

HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Horley Town Council held at the Albert Rooms, Albert Road, Horley on Tuesday 24 August 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present	Cllrs	Samantha Marshall (Chairman)		
		Hannah Avery	Andy Dye	David Powell
		Jante Baird	Jerry Hudson	Simon Marshall
		James Baker	Helen Kitajewski	Martin Saunders
		Jordan Beech	Robert Marr	Rob Spencer
			Wayne Phillips	

In Attendance J Walsh (Town Clerk)
 J Morgan (RFO)

C 5238 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

RESOLVED: that the apologies of Cllrs Buttironi, George, A Kitajewski, and Stimpson be accepted, for reasons as specified in the Attendance Register.

C 5239 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to any items included on the agenda.

RESOLVED: noted.

SCC/RBBC ‘Solar Together Community Scheme’ – Proposals for the installation of Solar Panels and Battery Storage at the Horley Town Council Offices and Edmonds Hall

Members received the draft Briefing Paper prepared by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer in consultation with the Environment Working Group and Town Plan Delivery Group on the proposed solar project at the Horley Town Council offices and Edmonds Community Hall.

The Town Clerk firstly provided a general overview by referring back to when the Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and pledged to help make improvements to tackle climate change, reduce its carbon footprint and aim to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. This would be achieved through its ongoing environmental activities along with future projects to be built into HTC’s 5-year Town Plan. Some of these commitments had already started since HTC moved its electricity provider to a green energy supplier offering favourable renewable energy tariffs. An Environment Working Group had also been set up and initiated partnership working alongside the principal authorities, including helpful input from the RBBC Sustainability Officer.

C 5240)

She further explained that SCC (in collaboration with District & Borough Councils) had launched the [Solar Together Scheme](#) in line with its commitment to become net zero carbon by 2050 as well as to achieve other goals set out in the [Surrey's Climate Change Strategy \(PDF\)](#) and meet its target of 15% of energy from solar PV by 2032. It had been set up to offer high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage through its community group-buying scheme. SCC had further partnered with independent experts so

that reputable solar installers could be vetted and, if approved, bid for business through an auction which had subsequently taken place with the winning installer having been selected.

She added that after registering with the Solar Together Scheme, a Personal Recommendation for the installation of Solar Panels and Battery Storage at the Town Council offices and Edmonds Hall had been received, to include a specification and approximate costs for a solar panel installation and optional battery storage. It was a limited discounted offer (expiring on 27 August 2021) and an initial deposit of £150 would be required to secure the deal. In line with the Town Council's Financial Regulations, two additional quotations had been acquired from other independent solar installers (summarised as Contractor 1, Contractor 2 and Contractor 3 in the Briefing Paper).

The Responsible Financial Officer led Members through the three quotations received. It was noted that more information was readily available from Contractor 1 since a detailed questionnaire had been completed by HTC to acquire a Personal Recommendation whereas Contractor 2 and Contractor 3 had used satellite imagery to carry out an initial desk-top survey and provide basic estimates. From this, it was apparent that all three Contractors had provided varying specifications, ranging from 20 to 48 panels and these were not like-for-like quotes since the number of size of batteries and provision of extras, such as, scaffolding and bird protection, were not clear. However, in all three cases, a full site survey would be necessary to determine the number of solar panels required along with battery storage and other installation costs for the project.

A discussion amongst Members ensued and some shared their own personal experiences after opting for solar power renewable energy schemes, advising that significant cost-savings post installation had been clearly notable in their reduced energy bills. It was also pointed out that any surplus energy generated could be exported back to the National Grid through a customer's supplier with the recordings taken from a compatible smart meter. Noting that HTC's electricity consumption was generally low, the building might be sufficiently powered with back-up battery storage as long as the overall specification for the building was adequate and this would need to be determined from each site survey.

The Town Clerk further explained that part-funding for the solar project had been progressed through a registration with the ['Surrey Your Fund Scheme'](#) and the first stage of the process had been followed by registering the proposal on the [Commonplace Map](#). Support for the project had also been shared widely on the HTC Website, eNewsletter and other social media platforms with a positive response received so far. Residents had also been canvassed through the eNewsletter with 75% of respondents in favour of the proposals.

The Responsible Financial Officer summarised the Town Council's financial position for Members, explaining that general reserves were low and needed to be rebuilt. However, a sum from the 'Parks & Playgrounds' earmarked fund could be vired to the 'Edmonds Hall' earmarked fund to cover the solar project. In turn, some existing CIL funding could be used to finance other community projects involving upgrades of outdoor spaces and infrastructure.

After Members made their deliberations, it was agreed that the solar project should be progressed to meet the Town Council's commitments to tackle climate change. However, more information was required to evaluate the estimates from all three contractors. As a starting point, the initial deposit of £150 would be paid through the 'Solar Together Scheme' so that the site survey could be carried out and this information would be used to seek more accurate quotations from all interested contractors. This was considered to be a necessary requirement and the Town Council would not proceed to making any formal

instruction until three accurate quotations had been received for Members to consider further at a later date.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council takes forward proposals for installing Solar Panels and the Battery Storage at the Horley Town Council Offices and Edmonds Community Hall, subject to more information being received from the interested installers and more accurate quotations received.

RESOLVED: That the virement of funds from the Parks & Playgrounds earmarked fund to the Edmonds Hall fund be used to fund the total cost of the solar project (capped at 15k), be agreed in principle (subject to the appointment of the selected installer being approved at a later date). (Proposer: Cllr Helen Kitajewski, Seconder: Cllr Martin Saunders).

RESOLVED: That the sum of £150 in respect of the initial deposit for a more detailed site survey for the solar project through the 'Solar Together Scheme', be approved. (Proposer: Cllr Jordan Beech, Seconder: Cllr James Baker).

RESOLVED: That the quotation and information received from the site survey through 'Solar Together Scheme' be used to acquire two additional estimates for further consideration.

RESOLVED: That the registration of the renewable energy project with the 'SCC Your Fund' Community Scheme for a part-funding application towards the total cost of the project, be ratified.

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Date of Next Meeting – 7 September 2021