

IM/07/21

Minutes of an **Interim Council Meeting** of Buckingham Town Council held at 7:05pm on Monday 9th May 2022 in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. R. Ahmed
 Cllr. M. Cole JP
 Cllr. M. Gateley Town Mayor/Chair
 Cllr. J. Harvey
 Cllr. S. Hetherington
 Cllr. A. Mahi
 Cllr. L. O'Donoghue
 Cllr. A. Ralph
 Cllr. A. Schaefer
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury
 Cllr. M. Try

Also present: Mr. P. Hodson Town Clerk
 Ms. P. Cahill Committee Clerk
 Mrs. K. McElligott Planning Clerk

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

841/21 Apologies for absence

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllr. Whyte, Cllr. Willett, Cllr. Collins, Cllr. Mordue, Cllr. Osibogun and Cllr. Davies.

842/21 Declarations of interest

There were none.

843/21 Motion: Cllrs. Schaeffer, Harvey and Ahmed

For the Town Clerk to issue a press release, distancing the Town Council explicitly from the message of concern and expressing our acknowledgement of the hurt and distress that this has caused members of our community. The Town Clerk to be instructed to write a press release including the previously agreed motion and explaining what action we are taking to help build a more inclusive Buckingham and restore the trust of all members of our community after this event.

An amendment to the motion was received by Councillors prior to the meeting:

For the Town Clerk to issue a press release distancing the Town Council explicitly from the social media message of concern that was the subject of the recent decision by the Hearings Sub Committee of Buckinghamshire Council and expressing our acknowledgement of the hurt and distress that said social media message has caused members of our community. The Town Clerk to be instructed to write a press release including the previously agreed motion and explaining what action we are taking to help build a more inclusive Buckingham and restore the trust of all members of our community after this event.

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Cllr. Schaefer apologised that the motion was not initially clearly worded. She explained that the purpose of the motion is not to point fingers or apportion blame, but all Councillors recognise that there are members of the community deeply hurt and upset. The motion shows the intention of reassuring members of our community of our inclusivity and to build on the motion put forward by Cllr. Harvey.

Cllr. Harvey seconded the amended motion.

Cllr. Hetherington told the Council that this has caused her hurt and distress and she feels tarred with the same brush and her trust in local democracy has been dented. She would like Buckinghamshire Council to understand this impact.

Cllr. Cole advised the Council that it would be a mistake to draw further attention and a motion had already been agreed on 11th April.

Cllr. Stuchbury requested that Councillors see the press release before publication.

Cllr. Ahmed said that the wounds haven't been healed at all. She has been contacted by several people who are unhappy with the outcome of the previous meeting.

The Town Clerk expressed reluctance for the press release to go to all Town Councillors for agreement; on a practical basis this could be difficult. He suggested liaising with the Town Mayor and Chair of Resources. Cllr. Stuchbury accepted the Town Clerk's advice.

Cllr. Gateley feels that we should acknowledge the hurt that has happened to all of our community and our Town Councillors, and a press release may help.

Cllr. Stuchbury's proposed the following amendment:

For the Town Clerk to issue a press release, in liaison with the Mayor and Chair of the Resources Committee, distancing the Town Council explicitly from the social media message of concern that was the subject of the recent decision by the Hearings Sub Committee of Buckinghamshire Council and expressing our acknowledgement of the hurt and distress that said social media message has caused members of our community. The Town Clerk to be instructed to write a press release, in liaison with the Mayor and Chair of the Resources Committee, including the previously agreed motion and explaining what action we are taking to help build a more inclusive Buckingham and restore the trust of all members of our community after this event.

Cllr. Schaefer seconded the motion.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the results were:

For: 8
Against: 2
Abstentions: 1

The amendment was agreed.

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Councillors voted on the amended motion and the results were:

For: 4
Against: 5
Abstentions: 1

The motion fell.

844/21 Motion: Cllrs. Schaeffer, Harvey and Ahmed

For the Town Clerk to write to the Hearings sub-committee of Buckinghamshire Council to ask them to consider altering their code of conduct investigation process such that all those who are impacted by a breach of the code, should have an opportunity to be consulted on the actions to be recommended. In this case this would have meant all the complainants and the Town Council (since our reputation has been damaged) being able to offer their ideas as to what would constitute proportionate actions.

Cllr. Harvey explained the context of the motion: a fait accompli has been given by Buckinghamshire Council with no allowance made for Buckingham Town Council to express their view on what should happen.

Cllr. Cole supports the motion as the Hearing was for one Councillor, but all Councillors have been punished.

Cllr. Gateley pointed out that if we do nothing then Buckinghamshire Council will not be aware of the impact on Buckingham Town Council.

Cllr. Harvey informed the Council that this was the first and only breach of Code of Conduct that the Committee had dealt with, and they may appreciate some feedback.

A vote was taken and the results were:

For: 8
Against: 3
Abstentions: 0

The motion was carried. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

845/21 Recruitment of new Town Clerk

Members received and discussed a written report from the Town Clerk.

Cllr. Gateley expressed sadness that the Town Clerk is leaving but congratulated him on his appointment.

Cllr. Harvey proposed to accept the recommendations to advertise for a new Town Clerk, to form a panel and to agree the process dates. Cllr. O'Donoghue seconded. **ACTION TOWN CLERK/COMMUNICATION CLERK**

Cllr. Try questioned whether a driving licence is essential rather than desirable for a Town Clerk. The Town Clerk explained that this could exclude a potentially excellent candidate,

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there is adequate public transport to Aylesbury, and it is feasible to walk or cycle around Buckingham.

Councillors voted unanimously to accept the recommendations.

846/21 Chair's announcements

Mayor-Making event 10th June. Please ensure replies reach The Events Co-ordinator by 23rd May 2022.

847/21 Date of next meetings:

Annual Statutory Meeting: 30th May 2022
Full Council: 30th May 2022
Interim Council: 27th June 2022

Meeting closed at 19:54pm

Signed

Date