



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee  
held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm  
Virtual meeting held on Microsoft Teams**

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

**In Attendance:** Carlos Novoth, Town Clerk; Ward Cllr Mattie Ross and a representative of Creative Sustainability

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

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A representative of Creative Sustainability (CS) provided an overview in support of agenda item B/203 in relation to the need for a post of Tourism Officer to support Stroud District Council's successful Canal funding bid. She highlighted the importance of commitments from the public, private and community sectors and was herself working closely with Stroud Chamber of Trade to provide a platform for 'Visit Stroud'.

CS were initially looking for one year's funding ideally for a full-time post to set up and manage a dedicated website and media streams etc. To date Stroud Town Council have committed funding towards the post and Nailsworth have also shown an interest. Stroud District Council are keen to work closely with CS on this matter.

It was stated that a Steering Group consisting of partnering members would ensure that all interests were equally accommodated.

The Chair thanked the representative for her contribution.

**B/194 To receive apologies**

There were apologies from Cllr David Thorpe

**B/195 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

**B/196 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021**

An error was noted on the draft minutes - the word 'not' should be removed from the third line of agenda item B/185. The Minutes were otherwise **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record; they are to be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

**B/197 To consider the latest budget position up to and including January 2021**

The budget position remains the same as reported to Full council on the 15<sup>th</sup> February; a more up to date budget report was not possible in light of the date of the committee meeting

**B/198 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed**

Committee **APPROVED** the payment's list totalling £21,803.05; this included a payment of £6239.21 to Stonehouse Town Football Club in relation to the Government's Local Resilience Support Grant - this amount had been paid into the Council account by Stroud District Council specifically in support of the football club.

**B/199 To consider the Council's Scale of Charges for the financial year 2021/22**

Committee **RECOMMENDS** Town Council approve a nil increase to the Council's 'Scale of Charges' for the 2021/22 financial year.

**B/200 To consider Council discontinuing the use of petty-cash**

Committee to **RECOMMEND** to Town Council to discontinue the use of Petty Cash from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

**B/201 To consider adjusting NEST pension payment dates**

Committee **RECOMMENDS** to Town Council to adjust the timing of NEST Pension payments so that they are paid during the month they apply to; this will improve budget monitoring.

**B/202 To consider the council's future energy supplier for financial year 2021/22**

Committee **APPROVED** the award of the council's electricity contract to 'Good Energy' for the period April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**B/203 To consider a proposal from 'Creative Sustainability' to match fund a Tourism Officer post across the district's market towns**

The matter was further discussed following a presentation from 'Creative Sustainability' earlier during the meeting. There was concern the area might suffer if visitor numbers were to increase substantially although it was recognised that visitor numbers and its positive impact on the town High street was essential post covid. It was also felt that to achieve the sort of visitor numbers needed, the partnership being offered was critical.

Committee **RECOMMENDS** that Council approve a contribution of £5,000 for one year towards a Tourism Officer post that would be directly managed by 'Creative Sustainability'.

**B/204 To consider the review of the Council's 'Annual Risk Assessment'**

Committee **RECOMMENDS** revised annual risk assessment for approval by Town Council. It was highlighted that the most recent policy highlighted the use of a traffic light system for identifying the scale of risk. The Clerk stated that this would be used in future years.

**B/205 To consider the review of the council's assets**

Committee **RECOMMENDS** the full list of Council assets for approval by Town Council

**B/206 To consider an application for grant funding from 'Band Musical Projects'**

The Clerk stated that at the eleventh hour, the applicant withdrew his application - the matter therefore does not require consideration

**B/207 To consider amendments to the following council policies:**

- **Complaints**  
Committee RECOMMENDS adoption by Town Council
- **Community Engagement**  
Committee RECOMMENDS adoption by Town Council following an amendment to reflect the need to recognise and consider the different ways residents wished to be engaged. The addition of the following words were agreed as: **'We will use a variety of online and face-to-face tools and methods of engagement, recognising that people of different backgrounds and demographics are able to, and prefer to, engage in different ways'**.  
Members felt that a future review of this policy should include the potential merge with the council's 'Communications Policy'
- **Risk Management**  
Committee RECOMMENDS adoption by Town Council
- **Scheme of Delegation**  
Committee RECOMMENDS adoption by Town Council subject to the following amendments - replace 'Committee Clerk' to 'Deputy Clerk' and reference to 'Chairman' with 'Chair'

**B/208 To receive an update from the 'Support Stonehouse' Working Group and consider its recommendations**

A summary of the year's events was provided by the Chair of the Working Group

**B/209 To receive reports from the following groups and consider recommendations:-**

- **Canal Rejuvenation Working Group**  
A summary was provided by the Vice Chair of the Working Group
- **Stonehouse Climate Change Action Forum**  
A summary was provided by the Chair of the Working Group. It was suggested that the council should be advertising climate change grants.
- **Youth Services Working Group**  
A summary was provided by the Vice Chair of the Working Group
- **Communication Working Group**  
Work was underway to establish the value of the council's key lines of communications with the community
- **Recreation Working Group**  
It was understood that the working group had not met for a number of months but would do so to progress the redesign of the Stagholt playing field. It was suggested that the software 'Commonplace' could be used albeit, this did not receive widespread support
- **Business Networking Group**  
Covid has to date effectively halted the council's efforts in developing links with the wider business community

It was noted that the Stroudwater/Bristol Road Station Working Group had not been included. The update highlighted the re-submission of the 'Restoring your Railway Bid'; Stroud District Council were encouraged to take the lead albeit, the bid was

being pulled together by the Deputy Clerk - this was considered a significant step forward

**B/210 To consider the short term offer of a local advisory service for the use of digital IT equipment**

There was concern about the lack of information made available to Cllrs. The matter was deferred to a future meeting.

**B/211 Date of next meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021**