



DRAFT

Minutes of a Town Business Committee held on Tuesday 1st June 2021 at 7.00pm (Meeting held at Park Junior School, Elm Road, Stonehouse - Main Hall)

Present: Councillors: Leigh Binns, Chris Brine, John Callinan, Mike Davis, Carol Kambites, Kevin Parsons, Gary Powell

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth, Clerk

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

B/237 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mick Gibbons

B/238 To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gary Powell declared an interest in relation to agenda item B/243

B/239 To appoint the Chair of Business Committee

Cllr Mick Gibbons was voted as Chair of Business Committee

B/240 To appoint the Vice Chair of Business Committee

Cllr Leigh Binns was voted as Vice Chair of Business Committee

B/241 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 19th April 2021

Cllrs who had attended the Business Committee on 19th April had accepted that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. New Cllrs abstained from voting.

It became evident at this stage of the meeting that without exception, all Cllrs wished to remove their masks during the remainder of the meeting. There were no members of the public present. All masks were voluntarily removed.

B/242 To consider the latest budget position up to and including April 2021

Committee **NOTED** the latest budget position. It was suggested that Cllrs would benefit from a different type of budget report that reflected the actual costs were incurred and income received on a month by month basis.

The Clerk stated that he would look for and use such a report, if possible, for future meetings.

B/243 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed

Cllr Powell declared an interest in this item as he himself was included in the payments list. A number of queries were raised by Cllrs and answered by the Clerk

Committee **APPROVED** the payment list

B/244 To note the Annual Internal Auditor's report for 2020/21

The report was distributed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained that the report focussed mainly on governance arrangements, systems and processes. The internal audit conclusion was that the council had met the applicable internal control objectives; there were however a number of areas identified for improvement. It was agreed that a report would be presented to Committee at a later date to identify key actions.

Committee **NOTED** the report

B/245 To consider the Statement of Accounts for financial year 2020/21

The Statement of Accounts (Total cash and investments of £859,811.58) along with the Consolidated Balance Sheet, Summary Trial Balance and I and E Accounts were distributed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained that this referred to the council's accounting figures only and that they were to be presented to the national external auditors PKF 'Littlejohn' by the deadline of 30th June. The Clerk identified that there was a need to identify reasons for differences in spend and income that were greater than 15%. This information is to be presented to Full Council at its meeting on 14th June.

Committee **RECOMMENDED** for approval by Town Council.

B/246 To consider recommendation of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for approval

Cllrs working on the Policy working group prior to the election had confirmed that there were no major changes to the detail in bold type in either documents.

Committee **RECOMMENDED** both documents for approval by Town Council

B/247 To further consider the PCC's request for council to take on the maintenance responsibilities for the closed parts of St Cyr's Churchyard

There was widespread discussion on the subject of whether Stonehouse Town Council should take on the maintenance of the, soon to be closed, churchyard. Whilst it was generally recognised that the churchyard would be complimentary to the Town if maintained to a good standard, the town council would be incurring a significant liability due to the condition of many memorials and table-top tombs and the cost of grounds maintenance and other issues as detailed in the Clerk's report. It was suggested that the council should consider organising a 'Friends of the Church' voluntary group to try and enhance the route through the churchyard and discuss this with the PCC.

Committee **RECOMMENDED** Town Council approve the following recommendations:-

1. Agree to the closure of the 4 specific parts of the churchyard.
2. Resolve not to accept responsibility for the maintenance of the closed parts of the churchyard and advise the Parochial Church Council and Stroud District Council of the resolution with immediate effect.

B/248 To receive an update on the Youth Working Group's activities in determining the future design of the Council's Youth Services

Cllr Leigh Binns presented an update on the work undertaken by the Youth working group to date which includes formulating a questionnaire asking youth and adults about whether the youth's needs are being met, wellness and mental health etc. The questionnaire has now been formatted on 'Survey Monkey'. A suggestion was that 'Smart Survey' could also be used and that Cllr Kevin Parsons would forward details. The survey information is to be collated and used to inform the retendering of the Youth Services Contract later this year. It was suggested that the working group discuss their plans with Stroud District Council's youth services officers as they are currently undertaking detailed project work that should help form youth services for the next 20 years.

B/249 To consider providing local businesses the opportunity to advertise free of charge in the next paper edition of the Council's Newsletter (June/July2021)

The need for a hardcopy of the Town council's newsletter at this time of year was determined by the previous administration; it was considered important that the Council's Annual report should be publicised in this manner.

The Clerk suggested that the Town's small businesses should be helped in some way to get back on their feet and that a free advert in the council's next edition of the newsletter would provide this kind of support at minimal cost.

Committee **AGREED** that the council should provide support for small businesses and that provided there was some control of the advert size, the first 20 adverts could be added in the newsletter free of charge.

B/250 To consider the date of next meeting, Monday 5th July '21

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/251 To consider recommendations of the HR Sub Committee

The Clerk provided Town Councillors with the latest updates. Recommendations of the HR Sub Committee were approved but on the basis that both the Chair of Council and Chair of Business Committee would be informed when it was necessary to outsource routine works.

