

Gerrards Cross Town Council

South Lodge, East Common, Gerrards Cross SL9 7AD 01753888018

Clerk – Jiya H Jilani clerk@gerrardscross.gov.uk

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 23rd May 2022 at Gerrards Cross Memorial Centre

Present: Cllr. A Wood (Mayor), Cllr. C Da Costa, Cllr N Barnett, Cllr. T Greenfield, Cllr. B Holborn, Cllr. B Peck Cllr. J O'Keeffe, Cllr. P Roberts, Cllr C. Stuart-Lee, Cllr M Bracken.

In Attendance: Jennifer Woolveridge (Associate Councillor), Chris Brown (Associate Councillor), Jiya H Jilani Town Clerk

22/001 To accept apologies for absences.

Apologies accepted from Cllr Chhokar & Cllr Lisa Lindvall (Associate Councillor)

22/002 Declaration of Interests

None were received

22/003 Election of Mayor

To elect the Mayor for the year 2022/23 and sign the Declaration of Acceptance Office.

RESOLVED, proposed by Cllr Keeffe **SECONDED** by Cllr Peck to appoint Cllr Wood as the Mayor for the year 2022/23. Unanimously agreed. The Mayor and the Clerk signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

22/004 Election of Deputy Mayor

To elect the Deputy Mayor for the year 2022/23 and sign the Declaration of Acceptance Office. **RESOLVED**, proposed by Cllr Wood **SECONDED** by Cllr Barnett to appoint Cllr J O' Keeffe as the Deputy Mayor for the year 2022/23. Agreed by majority. The Deputy Mayor and the Clerk signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

22/005 Public Speaking

There were no members of the public in attendance.

22/006 To approve the Minutes from the Full Council meeting on 25th April 2022.

Subject to amendments being made to the minutes. **ALL AGREED**

22/007 Report on current IT system and IT upgrade from Dan Turner (Nexus)

Mr Turner (external IT support) informed Councillors that he had worked for 10 years setting up iPads for the Council and supporting the IT systems for GXTC. Mr Turner highlighted the need for improved security. It was **RESOLVED** that the iPads & IT system going forward would be added to the agenda for the next meeting. **ALL AGREED**

22/008 Update from Locum Clerk:

The Locum Clerk reported on the following from her observations:

1. It appeared that the files kept by the previous Clerk had been deleted from the office PC and that most files and invoices had been shredded.
2. The Council's website is not Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG 2.1) compliant.

Cllr Davey will liaise with the current Web provider to see whether this is the case and the Locum Clerk will obtain three quotes.

3. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2021/22 had not been completed by the previous Clerk and the Locum Clerk is waiting for the bank statements in order to complete the form.
4. The Locum Clerk also suggested moving to Unity Trust from Nat West. This is because two Councillors will need to authorise payments, in line with the Finance Regulations.
5. It would also appear that the outgoing Clerk had not been obtaining three quotations when sourcing suppliers for work. This will be a requirement by the Council.
6. GXTC will now be moving from Excel spreadsheets to Rialtas finance software (Specifically designed for Parish/Town Councils) as recommended by the internal auditor.
8. The locum Clerk suggested it had also come to her attention that the previous Clerk was authorising payments which is not good practice. The Clerk should only administer payments and not authorise payments.

Cllr Wood asked the Locum Clerk about the possible implications of not having followed the requirements. The locum Clerk suggested taking further advice from SLCC.

Cllr Davey commented that all Councillors had encountered difficulties when dealing with the previous Clerk, Sue Moffatt, especially when they had asked her for invoices and information about payments.

The locum Clerk advised that all the income and expenditure should be listed on the Council website and at the moment there is no information.

Cllr Stuart-Lee asked the locum Clerk to explain why the Town Council was not able to pay or make any payments from the Bank account.

The Locum Clerk informed members that the mandate in place with the bank does not allow the new Clerk or Councillors to obtain information from the bank. A new mandate has been completed and sent to the bank.

22/009 Update on changeover of Clerks & Deputy Clerks

Cllr Wood informed everyone that Jiya Jilani had been promoted from Deputy Clerk to Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and that she had been delighted to accept the job. A new Deputy Clerk must be found.

22/010 To discuss the Chairman's allowance in pursuance of Section 15 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and whether payment of allowances for Councillors to be made (NB previously it was agreed for the Chairman of the council to have an allowance, but no allowances were set for Councillors

Cllr J O'Keeffe suggested to Councillors he was asking for an allowance for the Chairman to spend money when he does his volunteer work and buys gifts on behalf of GXTC members.

Cllr J O'Keeffe **PROPOSED** and Cllr B. Peck **SECONDED** for the Chairman to have an allowance of £1000 **ALL AGREED**

22/011 Appointment of Committees

Agreed no changes to those agreed in February.

22/012 Election of Chairman and appointment of Vice Chairman of Finance & General

Purposes Committee (N.B. appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman for other committees will be made at the first committee meeting). To include both the Communities Committee, Planning and FG&P as all of these should be elected again. It was agreed that Cllr Bracken would be the Chairman for Finance & GP and Cllr J O'Keeffe Deputy Chair for Finance & GP.

22/013 Appointment of working parties.

Cllr Wood proposed that this motion be taken at the next full Council meeting.

22/014 Appointment of Representatives to outside organisations

- SBALC meeting- Cllr Wood advised that everyone is welcome to come and attend these meetings they are held remotely.

- Buckinghamshire Council- Parish Liaison meetings- Cllr Wood asked The Clerk to find out whether this group still exists.
- Age concern- Associate Cllr Woolveridge will stay as a representative for Age Concern
- Denham Aerodrome Consultative Committee- Cllr Barnett and Cllr Robert will stay as representatives of this organization.
- GXCA Community Council- Cllr Stuart-Lee and Cllr Holborn continue to represent GXTC.
- Flag officer- Cllr Greenfield will be taking over this responsibility and Cllr Holborn will provide the relevant dates for raising/lowering the flag.

22/015 Report from Buckinghamshire Councillor

Cllr Bracken had attended the full Council meeting. He reported that housing needs continue to be a concern.

Cllr Wood told members about the prospective acquisition of new machines to fill potholes. He noted that the problem of potholes and damaged roads could not be a quick fix.

22/016 To confirm the Minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) **Commons Committee:** 16th May 2022
- (ii) **Highways Committee:** 9th May 2022
- (iii) **Planning Committee:** 3rd & 16th May 2022
- (iv) **Annual Town Meeting:** 13th April 2022
- (v) **Communities:** 25th April 2022
- (vi) **Communities:** 9th May 2022
- (vii) **Extra ordinary Council meeting (ECM) 9th May 2022**

Cllr Wood thanked Cllr Stuart-Lee & Cllr J O’Keeffe for their efforts in taking the previous minutes and sending them out.

Subject to amendments being made to the minutes. **ALL AGREED**

22/017 Update on Gerrards Cross Town Council website- Cllr S. Davey

Following the departure of Sue Moffatt, the Locum Clerk Usha had informed

Cllr Davey that the current GXTC Website was not compliant with WCAG

2.1 and strongly recommended fixing the website as a priority because the GXTC could face penalties for non – compliance, especially as it was developed and launched 1 year after the former Clerk, Sue Moffatt had been made aware of the new WCAG 2.1 regulation.

Sue Moffatt, the former Clerk, had been informed by email on the 25/July/2019 that “New Public Sector Websites published after the 22/September 2018 must comply with the new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Regulation by the 22/September/2019 Deadline”. Unfortunately, the previous Clerk did not bring to the Council’s attention the fact that the website was not compliant and made no efforts to make it compliant. The Gerrards Cross Town Council (GXTC) website was developed & launched by Vatu in July 2020.

Cllr Davey expressed her dismay regarding what she saw as total negligence.

22/018 Update from the Staffing Committee

Cllr Stuart-Lee updated Councillors on the staffing situation.

The change of Clerk & Deputy Clerk was discussed and it was **RESOLVED** that Jiya would be employed as Town Clerk

It was **RESOLVED** that the Locum Clerk, Usha, would be employed for a further three months until the compliance had been finalised. Usha has also committed to mentoring Jiya over the financial matters.

22/019 Update on BALC (Chair of the Council, Cllr Andrew Wood)

Cllr Wood had spoken to BALC and commented on how helpful they had been. They are happy to renew GXTC’s membership.

22/020 Update on Office Lease

Cllr Barnett informed the Councillors that the Office Lease had been signed and sent to our solicitor. The Council wishes to thank Cllr Barnett for his work on this.

22/021 Update & Planning of the office refurbishment

Councillors Da Costa, Peck & Barnett will be involved with the refurbishment of the office together with the Clerk.

22/022 Council Policies Discussion & Adoption

The Health & Safety policy was adopted, Cllr O’Keeffe **PROPOSED**, and **All AGREED**
All other policies are currently being prepared.

22/023 Update on Queens Jubilee Celebrations Picnic in the Park

All Councillors are intending to help with the event.

22/024 To consider the flying of the Ukrainian flag for another month

Cllr Wood suggested that Councillors should have a vote on further flying of the flag.
Four Councillors were in favour and six were against.

22/025 Communications Working Party Updates

Nothing was noted

22/026 To approve payments for May 2022

Payments are unable to be made at present due to bank accounts being frozen.

22/027 To confirm a date for the next F&G Committee meeting

It was agreed for the date to be arranged after the Jubilee celebrations.

22/028 Report on meetings – Council members update on where they have represented the Town Council

Cllr O’Keeffe had attended a meeting with Buckinghamshire Council regarding the parking review.
Cllr P Robert had attended the Denham meeting.
Cllr Jennifer is promoting Age Concern
Cllr Davey had approached the fitness people on the common and expressed the concerns of the residents.
The outcome was positive and the matter is now resolved.

22/029 Cornerstone – Proposed telecommunications site Oxford Road/ Fulmer Lane

No comments or questions were raised about the application and we will look out for the full planning application and make comments as usual through our planning committee.

22/030 To note information received in the correspondence at the Council Office

Cllr Wood advised that many congratulatory emails had been received from residents regarding hedges being cut and footpaths being cleared.

22/031 To confirm the date of the next Council Meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held on 27th of June 2022 at the Memorial Centre

The meeting adjourned at 9.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....