



AYLESBURY
TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Direct Services Committee of Aylesbury Town Council
held at the Town Hall, 5 Church Street, Aylesbury on Wednesday 7 September 2022
at 7pm**

Present: Cllr W Raja (Chairman)
Cllr M Azam
Cllr S Morgan (substituting for Cllr A Morgan)
Cllr C Hendren
Cllr R Lloyd
Cllr R King
Cllr M Winn

Officers in attendance: Mr K Gray (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Priest (Deputy Town Clerk)

No members of the public were in attendance.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7pm

1. Apologies

To note and agree apologies for absence.

Resolved: To unanimously receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllr A Morgan (prior commitment), Cllr N Hussain (illness), Cllr S Lambert (work commitment)

2. Declarations of Interest & Dispensations Requested

To declare and note any personal or prejudicial interests.

No declarations made and no dispensations requested.

3. Minutes

To receive, accept and sign the draft minutes of 8 June 2022

Resolved: To receive, accept and sign the minutes of 8 June 2022 as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising from the minutes.

5. Jonathan Page Play Centre

- a) To note the update report from the Play Centre Manager, which Councillors received in advance of the meeting.

Councillors were very pleased with the average attendance of children during the summer playscheme and the funding received from Waitrose for activity equipment.

Cllr Raja asked what the current capacity is for the After School Club and if more money is required for activity equipment. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that as After School Club just started again the average number of children is 35 per day, however there will be last minute bookings in addition and expected average will be between 40-45 children per day.

She also confirmed that at present there is sufficient equipment and toys available for the children.

- b) Councillors looked at the budgetary position of cost centre 702 Jonathan Page Play Centre to July 2022 (month 4).

Cllr Morgan queried why there have been no charges for utility bills yet and how often they are charged. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that no Service Charge budget for 2022-23 and no invoices have been received yet from the landlord, Buckinghamshire Council.

The report was received, reviewed and agreed by Committee.

6. Devolved Services and Environment

- a) To receive an overview of the Devolved Services Agreement to help new councillors understand the works involved in the agreement.

Town Clerk explained that the report has been issued to help councillors, in particular new councillors to understand the work that is covered under the Devolved Services Agreement and how Aylesbury Town Council works as a cluster lead for neighbouring parishes (Coldharbour Parish Council, Weston Turville Parish Council, Bierton Parish Council, Dinton with Ford & Upton Parish Council, Stoke Mandeville Parish Council and Aston Clinton Parish Council).

Cllr R Lloyd thanked the Clerk for putting the report together, which will help answer Councillor's questions.

Cllr M Winn asked if the other parishes are likely and happy to continue with ATC. The Clerk confirmed that the existing parishes are happy at present and likely to continue. However, a review of the agreement is due in 2023, which could have an impact on how we wish to proceed going forward.

The Clerk advised the committee that he has been asking officers at Buckinghamshire Council to start the review of the agreement early and to

ensure that all parish and town councils in Buckinghamshire are involved. He also confirmed that any new Devolved Services Agreement would have to be approved by Full Council in due course.

- b) To receive an update on Devolved Services and Environment from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk advised councillors of the increase in costs that will have to be covered in particular fuel costs, which have tripled. All other works are continuing and going well.

A discussion took place around the number of cuts the Council does per year and the Town Clerk advised that councillors and residents, are appreciative of the number of cuts taking place to keep the grass verges looking tidy.

- c) To look at the budgetary position of cost centre 701 Devolved Services and 403 Environment to July 2022 (month 4).

Councillors asked several questions around budget and how we know that the money we are getting from BC covers our expenses.

The Clerk confirmed that the amounts of money received from Buckinghamshire Council for Devolved Services covers the work that is involved. In addition, some of the neighbouring parishes have asked ATC to carry out additional works not covered under the Devolved Services Agreement, for which they pay ATC separately.

Further income is also received from Buckinghamshire Council for additional works ATC carry out on their behalf such as tree work and the salting of the Bourg Walk Bridge.

7. Cemetery

- a) To receive an update on cemetery matters from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk reported on the number of funerals and exhumations (ashes) that have taken place since April 2022 as well as other administrative matters such as transfers of Exclusive Right of Burial and Memorial applications approval.

Topple testing of memorials has started and five sections have been completed. This is ongoing until all sections are completed.

The Cemetery Officer and Clerk are liaising with the Commonwealth War Graves commission for planting of donated trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project.

The cemetery team are clearing overgrown areas to make way for wildflower planting. In addition, the Cemetery Officer is liaising with Mr D Short to arrange for RAF Halton Cadets to help clear the pond and create further wildlife areas. A mapping project of existing and identification of new locations for memorial benches is due to start in September.

The Town Clerk informed the committee of his recent conversation with Thames Valley Police and updated on recent matters and incidences the clerk and staff had to deal with at the cemetery.

Cllr Lloyd asked if there is an update from HS2 regarding the memorial and exhibition they were considering installing at Tring Road Cemetery. To date the Clerk has received no further update but will be following up again with HS2.

- b) To look at the budgetary position of cost centre 601 Cemetery to July 2022 (month 4)

Received, reviewed and accepted with no comments made or questions received.

8. Allotments

- a) To receive a quarterly update on allotment availability and associated matters

Councillors received, reviewed and accepted the report provided in advance of the meeting and had no further questions.

- b) To look at the budgetary position of cost centre 401 Allotments to July 2022 (month 4)

Received, reviewed and accepted with no comments made and no questions asked.

9. Town Hall

- a) To receive an update on matters concerning the Town Hall.

The Town Clerk updated the committee on maintenance works required at the Town Hall building. A recent fire alarm inspection flagged up that the detectors and fire panel are over 10 years old and require replacement as part of preventative maintenance. A quote has been obtained to rectify the above and for work to be carried out soon as possible.

The water tank in the loft space has been coming up in a Legionella Risk Assessment, due to access problems. This is being investigated with contractors to receive advice of how to proceed.

Cllr R King asked if there are any plans to replace the oven in the ground floor kitchen so it can be used by hirers. The Town Clerk advised that this is something that is being investigated and quotes being obtained. The oven will be replaced as soon as possible.

- b) To look at the budgetary position of cost centre 102 Building to July 2022 (month 4).

Received, reviewed and accepted with no comments made and no questions asked.

10. Allotment Rent 2023-24

To review allotment rents and to decide if any increase should be applied from September 2023.

Councillors reviewed a report which provided in advance of the meeting showing allotment rents being charged by other nearby Town Councils.

Cllr M Winn proposed and Cllr R King seconded that a 5% increase rounded to the nearest pound / half pound be made to allotment rents.

Resolved: Councillors voted 6 For and 1 Abstention to increase the allotment rent across all sites by 5%, rounded to the nearest pound/half pound from September 2023.

11. Tree planting request

To consider the request from former Town Mayor Ranjula Takodra, MBE to plant a tree in the cemetery.

Cllr W Raja proposed, Cllr Lloyd seconded for former Town Mayor Ranjula Takodra to plant a tree in the cemetery.

Resolved: The committee unanimously agreed for former Town Mayor, Ranjula Takodra, MBE to plant a tree in the Tring Road cemetery at a location to be agreed with the Town Clerk.

12. Date of Next Meeting

To note the date of the next meeting for Wednesday 7 December at 7pm in the Council Chamber.

There being no further business of the Direct Services Committee, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:10pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____