



Minutes of a Town Business Committee held on Monday 28th March 2022 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall

Present: Councillors Mike Davis (Vice Chair), John Callinan, Carol Kambites, Gary Powell and Theresa Watt

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth, Clerk, Ward Cllr Mattie Ross

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

Cllr Mattie Ross asked to speak with reference to B/385. She commented that it had in the past been generally understood by Council that business activities should not take place on the Town Greens

B/383 To receive apologies

Apologies were received by Cllrs Chris Brine and Kevin Parsons (Cllr Mick Gibbons did not attend as a result of his resignation)

B/384 To receive Declarations of Interest

Cllr John Callinan declared an interest in relation to agenda item B/394

B/385 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 28th Feb '22

Committee APPROVED the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting

B/386 To note the resignation of the Chair, Cllr Mick Gibbons

Committee NOTED Cllr Gibbon's resignation and wished to thank him for his contribution. Cllr John Callinan commented that Cllr Gibbons may be able to further contribute towards the town council's youth work but this will depend on his health

B/387 To appoint a Chair (and Vice Chair if necessary)

Cllr John Callinan proposed Cllr Mike Davis to be Chair of Business Committee; this was seconded by Cllr Gary Powell - Cllr Davis accepted the position - All voted in favour

Cllr Theresa Watt proposed Cllr John Callinan as Vice Chair; this was seconded by Cllr Gary Powell - Cllr Callinan accepted the position - All voted in favour

B/388 To receive the latest budget position

The Budget report includes Business Committee's financial position up to and including 24th March '22. Queries were raised in relation to income code 177 that showed a balance of -£145; the clerk said he would look into this. Also commented on was budget codes 1210/1 and 1210/2. The Clerk highlighted that when the original codes were generated, Public liability and Buildings insurance were separated unnecessarily. He advised the two codes should be read in a combined form.

Committee NOTED the latest income 'Actual Net' budget position of £356,801.66 and the expenditure 'Actual Net' position of £245,234.05.

B/389 To approve the latest payments list

Committee APPROVED the payments list totalling a net £20,974.51

B/390 To recommend the updated reserves to town council

The Clerk presented a detailed account of council decisions made during the course of the current financial year (one relating to the Tourism post had been mistakenly omitted). The last four entries on the spreadsheet represented four new reserves that were requested during the precepting process; they include £8,000 for Stagholt Allotments, £8,000 for the NDP, £10,000 for Court View and £5,000 for major projects.

Committee NOTED the approved payments from reserves and Recommends approval for the additional earmarked reserves totalling £31,000 as detailed above.

B/391 To recommend the listed budget virements to town council

Committee NOTED the listed virements as they had been previously agreed by Council

B/392 To recommend to town council the Scale of Charges for 2022/23

The latest recommended revision to the Council's Scale of Charges for 2022/23 provides for small 'sole trader' businesses running exercise courses to use the council's playing fields for their activities; this is reflected in Note 4 of the document. It was recognised that it was unusual to hire out open play space to businesses potentially free of charge but also highlighted that there was merit in seeing more people use the facilities.

Committee RECOMMENDS that town council approves the revised Scale of Charges subject to the following amendments:

- Note 3 - replace the term 'the 11th hour' with 'the last minute'
- Note 4 - replace 'may do so free of charge' with 'may be allowed to do so if they'
- Note 4 - add 'c. may incur a charge if a regular event'

B/393 To receive an update on and consider support for the Queens Platinum Jubilee

Discussion centered on the Canal Bridge Opening on the 23rd May. It was agreed to defer the matter to Council and that should Council decide to take an active part, the event should not be exclusive but be able to include the whole community.

B/394 To consider a way forward on Verney Fields

Cllr Rachel Armstrong presented a brief paper for Cllrs to consider. Committee agreed that further information was needed before a final decision could be made; Cllr Theresa Watt to look into the cost of maintaining the land and to establish whether the owner would sell it. Cllr Mike Davis to look further into establishing Town Green Status.

The following options were put forward as the priority of options - for town council to:

- to purchase the land
- establish Town Green status
- lease the land
- Do nothing with the expectation that the land is currently adequately protected

B/395 To receive updates from the following working groups:

- **Communications**
No further updates
- **Climate Change Action Forum**
Climate Change Fayre to take place on 3rd April - more exhibitors showing interest including GCC
- **Oldends Lane Development**
No further updates
- **Support Stonehouse**
A meeting has recently been held to discuss needs. Also, Cllr Val Randell volunteered to be convener of the group.
- **Youth**
The Door recently provided a quarterly update; future update meetings will continue to be made quarterly but as a stand-alone meeting. Meetings will be held with the community and external partners to discuss youth provision in Stonehouse on a six monthly basis. The Door have signed the new SLA. There will be a relaunch of the organisation's presence in the town with a relaunch later in the year.

B/396 To receive the Clerk's update

The Clerk highlighted the difficulties that will be experienced over the next few months due to the lack of staff. Offers of help were made and accepted. Committee NOTED the Clerk's report

B/397 To note the short-term change to Committee arrangements

The Chair stated that following a meeting between Chairs, Vice Chairs and the Clerk to the Council, there will be a recommendation put to Council for the suspension of both Business and Environment Committees and for the period April to July '22, there will instead be two Full Town Council meetings each month. This course of action is a direct result of the current staff shortage.