



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Full Council

Held on Monday 12th February 2024 at 7.00 pm

At the Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye. HR9 5HL

Present: Councillor L Stark – Chair
Councillors C Bartrum, M Boylan, D Ciolte, V Coker, L Delves, S Foreman,
S Freer, D Lister, E O’Driscoll, B Pope, M Setchfield, R Taylor, J Utting, J Vidler and,
J Winder.

In attendance: Carla Boyles – Town Clerk

There were three members of the public present, and no members of the press

24/02#01 Apologies for Absence

[Local Government Act 1972 S85 \(1\)](#)

To receive and approve any apologies for absence

Councillor K Fowler and C Lodea.

RESOLVED – To accept the apologies given.

24/02#02 Declarations of Interest

[Local Authorities \(Model Code of Conduct\) Order 2007 SI No. 1159](#)

To receive Councillors’ declarations of interest in items for discussion.

Councillor Taylor declared an ‘Other Registrable Interest’ in Agenda Item 24/02#09, Amenities Sub-Committee as he is the Chair of the two groups being considered. Councillor Taylor declared a ‘Non-Registrable Interest’ in Agenda Item 24/02#09, Planning & Development Sub-Committee as he is the Tree Warden.

24/02#03 Applications for Dispensations

To receive Councillors’ applications for dispensations.

None

24/02#04 Report from Ross Police

To receive a verbal report from a representative of the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

No Police representative was in attendance and no report had been received. Some proposed dates had now been received from the Police for a daytime meeting and these would be circulated to determine availability. Lack of attendance or report for Town Council meetings would be raised with the Police.

24/02#05 Herefordshire Councillor Ward Enquiries [maximum time allowed 15 minutes].

Town Council Members to raise issues with the Ward Councillors, on matters to be dealt with at County level.

A question was asked regarding whether Herefordshire Council will be funding the shortfall for CCTV monitoring after the withdrawal of funding by Hereford City Council. A BBC news article had been published suggesting Herefordshire Council may fund the shortfall. Cllr O’Driscoll confirmed that a further meeting to discuss CCTV was currently being arranged and details were awaited. It was suggested that a future Safer Streets grant application could be made to apply for a Police linked radio system similar to Herefords to be used by local businesses.

24/02#06 Public Participation

[Standing Orders Clause 3 \(e, f, g & h\)](#)

Members of the public requested support in trying to get a safe way of crossing installed across the A449 to enable residents to visit the businesses on the other side of the road. This road is the responsibility of National Highways and it was suggested for the residents to contact MP Jesse Norman for his assistance in this matter and an update on progress with his previous discussions about this. The Town Clerk would contact National Highways to request this issue be looked at and an item on the next Planning & Development Sub-Committee agenda to review the S106 wishlist would be included in order to consider this for inclusion.

7.19pm Two members of the public left the meeting

24/02#07 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public

[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed: Councillor Stark
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Utting

RESOLVED – that agenda item 24/02#23 - ‘Commercial and Staff in Confidence’ be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded.

24/02#08 Full Council Meeting Minutes

[Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12 para 41\(1\)](#)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Full Council held on Monday 13th November 2023

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Full Council held on Monday 13th November 2023 be signed as a correct record.

7.22pm Cllr Taylor left the meeting.

24/02#09 Committees – to receive and note the minutes of the following meetings and approve any recommendations;

Planning & Development Sub-Committee 2nd January 2024

Management Committee 8th January 2024

Amenities Sub-Committee 15th January

RESOLVED: To make a recommendation to Full Council to include an agreed annual budget for 25/26 for Ross in Bloom and Blake Memorial Gardens in line with the Council’s identified priorities

It was considered that this was a matter for the Communities, Markets & Tourism Sub-Committee, for discussion as part of their budget setting process for 2025/2026 as they are the Sub-Committee with responsibility for community grants.

Proposed: Cllr O’Driscoll
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Pope

RESOLVED: To make a recommendation to Full Council for the Play Working Group to submit an expression of interest to the Community Ownership Fund

Proposed: Cllr Winder
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr O’Driscoll

CM&T Sub-Committee

16th January 2024

Planning & Development Sub-Committee 30th January 2024

RESOLVED: That a recommendation to Full Council be made to request Cllr R Taylor join the Planning & Development Sub-Committee, but as a non-voting member.

For: 3

Against: 10

Abstentions: 2

The motion failed.

7.45pm Cllr Taylor returned to the meeting.

Finance & Property Sub-Committee

6th February 2024 - deferred

RESOLVED – to receive and note the above minutes as detailed.

24/02#10 Working Groups

- i) *Climate & Eco Emergency Working Group*
 - *To receive a verbal report from the Working Group*
- ii) *To receive and note the updated schedule of proposed meetings from the relevant conveners (for information only).*

Working Group	Parent Committee	Convenor	Last/Next Meeting Held
Climate & Eco Emergency	Management	Cllr Taylor	At a recent Ocean and Rivers event a suggested motion regarding the river was discussed. Cllr Taylor would draft a motion for Ross, to be Considered at the next Management Committee meeting.
Play Strategy	Amenities	Cllr Pope	A meeting is scheduled for 1 st March.
Market House Phase II	Finance & Property	Cllr Utting	A meeting to look at timescales, cashflow and grant conditions would be scheduled. A pre-contract meeting was due to take place, with work due to start on the 2 nd April.
Refresh Ross	CM&T	Cllr Winder	Planning for a Rubbish Festival for 2024 had started. It would be in October half term and it would be recommended to CM&T that it be a Town Council event for 2024, with the group setting up as a CIC for future years.
John Kyrle 300 th Anniversary	CM&T	Cllr O’Driscoll	Nothing to report.

24/02#11 Mayor's Announcements

to receive a verbal report from the Mayor.

The Mayor had attended the Pancake Day races and the opening event for Black Mountain Leisure, which had both been fantastic events. The Civic Service would be on the 25th February. All Councillors were invited and requested to let the Community Development Officer know if they were able to attend.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#12 Town Clerk's Report

to receive and note the verbal update from the Town Clerk.

- The areas suggested for new PSPOs for dog exclusion had been included in the draft, with any additional comments invited by the 26th February.
- Enquiries regarding attachment of Christmas lights to lighting columns in Wilton Road were still ongoing.
- BT phone box removal response had been included in Herefordshire Council's report, with the proposed removal of the boxes in Ross objected to. The response from BT is currently awaited.
- A grant application to Herefordshire DBid towards planters and the Easter event had been successful, with around £2,000 of funding allocated.
- The Rural Market Town Group survey response had been drafted, circulated for comment and submitted.
- The registration to participate in D-Day 80 on the 6th June 2024 had been completed. This would include a beacon lighting.
- An invitation to the Restore the River event in Monmouth on the 23rd February had been circulated. Cllr Stark would attend, but any others wanted to attend should contact the Clerk.
- The latest HALC training schedule had been received. It would be circulated and if any Councillors wanted to attend any of the training sessions, please let the Clerk know.
- Review of Talk Community – sessions were scheduled in Hereford and anyone wanting to attend should contact the Clerk.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#13 Finance – Income & Expenditure 2023/2024

[Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#)

To review the budget information for the year to date.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#14 Finance – Accounts for payment [Signatories to be Councillors Bartrum and Foreman]

[Local Government Act 1972 s150 \(5\)](#)

To receive and note items of expenditure paid since the last meeting and approve schedule of updated payments.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#15 Finance – 2023/2024

To review and confirm schedule of payments for 3rd quarter for Direct Debits, BACS payments and manual cheques.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#16 Finance – Budget 2024/2025 (report previously circulated)

To approve recommendation from the Management Committee Chairman to Full Council for the adoption of the 2024/2025 expenditure budget of £1,024,417.00 and set the precept at £594,062.00 which equates to a 5% increase for Band D properties, value of £144.77 with any deficit at the Year End to come from General Reserves.

Proposed: Cllr Utting

Seconded: Cllr Bartrum

For: 12

Against: 3

Abstentions: 1

RESOLVED – to adopt the 2024/2025 expenditure budget of £1,024,417.00 and set the precept at £594,062.00 which equates to a 5% increase for Band D properties, value of £144.77 with any deficit at the Year End to come from General Reserves.

24/02#17 Health & Safety

To receive a verbal update on the application of the Council’s Health & Safety Policy, consider any outstanding actions from the Audit and to report any accidents or near misses.

A report from the Operations Manager confirmed there had been no reported accidents or near misses in relation to staff operations. This month’s Toolbox Talk was on noise.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#18 Official Representatives on Outside Bodies

To receive reports from Councillors appointed to represent the Town Council on the following bodies

Condé Twinning Association	Cllr Pope	The Twinning Association were keen for new members to join.
Education Foundation	Cllr Delves	Currently taking applications from under 25s for help towards educational costs, therefore applications were encouraged.
Charity Trustees	Cllr Coker	Cawdor land - it was anticipated that developers may consider any affordable housing requirement to be an issue and therefore the Trust may look at the option of accepting property as an alternative.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

24/02#19 CCTV

To receive an update on the Herefordshire CCTV Contribution 24-25 and Safer Streets funding bid and consider any action required

A meeting of stakeholders had taken place to discuss how to address the shortfall in funding for CCTV monitoring due to Hereford City no longer contributing to the scheme from May 2024. The new CCTV project under the Safer Streets 5 funding was currently on hold until a decision on monitoring had been made. A BBC news report suggested that Herefordshire Council had now agreed to fund the shortfall for 2024/25. Clarification on arrangements and plans for future action would be requested.

24/02#20 Office Relocation

To receive a verbal update on the Town Council office premises move

The name change from The Old Chapel, Cantilupe Road, to Ross-on-Wye Town Council, Town Hall, Cantilupe Road had now been approved. A handover with Herefordshire Council had been arranged for the 20th February, with equipment and furniture to be moved on the 2nd March and the new offices becoming operational on the 4th March.

24/02#21 Town and Parish Council Charter

To consider nomination of a Town Council representative to join the Herefordshire Council working group

RESOLVED – that no nomination be submitted.

24/02#22 To confirm date of next meeting and propose items for consideration.

Management Meeting – Monday 11th March 2024 – venue to be confirmed
Items for discussion – CCTV and Office Relocation update

8.38pm Members of the press and public were thanked for attending and left the meeting.

24/02#23 In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item.

(Item 24/02#07 above refers)

Commercial in Confidence

- i) Grounds Maintenance Contract (5 years), 1st April 2024-31st March 2029
To receive the recommendation from the panel and approve the appointment of the contractor, schedule of rates and grounds maintenance contract

A confidential report was provided, which outlined the tender, evaluation and scoring procedure and the results, with the reasons for the panel's recommendation.

Proposed: Cllr Winder
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Lister

RESOLVED – to approve the recommendation from the panel and appoint Monmouthshire County Council as the contractor for the contract sum tendered for the period of five years, 1st April 2024-31st March 2029, with an agreed annual increase. The schedule of rates and grounds maintenance contract were also approved. It was noted that this was approval of the panel's recommendation and not quality assurance of the process.

Staff in Confidence

- i) *To consider proposals to change the contribution rates for the Councils' employees within the NEST Pension Scheme*

Proposed: Cllr Utting
For: 15
Against: 0
Abstention: 1

Seconded: Cllr Freer

RESOLVED – to approve enhancement of the employer's pension contribution for all members of staff in the NEST Pension Scheme from 3% to 5% for the first five years of employment and an increase from 8% to 10% from year five of employment onwards, to commence from 1st April 2024.

ii) To receive an update on temporary arrangements for clerking meetings and office staffing capacity and consider payment of overtime

RESOLVED – to approve payment of overtime to the Town Clerk on a temporary basis until staffing capacity has improved. Authority was delegated to the clerk to incur unbudgeted expenditure on temporary staffing measures if necessary, with need to be determined by the Town Clerk.

Proposed: Councillor Boylan
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.52pm

Chairman

Date

Mayor/Deputy Mayor Diary Engagements: 9th January 2024 – 12th February 2024

	Mayor	
Start	Subject	Location
Mon 29th Jan, 10:30	Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration	Worcester
Thurs 1st Feb, 11:00	Black Mountain Launch Party Event	Ross-on-Wye
Sun 11th Feb, 11:30	Ross-on-Wye Pancake Races	Ross-on-Wye