

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council,

1900hrs on Thursday 28th of September 2023.

Present: Councillors James Hunt (Mayor), Bobbie Sunderland (Deputy Mayor), Colin Hunt, and Graham Hutter.

Absent: None.

In attendance: Town Clerk, Ian Lyons.

Apologies: Councillors Alka-Mehta Graham, Rachael Hunt, and Simon Budd.

Public: Two members of the public attended the meeting: Mark King (Service Director - South Gloucestershire Council) and Christopher Taylor (St. James Church).

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

FC_2023.103 Welcome and Introductions.

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

FC_2023.104 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.

Minutes: The Mayor reminded members of the requirement to declare an interest. Cllr Bobbie Sunderland declared an interest as a member of St. James Church.

FC_2023.105 Public Participation.

Minutes: Two members of the public were present. To start with, The Mayor invited Mark King to address the Council on the subject of the A432 Badminton Road Closure. Mark provided the background and a summary of the decision-making process, which led to the overbridge closure at short notice.

After this, the Mayor invited questions from Councillors. Cllr Colin Hunt and others raised concerns about widespread traffic queues, and questioned why the right-hand turn at Hambrook could not be opened to provide relief.

In reply, Mark King explained that approximately 20,000 vehicles were displaced because of this issue and adding another phase would affect the entire network, increasing traffic problems and air pollution.

However, after some further debate, Mark King agreed that modelling traffic would help, and temporary lights at Bromley Heath could be considered.

Next, the Mayor invited Christopher Taylor to address the Council and explained this was the only opportunity to speak. However, the opportunity was declined.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

FC_2023.106 Election.

Minutes: A single nomination was received for Cllr Bobbie Sunderland to be elected as Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

Resolved: Cllr Bobbie Sunderland be the Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor of Emersons Green Town Council for the remainder of the municipal year.

FC_2023.107 Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

Minutes: At the invitation of the Mayor, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland signed and submitted the *Declaration of Acceptance of Office* for the position of Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor.

FC_2023.108 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 27th of July 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_2023.109 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*.

CO-OPTION

FC_2023.110 Applications for Co-option

- To receive applications from members of the public.
- To invite the applicants to address the Council for a maximum of 5 minutes.

Minutes: To start with, the Council received two applications for co-option from Kelly Allen, and Maria Celeste Bernart. Both candidates gave apologies.

At the applicants' request, it was agreed that the decision would be deferred to the next available Full Council Meeting.

FC_2023.111 Co-option to the vacant positions

To vote on the co-option of new Councillors.

Minutes: No longer required.

FC_2023.112 Declarations of Office

For new Councillors to sign and deliver the *Acceptance of Office forms*.

Minutes: No longer required.

INTEL & CURRENT AFFAIRS

FC_2023.113 Crime Update.

Minutes: The Council received a circulated report from the Town Clerk and Avon and Somerset Police.

OPERATIONS

FC_2023.114 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. Cllr Colin Hunt reported that the last Planning Committee was not quorate.

FC_2023.115 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_2023.116 To note any reports from external bodies.

Minutes: No reports were provided.

FC_2023.117 To appoint Councillors to Committee vacancies.

Minutes: The Town Clerk displayed a list of the current vacancies and highlighted the opportunities to Councillors. There were no changes made. However, Cllr Bobbie Sunderland highlighted an error.

Action: Town Clerk to correct the error.

FC_2023.118 To appoint Councillors to be signatories on the Bank Mandate.

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

Resolved: The Council appoints Cllr Bobbie Sunderland to be a signatory on the Bank Mandate.

FC_2023.119 To appoint Councillors to approve Internet Banking transactions.

Minutes: No appointments were made.

PLANNING & STRATEGY

FC_2023.120 Schedule.

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

Minutes: The Council received the circulated *Calendar of Meetings 2023/24*. However, it was agreed to defer this matter to the next available meeting to allow the Open Spaces Committee Clerk and Chair to confer. For practical reasons, no dates and times were agreed for other meetings.

Action: Open Spaces Committee Clerk to consult with the Chairman.

FC_2023.121 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. Cllr Bobbie Sunderland raised a suggestion for supporting the creation of a new Friends Group, which is a key objective of the Council, and a short debate took place on how to make progress with this idea.

FC_2023.122 Forward Plan.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

FC_2023.123 Correspondence.

- To note official correspondence to the Council, copies having been circulated.
- To receive a report from Creative Youth Network.

Minutes: The Council noted the emails, letters, and reports received; copies having been circulated.

FC_2023.124 Advertising.

Minutes: At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk directed attention to a poster advertising the vacancies for Councillors, and banners for display at Emersons Green Village Hall, to advertise the Coffee Morning. No comments or objections were raised.

POLICY

FC_2023.125 Financial Regulations.

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

Resolved: The Council formally adopts the updated *EGTC Financial Regulations September 2023*, copies having been circulated.

FINANCE - ROUTINE

FC_2023.126 Bank Reconciliations.

To review the latest bank reconciliations.

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

FC_2023.127 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_2023.128 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_2023.129 External Audit.

- To receive the *External Auditors Report 2022-23*, copies having been circulated.
- To consider an action plan to implement any recommendations.

Minutes: The Council received the *External Auditors Report 2022-23*, copies having been circulated. No matters of concern were raised, and no action plan was necessary.

FC_2023.130 Financial Planning.

- To make any recommendations on the longer-term planning of the Council's finances.
- To determine the 2024/25 budget-setting process.
- To consider any proposals for the 2024/25 draft budget.

Minutes: The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the existing budget and made suggestions for the 2024/25 budget-setting process, providing examples. Cllr Bobbie Sunderland indicated that a budget increase may be necessary for *Climate and Nature* and *Events*. However, it was agreed that details would be considered at a future meeting.

FINANCE – PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTS

FC_2023.131 Honorary Alderman Regalia.

To consider the procurement of a pendant and framed scroll, example copies having been circulated.

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

Resolved: The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission an Honorary Alderman Pendant and framed scroll, example copies having been circulated.

FC_2023.132 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 Colin Hunt, and resolved that:

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

FC_2023.133 Youth Services.

To consider a strategy for the 2024/25 draft budget.

Minutes: At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk provided advice from the *Clerk's Report*, including the financial implications and risks. After that, Councillors reviewed the existing service, budget, and relevant key objectives in the Strategic Plan. After some debate, it was agreed that the direct employment of a Youth Officer would be progressed at the next available meeting. For the draft budget, it was agreed that this should also aim to accommodate a Lot 3 contribution to South Glos (£23,865), and the enhanced option of an 'inclusive creative programme for young people' (£19,200).

FC_2023.134 Emersons Green Village Hall.

To consider a strategy for the 2024/25 draft budget.

Minutes: At the invitation of the Mayor, the Town Clerk provided advice from the *Clerk's Report*, including the background, financial implications, and other reputational risks. After that, Councillors reviewed the existing service, budget, and relevant key objectives in the Strategic Plan. After some debate, it was agreed that the draft budget should aim to accommodate a budget for Emersons Green Village Hall of at least £23,700, and an increase in the Events budget to at least £20,000.

PERSONNEL

FC_2023.135 Recruitment.

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

Resolved: The Council confirms the employment of Paul Kearsley in the appointed role of Environment Manager.

FC_2023.136 Dates and Timings.

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

Thursday 26th of October 2023 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.

The Mayor concluded the formal business of the meeting at 2056hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterward.