

Romsey Town Council

Chief Officer: Helen Klaassen PSLCC

Town Hall
1, Market Place
Romsey
SO51 8YZ



MINUTES of the FULL COUNCIL MEETING held on 12th November 2024 at Romsey Town Hall.

In the Chair: Cllr. J. Parker

Attendance:

Present:

Councillor J. Burnage	Councillor J. Parker	Councillor I. Culley
Councillor M. Cooper	Councillor J. Ray	Councillor J. Critchley
Councillor S. Gidley	Councillor S. Wilkinson	Councillor J. Urquhart
Councillor N. Gwynne	Councillor C. Burgess	
Councillor R. Kohli	Councillor C. Birkett	

Absent:

Councillor A. Goddard (A)
Councillor R. Theron (A)

Also in Attendance:

Helen Klaassen – Chief Officer
Police Inspector Stuart Ross

Public:

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PRAYERS

The Rev. Thomas Wharton said prayers.

TC016 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Theron and Cllr Goddard.

i. To consider a request for absence for 9 months from Cllr Goddard.

Cllr Parker **PROPOSED** and Cllr Burnage **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Goddard be allowed a 9 month leave of absence.

TC017 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

TC018 MINUTES

(a) To receive and approve as a true and accurate record the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2024.

Cllr Cooper **PROPOSED** and Cllr Wilkinson **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

(b) Matters Arising.

Cllr Critchley reported that the nest box and camera were being installed on Romsey Abbey roof during the week.

Cllr Parker **PROPOSED** and Cllr Critchley **SECONDED** to adjourn the meeting to allow Inspector Ross to speak.

TC019 POLICE INSPECTOR STUART ROSS

The Council welcomes invited guest Police Inspector Stuart Ross to speak to the meeting. Inspector Ross addressed the meeting. He noted that their team was focusing on shoplifting at present, which always increased closer to Christmas, but that generally Romsey was an area of low crime and that current levels were not unmanageable. Another area of focus was rural crime, this was more challenging due usually to lack of witnesses, CCTV/ANPR limiting investigative opportunities. Inspector Ross emphasised that any issues should always be reported online or to 101. Resources were often drawn from neighbouring police teams and in the same way Romsey resources were shared with them. The Police Station was now manned 24/7 by the response unit who used to be based in Hedge End. There were now 20 new offices, which would improve response times.

Following questions from councillors, Cllr Parker Welcomed Inspector Ross to the role and thanked him for speaking to the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- (a) To receive formal presentations from individuals or organisations which are an identified agenda item**

None.

- (b) To receive verbal reports from Borough and County Councillors regarding matters of interest to Romsey Town Councillors**

Cllr Gidley: Attended the Citizens Assembly and noted that it was better received when politics were put aside and people worked together. She noted the success of the current chair in creating an amenable working environment.

Cllr Cooper: Lusborough Lane had been resurfaced. HCC have offered all staff, except teaching staff, the opportunity to take mutually agreed redundancy, which is an indicator of the county's dire financial situation. Rumours abounded that a 2nd lane into Waitrose was being considered, Cllr Copper confirmed that, having spoken to Planners and TVBC, no such lane was being considered.

The Borough had agreed and sent a response to government pushing for housing numbers to remain at the current level, but that fines could be applied if developments weren't built as soon as possible following planning permission being granted.

Cllr Gwynne: Noted that cabinet was being held on the coming Thursday and that the benches for Ganger Farm would be in by the end of November.

- (c) Questions from members of the public to Town Councillors**

A member of the public raised a question regarding the South of Romsey Masterplan, that suggested that flat and retail units would be built on Broadwater car park and that the Crosfield Hall would be demolished to make way for car parking and asked councillors if they had agreed to that.

Cllr Parker clarified that the proposals were not set in stone and that TVBC would prepare an 'options' paper which would investigate all proposals and their effects.

Cllr Cooper remarked that car parking would not be reduced as there was not enough car parking presently, especially on Market days.

It was noted that the Borough Council were using its' land and assets to adapt to a changing environment and would improve the area, not do anything detrimental to it.

- (d) Questions from members of the public to Borough Councillors**
(e) Questions from members of the public to the County Councillor
(f) Questions from Town Councillors to Borough Councillors

Cllr Culley asked if any action would taken against the BC officers for taking advice from a weak barrister regarding the Churchill Development.

Cllr Cooper stated that he knew not of any action, but that they were appalled by the outcome and Churchill's barrister running rings around the BC's barrister.

- (g) Questions from Town Councillors to County Councillor**

Cllr Burgess enquired given the frequency of 'rare' events would the TVBC emergency plan be updated, noting that it was last updated in 2022.

Cllr Parker noted that there was already closer working with County, Borough and Town/Parish Council's and that there would be proposal to bring back the RTC emergency plan that Covid put paid to.

The meeting was reconvened.

TC020 PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive and note the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 3rd October, and 24th October(draft).

Cllr Critchley **PROPOSED** and Cllr Burnage **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted.

TC021 BUILDINGS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

To receive and note the minutes of the Buildings and Community Committee meeting held on 8th October(draft).

Cllr Parker **PROPOSED** and Cllr Wilkinson **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted.

TC022 FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

To receive and note the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meetings held on 22nd October(draft).

Cllr Gwynne **PROPOSED** and Cllr Critchley **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted.

TC023 ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEES

i. Southampton Road

To receive and note the minutes.

Cllr Burgess **PROPOSED** and Cllr Burnage **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted.

ii. Kings Chase

To receive and note the minutes.

Cllr Birkett **PROPOSED** and Cllr Gwynne **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted.

TC024 CORNMARKE SECURITY

Cllr Critchley updated members that Morrisons were working with TVBC regarding installing bollards outside their shop and that a date for the next Cornmarket meeting would be forthcoming. Cllr Parker noted that only one plan for a proposed layout had been received, from Cllr Critchley, and so would be the plan that the council would move forward with.

TC025 PRAYERS

The matter was robustly discussed, and it was noted that the Town Council had a long association with the Abbey and were involved in many services and events with them. It was equally noted that other faiths ought to be considered and that opting out of prayers at the start of the meeting when all were already assembled was not easy.

It was agreed that Cllr Critchley and Cllr Burgess would investigate the options for the council and report back.

TC026 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION MATTERS

i. Conclusion of Audit - following a recommendation from F&R to accept the Conclusion of Audit

Cllr Critchley **PROPOSED** and Cllr Ray **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the conclusion of audit be accepted.

ii. To receive and approve the payments lists for September and October

The September list was presented. October's list would be available at the next meeting as it hadn't been prepared yet.

The CO was asked to find out if the Risk Wizard payment included the licence payment.

The payment list was **AGREED**.

iii. To note received CIL payments of:

Application Number:	Neighbourhood Portion
21/02829/VARS	£35,378.21

22/02176/FULLS	£8,433.04
22/02671/VARS	£42,831.66
Total	£86,642.91

The CIL Payments were noted.

iv. To receive and approve the bank reconciliation for September

Cllr Gwynne **PROPOSED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Bank Reconciliations.

v. Grants:

a. Royal British Legion – Remembrance Sunday Grant

Cllr Burnage **PROPOSED** and Cllr Birkett **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the grant request from the Royal British Legion.

TC027 BUDGET 2025-26

To review and approve the budget and precept request for the 2025-26 year.

The budget was discussed.

The CO was asked to remind the Building Manager about the list of planned repairs for 2025 and confirmed that the raised NI costs were included within the budget.

Cllr Parker **PROPOSED** and Cllr Wilkinson **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that the budget be approved and that the matter of setting the Precept be moved to the January meeting.

TC028 NOMINATED COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE FOR HALC AND TVATPC

To nominate a councillor/s to represent the Town Council at the meetings of Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and Test Valley Association Town and Parish Councils (TVATPC).

Cllr Parker **PROPOSED** and Cllr Critchley **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** that members should be elected to represent the TC. Thus, Cllr Critchley would be representative for HALC and Cllr Parker and Cllr Wilkinson would be representatives for TVATPC.

TC029 GEOTHERMAL HEATING DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION: Cllr Culley **PROPOSED** and Cllr Burgess **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED** to support the concept of Geothermal Technology as an eco-friendly technology: Romsey Town Council agrees to investigate the suitability of Romsey for the establishment of a Geothermal District Heating Scheme. As a first step, the Council will identify and invite the relevant experts to give a suitable presentation to Town Councillors and other potential stakeholders within 3 months. The outcome of the presentation should indicate if a Feasibility Study should be undertaken and identify key Stakeholders.

In discussing the matter, it was noted that the scheme may only be appropriate for new build sites but not retrospectively fitted and that the systems could be expensive to use and get repaired.

TC030 RAILWAY BRIDGES

RECOMMENDATION: Cllr Culley **PROPOSED** and Cllr Burgess **SECONDED**, and it was **RESOLVED**, that Romsey Town Council requests the appropriate authorities to do more to prevent over-height vehicles hitting Romsey's railway bridges thereby reducing the danger to the public and risk of major disruption.

Cllr Gidley has written to Portfolio Holder Liz Bowman regarding the road signs not being visible as they were overgrown and reported that HCC were looking at ways to make the signs more impactful.

TC031 ROMSEY FUTURE

UKSPF: Cllr Critchley reported that two ideas were being pursued;

history boards and a mural on the wall of Boots. The footpath and barriers proposals were both currently stuck and not progressing.

The Crosfield Hall report was expected in December and a small working party would be formed to look at the scheme and the vision statement. It was noted that currently the response seemed to be reactive and would benefit from being proactive instead.

TC032 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Parker had attended a meeting for the Almhouses. Gas and electric costs had risen, and the cost increase was being recouped from residents. There would be a programme of updating the electric storage heaters.

TC033 CORRESPONDENCE

i. HALC email regarding virtual meetings.

The matter was discussed, and it was agreed that councillors should respond individually.

TC034 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor would be attending many events over the Christmas period, he hoped to see councillors attending them all too.

The meeting concluded at 9.39pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____