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| <i>Meeting (No)</i>    | <b>Full Council Meeting (3)</b>            |
| <i>Time &amp; Date</i> | <b>22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at 6pm</b> |
| <i>Location</i>        | <b>Neston Town Hall</b>                    |

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs: Jones (Mayor), Braithwaite, Davies, Griffiths, Hudspeth, Kynaston Marple, Warner, and Wastell.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Locum Chief Officer)

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

**38 Apologies for Absence**

**It was RESOLVED:** No apologies for absence were received.

Cllrs P. Doughty and A. Townsend were absent.

**39 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received from members.

**40 Minutes**

**It was RESOLVED:** To accept and sign the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**41 Presentation from Neston Civic Hall Trustees**

The Mayor of Neston read out the following statement ahead of the presentation and suspended Standing Orders:

“Neston Town Council has been informally approached by Cllr Martin Barker and Mr David Clark the Trustees NCYC, to consider including an additional tax on the Town Council precept for 2025/26 (for one year) in order to raise funds on the group’s behalf for the Civic Hall roof repairs.

It is important to note at this stage that there is no agreement in place for this proposal. We are working closely with NCYC and the Trustees to investigate the feasibility of the proposal, by inviting the group to formally present the proposal this evening for openness and transparency.

The Town Council is in the process of information-gathering and is seeking both legal advice and professional guidance on the request, prior to the proposal being voted on by Neston Town Council at a future meeting, ahead of the final budget-setting process. We will keep you all informed when a meeting date has been set. I will now hand over to the trustees.”

Neston Town Council received a presentation from Mr David Clark, Cllr Martin Barker and Rachael Furey (Chief Executive of NCYC).

The Civic Hall is leased by NCYC on a peppercorn rent on behalf of CH64 residents, for the benefit of Neston residents. The repair work to keep the building operational well-exceeds the money raised through hire costs and currently the charity funds this project. The building requires £240,000. The group is requesting a £10.00 per household precept increase on the electorate for one year. Prior to NCYC taking the building over it was operated by Brio Leisure. NCYC is requesting that Neston Town Council works with them. A survey is currently being run by NCYC to garner public opinion which has been widely shared to include several ways of voting. This survey will close on 17/11/2024. It is currently not financially viable to open the Civic Hall

Mayor’s Initial & Date:

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|           | <p>for general use when the building is not being hired. It was stated that some local groups operating out of the Civic Hall could fold if the building closed.</p> <p>The group is also raising funds from other sources; the proposed £10.00 charge would only secure partial funding. It was stressed that this additional sum is for vital repairs in order for the building to remain operational.</p> <p>The Mayor of Neston asked why the special expenses budget from CWAC had not been used. Cllr Barker agreed to look into this.</p>   |
| <b>42</b> | <p><b>Questions and Comments from Residents</b></p> <p>17 members of the public were present at the meeting.</p> <p>A number of residents spoke on the Civic Hall funding matter, expressing views and arguments both for and against this proposal.</p> <p>Cllr Braithwaite expressed views on behalf of a resident who was unable to attend the meeting in support of the proposal.</p> <p>Councillors responded to queries from the public; reaffirming the Council's politically neutral status. It was noted that the proposal to increase Neston Town Council's precept in order to provide assistance for the Civic Hall repairs was not on the agenda for this meeting. The vote will be taken at a future, extraordinary, meeting of Full Council, prior to the 2025/26 budget being finalised. The meeting date will be advertised once the date has been set.</p> <p>The Mayor re-instated Standing Orders for the Council meeting to continue.</p>   |
| <b>43</b> | <p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p> <p>a) <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To approve the minutes from the HR Committee held on 09/07/2024.</p> <p>b) <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To approve the minutes from the Community &amp; Environment Committee held on 06/08/2024, 11/09/2024 and 08/10/2024.</p> <p>c) <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To approve the minutes from the Finance &amp; Administration Committee held on 24/09/2024.</p> <p>d) <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To approve the minutes from the Market &amp; Town Hall Committee held on 10/09/2024.</p>  |
| <b>44</b> | <p><b>Co-Option</b></p> <p>a) The Council received a presentation from Mr Geoffrey Swaffer regarding his co-option application. Members asked questions regarding motivation and interests.<br/><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To co-opt Geoffrey Swaffer as councillor for the Little Neston Ward. The Acceptance of Office form was signed and Cllr Swaffer joined the meeting.</p> <p>The Council received a presentation from Mr Stephen Adderley regarding his co-option application. Members asked questions regarding motivation and interests.<br/><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To co-opt Stephen Adderley as councillor for the Little Neston Ward. The Acceptance of Office form was signed and Cllr Adderley joined the meeting.</p> <p>The Council received a presentation from Mr David Ruscoe regarding his co-option application. Members asked questions regarding motivation and interests.</p> <p>b) <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To co-opt David Ruscoe as councillor for the Neston Ward. The Acceptance of Office form was signed and Cllr D. Ruscoe joined the meeting.</p> |

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|           | <p>The Council received a presentation from Mrs Nicola Ruscoe regarding her co-option application. Members asked questions regarding motivation and interests.</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To co-opt Nicola Ruscoe as councillor for the Neston Ward. The Acceptance of Office form was signed and Cllr N. Ruscoe joined the meeting.</p> <p>c) No applications had been received for the Parkgate Ward vacancy.</p>  |
| <b>45</b> | <b>Committee Structure</b>   |
|           | <p><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To make the following appointments to committees:<br/> Community &amp; Environment Committee – Cllr D. Ruscoe &amp; Cllr G. Swaffer<br/> Finance &amp; Administration Committee – Cllr D. Ruscoe &amp; Cllr S. Adderley<br/> Market &amp; Town Hall Committee – Cllr N. Ruscoe</p>  |
| <i>NB</i> | <i>Cllr S. Hudspeth left the meeting at 7.05pm.</i>  |
| <b>46</b> | <b>Budget Setting</b>  |
|           | <p>Council noted that it is a requirement of the External Auditor that all committees will be expected to complete a proforma document in the November meeting cycle to note any budget changes in order for the information to be formally recorded.</p>  |
| <b>47</b> | <b>2023/2024 Full Council Year-End Financial Report</b>  |
|           | <p>A question was asked about the General Reserves. The Locum Chief Officer clarified that Neston Town Council only holds 3 months net income for General Reserves, which is the minimum amount. Usually, Councils opt to hold 3-12 months' worth. We are currently at £125K. The Finance Manager conducts regular updates as the Council's income changes; the next calculation will be available at the December F&amp;A meeting when the precept has been done. The £11,600 per annum top-up was agreed for 3 years, with one allocation being included in this year's accounts (24/25) and the next two payments due over the coming 2 years.</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To accept the 2023/2024 Full Council Year-End Financial Report.</p> |
| <b>48</b> | <b>Full Council Budget &amp; EMR Report</b>  |
| a)        | <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To receive the year-to-date Budget Reports for 2024/25.  |
| b)        | <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To receive a report on the EMRs for Full Council 2024/25.  |
| <b>49</b> | <b>Ranger Post</b>   |
|           | <p>Members were happy to see this item moving forward. The Chief Officer asked Council to clarify if it wished to pursue the post in the coming year (2025/26).</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To investigate both a 15-hour post and a 20-hour post to see what can be achieved; sending back to C&amp;E Committee to analyse the cost implication for an additional 5 hours.</p>   |
| <b>50</b> | <b>Christmas Closedown</b>   |
|           | <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To note that the Council Offices will close from 24/12/2024 – 02/01/2025.  |
| <b>51</b> | <b>Locum Chief Officer's Report</b>  |
|           | <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> To accept the Locum Chief Officer's report.  |
| <b>52</b> | <b>Exclusion of the Public and Press</b>   |
|           | <b>It was RESOLVED:</b> That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the  |

following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

**PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the Press and Public**

**53 Recommendation (2) from Community & Environment Committee**

- a) **It was RESOLVED:** To appoint Remember When UK to restore two telephone boxes located opposite The Royal Oak and on the corner of Landseer Avenue/Raeburn Avenue at a cost of £13,410 (including haulage).
- b) **It was RESOLVED:** To approve funding this project from the following reserved funds for the enhancement of assets in town and community benefit:  
Budget 4360 - £6,715.60 Grants & Donations  
EMR 333 - £2,256 (New Homes Bonus)  
EMR 337 £1640 (CiL)  
EMR 329 £2,799 Grants

**Meeting closed at 19:30.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated** \_\_\_\_\_