



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee  
held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 7.00pm  
in the Stonehouse Community Hall**

**Present:** Councillors: Neil Gibbs Chairman, Leigh Binns, Mike Davis, John Parker, Sally Pickering, Theresa Watt, Pam Swain, Carol Kambites

**In Attendance:** Carlos Novoth, Town Clerk, Richard Lacey, Project Manager (Relocation).

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*Attendees were reminded that the Proceedings of the meeting could be filmed, photographed or recorded.*

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**B/58 To receive apologies**

All Committee Members were present at the meeting

**B/59 Declarations of Interest**

A Declaration of Interest was noted for Cllr Sally Pickering in relation to Agenda Item B/68 headed 'Future energy supply to the council's buildings'

**B/60 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

The minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record of the meeting.

**B/61 To consider the Town Council's proposed Business Committee budget for 2020/21**

The Clerk had at a recent Town Council meeting, presented Members with a draft budget for the 2020/21 financial year and commented on several aspects including, a potential increase in the salaries budget as a direct result of the staffing review, an increase for the management of trees, increase in local grants to reflect a need to offer more support and the addition of a climate change budget heading to reflect additional costs of 'going green'. The draft budget also reflects areas of savings.

The current draft budget currently amounts to an approximate increase of 11%. Members felt that if the increase recognised the true cost of maintaining services to their current level and allowed for more realistic contingency measures, then it would be necessary for the budget to reflect this.

Committee AGREED to further consider the draft budget and make its recommendations to Council following its next meeting.

**B/62** To note progress regarding the move to temporary High Street premises due to co-location of Town Council and GCC Libraries at Town Hall.

The Clerk updated Members on the move to temporary premises. Members were grateful to staff for their efforts. The thanks were reciprocated for Cllrs help

**B/63** To consider the removal of the Willow Tree located on the footpath at the High street end of the Rest Garden

Members were advised that improvements to the Rest garden would include the planting of a number of replacement trees.

Committee **RESOLVED NOT** to remove the tree

**B/64** To receive an update on the progress of the planning application for Oldends Lane Pavilion extension and housing development and consider the Town Council's need to secure a Flooding report for the site in support of the application.

Committee **RESOLVED** that subject to the town clerk receiving a positive response from the Planning Authority at his scheduled meeting on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November with regards to the acceptability of the Council's planning application in relation to its inclusion in the Draft Local Plan, the Clerk be given delegated authority to obtain a flood survey from Hydrock (the council Architect's choice of contractor) at an approximate cost of £3000 in support of the council's planning application - full details highlighted in the supporting papers to Members under this Agenda Item.

**B/65** To consider replacing the damaged 'Armco' barrier at Oldends Lane car park

Committee **DEFERRED** the matter wishing to discuss alternative options to the replacement of the Armco barrier altogether

**B/66** To consider giving permission for the use of Laburnum playing field and Town Council support to a local resident wishing to organise a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in May 2020

Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the use of Laburnum playing field for the event and suggested that should further support be needed, that the event organiser contacts the Council's Events Committee.

**B/67** To consider launching an IDDEA Solar Streets Project in Stonehouse

The support paper provided by the Town Clerk highlighted the difficulties in providing the kind of support requested by the private sector company IDDEA. Discussion led to the critical question of whether providing the council's logo on the company's promotional material meant that the council was endorsing the company and its products; this was felt to be the case by several Members.

Committee therefore **RESOLVED NOT** to allow IDDEA to use the council's logo on its promotional material. However, in recognising the merits of the company's business model and safeguards to the customer, Committee hoped the company would do business within the Stonehouse community irrespective of the council's decision, as it had previously stated it would. Furthermore, the committee felt that it would like to provide support by encouraging the company to make its name and products known to the community through its Newsletter, Goodwill event and by attending a 'Green' energy event that may be arranged locally by the council at a future date.

**B/68 To consider the Town Council's future energy suppliers for its key building assets.**

In light of Cllr Sally Pickering's Declaration of Interest on this Agenda Item, discussion had been moved towards the end of the meeting allowing her to take part in discussion on the other remaining agenda items; Cllr Pickering left the meeting prior to the discussion of this Item.

Members expressed concern over the inability of the Utility Broker to confirm in writing how the energy provided by the companies producing the cheapest quotes, generated their electricity, albeit the Clerk's email correspondence with the company SSE, confirmed that their electricity was from renewable sources. Members raised the points that Ecotricity was a local energy provider, generated their electricity through renewable sources and ploughed profits back into renewables. They also considered that the additional cost of using Ecotricity was fairly minimal and questioned the Utility Broker's comment that Ecotricity could only service two of the three council buildings.

Committee therefore **RESOLVED** to **NOT** accept the Clerk's recommendation as detailed in the Clerk's support papers and that for the building whose electricity contract ends in December 2019, Ecotricity is to be the chosen electricity provider. Committee also **RESOLVED** that further work should be undertaken to examine whether Ecotricity can supply all three of the council's buildings with electricity and that further costs are to be sought and presented to Committee at a future date from Ecotricity and Good Energy.

**B/69 To consider the Town Council's support for Stonehouse In Bloom's application for funding of the Rest garden project through the Barnwood Trust by acting as the Lead Agency and Fiscal Agent to manage financial matters related to the expenditure of the grant**

Committee **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the Clerk's recommendation of acting as the Lead for the Project and as Fiscal Agent for financial matters in relation to the project.

**B/70 To receive reports from Working Groups:**

- Youth
- Events Working Group - Goodwill

There were no reports on Youth provided for the meeting. The Events group asked for additional helpers

**B/71 Date of next meeting: to be advised.**