**Heybridge Basin Parish Council**

**Minutes of the first and Annual meeting of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council held remotely on 7th May 2020, at 12:30pm**.

**Present**

**Councillors:** Michael R Edwards

Brian E Harker

Jenny Sjollema

**Officers:** Mr Paul Dodson, Director of Strategy Performance & Governance, Maldon District Council (MDC)

Cheryl Hughes, Programmes, Performance & Governance Manager, MDC

Simon Quelch, Monitoring Officer, MDC

Berna Casey, Committee Services, MDC (Clerk to the meeting)

1. **Election of Chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year. The elected Chairman to make the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

In light of this meeting being the first meeting of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council and in the absence of a Chairman Mr Paul Dodson, Director of Strategy Performance & Governance at Maldon District Council opened the meeting. He welcomed all to the first meeting and in accordance with remote meeting etiquette asked all members present to introduce themselves. He then took the meeting through the first Item of business to appoint a Chairman by calling for nominations to this role.

Councillor M Edwards nominated Councillor B E Harker and this was duly seconded by Councillor J Sjollema.

Mr Dodson then declared Councillor Harker elected as Chairman of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council for the remainder of the municipal year and handed the business of the meeting to the Chairman.

In accordance with advice from the Monitoring Officer it was noted that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form would be signed off by the elected Chairman and lodged with the Parish clerk.

**RESOLVED** the appointment of Councillor B E Harker to the role of Chairman of Heybridge Basin Parish Council.

1. **Appointment of a Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year**

The Chairman Councillor Harker introduced himself and went through the new working practices and etiquette in place for remote meetings. He then asked all Officers present to introduce themselves.

On completion of the aforementioned issues the Chairman addressed Item 2 on the agenda and called for nominations to the role of Vice-Chairman for Heybridge Basin Parish Council. From the chair he nominated Councillor J Sjollema and this was seconded by Councillor Edwards.

The Chairman then declared Councillor J Sjollema elected as Vice-Chairman for Heybridge Basin Parish Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

In accordance with advice from the Monitoring Officer at Maldon District Council it was noted that the Declaration of Acceptance form would be signed by the elected Vice-Chairman and lodged with the Parish Clerk.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor J Sjollema be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Heybridge Basin Parish Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

1. **Adopt a model code of conduct in same terms of Maldon District Council**

The Chairman, referring to appendix B on Agenda Item 3 proposed that the model Code of Conduct in the same terms of Maldon District Council be adopted. This was seconded by Councillor Edwards.

**RESOLVED** that the model code of conduct in the same terms as Maldon District Council be adopted by Heybridge Basin Parish Council.

1. **Declarations of interests**

Councillor B E Harker declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council referendum Team.

Councillor M R Edwards declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Heybridge Parish Council.

Councillor J Sjollema declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council referendum Team.

1. **Appointment of a Clerk and Proper Officer, and Responsible Financial Officer**

The Chairman advised the meeting that following interviews on Tuesday 5th May 2020 Mr John Watson was the preferred candidate for the position of Clerk and Proper Officer, and Responsible Financial Officer for Heybridge Basin Parish Council. The Chairman then put the proposal to agree this appointment to the meeting. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that Mr John Watson be appointed as Clerk, and Proper Officer, and Responsible Financial Officer for the Heybridge Basin Parish Council.

1. **Delegation of all decisions of Heybridge Basin Parish to the clerk in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman, other than budgetary issues (prohibited by section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972)**

The Chairman then put the proposal that all decisions of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council be delegated to the duly appointed clerk in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, other than budgetary issues (prohibited by section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972) to the meeting for agreement. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** the Delegation of all decisions of Heybridge Basin Parish to the clerk in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman, other than budgetary issues (prohibited by section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972).

1. **Remote public attendance and participation in writing**

The Chairman informed the meeting that in accordance with the procedure around public participation at remote meetings a written question had been received. This was from a Mr Bill Riches that asked who the Heybridge Basin Parish Councillors were, how they were appointed and why the process of electing the councillors had not been suspended during the current crisis to allow for the due democratic procedures to be followed.

The Chairman called on Mr Simon Quelch, the Monitoring Officer for Maldon District Council to respond to the question. The Monitoring Officer, in response, advised that the new Parish Council came into being on 1st April 2020 in preparation for elections today, the 7th May 2020. Due to the pandemic the Government passed legislation postponing elections until next year. This left the new Parish Council without any councillors and therefore any means of making any decisions to govern the Basin such as emptying bins, managing Daisy Meadow Car Park, consulting on planning applications and other local issues.

In such situations the District Council has the power to appoint temporary councillors until elections can be held.    If the Council had not used its statutory powers the residents of Heybridge Basin would have had a non-functioning Parish Council for potentially over a year. The District Council had appointed Councillor M R Edwards, B E Harker and J Sjollema as the current Heybridge Basin Parishcouncillors on 30th April 2020 to ensure the effective operation of the Parish Council.

1. **Any other items of business the Chairman decides are urgent**

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 12:45pm.

Councillor B E Harker

CHAIRMAN