

Minutes of an **Interim Council Meeting** of Buckingham Town Council held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7pm online via Zoom.

**Present:**

Cllr. R. Ahmed	
Cllr. T. Bloomfield	
Cllr. M. Cole JP	
Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins	Mayor
Cllr. P. Collins	
Cllr. J. Harvey	
Cllr. P. Hirons	
Cllr. A. Mahi	
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. Ms. R. Newell	
Cllr. L. O'Donoghue	
Cllr. A. Ralph	
Cllr. M. Smith	
Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark	
Cllr. R. Stuchbury	
Cllr. M. Try	Deputy Mayor

**Also Present:**

Mr P. Hodson	Town Clerk
Mrs. N. Stockill	Committee Clerk
Mrs. K. McElligott	Planning Clerk
Mrs. S McMurtrie	Town Planning Office
Mrs Cumming	Buckingham Society

*No members of the public attended and so there was no public session*

### **1220/20 Apologies for Absence**

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllr. Gateley and received apologies from Buckinghamshire Councillors Mills and Whyte.

### **1221/20 Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 Sections 26-34 & Schedule 4. There were none.

### **1222/20 To receive and discuss any response to the proposed Variation of Premises Licence at the BP petrol station on Stratford Road.**

Application [PR202104-251190](#)

Cllr. Smith reminded Members of the garage's location, adjacent to several small residential housing estates. Members were generally opposed to the extension of the current licencing hours and felt the current hours of 8am to 11pm were sufficient for the sale of alcohol.

Proposed by Cllr. Harvey and seconded by Cllr. Newell to oppose the variation of premises licence to allow the sale of alcohol 24 hours a day from the Buckingham Filling Station on Stratford Road. On the grounds:

It is extremely close to quiet residential housing.

**IM/06/20**

Allowing the sale of alcohol this late at night will lead to noise and antisocial behaviour in local streets at a time when local residents are in bed.

A vote was taken and the results were:

15 in favour

Abstentions: 1

**1223/20 Barclays Bank, Buckingham**

Members discussed the following questions sent by Barclays regarding the closure of the Buckingham branch:

1. *What do you believe will be the biggest impact of the closure of the Buckingham branch on the local community?*
2. *What do you believe will be the biggest impact of the closure of the Buckingham branch on customers of the branch?*
3. *What alternative ways to bank do you believe need to be provided to help customers and the community adapt to this change?"*

Councillors discussed a range of responses, and generally expressed disappointment and concern about the consequences of the closure.

Cllr. Cole pointed out that the closure had already been announced and this was simply a market research exercise for Barclays bank.

Cllr. Try said there was a diminishing number of services in the town and this should've been taken into consideration when Barclays were looking to close the Buckingham branch.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury and seconded by Cllr. O'Donoghue for the Town Council to write to Greg Smith MP requesting that he ask the Trade and Industry Secretary to outline the government's scrutiny of local branch closures and the impact on the rural economy. A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 14

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Councillors requested that the letter to Greg Smith be copied to Barclays Bank.

**1224/20 Meeting arrangements after 6th May**

Members received and discussed a report from the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk explained that as things stand it will be necessary to return to holding Council meetings in person from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and for councillors only to take part when they are physically present. Plans are therefore being made to use the Lace Hill sports hall for the Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May, as the only Town Council room large enough to accommodate the necessary social distancing. (The community centre remains block booked for vaccinations for the foreseeable future). Officers are currently investigating the necessary audio visual equipment to broadcast the meeting on Zoom and YouTube, and to enable staff and members of the public to participate online. However, the first priority is to ensure that a legal and effective meeting can be held, which means focussing on ensuring a physical meeting can be held safely at Lace Hill.

The Town Clerk explained that Members could consider amending Terms of Reference to make Committees advisory and forward all decision making to the Full Council (physical) meetings to enable all Committees to meet virtually. Councillor Stuchbury spoke against this approach.

Proposed by Cllr Harvey seconded by Hirons and unanimously **AGREED** for the Town Clerk to respond to the call for evidence from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on behalf of the Town Council, requesting that remote and hybrid meetings are allowed for in the future, and emphasising the benefits of the remote meetings held in the last year. I.e. that many more residents have watched Town Council meetings, and attendance at meetings by Town Councillors and guest speakers has been higher. Also, the response should register the Town Council's extreme anxiety and concern about the decision, in that it will force officers and councillors to meet in a situation that was against the government's current Covid guidance. Also, for the Town Clerk to write to Greg Smith MP expressing concern and asking for his views on the matter.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

The Town Clerk said that Councillors will be provided with more information nearer the time of the meeting, including the risk assessment for holding the meeting.

### **1225/20 Audit Dates**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk and **AGREED** that the dates given in the circulated letter were correct, and that the letter be issued to the Council's internal auditor.

### **1226/20 Memorabilia for Town Council Awards**

Members received and discussed a written report from the Events Coordinator. Cllr. Stuchbury suggested a handmade pottery plate with the dates of the retiring Mayor's term in office. Cllr. Newell spoken in support of a silver pin in the shape of a swan or gavel – depending on the Mayor's personal choice.

Proposed by Cllr. Try, seconded by Cllr. O'Donoghue and unanimously **AGREED** for the retiring Mayor to be given a choice of options from a silver pin, framed Mayoral portrait or engraved glass bowl.

Members **AGREED** that a certificate and £50 is to be awarded to each year's recipients for the Sports and Arts award. The monetary gift can then be used within the organisation.

For other awards, it was **AGREED** that as an alternative to a salver, recipients be presented with either an engraved glass award or an engraved crystal glass bowl.

### **1227/20 Co-option**

Members discussed a written report from the Town Clerk regarding plans to enable the co-option to the Council's remaining seat after the upcoming election. The Returning Officer had reported that seven people have been duly elected Parish Councillors for Buckingham Town Council for Buckingham South ward. The ward has eight seats, so all seven candidates automatically become elected. This leaves one unfilled seat. The Town Council could fill this seat by co-option without advertising the vacancy, providing the seat is filled within 35 working days of the election. The last day this would be possible is 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021, when a meeting of Interim Council is scheduled. Given the extensive agenda planned for the first meeting of the new Council that will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Co-option could be held during the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

Cllr. Stuchbury said candidates that were not elected on the 6<sup>th</sup> May should be taken forward for co-option sooner than the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The Town Clerk suggested than an additional Interim Council meeting could be held on 7<sup>th</sup> June to enable the co-option to happen sooner. Cllr. Harvey stressed that any candidates, regardless of the election,

**IM/06/20**

interested in standing for co-option should be given sufficient time, knowledge and guidance to apply to the vacancy. The Town Clerk clarified that the advice from the National Association of Local Councils is that a vacancy for co-option immediately after an election does not have to be advertised, but it is good practice to do so.

Proposed by Cllr. G. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Harvey and unanimously **AGREED** for the office to advertise the vacancy for co-option from the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, informing the two unsuccessful candidates from the North Ward of the vacancy but ensuring that any applicants are given sufficient time, knowledge and guidance to apply

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

**1228/20 Chairman's Announcements**

The Mayor gave her thanks to all of the retiring Councillors thanking them for their time and commitment to the Town Council.

**1229/20 Date of next Meetings:**

Annual Statutory Meeting (ASM)	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 @7pm
Full Council	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 following the ASM
Annual Town Meeting	Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Interim Council	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2021

Meeting closed at 8pm

Signed

Date