***High Wycombe Charter Trustees***

***Mayor’s Parlour, Wycombe Area Office, High Wycombe HP11 1BB***

*Town Clerk: Tel: 01494 421367 Secretary: Tel: not yet allocated*

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| ***Mayor 2021-2022:*** | ***Cllr. Andrea Baughan*** |  | ***Email:***  ***mayor@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |
| ***Town Clerk & Treasurer:*** | ***Mr Joe Bradshaw MVO*** |  | ***Email: Joe.Bradshaw1@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |
| ***Mayor's Secretary:*** | ***Miss. Sarah Martin*** |  | ***Email: Sarah.Martin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHARTER TRUSTEES**

**HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE WYCOMBE AREA OFFICE**

**ON TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022**

**The meeting began at 6.04 pm**

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| **Present**  Cllrs: Andrea Baughan, Arman Allam, Karen Bates, Lesley Clarke OBE, Tony Green, Steve Guy, Orsolya Hayday, Mahboob Hussain JP, Majid Hussain, Mazamal Hussain, Arif Hussain, Imran Hussain, Matt Knight, Nabeela Rana, Melanie Smith, Nathan Thomas, Paul Turner and Julia Wassell. Joe Bradshaw (Town Clerk) and Sarah Martin (Mayor’s Secretary) were also in attendance. | |
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| 1. | The meeting commenced with prayers led by Imam Haseeb Jahangir  **.** |
| 2. | **Apologies**  The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from:  Cllrs Darren Hayday, Sarfaraz Raja and Katrina Wood.  **.** |
| 3. | **Minutes of the last Charter Trustees Meeting held on 23 November 2021**  The Mayor asked Charter Trustees if they had any comments regarding the accuracy of the minutes that had been presented following the last meeting and also for their approval.  It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 were a true and accurate record. |
| .4. | **Matters arising from the last meeting.**  The Mayor reported that the only matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting was the need to further discuss Agenda Item 6 (the Annual Reception) and Agenda item 9 (Voluntary Repayment of Furlough Grant to HMRC). Both of these items have been included as agenda items to be discussed later in the meeting |
| 5. | **Mayor’s Communications.**  The Mayor gave a brief outline of the highlights of the engagements that she has undertaken since the last meeting. These included her visit to Bracknell Forest to view the works of a Wycombe artist, visit to pantomime at West Wycombe (£400 raised), Christmas light switch on in Micklefield, Mayor’s Carol Festival organised by Cllr Lesley Clarke at All Saints Parish Church, Wycombe High School Carol Concert at All Saints Parish Church, day out with Chiltern Rangers. Chesham Carol Service, Christmas Market Stall Teddy Tombola (to raise funds for Mayor’s appeal). The Mayor advised that her attendance at a number of other planned events had to be cancelled due to Omicron, The Mayor also advised that she will be signing-in the Mayor’s Cadets, inviting a number of local Mayors to visit the Parlour,hosting a visit by the owner of Wycombe Wanderers and participating in the annual Pancake Race in the Eden Centre on 1 March, |
| 6. | **Plans for the Annual Reception.**  The Mayor gave an outline of her plans for the Annual Reception which was now scheduled to be held at High Wycombe Town Hall on the evening of Monday 21 February. The Mayor advised that the Reception had been deferred since June 2021 and it would allow the immediate Past Mayor with the opportunity to thank those individuals who had supported him during his term in office. The Mayor advised that the event would also include the presentation of the Honorary Freeman scroll to Mr William Reid, the former Town Clerk. |
| 7. | **Voluntary Repayment of Furlough Payment to HMRC**  The Mayor invited Lesley Clarke to update Charter Trustees on the repayment of Furlough payments to HMRC. She also advised that following the last Charter Trustees meeting the Town Clerk had carried out further investigations and had consulted with the Association of Charter Trustee Towns. A copy of his findings had been circulated to Charter Trustees prior to the meeting. Lesley Clarke opened the debate and recommended to Charter Trustees that the Town Clerk be instructed to write to HMRC to offer to return the funds. Tony Green felt that hindsight is a wonderful thing and if Charter Trustees had insisted that the Mayor’s Secretary came into work when there was no work for her to do it would have been most difficult for both parties. He mentioned that during the early part of the pandemic that the Mayor’s Secretary was in the North East caring for her elderly mother. Furthermore there was no opportunity for her to carry out any other duties and it would not have been morally good for her or the Charter Trustees to have her sitting in an office with no work to do. He suggested that we write to HMRC and let them know that we have made an error in claiming and then await their reply. Arif Hussain questioned whether or not HMRC were aware of the circumstances of the case . Steve Guy questioned the wording of the recommendation. Paul Turner suggested that we amend the wording and seek a response by a certain date. Nathan Thomas agreed with the changes to the wording suggested by Steve Guy and Paul Turner. Majid Hussain questioned whether it was morally acceptable for Charter Trustees to retain the funding as it was his view that the funds should be returned to HMRC Lesley Clarke suggested that she prepares alternative wording for the draft letter which would incorporate the suggested changes for the Town Clerk to send to HMRC. Mahboob Hussain seconded the proposal. Melanie Smith commented that she agreed with Lesley Clarke but advised that HMRC were not always good with their responses and may not reply at all but that we should do the right thing and return the money directly to HMRC in accordance with the government advice. Arman Alam asked what would happen if HMRC did not reply at what point would we decide what to do with the money. Julia Wassell felt that we should be totally honest with HMRC and also suggest that the money might be spent to projects in the local community.  First vote – recommendation that Furlough Payment is returned directly to HMRC  **7 in favour - 8 against - 3 abstained.**  Second vote:- recommendation that Town Clerk writes to HMRC advising them that the Charter Trustees applied for a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme based on advice from our accountant but given that the member of staff’s funding had already been budgeted for in the 2020/21 Precept that if we need to to return the funds to HMRC. If we do not receive a response from you by 31 July 2022 we will retain the funds in our bank account.  **14 in favour – 3 against – 1 abstained.** |

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| 8. | **Appointment of Mayor for the Mayoral Year 2022/23**  The Mayor advised that it was now approaching the time for Charter Trustees to consider who they wish to nominate to be her successor for the Mayoral Year 2022/23. She advised that The Town Clerk will be sending out an email on 19 January to remind Charter Trustees about the election process. The Town Clerk will be asking fo nominations to be submitted to him in writing by Friday 18 February 2022 in order for Charter Trustees to select the Mayor elect at the next meeting of the Charter Trustees on Tuesday 1 March 2022.  Julia Wassell questioned whether the convention was that the longest serving Charter Trustee be appointed as Mayor. Matt Knight advised that he would be voting for the longest serving candidate who had been put forward as a nomination. Lesley Clarke advised that the Town Clerk would be sending out a list of CTs in seniority order. Tony Green advised that it had never been the convention that the longest serving Charter Trustee who had not been Mayor should be appointed as Mayor but that the new Mayor should be selected on merit and that a number of other factors should be taken into consideration such as support to the Mayoralty.  Due to lack of time the Mayor advised that as significant discussion had ensued on the previous agenda item that there were no further issues raised at the Finance Sub-Committee that required further debate by the Charter Trustees. |
| 9. | **Minutes of the Standing Sub-Committee Meeting.**  A copy of the minutes of the meeting had been circulated ahead of the meeting and there were no issues which required further discussion by Charter Trustees. |
| 10. | **Date of next meeting**  The next meeting of the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe is currently scheduled for Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 6pm |
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| **The meeting closed at 6.57 pm** | |