



Minutes of a (Virtual) meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 25th January 2021 at 7.00pm using 'Microsoft Teams'

Present:

Councillors: (Chair) Cllrs Neil Gibbs, (Vice Chair) Carol Kambites, Debbie Curtis (Part of meeting), Michael Davis, Tim Jackson, John Parker, Sally Pickering, Jennie Smith, Pam Swain, David Thorpe and Theresa Watt

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth - Town Clerk, Ward Cllrs Mattie Ross and Gary Powell and, a member of the public.

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

A G E N D A

TC2534 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Leigh Binns, Dave Thorpe and John Parker for the whole of the meeting. Cllr Debbie Curtis is only able to attend part of the meeting.

TC2535 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

TC2536 To approve the minutes of the Town Council held on 14th December 2020

Council **ACCEPTED** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting; the minutes to be duly signed by the Chair at a later date.

(TC2543) The Chair was asked to bring forward discussion on this agenda item - 'To resolve to send an official response to Stroud District Council in connection with the 'SHIP INN' site (B/175)'

It was felt that the recommended course of action was justified bearing in mind the importance of the site to the town

Council RESOLVED to approve the Business Committee's recommendation.

Proposed: Carol Kambites Seconded: Theresa Watt - All in Favour

TC2537 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors

There were no reports

County Cllr Lesley Williams joined the meeting

TC2538 To receive reports from County and District Councillors

Ward Cllr Mattie Ross

- Flats at Elm Road are being refurbished
- Willow road Sheltered unit has been improved
- Wharfdale way play area fencing to be inspected by ROSPA
- Homeless person at Oldends Lane - the person has been visited by various agencies
- Leisure strategy will be about the whole district - public consultation out now

Ward Cllr Gary Powell

- Stated it was not possible to move the SHIP INN site from the HRA to the General Budget

County Cllr Lesley Williams (MBE)

- Suggested STC look at GCC's forthcoming year's budget
- The Local Transport Plan will be going to next Cabinet meeting - Cllr Kambites will forward a question re the Bristol road railway station to GCC
- Labour group have requested £50,000 to be put into GCC's budget to consider the physical and mental affect of Covid

The Town Clerk thanked Cllr Williams for her direct support in relation to the funding of laptops for local schools. Cllr Kambites thanked Cllr Williams for funding the walking festival

TC2539 To receive RFO's budget report including the bank reconciliation for December 2020

The RFO took Members through the budgets and highlighted several areas:

- overall expenditure was lower than would normally be expected due to Covid which may result in a total underspend of approximately £50,000 by year end,
- overall income had increased inspite of covid due to new rental opportunities and realisation of Market Town Funding
- IT - spend to date includes £3250 on hardware
- Professional fees - a further invoice for £2300 is expected
- Admin - £1921 has been spent on Covid related issues
- Amenity areas - spend includes abnormal cost re old chapel garden; separate income received for this
- Misc Building Hire - includes unexpected Network rail income

Council **NOTED** the latest budget report and reconciliation of accounts up to and including December 2021 (Actual Net Expenditure £228,192.83 and Actual Net Income £395,784.32)

TC2540 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed

There was no need for a payments list to be presented for this meeting

Cllr Debbie Curtis left the meeting

TC2541 To approve the 2021/22 budgets for both Business and Environment Committee

The RFO confirmed that the changes recommended by both Business and Environment Committee at their most recent meetings, had been made, resulting in the following revised budgets presented for approval:

- Business Committee
 - Gross Exp Budget £320,565
 - Gross Income Budget -£6784
- Environment Committee
 - Gross Exp Budget £36,300
 - Gross Income Budget -£0
- Total Net Overall Budget £350,080

The revised budgets reflect the need to accommodate the additional work required to support the canal project and ensure increased support for the Stonehouse Community.

Council **APPROVED** the budgets for financial year 2021/22
(Proposed: Cllr Carol Kambites Seconded: Cllr Mike Davis - All in favour)

TC2542 To consider feedback from Business and Environment Committees and approve the Precept for the financial year 2021/22

Councillors wished to ensure residents would not receive an increase in the proportion of their Council tax relating to the town council's precept. It was also agreed that the town council's precept should be lowered to reflect the decreased tax base.

Council **APPROVED** the Town Council's Precept of £336,995 for the 2021/22 for the 2021/22 financial year.
(Proposed: Cllr Pickering Seconded: Cllr Theresa Watt - All in Favour)

Council also **RESOLVED** to fund the difference between the agreed net budget (£350,080) for 2021/22 and its anticipated income for the year (£336,995), through its reserves (£13,085).
(Proposed: Cllr Pickering Seconded: Cllr Theresa Watt - All in Favour)

The Chair thanked Officers for their hard work

Cllr Lesley Williams left the meeting

TC2543 To receive minutes of Business Committee held on 11th January '21 and consider the following recommendations:

- To appoint an internal auditor through GAPTC for 2021 (B/173)

Council **AGREED** to appoint GAPTC as its internal auditor

- To approve changes to the Council's bank signatories (B/174)

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following changes to the council's signatories:

- Remove Gill Jennings (previous Town Clerk) as signatory
- Add Carlos Novoth (current Town Clerk) as signatory
(All other signatories to remain)

for each of its investments with immediate effect:

- Barclays Bank
- Cambridge Building Society
- Charity Bank
- Melton Building Society
- Nationwide Building Society
- Nat West Bank

(Details of current signatories and investment accounts as provided on each of the bank and Building Society mandates)

(Proposed: Cllr Pickering Seconded: Cllr Theresa Watt - All in Favour)

- To resolve to send an official response to Stroud District Council in connection with the 'SHIP INN' site (B/175)

See details of discussion and decision above

- TC2544 To receive minutes of Environment Committee held on 18th January '21 and consider its recommendations**
Council received and **NOTED** minutes of the meeting. Council learned of the much needed work undertaken by 'Homestart' with the community's expectant mothers
- Council **APPROVED** the Environment Committee's recommendation to award the organisation, 'Homestart' a town council grant of £2,500 in the current financial year
- TC2545 To agree response to Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership Travel Survey consultation**
- Cllr Pickering forwarded comments to Officers for inclusion in the Town Council's response. It was also felt that there was increased need for cycling lockers for the train station. Cllr Pickering suggested that individual responses to the consultation would be beneficial.
- Council **RESOLVED** to delegate the response to Officers and the Vice Chair of Council.
- TC2546 To receive an update from the 'Support Stonehouse' working group and consider its recommendations**
- Discussion was centered on continuing to support those in need with reference to ensuring that current advice directs people to the correct help organisations and ensure that adequate funding continues to be made available. It was recommended that the local voluntary groups are encouraged to apply for grant funding to both the town council and Stroud District Council.
- There was a concern that the most recent flyers distributed by the council through a third party did not reach all households. The Clerk mentioned that the council had tracked the locations attended by the distribution company and that he was not aware of any areas that were missed; Officers would in future make extra effort to ensure that everyone received flyers.
- TC2547 To provide Council with the latest position on the state of Stagholt Brook and to consider next steps.**
- The Clerk provided a detailed overview of the current and developing situation with regards the various flooding issues in and around the Stagholt Brook. Last year's storm damage (long bouts of heavy rainfall) affected the integrity of the banks towards the upper part of the Brook. More recent bouts of heavy rainfall/storm damage occurred on the 23rd December '20. The latest damage resulted in a narrowing of the public footpath with the rear boundary of properties located in Little Australia. The town council had received two calls from concerned neighbours.
- The Clerk stated that he had met with the Water Engineer from Stroud District Council (SDC) and was seeking advice; owing to the

latest damage however, the water engineer was very concerned and had advised for the town council to act as quickly as possible. The Clerk has raised the issue with the town council's insurers and is awaiting a response. Discussions have taken place with a contractor about a possible solution. Further professional advice is currently being sought.

It was suggested that SDC should be contacted about the application of rural SUDS to Horsemarling lane.

Council **AGREED** with the Officer's recommendation to set up an immediate working party to look at the problem. It was agreed for the working party to include Cllrs Neil Gibbs and Theresa Watt and the Clerk.

TC2548 To receive the Clerk's latest update

Council **NOTED** the Clerk's report

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from the following items as due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC2549 To approve the recommendation by Business Committee in relation to staff payments

Council **APPROVED** the Business Committees recommendation under Agenda Item B/180

Council **NOTED** the following decisions by HR Committee relating to Agenda item 6 at its meeting in December 2020

TC2550 To note the date of the next Town Council Meeting: 15th February 2021