



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HEDNESFORD TOWN COUNCIL

on Tuesday 7th March 2023 held at Pye Green Community Centre, Bradbury Lane,
Hednesford

**Members of the public were able to attend in person and the meeting was livestreamed
on the Council's Facebook Page**

Present:

Cllr Darrell Mawle (Mayor)
Cllr Paul Woodhead [Chair of Regeneration & Community Committee]
Cllr Laura Harrison (Chair of PGCC Committee)
Cllr Sharon Jagger (Chair of FP&Ops Committee)
Cllr Garry Jones
Cllr Chris Harborow
Cllr Arthur Roden
Cllr Mandy Dunnett

In attendance: Lindsey Smith (Chief Officer)

Members of Public: There were 2 members of the public present

1. Public Participation

Representative from Hednesford in Partnership thanked the council for their kind words regarding the organisation last month and that the volunteers from Hednesford in Partnership were very pleased to hear the thanks. Hednesford in Partnership thanked the Cllrs around the table for all their help and support and would continue to welcome help and support from the Cllrs post May 2023.

The representative went on to inform that Hednesford in Partnership puts on 2 of the largest events in town each year and that these events are a massive asset to the town, but that Hednesford in Partnership need help and support to fund these and enquired whether the council are able to support the funding for 2023/2024.

Cllr Mawle again expressed thanks to everyone who falls under the Hednesford in Partnership banner and informed that any support for funding will be discussed under agenda items 12, 13 and 14 concerning budgets for 2023/2024

On behalf of a member of the public Cllr Jagger informed that if anyone was interested in sponsoring or hosting families displaced to the UK from Ukraine that a group meets every Thursday at St Luke's Church in Cannock and that the group can provide further support and

information if anyone is interested in hosting a family. Any ed party can also contact Cllr Jagger direct or via Hednesford Town Council Clerk.

Cllr Mawle closed the public participation section of the meeting and opened the Full Council meeting.

2. Apologies:

Cllr Stuart Crabtree

3. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Jones declared DOI for agenda item 7 as organisation he works for is in dialogue with CCDC regarding funding

Cllr Harborough declared DOI for agenda item 9 due to knowing contractor

4. Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7th February 2023 were reviewed and approved subject to a spelling correction and amendment of date from 2022 to 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Mawle

Seconded: Cllr Jagger

Agreed: 8

Abstain: Cllr Dunnett who was not present at the meeting on 7th February 2023

5. Mayors Announcements/Update:

- I. Cllr Mawle informed that the February 2023 market was well attended and that the next market is on 25th March 2023.
- II. Cllr Mawle advised of two free Coronation Events that will be taking place in May 2023. One in the park on Saturday 6th May and another at Pye Green Community Centre on Sunday 7th May. Both events are open to the community and free to attend.
- III. Cllr Mawle informed that information had been received just prior to the town council meeting that a new owner had been found for Hednesford Town Football Club. The new owner is Gary Hartland.

Cllr Roden enquired how many traders were at the market in February 2023 and was advised that there were about 40. Cllr Roden informed that he had only counted 31.

6. Verbal Update from Committee Chairs

i. Regeneration and Community – Cllr Woodhead

Cllr Woodhead informed that they can update and discuss the market further under the motion for agenda item 11

ii. Pye Green Community Centre – Cllr Harrison

Cllr Harrison informed that there is a review of room bookings at the start of every PGCC committee meeting and that there is a need for a bigger focus on meeting room 1 lettings.

The replacement fridges are ongoing due to an error in the calculation of the size of fridges that will fit the available space. This is being overseen and remedied by the Chief Officer.

Cllr Harrison advised that there is a motion under agenda item 9 regarding the urgent repair work to the roof above meeting room 3 before the internal works can be carried out.

The issues regarding the lighting at the centre has resulted in an expansive quote and due to the value 2 further quotes need to be procured. Some of the costs have been separated out due to the need to rectify the lighting failure in the ladies bathroom.

3 hand driers have been approved and are awaiting delivery and installation. Funds have come from the Prosperity Fund and Cllr Harrison expressed her thanks to the Chief Officer and Mayor in securing these.

Cllr Harrison stated that she would like to see a regular programme of events at PGCC and that this falls under the remit of the Community Officer to take forward.

Cllr Harrison informed that the last PGCC committee meeting will be on 20th February 2023 and that the committee will remain formed until the end of the current administration. Cllr Harrison concluded by expressing her thanks to everyone who has sat on and contributed to the PGCC committee.

iii. Finance, Personal & Operations – Cllr Jagger

Cllr Jagger informed that there was no update from FP&Ops and that budgets are to be discussed later in the agenda.

Cllr Mawle informed that he was going to do something that he had not done previously and that was to action the point from the standing orders where a Cllr is only permitted to have one say on a motion.

7. Motion from Cllr Darrell Mawle – Museum of Cannock Chase

Cllr Mawle read out the motion the proposing that the council writes to Cannock Chase District Council to express objection to the budget saving proposals as well as to give support to the campaign to keep the museum in Hednesford.

Cllr Dunnett informed that she completely agreed and stated that everyone she has spoken to seems outraged by the decision.

Cllr Harborow stated that he 100% agreed with the motion before stating that alternatives seem like last minute thoughts. It feels like CCDC are taking the history away from Hednesford and that as a council that they need to do all that they can.

Cllr Harrison proposed an amendment to the motion to say relocate not moved and advised that the consultation to do so has not yet commenced.

Cllr Jones enquired if Cllr Harrison has DOI in this matter regarding being a prospective conservative candidate. Cllr Harrison informed that she does not as she was not involved in the decision made by district.

Cllr Jagger informed that the museum is the heritage of the community and disputed the proposed amendment to the change of working by Cllr Harrison. Cllr Jagger informed that the museum is known as Valley Heritage Centre and struggles to see how you can take the heritage out of the valley centre.

Cllr Woodhead stated that as a town council they represent the community directly and shouldn't have to apologise for district decisions. The reality is that CCDC is looking to save £100k and to relocate the museum out of Hednesford. Need to be very clear and very strong that the people of Hednesford are telling the council that they want the museum to stay where it is and that the wording of the motion is very clear.

Vote on amendment to wording of motion:

Proposed: Cllr Harrison

Seconded: Cllr Roden

For: 2

Against: 5

Abstain: 1

Amendment to motion 7 failed

Cllr Mawle informed that under the right to reply to a freedom of information request to CCDC regarding the decision to move the museum out of Hednesford had been received but that no answers were provided within the freedom of information as to how the decision was reached

Cllr Mawle further informed that as CCDC had passed their budget that CCDC now felt that they have a mandate to move the motion to move the museum forward. Cllr Mawle informed that the consultation should have taken place first.

Vote on motion to express objection on the move of the museum:

Proposed: Cllr Mawle

Seconded:

For: 5

Against:0

Abstain: 3

Motion passed

Cllr Roden asked if could honestly see the museum moving. A disagreement followed between Cllr Mawle and Cllr Roden in which Cllr Roden was reminded of the rules of the meeting.

8. Motion from Cllr Sharon Jagger – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spending strategy

Cllr Jagger proposed for a CIL spending strategy to be urgently formulated and agreed to ensure that a deadline spend of £17,000 by end of October 2023 will be spent in the community for the benefit of those that have come to live within the new housing developments off Pye Green Road. Cllr Jagger informed that residents in Pye Green Ward are holding a fund-raising event in the summer of 2023 to raise money for first aid equipment when there is no need for them to do so.

Cllr Mawle clarified if Cllr Jagger wanted this agreeing in the meeting. Cllr Jagger informed that this can be passed to the officers to complete.

Cllr Harrison raised concerns about time pressures on the Chief Officer and whilst Cllr Woodhead concurred about time pressures informed that new staff commencing in roles may help alleviate some of the pressure.

Cllr Woodhead went on further to inform that the council need to be mindful that the October deadline is looming, and that the council don't want to have to give the money back. Council have had the opportunity to spend the money previously that hasn't been taken for different reasons and that is important to have something in place to advise the new administration of the CIL monies available. Cllr Woodhead explained that this is something that the Community Officer can be involved in and that CIL monies are not just for being spent within the new developments. New developments also create pressure else where in the town and it is important to understand what these might be and where spend may be needed.

Chief Officer informed that this is already on the officer's agenda and can be picked up and actioned by officers.

Cllr Jones suggested it would be beneficial to delegate decision making to the Chief Officer and for Chief Officer to come back to council with a list of suggestions and firm ideas for approval instead of the back and forth and time delays that would otherwise be required. Cllr Jones stated that ideally the consultation should have taken place prior to the budget setting, which would have meant that CIL spending would already be agreed, but that there had not been the time to do so. Cllr Jones further stated that the Chief Officer and Community Officer are both very competent offices more than capable of overseeing this.

Cllr Harborow agreed with Cllr Woodhead in that CIL is not just for the communities on the new developments but also for other people who receive the knock on effects in other parts of the community. Fully supports sending out Community Officer to gains views and ideas.

Cllr Jagger proposed and amendment to the motion;

"Officers urgently to develop a CIL spending strategy to ensure that a deadline spend of £17,000 by the end of October 2023 will be spent in the community, with particular reference to the needs which have been brought upon the local community as a result of the extensive development west of Pye Green Road"

Vote for amendment to motion and action on motion:

Proposed: Cllr Jagger

Seconded: Cllr Woodhead

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion passed

9. Motion from Cllr Laura Harrison – Resurfacing of roof at PGCC

Cllr Harrison informed that following the building survey 2022 that the resurfacing work of the roof over the bar and adjacent storeroom is now due and requested approval to schedule the work to take place before change in the administration due to dry weather being needed

Proposed: Cllr Harrison

Seconded: Cllr Mawle

Cllr Jagger sought clarity about whether schedule of the works also included approving the quote from the contractor and whether due diligence was applied. Cllr Harrison informed that in approving the scheduling of the works that council are also

being asked to approve the quote/contractor. Cllr Mawle informed that 3 separate quotes were obtained from qualified contractors. Cllr Jagger advised that she had not had the opportunity to speak with officers and will sit out of the motion due to nature of what she wishes to discuss being of a confidential nature.

Cllr Jones called a point to order and wanted to clarify with the Chief Officer that Cllr Harborow who declared a conflict of interest at the beginning of the meeting also declared the conflict of interest at the PGCC Committee meeting when the item was discussed there.

The Chief Officer confirmed that Cllr Harborough did declare a conflict of interest at the PGCC Committee meeting. Cllr Jones further enquired if Cllr Harborough abstained from the conversation at PGCC committee regarding the item of conflict of interest. The Chief Officer advised that without going back through the minutes of the meeting that she would not be able to answer that question.

Cllr Jones stated that he had watched back the video of the meeting and that Cllr Harborow did not excuse himself from the meeting and continued to take part in the discussions surrounding the contract and wanted this noted.

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

Motion passed – works can be scheduled, and quote approved

10. Motion from Cllr Harrison – source of funding for lighting repairs at PGCC

Cllr Harrison informed that previous approval has already been given for the repair of the lights in the ladies' toilets at PGCC but that the source of the funding had not. Cllr Harrison would like to confirm if this spend is to come from underspend within the 22/23 budget or from CIL funds.

Cllr Woodhead asked what the value was. Cllr Harrison confirmed £458.16 plus VAT. Cllr Woodhead felt it should come from underspend.

Cllr Jones enquired if it would be done by end March. Cllr Harrison informed that with council approval that the works could commence on Friday.

Proposed: Cllr Harrison

Seconded: Cllr Harborough

Cllr Woodhead clarified if the spend was coming from underspend or CIL. Cllr Mawle advised from underspend.

For: 8
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion passed – payment to come from 22/23 underspend.

11. Motion from Cllr Woodhead -future operational options for Farmers and Craft Market

Cllr Woodhead gave a background to the Hednesford Farmers and Craft market and informed that now there is no longer a dedicated officer to oversee the running of the market that it relies heavily on voluntary time to keep it running, and that the voluntary time may or may not be available following the election in May 2023. Cllr Woodhead stated that due to the delays in officer recruitment due to the budget not being passed that time is running out to make a decision on the future of the market.

Cllr Woodhead informed that he has been approached by an interested party in contracting the market out. This person wishes to remain anonymous at this stage. Cllr Woodhead stated that any long term contracting out of the market will require a longer and formal tender process but in the interim is proposing a list of options to ensure that the market can continue to run and thrive until decisions can be made under the new administration.

Cllr Woodhead outlined the options in order of preference:

1. Zero cost basis – contract out market for the remainder of the year – and that he is due to meet with the interested party tomorrow
2. Recruit a Regeneration Officer
3. External Management company – this raises concern that the market would be outside of the council control
4. Status quo – continue as are with current officers and volunteers
5. End the market

Proposed: Cllr Woodhead

Seconded: Cllr Dunnett

A full conversation followed and worked through all the above options together with costs of the market.

Cllr Harborough informed he wont support to end the market and would like more information and a plan regarding option 1. Can't continue as it is so do need to find a way forward.

Cllr Jones stated that it is hard to hear anti-market views and that option 2 to recruit a regeneration officer is his preferred option and sought clarity on the proposed finance of the market. Cllr Woodhead informed that the council would not be paying for the interested party to run it. Cllr Jones informed that he would be open to option 1 now that this point has been clarified.

Cllr Harrison thanked Cllr Woodhead for the detail continued in the motion and that her preference would be the external route and that she is open to learning more about option 1. Cllr Harrison informed that she does not feel that a Regeneration Officer would be the way to go.

Cllr Dunnett informed that she is totally in favour of option 1 and that she knows the person who has approached the council and that they would want to keep the market as it currently operates.

Cllr Jagger informed that she agreed with the order of options.

Cllr Woodhead confirmed that there would be no cost to the council and that a contract that is mutually beneficial will need to be written together with a business plan. The option to outsource provides options as well as a way out if it does not work. If council does not vote for option 1 then will move in order down the list of options

Cllr Harrison proposed an amendment to the list of options to option 1,3,2,4,5

For: 3

Against: 5

Abstain: 0

Amendment to motion failed

Vote for original options for the market 1,2,3,4,5

For: 5

Against: 3

Abstain:

Motion passed - to contract market out for the remainder of the year

815pm – a 6 minute comfort break was taken

816pm – council meeting resumed

12. Motion from Cllr Harbourough – Budget Proposal for 23/24

Cllr Harbourough sought clarification on how the voting will work and requested that all three budget motions carry a named vote.

Cllr Mawle informed that each motion will be considered in turn in the order in which they were received by the Chief Officer and that the request for named votes need to be voted on by full council.

Vote for named votes on all three budget amendments

Proposed: Cllr Harborough

Seconded: Cllr Mawle

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Vote passed – all budget motions will be named votes

Cllr Harborough proposed an amendment to the motion that with funds left from the budget to re-include Hednesford Festival in the proposed budget and informed that he has tried to be as fair as possible and to hand over a budget on an even footing to the next administration.

A short conversation followed about points in the proposed budget

Vote for amendment to motion to include Summer Festival funding

Proposed: Cllr Harborough

Seconded: Cllr Harrison

For: Cllr Harborough, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Roden

Against: Cllr Jones, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Jagger, Cllr Woodhead

Abstain: Cllr Mawle

Vote for amendment failed

Vote for original motion

Proposed: Cllr Harborough

Seconded: Cllr Harrison

For: Cllr Harborough, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Roden

Against: Cllr Jagger, Cllr Woodhead, Cllr Jones, Cllr Mawle

Abstain: Cllr Dunnett

Motion failed

13. Motion from Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee – Budget Proposal 23/24

Cllr Jones presented the budget on behalf of Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee and informed it has been debated at length and had scrutiny from Chief Officer and RFO. Cllr Jones informs that the difference between item 13 and item 14 is that item 13 includes a staff structure whereas item 14 has more flexibility for staffing.

Proposed: Cllr Jones

Seconded: Cllr Jagger

Cllr Harrison informs that she categorically disagrees with the budget proposal in item 13 and will not stand by it. Cllr Roden concurred.

Cllr Woodhead stated that the budget proposal does cover everything and so does item 14 and he is happy to support.

For: Cllr Jagger, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Woodhead, Cllr Jones

Against: Cllr Harborough, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Roden

Abstain: Cllr Mawle

Cllr Dunnett sought clarification before voting and was informed that she can vote for or against on both motions. Following the outcome of the vote Cllr Dunnett informs that she wanted to vote in favour of item 14 and misunderstood the guidance provided to her by fellow councillors.

A brief discussion followed, and Cllr Dunnett stated that she was not clearly informed that if item 13 passed then item 14 would not be debated. The decision was made in agreement with full council to revote on item 13.

For: Cllr Jagger, Cllr Woodhead, Cllr Jones

Against: Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Harborough, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Roden

Abstain: Cllr Mawle

Motion – failed

14. Motion from Cllr Woodhead – Budget Proposal 23/24

Cllr Woodhead put forward a budget that combines motions 12 and 13 to create a third budget option. Only difference from item 13 is that the staff structure is taken out and it is just a pot of money allocated to staffing for the Chief Officer to allocate.

Cllr Mawle enquired what the budgets are compared. Cllr Woodhead informed item 14 has a surplus of £78.00.

Proposed: Cllr Woodhead

Seconded: Cllr Dunnett

A brief discussion took place about the proposed budget for clarity. Cllr Jones clarified that the market and staffing is being delegated to the Chief Officer while Cllr Harrison clarified that the proposed staffing structure in item 14 is just an example of staffing rather than a set given. Cllr Woodhead confirmed all these to be correct.

Cllr Roden queried the spend for Hednesford Life Magazine. Cllr Woodhead informs that the spend will be dictated by the sponsorship received.

Cllr Harborough stated that he is worried about leaving the decisions to officers

For: Cllr Jagger, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Woodhead, Cllr Jones, Cllr Harrison

Against: Cllr Harborough

Abstain: Cllr Roden, Cllr Mawle

Motion 14 – passed – Budget 23/24

15. Councillor Acknowledgements

Each Councillor gave public thanks and appreciation for any support, opportunities and feedback afforded to them during their administration at Hednesford Town Council.

16. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 7pm

Meeting closed at 9.15pm