

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
held on Thursday 14 May 2020 at 7.30pm
via Video Conference (Virtual Meeting)**

Present: Cllrs Jayne Stansfield (Chairman and Mayor)
Christopher Davies (Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor)

Ashley Bijster
Benj Emmerson
Clare Fardell
Eva Fielding
Bob Griffin
Helen Harrison
Shirley Holloway
Clive Parkinson
Guy Rawlinson
Matthew Stringer
Angela Symonds
Martin Trueman (joined late)
Maggie Tyrrell

Louise Powell (Town Clerk)
Wendy Sydenham (Deputy Town Clerk/Minute Taker)

(Cllr Pam Shipp – absent)

1. **To receive any apologies for absence**

None.

2. **To receive any members' declarations of interest**

None.

3. **To receive any representations from the public**

There were no members of the public participating in the virtual meeting.

4. **To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during considering of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted**

120/20. Resolved.

(Cllr Martin Trueman joined the meeting.)

5. **To consider and agree actions relating to staffing matters**

121/20. The Chair confirmed that the Armstrong Hall Charitable Trust, at its meeting on 7 May 2020, had resolved that with deepest regret it had no option but to accept that in the current circumstances there was not sufficient work to occupy the Hall staff and therefore it had requested that Council consider furloughing as many of the Hall staff as possible. It had

also been noted by the Trust that there was a member of staff whose contract specifically included work at both the Town Hall and the Armstrong Hall and therefore had requested that Council also consider their situation.

- 122/20. The Clerk confirmed that Councillors had received further background information reports from her in relation to the Armstrong Hall to assist them with their considerations. This included information relating to expected use of the building for the remainder of the year, the responsibilities of Trustees as per Charity Commission guidance including their general responsibilities and the need for a plan in the current circumstances, and also Council's financial position and liabilities, including an analysis of its current reserves. An outline of decisions that needed to be made had also been circulated.
- 123/20. Council considered the requests from the Trust in detail including a thorough discussion of the furloughing scheme. Cllr Guy Rawlinson proposed that Council agree to furlough five members of the Hall staff. These five members of staff had previously been exclusively occupied by work at the Armstrong Hall. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Clive Parkinson and unanimously agreed.
- 124/20. Cllr Guy Rawlinson further proposed that the furloughed staff would be paid 80% of their current salary as per the current government furlough scheme, capped at £2500 per month. This would not be "topped up" to 100% as this would involve an extra unanticipated cost to the Council for which there was no budget. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Clive Parkinson and unanimously agreed.
- 125/20. It was noted that the furlough situation should be reviewed every three weeks in line with government guidance and therefore a meeting of both the Trust and the Council should be arranged for three weeks' time. The Clerk confirmed that these meetings would take place by video conference on Thursday 4 June 2020, with the Trust meeting taking place at 7.00pm and the Council meeting at 7.30pm. At this stage the Trust could confirm whether the situation regarding the anticipated use of the Armstrong Hall had changed, and this could therefore inform Council's review of the furloughing of Hall staff. It was also noted that the Government had announced that changes would be made to the furloughing scheme at the end of July, which was likely to involve a reduction in the % of salary that it would pay.
- 126/20. It was agreed that when informing Hall staff of the need to furlough them, the Clerk would also inform them that the situation would be reviewed in three weeks' time and be clear on the current situation of the Hall.
- 127/20. The situation regarding the member of staff who currently worked partly for the Armstrong Hall and partly for the Town Hall was discussed. This post cannot be furloughed as the Council still needed the work to be carried out and part-furloughing is not possible at the moment. Cllr Clive Parkinson proposed that the Clerk be given the discretion to consider what hours were needed for cleaning work at the Town Hall and at other Council properties but the hours be negotiated down to enable costs to be covered from reserves. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Maggie Tyrrell and unanimously agreed.
- 128/20. Cllr Clive Parkinson proposed that Council accept the need to increase the Town Council staffing budget to cover other members of staff at the Town Hall who currently worked some hours for the Armstrong Hall but did not have this written in their contract and were therefore Town Council responsibility. It was proposed that this increase in costs should come from reserves. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Guy Rawlinson and unanimously agreed.

129/20.

It was agreed that the Clerk would need to clarify how the blood donor session, which was due to take place next week, would be staffed.