



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee
held on Monday 28th September 2020 at 7.00pm
in the Stonehouse Community Hall**

Present: Councillors: Neil Gibbs (Chair) Carol Kambites (Vice Chair) Mike Davis, John Parker, Theresa Watt and Pam Swain

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth, Town Clerk; Member of the public

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

Issue raised by a member of the public in relation to the Stagholt Playing Field. The resident enquired about the Council's decision to reduce the grass cutting regime at the field earlier in the year. He highlighted the field had been used each Sunday morning to play touch rugby by between 10 and 20 players of all ages and abilities. He commented that the grass was too tall and had become unplayable - added to this was the fact that players had slipped on dog faeces on several occasions despite the club clearing the area before each match. He asked for the council to consider the problem with a view to potentially reinstating the previous grass cutting frequency. The Chair explained that the Committee could not make such a decision as it was not on the agenda but explained that he should speak to the Clerk directly and that he would advise on potential options. The Chair thanked the resident for raising the matter.

B/125 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Leigh Binns, Sally Pickering David Thorpe and Ward Cllr Mattie Ross

B/126 To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr Parker declared an interest in item B/137 (He is Technical Director of the Arboriculture Association). Cllr Parker will however be presenting the item; he did not take part in the vote.

B/127 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 27th July 2020

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record; they are to be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

B/128 To consider the latest budget position

The Clerk/RFO presented the latest budget position up to 1st September 20. The Clerk confirmed that problems with coding works appropriately had been resolved in the main. The Clerk highlighted several budget lines showing increased spends for the time of year but in particular the spend on IT support - whilst there have been additional costs in relation to the two office moves, the Clerk confirmed the need to closely monitor future costs.

Business Committee **NOTED** the latest budget report (Total Actual Net Income £190,594.48 and Total Actual Net Expenditure of £123,461.95)

B/129 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed

Committee **NOTED** and agreed all payments on payment list for the period 1/8/20 to 11/9/20 - Gross payment of £4866.80

B/130 To consider the provision of Christmas lighting for the tree at the front of the Woolpack public house

There was discussion on whether this was the right thing to do during the re-emergence of the Covid crisis, especially when some in the community will be facing financial hardship; in addition, the lights would be purchased to dress a privately owned tree. It was acknowledged there will be difficulties over the coming winter months and that the council were trying to help and support families as best they could through its 'Support Stonehouse' working group. With Goodwill being scaled down this year and businesses asking for an increase in Christmas lighting at the bottom end of the High street, it was felt that this was a good time to move forward with this part of the ongoing lighting project; the new lights would be used to dress a privately owned tree. It was recommended that if the lights were to be installed on the tree, there should be plans in place to remove and reinstall them at least every three years to take account of tree growth.

Committee **APPROVED** the purchase and installation of the Christmas lights prior to Christmas and ensure the recommendation to remove and reinstall them every three years were put in place. Cllr Parker abstained from the vote.

B/131 To update Members on an outstanding matter of a £500 donation made to Stonehouse in Bloom in July 2018 by the Stonehouse Dog Training Club

Members **NOTED** and agreed with the Clerk's action

B/132 To receive an update on Stonehouse Town Council's Climate Change Action Plan

Chair of the Stonehouse Community Climate Change Action Forum thanked all those involved in the Forum's work to date. He commented on the fact that the group now has more non councillors than councillors and that the council should see this as a positive; he also ran through a number of the Forum's activities and projects.

Committee **NOTED** the update and thanked Cllr Parker and the Forum's members for their hard work

B/133 To consider the installation of air monitoring equipment to establish a local air quality baseline in Stonehouse

The matter was discussed and it was generally agreed that this would be a worthwhile exercise to undertake but that it was necessary to gather further information on exactly what was included in the quote provided before making the final decision.

B/134 To consider replacing the ARMCO barrier located at the Community Centre boundary of Laburnum playing field

The Clerk presented this item and highlighted that he had discussed the improvement with the Chair of the Community Centre and that it agreed that it would enhance the area and that she would be happy for the barrier to be replaced.

Committee **APPROVED** the Clerk's recommendation

B/135 To consider the Council's revised

- **Standing Orders**

The Policy Working Group had used the previous Council's approved Standing Orders as a baseline and had made a number of minor amendments; these were highlighted along with the revision to the contents page identifying the NALC clauses in relation to STC's revisions. Two specific changes were requested - Clause 23 to be amended by adding 'and other parties as deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk' after the word 'agenda'; Clause 16 to include the words 'to council staff' at the end of sub clause 16(a)(ii).

Committee **RECOMMENDED** Council approve the amended Standing Orders

- **Memorial Policy**

Committee **RECOMMENDED** Council approve the proposed Memorial Policy

- **Grants Policy**

The working group responded to Council's recommendation that the policy should be revised to reflect the ability to consider both 'one-off' and 'revenue' grants so that ongoing support could be given to organisations that provide a community benefit. It was determined that organisation seeking revenue grants (ie grants spanning more than one year) would need to provide a short report each year they sought grant funding. Committee requested the working group reflect this change to the policy

Committee **RECOMMENDED** Council approve the amended Grants policy

B/136 To receive an update on the Stonehouse 'Active Travel' consultation

Members had no strong views as to the usefulness or ease of use of the software but had initial thoughts of it being a little clunky and that it was unfortunate that users could only make 1 comment at a time.

B/137 To consider the use of the Town's tree stock by the locally based Arboriculture Association (AA) as a training opportunity

Cllr Parker spoke to this item and explained that it presented an ideal opportunity for both organisations to benefit; this includes raising the profile of trees in the town, highlighting the synergy between the AA and the Stonehouse community, making good use of the communities assets and potentially receiving new young trees to add to the council's tree stock as a gesture of goodwill

Committee **APPROVED** the Arboriculture Association's use of the council's tree for training purposes.

B/138 To consider a local residents' suggestion to paint a Mural inside the pedestrian tunnel near Bridge Garage

Committee thought it would be a positive change and would therefore support a mural provided permission was given by the owner of the tunnel. It was agreed that Officers should determine the owner of the tunnel and then advise the resident raising the issue.

B/139 To receive the last quarterly report from 'The Door'

The item was not discussed - the quarterly report is to be placed on the Town Council agenda on the 19th October for consideration

B/140 Date of next meeting: 26th October 2020