

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD ON
MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2008**

The Mayor, Councillor Miss K P Darby

Councillors, Mrs H P Durbin, Miss C J Geall, J F Cook, J Hedley, D R Poole, R A K Radford, Dr L E Radford, Miss J C S Sartin and N Wilson, Mrs B Wrangles

Mrs N L Villa, Town Clerk
Mr Stephen Davies, Finance and Administration Manager
Rev Jo Loveridge, the Mayor's Chaplain

Prayers - The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Jo Loveridge, led the opening prayers

Presentations –Mr Derek Farquharson, Chairman of the Herts QPS Accreditation Panel, and Councillor Garrick Stevens, Chairman of HAPTC presented the Quality Status Certificate to the Mayor/Chairman of the Council, Cllr Miss Kim Darby.

218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was proposed and agreed that all previously declared interests relating to the Committee minutes be carried forward.

219. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor invited Councillors to a display of portraits of current and past Mayors, produced by the Hertford Art Society, in the Mayor's parlour after the meeting.

The Mayor reminded Councillors that the 'Carols at the Castle' event was taking place on Saturday 20th December and all were welcome to attend.

The Mayor announced that she had recently attended the University of Hertfordshire awards ceremony at which Cllr Dr Radford was awarded her PhD. The Mayor warmly congratulated Cllr Dr Radford on this significant achievement.

The Mayor announced that she had recently been a guest of Judge Baker DL at St Albans Crown Court, which she felt was important in re-establishing the historic link between Hertford Mayoralty and the Judiciary.

The Mayor had attended a photo session recently with the Chairman of the District Council and the other Town Council Mayors.

A Civic Dinner, with a St Georges Day theme, is to be held on 25th April in County Hall in aid of the Mayor of Hertford Appeal Fund.

The Mayoral diary is now available on the Town Council website and Mayor expressed her thanks to the Mayor's Secretary and Assistant to the Town Clerk for their efforts in achieving this.

The Mayor passed on season greetings from Cllr Mrs Newton.

220. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 13th October 2008 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

221. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

222. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Councillor N Wilson moved the report of the Community Services Committee held on 15 October and 10 November 2008.

Minute 182 – Hertford County Town Gateway – An update was requested on the latest position regarding this project, which was pending the outcome of a Scrutiny Committee meeting at East Herts Council. The Chairman of Community Services and Town Clerk advised that the funding had now been withdrawn from Quality of Place and reallocated and therefore, this project will not be pursued any further.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Community Services Committee held on 15 October and 10 November 2008 be received.

223. DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE

Councillor Miss J C S Sartin moved the report of the Development and Leisure Committee held on 24 November 2008.

Minute 197 – Hertford Museum – Hire of Mill Bridge Rooms - Councillors requested clarification on the wording concerning the priority given to the Museum regarding the hire of the Mill Bridge Rooms. The Town Clerk confirmed that regular hirers would take priority over regular hirers of the facilities.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Development and Leisure Committee held on 15 September 2008 (this included the relevant reports of the Planning Sub-Committee meetings of 15 and 29 September, 13 and 27th October and 10th November 2008) be received.

224. FINANCE, POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Councillor Miss C J Geall moved the report of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee held on 4th November 2008.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee held on 4th November be received.

225. MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN

The Council received a report and an updated draft Major Incident Plan, which was recommended for inclusion in the Council's Constitution at a

meeting of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee on 29th September 2008. The Town Clerk outlined its contents, explaining that although the Town and Parish sector have no specific responsibilities under the emergency planning legislation, there can be an important civic leadership role for the Council to play in the event of an emergency. The plan was created in consultation with Hertfordshire Resilience and would be forwarded to them as Hertford Town Council's official plan for Major Incident response.

It was noted with some concern that this document had been made public with Councillor's private telephone numbers included. The Town Clerk acknowledged this oversight and apologised. The final version would be shared with Hertfordshire Resilience and other public authorities such as the District Council and Councillors were asked to clarify which numbers they were happy to include in the document for that purpose.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The revised Major Incident Plan be adopted and approved for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

226. MOTION – BUSINESS MOTION

Councillor J C S Sartin had given written notice in accordance with Standing Order 2.1(1.10) and moved the following motion:

'Hertford Town Council notes with considerable concern the decision by Hertfordshire Constabulary to reduce the hours during which the counter service is open to the public at the new Hertford Police Station. Opening hours will reduce from 108.5 hours per week to just 22 hours per week, severely limiting access for Hertford residents to their local police station.

Councillors regret that no consultation has taken place on the plans, and urge the police to reconsider this decision ahead of the planned 1st January implementation date.

This motion was seconded by Cllr Mrs B Wrangles.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Council approve the motion.

227. FINANCE – DRAFT BUDGET 2009/10

The Council received a report and recommendation from the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee, held on 8th December 2008. The report outlined the proposed projects which the Council may wish to undertake the in the forthcoming year and their associated cost implications. The report recommended a precept figure of £1,034,029 which represents a 4.9% increase on 2008/09.

The Finance and Administration Manager informed that Council that the Tax Base for 2009/10 had been finalised which had resulted in a change in the actual increase of 4.1% on Band D Council Tax.

Councillors stressed the need for prudence in the current climate and were keen to ensure that any increase remained affordable.

In light of the recent difficulties faced by some Council's who had invested in overseas banks, Councillors queried whether the Council should review its current investment policy and consider moving some of the Council's reserves to avoid the possibility of relying solely on one financial institution. The Chairman of Finance, Policy and Administration explained that the impact of spreading the Council's savings across of number of institutions would be a considerably lower interest rate and assured Councillors that the current banking arrangements are probably the most secure in the current circumstances.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Council approve a precept request of £1,034,029 for 2009/10.