

## **RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

**Due to the recent death of Tony Helsdown, former Town Councillor and Town Mayor, a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect, prior to the meeting commencing.**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Councillor: Sarah Peacock – Chairman

Councillors: Robin Underwood    Richard Lewis  
Philip Humphrey    Barbara Jenney  
Gill Mercer    Andy Mercer  
David Jenney    Adrian House  
David Coleman    Colin Wright.  
Janet Pinnock    Melanie Coleman [Ex officio]  
Cameron Clarke

Town Clerk: Vivienne Prodger

#### **333/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **334/21 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Steven North.

#### **335/21 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 had been previously circulated to members and it was

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### **336/21 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

Members had been circulated with details of payments made since 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 amounting to £119,079.46

#### **RESOLVED**

That payments amounting to £119,079.46 be approved (as attached to these minutes).

### **337/21 INTERNAL AUDIT**

Members considered the Internal Audit Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 be recommended to Council for acceptance.

### **338/21 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

Members had been previously circulated with a detailed copy of the Income and Expenditure report April to December 2020. There had been no queries from members prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk went through the report and answered any questions raised at the time of the meeting and it was

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Income and Expenditure Report April – December 2020 be accepted.

### **339/21 RISK REGISTER**

Members had been circulated with the comprehensive Risk Register for all activities carried out by Rushden Town Council. Members scrutinised these documents and it was

#### **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Council that the current Rushden Town Council Risk Register is accepted.

### **340/21 COVID UPDATE**

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council offices are continuing to operate on a team A and team B rota with staff working alternative 2 or 3 day shifts within the offices. It is envisaged that this work pattern will continue to the end of March 2021.

Playground inspections and general maintenance will continue to be undertaken on a daily basis. As per current Covid guidelines, play areas and public toilets will remain open and additional cleaning will be carried out.

The Town Council offices will remain closed to the public until at least 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Site visits will continue to be carried out under current Covid guidelines.

## 341/21 PROJECTS/MAINTENANCE

### PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE WORK IN PROGRESS 16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Sartoris	Rushden Hall	Exterior painting of woodwork	In House – on going		
	Rushden Hall	Disabled Toilet	PAD Builders	December 2020	Completed
	Rushden Hall	Defibrillator Installation at disabled toilet	In House		Completed
	Rushden Hall	Rebuilding wall adjacent to green container in walled garden	PAD Builders	February 2021	
	Rushden Hall	Damp proofing old kitchen and store rooms	John Toseland	February 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Spencer	Spencer Park	Repair works to watercourse	John Clark Groundworks	February 2021	
	Spencer Park	Table Tennis base	John Clark Groundworks	March 2021	
	Spencer Park	Table Tennis Table	Playground Supplies	April 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Hayden	Queen Street	Installation of Defibrillator	Mays Electrical	February 2021	
	Cemetery	Improvements to footpaths	TBC	April 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Pemberton	Melloway Park	Toddler Play equipment	TBC	April 2021	
	Haddon Close	Installation of Defibrillator	Mays Electrical	February 2021	

WARD	Location	Job Description	Contractor	Start Date	Completion Date
Bates	Manor Park	Master Plan	Hinton Cook	Submitted ENC	

				December 2019	
	Sports Site	Archeological Survey	KD Archeology	March 2021	
	Sports site	Master Plan	Hinton Cook	Submitted to ENC December 2019	
	Manor Park	Badger Survey	Cherryfields	March 2021	
	Manor Park	Reptile Survey	Cherryfields	March 2021	
	Manor Park	Drainage Survey	MK Drainage	April 2021	

### **342/21 ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING POINTS**

Members discussed the possibility of installing an electric charging point at Rushden Hall. Because Hall Park is locked at night, charging could only take place during the day and therefore would only really be suitable for Council employees or if we change our vehicles to electric vans.

The installing of electric charging points within the town will be the responsibility of the North Northamptonshire Unitary Council, as they will own all the footpaths, roads and car parks.

After further discussion members

#### **RESOLVED**

To reconsider this item once we have a need through either our own vehicles or staff vehicles for electric charging points.

### **343/21 E SCOOTERS**

Ian Achurch from NCC gave the following report on the proposed E Scooter trial and Voi and NCC are undertaking at the end of March 2021

#### **Northamptonshire e-scooter Trial – Corby, Wellingborough and Rushden & Higham Ferrers Launch**

Update on progress with the Northamptonshire e-scooter trial which was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> September in Northampton, in Kettering on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and will be live in Corby, Wellingborough and Rushden & Higham Ferrers from the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Initial discussions have started with local officers and this will also include joint communications.

##### **Background**

The Northamptonshire e-scooter trial is part of a wider initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT) which has been accelerated as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. New emergency legislation was introduced last year to make e-scooters legal in the UK for the first time. The trial will help us respond to the immediate need to provide a clean and green alternative to public transport and car sharing for those travelling to work and undertaking essential journeys. This is important during the current Lockdown and with restrictions likely to continue for some time. It will also help build our understanding of the role that e-scooters could play in the future across

Northamptonshire and in different sized towns, particularly in relation to shorter journeys, improving local connectivity where availability of public transport is limited, and how we can start to move towards a net zero (emission) carbon transport system.

There was significant interest from suppliers keen to operate the trial in Northamptonshire. A competitive process led by NCC as part of the wider Smart Move Northamptonshire initiative saw Voi Technology (Voi) selected as the preferred supplier. Voi have successfully delivered similar schemes across Europe and are now live in more than 50 cities.

I am pleased that Northamptonshire was one of the first areas in the country to successfully bid to host a trial. I am also delighted that in terms of users, and ridership, it is currently the most popular trial in the UK with over 172,000 rides, and more than 15,600 users already active in Northampton and Kettering.

#### **Trial in Corby, Wellingborough and Rushden & Higham Ferrers**

The trials in Corby, Wellingborough and Rushden & Higham Ferrers will launch with a fleet of 50 e-scooters in each area. The initial operating zones will be centred on the town centre and major employment. The geography will be discussed with local officers, Northamptonshire Police and Voi. This will also help to identify more sensitive areas and enable appropriate safeguards to be put in place.

As with Northampton and Kettering, the operating area and fleet size will increase gradually working closely with NCC and Northamptonshire Police (the Police). Local officers will also be involved in these discussions. Key metrics Voi takes into account prior to scaling include the average rides per scooter per day. As the operation grows, the intention is that Voi will be introducing e-bikes in all the towns. This is similar to the approach in Kettering. Voi is planning on having a dedicated Ambassador in each or the new operational areas. Depending on user behaviour and reported incidents, Voi will evaluate together with NCC, the Police and local officers if the Ambassador presence needs to be increased or targeted during the trial.

Operations will be run from the Voi Northampton warehouse, meaning all repairs and scooter deployments will be handled by the local team. Voi plans to operate a night-shift to swap, rebalance, and if needed transport damaged, scooters from the operational area back to the Northampton warehouse.

Voi services the fleet through the use of E-vans and E-cargo bikes. It is a zero carbon emission operation which also uses electricity generated from renewable sources. Voi has installed a fast-charging solution at the Northampton warehouse which will increase efficiency and decrease downtime. Voi will also look to access electric charging points in the new operating areas to increase efficiency.

All e-scooters are GPS tracked enabling the Voi team to monitor usage. Incentivised parking areas will also be created in each of the operation areas using GPS, to encourage and reward users to park responsibly in defined areas. Geo-fencing (using GPS) is used to control speeds in more sensitive areas, and block use where scooters should not operate, such as in parks without through routes, schools, or on faster roads.

#### **Safety**

Safety is paramount. Users must be 18 or above and hold a provisional or full driving license. This will be checked on the Voi mobile phone app before any user can register to ride. All users will be encouraged to wear a helmet. Users will also be rewarded for completing safety training online. Since the trial started we have been working closely with Voi Technology to identify areas for improvement and to address some of the concerns which have been expressed. A key priority has been to work closely with Northamptonshire Police. We have a regular call in place and clear channels of communication and reporting. This makes it easier for the Police to report incidents to Voi, and for action to be taken. This learning from Northampton will benefit the new operational areas and local officers are already being briefed so they are well prepared for when the trial is launched in the new towns.

We are also engaging with various other local organisations and stakeholders including the RNIB and Northamptonshire Association for the Blind. This work will continue. Technology enables tipped

scooters to alert the Voi response team ensuring that they can act quickly and remove potential trip hazards.

I have been pleased how keen Voi has been to work with us to help identify where the operation can be improved and fast-track implementation and action. Some of the activities and improvements already implemented and in place are listed below. **Early activities and improvements**

- Adding visible ID codes to the e-scooters enabling easy reporting of incidents
- Increasing the number of Voi ambassadors on the street to help people ride safely, answer questions, and monitor scooter activity.
- Rebalancing of the fleet to help reposition scooters where there is greatest need, and not in the wrong areas.
- Increased collaboration between ambassadors and police to contend with riders flouting the rules of the road.
- Doing more to keep pedestrians and riders separate: revising the no-ride and slow-ride zones, based on local learning.
- Reinforcing the message that e-scooters (nor bicycles) should not be used on pavements. This is on the Voi app and all e-scooters.
- Helmet giveaways and Voi are giving out free helmets to riders.
- Increasing rider education with Voi upping the incentives (such as free ride credits) for people who complete *Ride Like Voila*, their online rider training school.
- Deterrents implemented include charging users a £25 premium for leaving scooters in no-parking zones and blocking users who are shown to be abusing the licensing rules, such as enabling the use of under-age riders.

Members were concerned about the lack of consultation regarding the proposed trial in Rushden. They also requested that confirmation was sought regarding insurance liability for the scooters. Ian Achurch did not have this information at the time of the meeting but it will be forwarded in due course.

Chairman