



## HOWDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Howden Town Council held on Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 7.00 pm via ZOOM conference call

Present: Councillors H Roberts (Chair), R Drury, R Hart, D Howard, D Patrick, H Pears, S Smythson, E Ward, A Wilson, H Chiswell, A Morris & R Blee.

In attendance: Three members of the public were in attendance, along with representatives from KCOM for agenda item 3.

Apologies: Cllr C Thackray

Acting Clerk: H Roberts

**Min 19-189 Declaration of interest**

19-189.1 No interests were declared.

19-189.2 No dispensations were requested/granted.

**Min 19-190 Update on KCOM's build plans for Howden**

19-190.1 KCOM gave a presentation to the Council covering their achievements in Hull and how they are starting to look at establishing 'lightstream' broadband across the East Riding and North Lincolnshire. The presentation included their broadband speeds and pricing, how they are a community player and offer a small grant each year.

19-190.2 Members asked questions of KCOM including: 'Will there be any disruption to existing utilities'; 'will there be any damage to the recently re-surfaced roads' and 'will residents be informed ahead of working on their street'

19-190.3 KCOM replies – 'there will be no disruption to existing utilities as they dig a narrow trench and work round services and repair the workings to high standard'. 'They have met with ERYC highways and are aware of all section 58 roads which they will not touch, and all residents have been informed about the works and a more detailed letter will be sent to the areas of Howden where works are to be undertaken ahead of the works starting'.

19-190.4 The works are planned to run from 6 May to 8 Sept 2020. Roll out of the broadband will be in phases.

19-190.5 The Chair thanked KCOM for their time and asked that the Council be kept informed on progress.

**19-191 Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council dated 24 Ma21 April 2020**

19-191.1 The above minutes were approved as a true record

**Min 19-192 Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting dated 5 May 2020.**

19-192.1 The Acting Clerk was asked to write to the Planning Department at ERYC to point out that during the recent pandemic lock down residents were no getting out and were less likely to see planning notice around Howden. He asked if the planning notices could be advertised more widely and through social media. The reply back from the ERYC was as normal, they are doing as much as they need to and if the Town Council would like to advertise the applications further, they could. The minutes were approved as a true record.

**Min 19-193 Minutes of the Personnel & Grievance Committee dated 28 April 2020.**

19-193.1 The Acting Clerk gave an update on the recruitment of the Town Clerk and RFO. He informed the members of where the advert had been placed and the number of applications received to date.

19-193.2 The above minutes were approved as a true record.

**Min 19-194 Minutes of the Resource and Asset Management Committee dated 12 May 2020 and to receive recommendations**

19-194.1 Cllr Blee read through the minutes of the Resource and Asset Management Committee giving more background to the recommendations and the papers presented as attachments.

- 19-194.2 It was pointed out that due to the failings of the former clerk, the Town Council had not completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2018/19 and under The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Town Council had to prepare Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 in the form required by proper practices (the AGAR); to approve and publish the AGAR including the Accounting Statements; to provide for the exercise of public rights of inspection; and to publish the AGAR, including the external auditor's signed report. As a consequence the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn had issued the Council with Public Interest Report, under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.
- 19-194.3 **Minute 20-03.1.1 recommended to Council that both letters from PKF Littlejohn LLP dated 16 December 2019 and 30 January 2020 be accepted. Approved**
- 19-194.4 As a consequence of the failings of the former clerk an internal audit of the 2018/19 finance year had not been commissioned. This had now been undertaken and the Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2019 was presented.
- 19-194.5 **Minute 20-03.1.3 recommended that Council accept the report and implement its recommendations at the earliest opportunity. Approved**
- 19-194.6 Now that the accounts had been drawn together by an accountant and the internal audit had been undertaken the AGAR for 2018/19 could be completed and signed off. Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 of the AGAR included a number of 'No' answers. The required response to the 'No' answers were read out and accepted.
- 19-194.7 **Minute 20-03.1.6 recommended that Council accept the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/19. It also recommended that the AGAR, Explanation of variances – pro forma, Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2019 and the response to the 'Nos' in Section 1 should be placed on the Council's website as required by The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to provide for the exercise of public rights of inspection before being sent on the external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP. Approved**
- 19-194.8 It had been raised as a recommendation in the Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2019 that the Standing Orders should be updated to the latest version. These had been updated using the NALC Model Standing Orders 2018.
- 19-194.9 **Minute 20-04.2 recommended that Council adopt the Standing Orders dated May 2020. Approved**
- 19-194.10 It had been raised as a recommendation in the Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2019 that the Financial Regulations should be updated to the latest version. These had been updated using the NALC Model Financial Regulations 2019.
- 19-194.11 **Minute 20-05.2 recommended that Council adopt the Financial Regulations dated May 2020. Approved**
- 19-194.12 Due to the fact that the former clerk had stopped using the financial accounting package provided, without informing the Council, the Council were asked to accept that until the AGAR for 2019/20 has been completed and approved and the formal accounting system, Rialtas, can be used again the financial control will be monthly bank reconciliation, schedule of invoices paid and detailed account monitoring reports.
- 19-194.13 **Minute 20-06.1 recommended that this form of financial control be presented to Council each month due to the coronavirus restrictions and the lack of a formal accounting system. This approach should be reviewed each month. Approved**
- 19-194.14 As no financial risk assessment had been undertaken by the former clerk one had been done using the ERNLLCA model. It was accepted that this version needed developing.
- 19-194.15 **Minute 20-07.2 recommended to Council to accept the Financial Risk Assessment presented and that it should be reviewed on a regular basis. Approved**
- 19-194.16 It was unclear how the former clerk had recorded the annual budget income and expenditure. Until rialtas could be used again a spread sheet showing all income and expenditure should be used.
- 19-194.17 **Minute 20-09.2 recommended that the budget should be reviewed at the next meeting of RAM and any adjustment to budget heading required should be recommended to Council. Approved**
- 19-194.18 The recording of the Council's assets must be recorded on the Asset Register. The former clerk had not updated the register correctly for some time.
- 19-194.19 **Minute 20-09.2 recommended that the Acting Clerk and Acting RFO should update the Asset Register and present it the next meeting of RAM. Approved**
- 19-194.20 The Council's insurance cover is due for renewal and WPS Insurance Broker who the Council use had sent a pre-renewal review form. The Acting Clerk had made amendments in consultation with WPS.
- 19-194.21 **Minute 20-10.2 recommended that Council accept the Pre-Renewal Review for insurance cover along with the amendments made. Approved**
- 19-194.22 There needed to be a change to the offer of a grant to Howden PCC. The Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2019 highlighted that the offer of a grant under section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act to the Howden Minster PCC for the lighting of the Minster tower could no longer happen as section 8 of the 1894 Local Government Act prohibits a Parish Council from

incurring expenditure on "property relating to the affairs of the church or held for an ecclesiastical charity". Following advice from ERNLLCA this activity could still carry on under Parish Council Act 1957 s2.

- 19-194.23 **Minute 20-11.3 recommended to Council that it agrees to fund the flood lighting of Howden Minster Tower, to the value of £600 under the Parish Council Act 1957 s2. Approved**
- 19-194.24 **Minute 20-11.5 recommended to Council that all of the grants offered for 2020/21 should be honored in full, subject to any conditions imposed at the time of offer. Approved**

**19-195 Howden Helpers: to receive a verbal report**

- 19-195.1 Cllr Howard gave an update of the success of Howden Helpers. They had achieved over 511 shopping or prescription runs and there were 169 households on their register with 205 volunteers. In addition to the shopping runs Howden Helpers had also set up a community pantry in the Shire Hall, open Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings with donations of food from the supermarkets and local residents. A book swop had also been set in alongside the pantry. The volunteers had been cutting grass in the community areas. There had been a number of grants offered and some of this money was going to be held back to help those who might not be able to help themselves are people started to go back to work. The post office, which had re-opened in the Council building would soon be starting to sell gas and electric meter tokens.

- 19-195.2 The Council thanked Cllr Howard and the Howden Helpers for all of their hard work and support to the local community.

**Min 19-196 To review delegated powers and duties to the clerk in consultation with the chairs of the committees in case of an emergency under Local Government Act 1972, section 101.**

- 19-196.1 There had been no cause to delegate during the month. **Recommended that it is reviewed next month. Approved**

**Min 19-197 To review the appointment of Acting Clerk and Acting RFO under Local Government Act 1972, section 112(5)**

- 19-197.1 **Recommended that it is reviewed next month. Approved**

**Min 19-198 ERY Cllr Bayram: to receive a verbal report**

- 19-198.1 Cllr Bayram was still in lockdown and self-isolating

**Min 19-199 Correspondence**

- 19-199.1 Letter from PA Media Group that they no longer needed the room in the Council office and had given their notice on it. The Acting Clerk confirmed that he had sent them an invoice for their second year which the former clerk had failed to do.

- 19-199.2 The Acting Clerk had written to the attendees of the drainage issues in Howden meeting held earlier this year for an update. The ERYC responded that the work on Thorpe Road Avenue was ongoing but they and the IDB had done what they could until coronavirus restriction were lifted and contractors could complete the final section of work through private gardens. The EA had also responded to say that Yorkshire Water had either or were about to install the storage tank at Broad Lane PS.

- 19-199.3 WPS Insurance had confirmed that the Fidelity Insurance would not cover the theft of public funds by the former clerk as the Minimum Standards of Control at Condition 15 of the Fidelity Insurance had not been met, mainly 'Audit – the accounts of the policyholder including all subsidiary companies shall be examined by external auditors every twelve months'. As the former clerk had failed to present the accounts to be audited the insurance company could not respond to the claim.

- 19-199.4 The Acting Clerk had consulted WPS Insurance for advice over risk assessment. They confirmed the 'necessity to have a robust H&S policy with detailed risk assessments for procedures undertaken – If the council don't have this, or don't adhere to their procedures, then it could lead to increase claims, increased premiums & possibly prosecutions.

**Min 19-200 May 2020 Accounts**

- 19-200.1 The Acting Clerk presented the three papers, a copy of the monthly schedule with voucher numbers for each invoice received; a copy of the bank transactions (taken from the Cooperative Bank on line banking from the date of the previous meeting) with voucher numbers on it cross referencing the monthly schedule and a copy of the financial accounts, again with a voucher number against each entry. In addition the April and May monthly schedules showed the date the payment was presented at the bank.

- Min 19-200.2 The invoices and monthly schedule had been checked by the Acting RFO and the papers presented were approved.

**Min 19-188**    **Items for next agenda**  
Nothing extra was put forward

**Min 19-189**    **Date of Next Meeting**  
Next meeting to be held on 16 June 2020 and would be the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The meeting ended at 8.57 pm.

