

Minutes of the meeting of the Harworth and Bircotes Town Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.15pm at the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP.

**Present:** Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Jones, Cllr Smith, Cllr Flynn, Cllr James, Cllr Sidwell, Cllr S Harrison, Cllr Hughes, Cllr A Harrison, Cllr Horrocks and Cllr Schuller

**Others:** Mrs Davies (Officer) Mrs Tarburton (Development & Funding Manager)

**17673** To receive and consider any apologies and reasons for absence

Cllr James proposed to accept the apologies and reason from Cllr Wratten, this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17674** To receive Declaration of Interest on any item on the agenda

No declaration of interest received.

**17675** **To suspend the meeting to hold a public session and receive reports from Police, District & County Councillors**

Cllr Evans gave her District Council report below.

**The English Devolution White Paper: Reorganisation of Local Authorities**

The Government's long-term vision is for simpler structures which make it much clearer for residents who they should look to on local issues, with fewer politicians able to focus on delivering.

The aims are for a joint programme of devolution and local government reorganisation, to set out a clear process and key milestones. Local government believes that reorganisation of local authorities, alongside devolution, over a large strategic geography, can drive economic growth whilst delivering optimal public services. To help deliver these aims, government will facilitate local government reorganisation in England for two-tier areas, and for smaller unitary councils where there is evidence of failure, or where their size or boundaries may be hindering an ability to deliver sustainable, high-quality public services.

**So, what does this mean?**

In practical terms, this means larger, unitary councils with populations around 500,000 will be created, replacing district councils. These larger structures will, allegedly, be more strategic and therefore help facilitate devolution of powers from Westminster. This will take time to achieve, and government is taking a phased approach; the expectation is that the new unitary councils will appear in 2027 and 2028.

The White paper also mentions that parish and town councils might be able to purchase community assets, though no details are given...this is something that would need careful consideration because of budget pressures, and particularly because of the responsibility of delivering services, e. g. a community library.

This is just the start of what will be a lengthy and complicated process.

**17676** **To receive the Chair's report**

**The destroyed C.C.T.V. pole/camera.** The District Council has found an alternative camera and have submitted an application to Planning for a replacement pole. It is then up to Highways to dig out the old stump and put in place the new pole.

**The Miners Memorial.** The damaged chains/supports were removed to avoid them being stolen and are now being repaired.

**17677 To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024**

Cllr A Harrison proposed to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2024 as a true record; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council. The Chair duly signed the minutes.

**17678 To receive the cemetery Health & Safety reports**

Cllr Jones gave her new cemetery health & safety inspection report – no actions required.

Cllr Harrison gave his old cemetery health & safety inspection report – no actions required.

- The Officer showed the Dog Fouling notice sign for the cemeteries – the council suggested to have them A2 size
- A question was asked which way will the burials in phase two be? They will be facing east
- The Officer reported on our security contractor's proposal for putting up CCTV in the cemeteries; we already have the software to monitor any cameras . For the old cemetery, the electric can be extended to the garage again to run the cameras. The new cemetery would need to consider the security of the equipment first.

**17679 To consider planning applications as listed and any planning correspondence**

**Application: 24/01419/HSE**

Proposal: Proposed front porch extension

Location: 16 Essex Drive, Bircotes

Cllr James proposed not to make any objections; this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17680 To review the Internal Control Document**

The Officer previously circulated copies of the 2024-25 Internal Control Document for the Councillors to consider. After discussion with the Officer, Cllr A Harrison proposed to approve the Internal Control; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council. Cllr S Harrison and Cllrs S James signed off the checked boxes.

**17681 To review the General and Financial Risk Assessment**

The Officer previously circulated copies of the updated General and Financial Risk Assessment for the Councillors to view.

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the General and Financial Risk Assessment; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

**17682 To review the Standing Orders**

The Officer previously circulated copies of the Standing Orders and checked that it is in line with the new Financial Regulations.

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the Standing Orders; this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17683 To consider the costs to complete the Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Due to no external funding being available for the Town Council to complete the Neighbourhood Plan Review; the Officer suggested an ear marked reserve of £9,000 to cover the consultant's work and the steering groups consultations that need to completing ready for the examiner.

After discussion, Cllr Jones proposed to ear marked £9,000 for the completion of the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

**17684 To consider when to hold the six weeks Neighbourhood Plan Review consultations**

The Officer has circulated the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan Review document for the Councillors to view. A discussion took place regarding when to start the six-week consultations and the Chair will discuss this further with the District Council.

**17685 To consider the Blyth Road, Harworth propose 40mph speed limit extension – initial consultation**

Cllr James proposed to support the above consultation; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17686 To consider payments as listed and the financial reports for 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

The Officer circulated payments for approval, bank reconciliations and bank statements, budget, variances, reserves and ear marked reserves for the Councillors to view. Cllr S Harrison and Cllr S James confirmed the bank statements balances and financial documents and signed the documents.

Cllr S Harrison proposed to approve the payments and financial reports as above; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17687 To review the Draft budget**

The Officer explained that there wasn't any December finance figures available for the council due to an issue with the accounting software; plus, there are still quotations to be received for budget items for discussion for 2025-26 budget.

The Officer went through the current budget and discussed the variations and the increases that will occur in 2025-26. The utility company that is comparing the renewal costs for our heating and lighting has submitted the proposed savings of approximately £2,700 for the first contract which is up for renewal in December – this was approved; the second contract comparison will be available in the end of February/March for the Town Hall.

A Finance committee will be scheduled to discuss the proposed draft budget ready to submit to the full council's extra meeting which is just for consideration of the 2025-26 budget and precept figures.

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the renewal for the first energy contract renewal for 2026-27 and also to note the review and information received; this was seconded by Cllr S Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17688 To consider repairs to the damaged caused at the Miners Memorial Garden**

The Officer reported that finally we have a fabricator that can help with the repair to the damage caused to the heavy chains on the Memorial Garden. The contractor previously removed and

painted the chains for us via the Harworth Group's donation for the cost. The repairs and reinstalling of the chains will be £800.00.

Cllr James proposed to accept the work as above; this was seconded by Cllr A Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17689 To consider the work required to carry out work on the allotment trees**

The Officer reported that a large branch has fallen into the allotments and under her health & Safety delegation, the Officer asked a contractor to check the rest of the tree(s); it was confirmed that work was required. After discussions and consideration Cllr S Harrison proposed further quotations to be obtained; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**17690 To consider the Bassetlaw Community Infrastructure Levy – Local Infrastructure money notification letter**

After discussion, Cllr James proposed that the District Council retains the local infrastructure money on behalf of the Town Council until it is required; this was seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by the Council.

**17691 To consider repairs to the Styrrup Road Cemetery gates and electric supply to the cemetery**

The Officer then reported that the fabricator has also agreed to meet with the electrician to help with the fabrication work required to repair vandalised new cemetery gates to enable the gates to close.

The Officer reported that the approval to install an electric supply into the Styrrup Road Cemetery was some time ago, is it time to start implementing this project prior to the planning application (subject to the application being approved) for houses to be built in the area in front of the cemetery?

Following a discussion; it was left to investigate various options of meeting with the developer and also the planning officers.

**17692 To consider the Pride's requests for this year's events**

Following a request from the Harworth & Bircotes Pride Committee to extend the activities of their annual Pride event; after discussion, the following requested were:

- Agreed to close the car park for the event
- Agreed to increase the use of the hall for additional activities as requested
- Agreed to close the event an hour later at 7pm
- Refused the request for the bar on the Civic Square
- The Council will request a copy of the event management plan.

Cllr Flynn proposed to approve the above decisions; this was seconded by Cllr Harrison and resolved by the Council.

**17693 To receive items for information**

No items put forward for the next agenda.

**17694 Time and date of the next Town Council scheduled meeting**

The next scheduled Town Council meeting will be the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.15pm in the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes, DN11 8JP.

**17695 To exclude members of the public under the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 to allow discussion regarding staff and to consider employing a part time Deputy Clerk**

No members of the public present.

The Chair discussed having a part time Deputy Clerk to assist the Town Clerk, after consideration Cllr Sidwell proposed to employ a part time Deputy Clerk; this was seconded by Cllr Flynn and resolved by the Council.

**Bank reconciliation as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**Bank Statement Balances:

30.11.2024	Natwest Current	£235,078.97	
30.11.2024	Natwest Deposit	£132,934.38	
30.11.2024	Unity Trust Current	£227,066.04	
30.11.2024	Unity Trust Deposit	<u>£106,710.54</u>	
			£702,789.93
	Less unrepresented payment		£000,053.01
	Plus receipts not on bank statements		<u>£000,000.00</u>
			<u>£702,736.92</u>

Closing cash book balances:

Natwest Current	£235,078.97	
Natwest Deposit	£132,934.38	
Unity Trust Current	£227,013.03	
Unity Trust Deposit	<u>£106,710.54</u>	
		£702,736.92

Represented by:

General Reserves	£451,145.34	
Earmarked Reserves	<u>£251,591.58</u>	
		<u>£702,736.92</u>