



Name: Cllr James Hunt (Mayor)

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2023

Signed: {Original Signed}

## **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

**held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council,**

**1900hrs on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.**

**Present:** Councillors James Hunt (Mayor), Bobbie Sunderland (Deputy Mayor), Colin Hunt, Graham Hutter, Rachael Hunt, and Alka-Mehta Graham.

**Absent:** None.

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Ian Lyons.

**Apologies:** Councillor Simon Budd.

**Public:** Two members of the public attended the meeting: Jenny Bright (Green Community Travel) and Suzanne Heath (Mangotsfield Folly Project).

**Notes:** The meeting began at 1900hrs. All resolutions are passed with a majority vote, by a show of hands, unless otherwise stated.

### **FC\_2023.137 Welcome and Introductions.**

**Minutes:** The Mayor welcomed everyone present at the meeting and explained the emergency procedures.

### **FC\_2023.138 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.**

**Minutes:** The Mayor reminded members of the requirement to declare an interest. No interests were declared.

### **FC\_2023.139 Public Participation.**

**Minutes:** Two members of the public were present. To start with, the Mayor invited Jenny Bright to address the Council about Green Community Travel. Jenny provided a summary of the organisation's work, which is a registered mutual society, and answered questions from Councillors.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked the organisation for their support to the local community over many years and encouraged them to apply for new grants and other support available.

## COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

### FC\_2023.140 Minutes.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr James Hunt, supported by Cllr Colin Hunt, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The *Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2023*, copies having been circulated, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Mayor.

**Minutes:** The minutes were signed at the meeting by Cllr James Hunt.

### FC\_2023.141 Outstanding items.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk circulated a summary of the work undertaken as a result of the resolutions and action points from the previous meetings, in the *Clerk's Report*.

## INTEL & CURRENT AFFAIRS

### FC\_2023.142 Mangotsfield Folly Presentation.

**Minutes:** To start with, the Council received a circulated report from Suzanne Heath, and a 20-minute formal presentation was delivered using the projector, which summarised the work of the Mangotsfield Folly Project over the last two years. After this, a short question and answer session took place, with Councillors making suggestions at the end. In conclusion, the Mayor thanked Suzanne and all the volunteers involved in the project.

### FC\_2023.143 Crime Update.

**Minutes:** The Council received a circulated report from the Town Clerk.

## OPERATIONS

### FC\_2023.144 To note any updates from Committees.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland circulated a written report and provided a verbal summary on the work of the Open Spaces Committee.

### FC\_2023.145 To note any updates from Working Groups.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland circulated a written report and provided a verbal summary on the work of the Climate and Nature Working Group.

**FC\_2023.146 To note any reports from external bodies.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk directed attention to the circulated *Lyde Green Partnership Minutes 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2023* and the *Avon Local Councils' Association Minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023*.

After this, the Council noted that representation was urgently required for the next ALCA meeting.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr James Hunt, supported by Cllr Colin Hunt, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council appoints Alka Mehta-Graham to the Avon Local Councils Association.

**FC\_2023.147 To appoint Councillors to Committee vacancies.**

**Minutes:** The Town Clerk displayed a list of the current vacancies and highlighted the opportunities to Councillors. No changes or appointments were made.

**PLANNING & STRATEGY**

**FC\_2023.148 Strategic Plan Update.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk delivered a short update on the progress of the Strategic Plan, circulating a progress chart with the meeting documents.

**FC\_2023.149 Rebranding.**

To receive any proposals. <sup>1</sup>

**Minutes:** To start with, Cllr Colin Hunt argued that the Town Council (EGTC) had inadequate representation from the Lyde Green area and that many residents did not identify with the Council. As a result, there was a risk that a new Parish Council could be created, which had the potential to increase the costs to the taxpayer but decrease overall output. For instance, it was argued that a large proportion of the cost for a new institution would be taken up by routine administration, which is currently spread over a larger base of taxpayers.

As a solution, Cllr Colin Hunt asked members to consider rebranding the Council to 'Emersons Green and Lyde Green Town Council' or similar. In the meantime, it was also suggested that some meetings be held in Lyde Green to raise the profile of EGTC and recruit new Councillors.

In support, Cllr Rachael Hunt agreed that creating a new Parish Council was a terrible idea and confirmed that many residents in Lyde Green still felt separate

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<sup>1</sup> This item was requested by Cllr Colin Hunt on the 28/09/23.

from EGTC. However, the situation had improved since the employment of a new Town Clerk. Nevertheless, Lyde Green Community Association (LGCA) were reluctantly taking on the role of a Parish Council in many cases, and residents were increasingly looking to the partnership for support instead of EGTC. Residents were also concerned about paying fees to Green Square to maintain public spaces that could be publicly funded and managed.

Next Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham highlighted the importance of consulting with the public. In response, Cllr Rachael Hunt agreed that a consultation would increase engagement with EGTC and provide valuable insights. Likewise, it would be useful to continue having a Council officer attend the Lyde Green Partnership alongside a Councillor.

In contrast, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland raised concerns that a consultation might have undesirable consequences and precipitate an independence movement. As an alternative, it was suggested that it might be better to consult the public more generally on the current role and strategy of the Council and deliver a presentation to recruit more Councillors.

After this, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland reminded members that the Council also had a responsibility to other areas such as Badminton, Blackhorse, and Pomphrey, which had their own Ward boundary and Councillors. As an alternative, it was suggested that the creation of a Lyde Green Ward to create direct representation might be a higher priority and argued that a more direct recruitment campaign could be more effective.

In response, Cllr James Hunt explained that boundary changes have been a complicated and expensive process in the past, with high risks, and rebranding could be a quicker and simpler solution. However, at the next scheduled boundary review, a new ward should be included. In the meantime, he argued that the issue threatened the efficiency of local services and should be urgently addressed.

In conclusion, Cllr James Hunt volunteered to draft a motion, in consultation with the Town Clerk and LGCA, for the Council to consider launching a formal public consultation about rebranding, including all of the Council's constituents, and use this as an opportunity to encourage new Councillors. In the meantime, the Town Clerk would be asked to revisit the meeting schedule for the Council to consider alternative locations for Council meetings.

**Action:** Town Clerk and Cllr James Hunt to draft a motion. Town Clerk to reconsider the meeting schedule.

**FC\_2023.150 Forward Plan.**

**Minutes:** The Council received the circulated document *Forward Plan*.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **FC\_2023.151 Correspondence.**

To note official correspondence to the Council, copies having been circulated.

**Minutes:** The Council noted a circulated letter of complaint from a member of the public about the lack of dog bins, bus services, and the need for an off-lead dog walking area. The Council also noted the response from the Town Clerk. Then,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Bobbie Sunderland, supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council defers the complaint to the Open Spaces Committee.

**Minutes:** Next, the Council noted a circulated letter from a member of the public providing feedback on the Mangotsfield Folly Project, expressing concern that any new structure might attract vandalism and anti-social behaviour without security and maintenance.

**Action:** Town Clerk to write a reply.

### **FC\_2023.152 Advertising.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk directed attention to a poster advertising the Film Night, organised by Cllr Bobbie Sunderland, and a poster advertising the Cllrs Surgery / Coffee Morning at Emersons Green Village Hall. No comments or objections were raised.

In addition, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland requested the inclusion of a poster advertising the first anniversary of the Community Nature Reserve in January, which was accepted.

Similarly, Cllr James Hunt requested a new advert to recruit Cllrs, using a survey format to engage the public.

Finally, Cllr Rachael Hunt raised an idea to provide a concise version of the minutes, promoting the work of the Council, in the format of a Mayor's column, circulated on the website and social media, which was well received.

**Action:** Town Clerk to draft adverts.

## POLICY

### **FC\_2023.153 Probation Policy.**

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr James Hunt, supported by Cllr Graham Hutter, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council formally adopts the updated *EGTC Probation Policy October 2023*, copies having been circulated.

**FC\_2023.154 Training Courses.**

To consider training opportunities, copies having been circulated.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk directed attention to a wide range of circulated training courses that were available and encouraged members to apply.

**Action:** Town Clerk to assist with registration of courses.

**FINANCE - ROUTINE**

**FC\_2023.155 Bank Reconciliations.**

To review the latest bank reconciliations.

**Minutes:** The Council received the circulated documents, and they were signed by the Mayor.

**FC\_2023.156 Monthly Payments & Investments.**

To consider that the monthly payments and investments list, copies having been circulated, be approved, and signed by the Mayor.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Colin Hunt, supported by Cllr Graham Hutter, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The monthly payments and investments lists, copies having been circulated, be approved, and signed by the Mayor.

**Minutes:** The Mayor signed the payments and investments lists.

**FC\_2023.157 Budget Monitoring.**

- To review the income, expenditure, and earmarked reserves.
- To receive a report on emergency expenditure, copies having been circulated.

**Minutes:** Members reviewed the circulated documents. There were no reports on emergency expenditure. Cllr James Hunt invited questions from members. There were none.

**FC\_2023.158 Financial Planning.**

To receive any proposals for the 2024/25 draft budget.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk circulated a quote for a solar panel installation, which is a key objective of the Council, and it was agreed that the Council should aim to accommodate this in the draft budget. Similarly, at the suggestion of Cllr Rachael Hunt, it was agreed that the Council should aim to increase the earmarked reserve for elections to accommodate a potential referendum. Cllr Bobbie Sunderland indicated that an increase would

be required for the Climate and Nature budget and agreed to forward estimates. Finally, it was agreed that the Council should also aim to increase the events budget.

**Action:** Town Clerk to draft the budget. Cllrs to forward any additional proposals.

**Minutes:** At this point, Cllr Rachael Hunt gave apologies and left the meeting (2105hrs).

## PERSONNEL

### **FC\_2023.159 Privacy.**

To consider excluding the public and press due to the confidential nature of the following items.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr James Hunt, supported by Cllr Bobbie Sunderland, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The remainder of the meeting be conducted in a private session to the exclusion of the press and public.

### **FC\_2023.160 Working Conditions<sup>2</sup>.**

To consider an indoor and outdoor rest area, example copies having been circulated.

**Minutes:** To start with, at the invitation of Mayor, the Town Clerk provided advice from the *Clerk's Report*, and circulated a draft proposal for an indoor and outdoor rest area for the Council to consider. Then,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Bobbie Sunderland, supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to create an indoor and outdoor rest area, example copies having been circulated.

### **FC\_2023.161 Recruitment<sup>3</sup>.**

To consider the recruitment of a 'Youth Officer' and a 'Community Caretaker'.

**Minutes:** To start with, at the invitation of Mayor, the Town Clerk provided advice from the *Clerk's Report*, and directed attention to several circulated supporting documents, including the Council structure, pay scales, draft job descriptions, and HR consultations. After considerable debate,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Graham Hutter, supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:

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<sup>2</sup> This item was a recommendation of the Personnel Committee 12/10/23.

<sup>3</sup> This item was a recommendation of the Personnel Committee 12/10/23.

- Resolved:** The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to recruit and appoint a Youth Officer on a full-time employment contract and a Community Caretaker on a part-time employment contract.
- Motion:** Then, it was moved by Cllr Graham Hutter, supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:
- Resolved:** The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to instruct Human Resource advisors.
- Action:** Town Clerk to draft the recruitment packs in consultation with HR advisors.

## **DATES & TIMINGS**

### **FC\_2023.162 Schedule.**

- To consider the updated *Calendar of Meetings 2023/24*.
- To schedule dates and timings for any other meetings such as Working Groups.

**Minutes:** The Council received the circulated *Calendar of Meetings 2023/24*. Then,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Graham Hutter, supported by Cllr Bobbie Sunderland, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council formally adopts the *Calendar of Meetings 2023/24*, copies having been circulated.

### **FC\_2023.163 Next Meeting.**

**Minutes:** The Mayor announced that the next meeting of the Full Council was scheduled to take place:

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2023 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.**

The Mayor concluded the formal business of the meeting at 2124hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterwards.