



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council
held on Tuesday 17th May 2021 at 7.00pm
at the Main Hall at Park Junior School, Elm Road,
Stonehouse.**

Present:

Councillors: Councillors: Rachel Armstrong, Leigh Binns, Chris Brine, John Callinan, Michael Davis, Carol Kambites (Vice-Chair), Mick Gibbons, Neil Gibbs (Chair), Kevin Parsons, Gary Powell, Val Rendell, Pam Swain, Keith Terry, David Thorpe,

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth (Clerk), County Councillor and Ward Councillor Nick Housden, Ward Councillor Mattie Ross (Ward and Town Cllr Chris Brine attending the meeting as Town Cllr) and several members of the public.

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

The Chair offered the attending members of the public the chance to speak ahead of the meeting. A resident asked the council to consider taking on the maintenance responsibility for St Cyr's churchyard, soon to be closed; he highlighted that he had a particular interest in the site. The Chair thanked the residents for his input and mentioned that St Cyr's Churchyard was to be discussed later in the meeting.

TC2609* **To elect a Chair/Town Mayor for 2020/21
(Note! the agenda item should read 2021/22)**
The Chair made a brief introduction highlighting his term of office. In light of the importance of the position of Chair to the Council, he offered Town Councillors an opportunity to speak on the matter before the vote.
Following a majority vote, it was decided to hold a ballot for the position of Chair. The Clerk advised that he could not find reference to holding a ballot within the Council's Standing Orders.

Two Cllrs were nominated for the position of Chair - Cllr Carol Kambites and Cllr Gary Powell.
The majority voted for Cllr Gary Powell. Cllr Powell took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

- TC2610*** **To receive the Chair/Town Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office.**
The new Chair of Council signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office in front of the Clerk and was then duly countersigned by the Clerk
- TC2611*** **To elect a Deputy Chair/Deputy Mayor for 2020/21 (Note! the agenda item should read 2021/22)**
There was only one nomination for Vice Chair of Council - Carol Kambites. Cllr Carol Kambites was voted in unanimously
- TC2612*** **To receive the Deputy Chair/Deputy Mayor's declaration of acceptance of office.**
The new Vice Chair of Council signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office in front of the Clerk and was then duly countersigned by the Clerk
- TC2613*** **To receive Councillors' declaration of acceptance of office**
In an attempt to follow national guidelines for indoor meetings, the Clerk had asked each town cllr to attend the office prior to the meeting date to sign the 'Acceptance of Office' in front of the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that all Town Cllrs had signed the appropriate form.
- TC2614*** **To receive apologies**
There were no apologies
- TC2615*** **To receive declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- TC2616*** **To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council held on 4th May 2021**
The Chair stated that he was advised that none of the new Town Cllrs would be voting on the accuracy of the minutes as they were not part of the council at the time.
Council APPROVED the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting (there were 7 votes in favour); the minutes to be duly signed by the Chair at a later date.
- TC2617*** **To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed**
The Clerk presented Cllrs with a payments list and explained that a number of payments had already received approval but because of the way the software runs the reports near End of Year, they have had to be included again.
Council APPROVED the payments list totalling £29,207.44.

- TC2618 To confirm the council’s ‘Earmarked’ Reserves as at 31st March 2021**
 The latest Reserves report was presented to Cllrs. The Clerk highlighted the fact that this was the first time that the Reserves had been included in the finance software; there was as a result a time lag in processing the information onto the system. For this reason, the report shows several amendments dated 14th May 2021. The Clerk stated that the report is as previously approved by council in March 2021.
 Council NOTED the report
- TC2619* To approve year end accounts, balance sheet and bank reconciliation for 2020/21**
 The Clerk stated that the Council’s finance software needed updating and it was hoped that this would be completed by ‘Edge’ in time for the meeting. This was unfortunately not to be the case. The matter would be placed on next month’s town council agenda for approval
- TC2620* To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21**
 The Clerk stated that it would be ideal to defer this item until next month’s full town council when the council’s accounts would be finalised
- TC2621* To consider and approve the Accounting Statements by resolution and to ensure the Accounting Statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval is given.**
 The Clerk stated that the Council’s finance software needed updating and it was hoped that this would be completed by ‘Edge’ in time for the meeting. The was unfortunately not to be the case. The matter would be placed on next month’s town council agenda for approval
- TC2622* To review the bank mandate for the Council’s ‘operating’ account and agree bank signatories**
 Council RESOLVED to agree the following Cllrs as bank signatories:-
 - Cllr Carol Kambites (existing Bank Signatory)
 - Cllr Pam Swain (existing Bank Signatory)
 - Cllr Dave Thorpe (new Bank Signatory)
 - Cllr Chris Brine (new Bank Signatory)
- TC2623* To resolve that Council meets the eligibility conditions required for it to use the General Power of Competence**
 The Clerk confirmed that the council did not currently hold the General Power of Competence. Council would be advised once the situation changes.

TC2624* To approve arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks

The Clerk presented Cllrs with his report that included details of the Council's level of insurance cover and costs. There queries raised in relation to insurance cover for volunteers; the Clerk confirmed that provided the Council was in control of the activity engaged by volunteers, they would be insured. The Clerk also commented on the following issues:

- The Council was not covered against covid 19
- The Council was covered for third party claims in relation to the general erosion of Stagholt Brook but not for the repair of the eroded areas.

Council RESOLVED to follow the Clerk's recommendation to accept insurance cover for the period 1st June 2021 to 31st May 2022 only from 'Hiscox' at the cost of £6,295.62 plus an Administration Fee of £75. Proposed by Cllr Gibbs, Seconded by Cllr Kambites - all voted in favour

TC2625 To appoint councillors to an Internal Audit panel to review internal controls at the end of each quarter as required by Financial Regulations

Council AGREED for Cllrs John Callinan and Keith Terry to form the Internal Audit Panel for 2021/22.

TC2626* To consider the closure and transfer of parts of St Cyr's churchyard to the Town Council for future maintenance

The Clerk presented his report that identified a clear recommendation. The Clerk highlighted the fact that a decision was needed within a timeline of 3 months from the date the council received notice of the intention of the PCC to pass on maintenance responsibilities to the Town Council. New cllrs felt they needed time to consider the report and that they would benefit from visiting the site before they made a decision.

Council AGREED to defer the decision and that the matter would benefit from discussion at the next Business Committee meeting and Full Town Council

TC2627 To receive the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21

Council NOTED the Annual Report for 2020/21

TC2628* To review membership of committee and appoint members to:

Town Business Committee

Cllr Leigh Binns
Cllr Mike Davis
Cllr Kevin Parsons
Cllr Chris Brine

Cllr John Callinan
Cllr Mick Gibbons
Cllr Gary Powell
Cllr Carol Kambites

Town Environment Committee

Cllr Carol Kambites
Cllr Rachel Armstrong
Cllr Neil Gibbs
Cllr David Thorpe
Cllr Pam Swain
Cllr Val Randell
Cllr Keith Terry
Cllr Gary Powell

Human Resources Sub Committee

Cllr Carol Kambites
Cllr Kevin Parsons
Cllr Chris Brine
Cllr Mick Gibbons

TC2629* To review membership of working groups and appoint members to:

Policy	Public Rights of Way
Business Networking	Recreation
Climate Action Forum	Youth
Communications	Transport and Highways
Canal Rejuvenation	Events
Oldends Lane Development	Stroudwater (Bristol Road) Station
High street	

In order to meet with current Covid guidance, Cllrs considered it would be preferable for them to express their interest in particular working groups with the Clerk at a later date. However in light of the impending meeting of the Stonehouse Climate Change Action Forum (SCCAF), Membership of this group needed confirmation at the meeting. It was agreed that the following Cllrs would become members of the working group:-

Cllr Mick Gibbons
Cllr Rachel Armstrong
Cllr Mike Davis
Cllr Carol Kambites

TC2630 To appoint members to external groups as representatives:

Stonehouse Allotment Tenants Association
Stonehouse and Cotswolds Citizens Advice
Cotswold Canals Western Executive Committee
Stonehouse Community Partnership
Stonehouse School Trustees
Doverow Hill Trust
Chartered Parishes
Standish Partnership

Parish Cluster Group
Market Towns Forum
Stroud Tourism Forum

In order to meet current Covid guidance, Cllrs agreed to forward their interest in acting as a representative on the above mentioned external groups.

Ordinary business section

- TC2631 To receive RFO's budget report including the bank reconciliation for April '21**
Council NOTED the bank reconciliation for April 2021 with an opening balance of £266,707.90 dated 1st April 2021 and a closing balance of £414,319.21 dated 30th April 2021.
Council NOTED the budget report for April 2021 showing an actual Net Expenditure of £43,737.75 and a Net Actual Income of £170,351.80.
- TC2632 To consider the request for minor works to the 'Arqiva' telecoms mast located within Oldends Lane Car Park**
Cllrs entered into debate over health and safety concerns. It was agreed that further information was necessary before a decision could be reached.
Council DEFERRED its decision and would consider the matter at a future meeting once the company has provided a 'Scheme of Works' so that the council could fully consider risks associated with the scheduled works. Council felt that this was a reasonable request to make
- TC2633 To acknowledge receipt of reports from County and District Councillors**
The Chair welcomed the new County and Ward Councillor for Stonehouse, Nick Housden and thanked him for providing a written update. The Clerk received the update late on the evening of the meeting - it was however distributed to Town Cllrs at the meeting.
Cllr Mattie Ross had nothing to report
- TC2634 To note the date of the next Town Council Meeting: Monday 14th June 2021**

Cllr Carol Kambites asked the New Chair to express the Council's thanks to all those Cllrs that had lost their seat at the latest election, for all the hard work they have put in over the years.

The Clerk highlighted to Council the need to make an urgent and unexpected decision at the meeting in relation to the planned resurfacing works of the High street on or around 5th July 2021. Glos Highways needed an immediate answer on the preferred colour of the new tarmacked surface.

Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders and voted unanimously on the bright red option.