

**Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Warminster Town Council
on
Monday 15th April 2024 at 7pm
held at the Civic Centre,
Sambourne Road, Warminster, BA12 8LB.**

Membership:

Cllr Allensby (West) Vice Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor	*	Cllr Keeble (West) Chairman of the Council and Mayor	*
Cllr Brett (East)	*	Cllr Kirkwood (Broadway)	*
Cllr Cooper (Broadway)	A	Cllr Jones (East)	*
Cllr Davis (East)	*	Cllr Macfarlane (West)	*
Cllr Fraser (West)	*	Cllr Parks (North)	*
Cllr Hawker (Broadway)	A	Cllr Robbins (East)	*
Cllr Jeffries (North)	*		

Key: * Present A Apologies AB Absent

In attendance:

Officers: Tom Dommett, (Town Clerk and RFO), Judith Halls (Deputy Town Clerk), Stuart Legg (Parks and Estate Manager), Patsy Clover (Committee Clerk).

Police: None

Press: One

Members of the public: 12

Visiting Unitary Councillor: Tony Jackson

FC/23/141 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Cooper and Hawker.

FC/23/142 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest under Warminster Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

FC/23/143 Chairman's Announcements

Cllr Keeble, Mayor of Warminster, referred to the social media post by Dr Andrew Murrison MP about the possible scope for a banking hub in Warminster if the Financial Conduct Authority changes the criteria.

FC/23/144 Questions

The answers to questions submitted to the Town Clerk by Cllr Jeffries in advance of the meeting regarding agenda items 7 and 10 were provided to all councillors by email.

Standing Orders were suspended for public participation at 19:02.

FC/23/145 Public Participation

Nick Pitcher spoke to agenda item 7 raising his concerns that the centenary event in the Park may not go ahead but recognising that the most important consideration was public safety. He suggested some potential solutions which could help with crowd control.

Michael Turner spoke to agenda item 9 reminding members that he had highlighted the condition of the squash courts last year and stating his opinion that the courts need to be refurbished. He believes that the number of squash players is likely to increase when squash becomes an Olympic sport at the 2028 Olympics. Criticisms were raised about the lack of engagement with England Squash and poor management of the centre meaning that the squash courts weren't adequately promoted within the community with no incentives to use them being offered.

Steve Howe spoke to agenda item 9 commenting that he believed that a consultation should have been carried out regarding the proposed closure of the squash courts in Warminster and that there should have been a discussion by cabinet. He added that according to England Squash's model, Wiltshire did not have enough squash courts.

Cllr Tony Jackson spoke to agenda item 9 advising that he had asked the leader of Wiltshire Council for the minutes of their Culture, Community and Leisure Board. He is concerned that the nascent youth development programme will be lost if the two glass backed squash courts are removed from the sports centre.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 19:14.

The Chairman requested to move agenda item 9 to the top of the agenda. Members voted and agreed.

FC/23/146 Squash Courts at Warminster Leisure Centre

Members debated the best way forward on this issue. Amongst the points raised in the debate were:

- The usefulness of glass backed squash courts for competitions.
- The importance of having multiple, diverse sporting facilities in Warminster for all ages, especially for the youth.
- Data provided by Wiltshire Council demonstrated that the squash courts at the sports centre, a community asset, were averaging around one or two users a day and that more recently one of the courts was being used for other purposes.

Wiltshire Council has a budget of £10 million as part of the rolling programme for investment in leisure centres by the end of 2024, of which £1 million has been allocated to Warminster. Concerns were raised that if the gym project was delayed, the funding of £1 million may be reallocated.

A proposal to write to Wiltshire Council opposing the closure of the squash courts using Cllr Keeble’s wording was made.

A recorded vote was taken:

Councillor	Absent	For	Against
Allensby			X
Brett		X	
Cooper	X		
Davis			X
Fraser			X
Hawker	X		
Jeffries		X	
Jones			X
Keeble		X	
Kirkwood			X
Macfarlane			X
Parks			X
Robbins			X
Totals	2	3	8

A proposal to support Cllr Jackson’s request and write to Wiltshire Council opposing the closure of the squash courts was made.

A recorded vote was taken:

Councillor	Absent	For	Against
Allensby			X
Brett		X	
Cooper	X		
Davis			X
Fraser			X
Hawker	X		
Jeffries		X	
Jones			X
Keeble		X	
Kirkwood			X
Macfarlane			X
Parks			X
Robbins			X
Totals	2	3	8

The Town Clerk confirmed that both proposals were defeated and, therefore, no further action will be taken.

FC/23/147 Commemoration of the Lives of Past Councillors

Members discussed the most appropriate way to commemorate past councillors.

Members resolved to take no further action and; therefore,

- **not to install a bench in the Lake Pleasure Grounds to commemorate Cllr Rob Fryer's life, and**
- **not to award a grant towards the cost of a bench in the Lake Pleasure Grounds to commemorate the life of Mr Peter Coventry, a former Mayor of Warminster, as requested by his family.**

FC/23/148 100th Anniversary of the Lake Pleasure Grounds

It was noted that ticketing of the centenary event would be essential for crowd control, safety, and security.

Members resolved that the Centenary Event in the Lake Pleasure Grounds be ticketed.

FC/23/149 Rights of Way Responsibilities

Members resolved to ratify the approach agreed with Wiltshire Council that the Rights of Way Volunteers may write to residents/ landowners encouraging them to maintain their hedges by sending Wiltshire Council's standard initial letter, and that if no action was taken by the owners subsequently Wiltshire Council would adopt a more formal approach.

FC/23/150 Road Sweeper

The council will have to make a decision on whether to renew the lease on its road sweeper. The renewal is due in June 2025. If the Council can secure a local sweeper waste dewatering and storage site, that would make retention of the inhouse sweeper service more attractive. In preparation for the decision on the future of the road sweeper service,

Members resolved to:

- **ask for tenders for a local site for sweeper waste dewatering and storage, and**
- **ask for quotes for a contractor provided road sweeper service,**

with the intent to continue with the provision of an inhouse service.

FC/23/151 Communications

Members agreed press releases to be issued with the following spokespeople:

- 100th Anniversary of the Lake Pleasure Grounds – Cllr Keeble
- Squash courts at Warminster Leisure Centre – Cllr Davis.

Meeting closed 8:34pm.

Minutes from this meeting will be available to all members of the public either from our website www.warminster.uk.com or by contacting us at Warminster Civic Centre.

Next Full Council meeting to be held on 20th May 2024. This will be the annual meeting.