



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee  
held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.00pm  
Virtual meeting held on Microsoft TEAMS**

**Present:** Councillors: Leigh Binns, Mike Davis, Neil Gibbs (Chair) Carol Kambites (Vice Chair), Sally Pickering, Pam Swain and Theresa Watt

**In Attendance:** Carlos Novoth, Town Clerk; County Councillor Lesley Williams and a Member of the Public

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

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Councillor Lesley Williams highlighted that she has provided Maidenhill School access to the 'Growing your communities' fund for IT equipment. She commented that Schools can still apply to Glos County Council for IT funding generally. She also noted that she was aware of a local resident providing IT equipment free of charge, adding to the much-needed distribution of laptop computers to children for their studies. The Chair thanked Cllr Williams for her contribution.

**B/161 To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr David Thorpe and Ward Cllrs Mattie Ross and Gary Powell

**B/162 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

**B/163 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

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

**B/164 To consider the latest budget position**

The latest budget position presented by the Clerk was still based on the latest finance report for the period up to and including November 2021 and presented to full town council at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The Clerk reiterated his comment in relation to the high energy bill for the pavilion and that alternative energy sources such as solar should be considered.

Committee NOTED the report

**B/165** To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed  
Committee APPROVED the payments

**B/166** To consider installing Cavity Wall Insulation to the Old Town Hall  
Committee noted the fact that the Council had found it difficult to secure more than one quotation for this work at this difficult time and that the quote received had been sense checked with 'Severn Wye Energy' to demonstrate value for money. Owing to the unlikely-hood of the Covid situation changing in the near future, Committee AGREED to proceed with the work and to award the cavity wall insulation work.

**B/167** To note the Council's working group 'Support Stonehouse's latest expenditure in support of local families in need  
Cllr Pam Swain explained that 'Homestart' had requested support from the council by way of providing six birth packs for vulnerable expectant mothers in the Stonehouse area. The total cost of the birth packs would total approximately £120. The packs would be distributed through 'Homestart'.  
Committee APPROVED the expenditure

**B/168** To consider the purchase of a second laptop computer to support remote working  
Committee APPROVED the expenditure

**B/169** To consider the final proposed Business Committee budget for financial year 2021/22 in support of the Council's Precept and make a recommendation to full council.  
The Clerk referred to his recent email to Members highlighting that with the decrease in band 'D' property numbers for 2021/22, unless the proposed 2021/22 Precept was reduced, the impact would be a slight increase in council tax charge (parish related) to residents.  
Committee AGREED there should be no increase to residents at all and RECOMMENDS a reduction in the 2021/22 proposed Precept level by £2,578, from £339,573 to £336,995. The Vote was Proposed by Cllr Theresa Watt and seconded by Cllr Sally Pickering - all Cllrs were in favour.

**B/170** To approve payment of a small business grant of £1,334 received from Stroud District Council to Stonehouse Town Football Club  
Committee acknowledged the unusual position of the football club in not being able to apply for the first round of small business grants and that the club were struggling to survive.  
Committee APPROVED payment of £1,334 to Stonehouse Town Football Club.

**B/171** To receive the External Auditor's report for financial year 2019/20  
Committee acknowledged the hard work and support by staff and locums during the 2019/20 financial year.  
Committee NOTED the report

**B/172** To receive a report on the internal checks on the council's financial transactions for the period April to September 2020  
Committee NOTED the report

**B/173 To consider the formal appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2020/21**

Committee RECOMMENDS Council appoints GAPTC as the council's internal auditor for 2020/21

**B/174 To approve changes to the signatories for each of the council's investments:**

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

The Clerk highlighted the immense difficulty in dealing with the Banks and Building Societies during the Covid crisis.

Committee RECOMMENDS Council approves the change of signatories

**B/175 To receive an update from the Canal Rejuvenation working group and consider its recommendations**

Cllr Pam Swain presented an overview of the Canal Rejuvenation Working Group's meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and its recommendation to Business Committee. Committee Members felt that it was imperative that the Ship Inn site be considered as a landing point for access to Stonehouse within the strategic work being undertaken by Stroud District Council; it has been recognised by Creative Sustainability as an ideal location through various past consultations and as such is critical to Stonehouse being able to secure a viable connection with the town centre. For this reason, it was felt that the recommendation be strengthened to reflect the site's level of importance.

Committee therefore RECOMMENDS the following:

*'that Stonehouse Town Council write to Stroud District Council asking for the removal of the SHIP INN site from the Housing Revenue Account and transfer it to SDC's General Fund so that it can be openly considered with other identified sites as a community hub and strategic link between the canal and the town centre'.*

**B/176 To receive an update from the 'Support Stonehouse' working group and consider its recommendations**

Cllr Pam Swain provided an overview of the work undertaken to support the Stonehouse Community to date through the 'Support Stonehouse' working group; this included the support shown to local residents at Stagholt who were recently flooded.

Committee NOTED the good work being undertaken and thanked members of the group for their contributions to date.

**B/177 To consider subscription to the Glos Playing Fields Association for 21/22**

Committee APPROVED ongoing subscription to the Glos Playing Field Association for 2021/22 at a cost of £100

**B/178 To consider the relocation of an existing bench and allocation of a new bench and sculpture at the Old Chapel Garden**

Committee APPROVED the request for a memorial bench, the relocation of an existing bench and the installation of a sculpture to reflect the nearby presence of the canal. It was acknowledged that picnic benches would be an asset in the gardens but it was agreed this would be considered at a future meeting.

**B/179 To receive an update on the Youth Service**

Cllrs Pam Swain highlighted the extraordinary work undertaken by 'The Door' in supporting Stonehouse Youth; the work done by 'Psalms' was also noted. The Door asked if the Committee would be agreeable to its staff supporting the NHS by using some of its contracted time to help man a local testing station - owing to the unusual circumstances, Committee felt this would be worthwhile especially as it would help engage with local youth.

The Clerk highlighted that since Council's decision to extend The Door's Service Level Agreement, the council had time to consult with local youths about future service provision. This work will shortly be commencing.

**Both the County Councillor and member of the public left the meeting.**

***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.***

**B/180 To receive an update from the Council's HR Sub Committee and consider its recommendations**

Members were updated on the issues raised at a recent HR Sub Committee meeting. Committee agreed with the recommendation put forward by HR Sub Committee as detailed under Item 2 in its minutes dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**B/181 Date of next meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021**