

Meeting (No)

Time & Date

Location

Meeting of the Council (7)

12th March 2019 at 6.30pm

Town Hall, High Street, Neston

Minutes

Present: Councillors Cllrs Kynaston (Mayor), Barker, Bennoch, Carter, Edwards, Flockhart (from item 107), Griffiths, Jones, Lloyd, Marlow, Pilley, Roberts, Scott, Warner and Wastell.

In attendance: Mrs Kunaj (Council Manager) plus three residents.

PART 1: Items considered in the presence of the press and public

103 Apologies for absence

Resolved: To accept apologies from Cllr Davies (personal)

104 Declarations of Interest

105 Questions and comments from residents: None.

106 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22.01.19 as a true and correct record, subject to amendment of typo 'Lockhart' to 'Flockhart'. The Mayor signed the minutes and initial the amendment.

107 Chairman's Announcements

The Mayor had attended many civic events and had networked with many other councils; the Lord Mayor's banquet and the Sheriffs breakfast to name just a few. She was pleased to have opened a new local bathroom and kitchen showroom and hoped that they would flourish.

The Mayor advised that she would be co-ordinating the election, a list had been taken and she wanted to ensure that any one ward was not oversubscribed with others having a shortfall. This was pertinent this year as the opportunity to withdraw any nomination following the last date for submission is now forbidden.

Cllr Flockhart arrived

108 Council Manager's Report

The Council Manager's confirmed the Ward Boundaries for Neston with effect from 2nd May and the timescale of the impending election.

The Council Manager gave a personal thanks to the Councillors both absent and present for their efforts throughout their time with Neston Town Council.

109 Finance

Resolved to approve reconciliation of the Council's three bank accounts to 31.01.2019. The Mayor signed the reconciliations.

110 Chairmanship of Neston Neighbourhood Plan

The Mayor advised councillors that the following item was not a motion for this meeting but perhaps one for a future meeting. It expressed a Councillor's view and as such, the Mayor felt Councillors' should have the time for their views.

Mayor's initial and date DC 30/4/19

A statement was read out by Councillor Barker.

"This council considers the processes specified to monitor the Neston Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) have not been followed and that insufficient progress has been made in implementing the NNP. The Council believes that this failure is the product of the lack of direction in management and leadership that has distracted Neston Town Council from its essential purpose to improve the quality of life of the people of Neston and provide value for money."

The Mayor suspended standing orders in order to allow members of the public to speak.

One resident spoke to say that he was a member of the NNPMG. He did not think that the lack of the implementation of the NNP was the fault of anyone but perhaps the fault of everyone. He asked that the Council pay more attention to the NNP and in particular the extracts which state what the town council had said that they would do, and suggested that perhaps the Plan said that they would do too much. The statement was self-critical, but that is not always a bad thing or a negative thing to do.

Another resident spoke out to say that the Transport Working Group had expressed support from G&OM and were very pleased with the support they received. He reminded Council that they had agreed that the NNP would be central to their future decisions. He stated that the town council had an obligation to implement the Plan. There had been an absence of a review for 2017/18. There was no connectivity set up. Health & Wellbeing had not been considered, only through individual initiatives, not through co-ordinated approach. He expressed concern and asked if the Council are not delivering the NNP how can they increase the precept? Is the direction of the Council to half the precept and change leadership?

The Mayor reconvened the meeting.

Each member in turn was asked if they wished to comment, every member spoke. Some comments received were:

The council agreed that the NNP would be central to the decision making of the Council's strategic objectives, the NNPMG have not met since September 2018 due to an impasse of the election of the chair of the NNPMG.

Any discussions regarding this issue should take place after the elections, it should be for the new electors to decide the way forward. If the NNPMG have not met it should be considered if they are needed. There is one meeting left.

There is no requirement to have a monitoring group but it is good practice. There is cloudiness about who can or should actively implement the Plan.

The council need to decide if they wish to see the Plan monitored or delivered.

It's a good idea to monitor the Plan, this will offer council assurance. All are responsible for the monitoring and control of the Plan, the new council should look at this. Via a committee was suggested, with a strong leader and feedback submitted to Council.

Working Groups cannot have delegated powers to act, the remit of the Group is decided by Council. The Council control all Groups, not the other way around. Results are evident via the committee minutes, albeit that they don't state next to the resolution that this is a neighbourhood plan issue, they are happening.

Mayor's initial and date DC 30/4/18

The Group seem to have an adversarial stance. Their main role is to monitor planning applications, something that the town councillors have done. More ambitious plans raise un-achievable expectations and is mostly aspirational.

Objection was raised to the tone and content of the item and the comments received; 'that the town council had made insufficient progress, there was a failure of leadership causing distraction and that the town council had strayed from its essential purpose to improve community life.' Council were reminded of what is currently being delivered by them:

Greening of the town; re-invigorating the market; a long term plan for the Town Hall in collaboration with CWaC; transport issues via the TWG; grants awarded to local organisations which improve our resident's lives, and the remodelling of Sytchcroft Park in partnership with CWaC.

Reference was made to the NALC report 'Where next for Neighbourhood Plans? Can they withstand the external pressures?' The focus being on planning and how the local plans are being superseded by new legislation, which could render Neighbourhood plans obsolete.

Places committee does take into account the neighbourhood plan. The Plan has undeliverable initiatives and some are impossible.

Council agreed to make the NNP central to the decision making of the Council, this is done via the agreed strategic objectives and the traffic lights system.

The list of achievements is not co-ordinated nor do they have a managed response. There is a lack of monitoring to support the Plan.

The change in the precept, if it isn't used to deliver the NNP what are we delivering for this? We need a managed response to promote the town.

Cllr Barker expressed that he was disappointed.

The NNP should be open to anyone to monitor, embrace what can be done.

Parameters and specifics need to be set for Groups.

There was a general view that NNP was valued and the parts that are relevant should be looked at as a priority in the new council year, the Group should be looked at as a critical friend. Cllr Barker will consider if he wishes to bring a motion for consideration to the next Council meeting.

111 Minutes of Committee meetings

One resident left the meeting.

The draft committee minutes were noted as follows:

a Policy committee 05.02.19

Review Group: The report and outcome of the Review Group will be tabled at the full council meeting.

Junior Mayor: Installation will be in line with the new Y6 school year.

b Resources 12.02.19

c People 19.02.19

d Places committee 26.02.19

112 Next Meeting

Mayor's initial and date

DC 30/4/19

To note the next scheduled meeting of the Council is 30.04.2019

113 Any other Items

The Mayor reminded committee chairs to submit their reports to her, and thanked the retiring councillors as she would not be in attendance in April.

The Mayor invited members to join her for some refreshments following the Annual Town Meeting on 14th May 2019.

114 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved to exclude members of public and press for the remaining items because of likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the press and public

Two members of the public left the meeting.

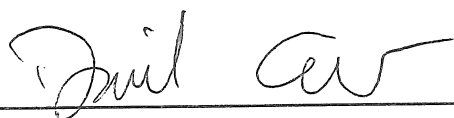
115 Recommendations from Committees

Policy committee.05/02/19

Resolved To approve that the Asset Management Agreement with Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) be extended to 2019/20 using the same Heads of Terms as for 2017/19, and with receipt of financial support from CWaC of £9,000.

Meeting closed at 7.35pm

Signed



Dated

30/4/19