meeting.