

## **RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2020 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Cllr Cesare Marinaro, Town Mayor

Councillors:

David Coleman	Melanie Coleman	Barbara Jenney
Tracey Smith	Paul Harley	Sarah Peacock
Adrian House	Marian Hollomon	David Jenney
Philip Humphrey	Richard Lewis	Kaye Rawlins
Janet Pinnock	Gill Mercer	Steven North
Carol Childs	Ron Pinnock	Andy Mercer
Colin Wright.		

Town Clerk: Vivienne Prodger  
Town Manager: Julie Thorneycroft

#### **23/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Philip Humphrey declared a 'bias' interest for agenda item 9, Approval of Payments, and left the meeting when this item was discussed and took no part in discussion and voting thereon.

#### **24/21 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Robin Underwood

#### **25/21 MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### **26/21 MEETINGS**

The proposed calendar of meetings of the Council and its Committees for 2020/201 had been previously circulated to members and it was

##### **RESOLVED**

That the calendar of meetings as appended to these minutes be approved.

#### **27/21 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORT**

*'Once again we are still virtual, courtesy of Zoom.*

*I am looking forward to visiting the retailers in the High Street to welcome them all back at the beginning of July. I am also going to visit the shops that have continued trading during these difficult times, and thank them for providing fantastic local services. I hope people will continue to use them once the shops are all reopened.*

*My only other Mayoral Duties at the moment are the delivery of birthday cards and wedding anniversary cards and I have a number of these coming up in the near future, not quite the social events normally anticipated at this time of year but it is good to let people know we are thinking about them.*

*Stay safe'*

*Cesare*

## **28/21 POLICING ISSUES**

Policing in Rushden has been very active in terms of drugs raids and the discovery of a Cannabis factory in Pratt Street. PC Mitchinson informed the Town Clerk several arrests had been made on individuals for either possession or intent to supply Class B drugs within our parks, over the last few weeks. Drug detection continues to be a priority with Northamptonshire Police and further undercover work will be carried out with Rushden.

Sgt Leigh Goodwin had informed the Town Clerk that further letters may be issued to persistent anti social drinkers, although the problem does appear to have dispersed from the War Memorial Gardens at present. There had been issues in Hall Park, but again this now appears to be under control.

The next JAG meeting is to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020, via Zoom and if any members have any concerns can they please contact either the Town Clerk or Councillor Hollomon.

## **29/21 LEADER'S ADDRESS**

*Good evening,*

*The Council continues to function within the realms of virtual reality. Most of us have learnt new skills and a very different way of meeting. Some for the better some not so. Remembering the mute button is one very important feature to master and to unmute even more!*

*The Clerk along with Richard and myself had our first virtual Leaders meeting last week and that went well, and we will possibly continue to carry them on. However, I think actual face to face meetings are better for some meetings and hopefully they will return soon.*

*I hope that the revised Calendar of meetings will bring back some normality to our structure, but they will remain virtual until it is safe to do otherwise.*

*This week the staff are coming into the office more often now that extra safe guarding issues are in place. We are looking at putting in screens and a heat sensor that will monitor temperatures. This will give the staff the required protection. Holidays will be taken as normal as is the advice received. We are requesting 2 weeks before Sept so that will help those with children who may have child care issues. Once again, I would like to thank those staff who have carried on with their work during this pandemic and hope we will all soon be back to normal and relieve the pressure all round. The office remains closed to the public, but the phones are manned during office hours.*

*The summer planting has taken place with the hanging baskets and tubs brightening up the High St. Those observant ones amongst you who may have had a walk round the Hall Park will notice that part of the front of the Hall has had the shrubs removed and bedding plants put in. This has added colour. I believe the other side will be treated the same. We nearly lost the wisteria as it decided to leave the wall, but it has been saved and now has new fixings. It even appeared on the front cover of the Risdene Echo, the R&D History Societies quarterly journal.*

*The toilets are now open in Hall Park and Duck Street, 9-4. Sean will be monitoring them over the weekend. We have some special spray to help with the sanitization and this will be applied on a regular basis.*

*Alison the ET photographer did a good short film on Facebook of the High St on the 15<sup>th</sup> when shops started to open. There was an interview with Will Osborne and a meander up to the south end. Our own social media are also promoting any areas of support from other groups.*

*On a sad note it has been decided to cancel The Dog Show, that is an event run by the staff, till next year, though I understand there may be some virtual options. That said it will be bigger and better next year when we celebrate our 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday as we missed our 20<sup>th</sup>*

*Asset and Events have held meetings along with planning and their reports will follow. We are still trying to keep projects moving and dealing with issues as they arise. We are aiming to get the Business Partnership WP and the High St WP back up and running. Now is a time when business needs our support. We may not be able to provide financial support but to date we have worked with ENC and NCC to get out messages via social media and delivering packages to all the shops in the High St. Packs are available from the office if there are businesses outside that area that we can support. The goal posts are changing daily as we try to get our town back to life.*

*We also need to have ideas ready to go when we see how the High St returns after this horrific Covid 19 outbreak. Some changes that we wanted to do may not be possible or practical. Also, there is the minor detail of funding, and working with other bodies will be crucial if we are to move forward. We will possibly have projects that we do in phases to deliver a product, but it needs to be joined up. I know some of you, after all this free time, have many ideas spinning around your heads, but they must be sustainable and supported. I look forward to future discussions. The Rushden East SUE Board have met for the first time since the pandemic and continue to move the project forward. Hopefully a planning application is imminent.*

*Our own projects are our priority and hopefully we are nearing the point when we can re submit our applications for Manor Park and the new Sports Hub/Community facility.*

*We also have had other presentations on new applications coming our way and we will deal with them according to our Neighbourhood Plan and other relevant policies. Never easy decisions and some difficult ones to be made but in the end, we work for the benefit of the town and its future generations.*

*The NN Shadow Authority had their first meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June with over 150 members on Zoom. It was very interesting and went well considering the numbers. The next meeting is 30<sup>th</sup> July. The constitution has been agreed and committees set up to move forward.*

*The Shadow Executive have also met on the 11<sup>th</sup> June and continue to move things forward. Updates are on the website and meetings can be viewed on You Tube. Their next meeting is on the 25<sup>th</sup> June. Some of the agenda items are very interesting, whether they will support local Town Councils remains to be seen and there is no scrutiny in place to question the decisions being made. We must hope that moving forward the Unitary's will work and listen to Town & Parish Councils and help us to deliver a better community with good services.*

*Don't forget this Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> is Armed Forces Day and that superb parade through the town ending at the Railway Station. Unfortunately, as with everything else it has been cancelled but please join the "Salute Our Forces" campaign by hanging the Union flag out of your window and they are also running a photographic competition of people saluting. All info on their website and Facebook.*

*Stay safe and I look forward to moving the town forward as it comes to life again.*

## **30/21 CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS OF COMMITTEES MEETINGS**

### **Planning Consultative Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 2nd June 2020

## **31/21 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

Members had been circulated with details of payments made since 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 amounting to £51,580.29

### **RESOLVED**

That payments amounting to £51,580.29 be approved (as attached to these minutes).

## **32/21 CELEBRATE RUSHDEN**

Councillor Lewis reported that sadly the decision has now been made to call off the Soap Box Derby. It is looking likely that 'lockdown' will continue for the foreseeable future and therefore it was impossible to try and organize this event. Hopefully, this event will come back, bigger and better next year!

## **33/21 TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **1. Lockdown – COVID-19 Support & Guidance for Local Businesses**

Continued support to local businesses has been maintained throughout the lockdown period this has involved:

- A dedicated COVID-19 Community Advice page on the RTC website signposting the community to local/national help and advice.
- Promotion through social media of shops/services that have remained open throughout lockdown and the non-essential retail shops that were allowed to reopen on 15<sup>th</sup> June.
- Giving assistance to local businesses in understanding new advice and guidance through regular contact and dissemination of information. Regular promotion of webinars/information from East Northants Council and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Growth Hub.
- Giving assistance to local volunteers in coordinating a "Delivering in Rushden and Higham" a one stop shop for local delivery services and working with local Churches to share online Church Services to members of the local community.
- Working closely with local radio station, Beat Route Radio to promote and share information in the town.
- Regular meetings with ENC to make the best use of the Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) to enable local businesses to safely re-open and trade whilst minimising the risk of COVID-19.
- Hand delivery of business guidance packs detailing information to help local shop keepers reopen safely.

- Completion of a town centre walkabout with Sarah Barnwell (Highways) to establish public safety signage with regard to social distancing.
- Further graphics (social distancing, queue here and directional signs) are due to be distributed to shopkeepers next week.
- Hand sanitising workstations are being costed through the Reopening High Street Safety Fund (RHSSF) this option is being investigated.

## **2. Business Database**

Work is ongoing on the business database.

## **3. Rushden Lakes**

Regular communication with Rushden Lakes Centre Management team has been maintained throughout this difficult period. Guidance from Savills indicates there will be no events on site until December therefore local events including Heritage Family Fun Day (September 13<sup>th</sup>) have been cancelled in their current format. Alternative opportunities may involve a digital heritage day or a series of podcasts/videos to meet the “local traders.”

## **4. Business Working Party**

A date for a Business Working Party will be circulated asap.

### **34/21 RUSHDEN MATTERS**

The Town Clerk reported that Rushden and Higham Trader, the company who delivered the Celebration Rushden Matters did not track their delivery team, therefore it was very difficult to determine where Rushden Matters had in fact been delivered to. As a result of the disappointing delivery response Rushden and Higham Trader have made a full repayment to the Town Council.

We have now put full colour A3 pages of Rushden Matters in the interpretation boards in the High Street and the town noticeboard. We have also displayed Rushden Matters in the noticeboards at the Lakes.

### **35/21 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Sarah Peacock, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee reported that Manor Park and the Sports Hub are continuing to progress and it is hoped new applications can be submitted in September this year.

The new drains at Hall Park have now been completed and the groundworks for the disabled toilets are now due to commence in the next few weeks.

Grounds Maintenance is continuing to work well and the team are keeping up with grass cutting and bed maintenance.

### **36/21 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Adrian House, Chairman of the Community Services reported that the Community Services Committee had recommended that the criteria for Community Grants be changed to allow funding to be spent on day-to-day running costs rather than specific projects.

This is to be taken to the next Policy and Resources meeting in July.

**37/21 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Planning Consultative Committee 21<sup>ST</sup> April 2020

**RESOLVED**

That the report of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be received and adopted.

Town Mayor