



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 24th July 2023, 7pm at the Town Hall

Present:

Councillors: Councillors: John Callinan, Keith Creighton, Debbie Curtis, Mike Davis, Marcus Dixon, Mark Edwards, Neil Gibbs, Gary Powell, Val Randell, Keith Terry.

In Attendance: Clerk, Carlos Novoth; a representative of 'Sportily'; a member of the public

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

A member of the public raised a number of issues in relation to ongoing issues around Verney Fields. The town council responded as follows:

The town council have submitted a considerable number of DMMOs (Designated Map Modification Orders) to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC); The majority of evidence forms were submitted with the applications but the total number continues to increase. The town council received confirmation from GCC that the applications have now been validated. The town council has over the past many months tried to actively engage with the new owners of Verney Field to no avail. At its meeting in June '23, Council agreed on a deadline of 30th June '23 for the submission of DMMOs to GCC. Unfortunately, this date came and went - submission of the DMMO applications were promptly made.

TC3080 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rachel Armstrong and Wendy Thomson

TC3081 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

TC3082 To approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 12th June '23

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

With approval of the council, the Chair brought forward agenda item TC3087

- TC3087 To approve a grant application from ‘Sportily’**
Councillors valued Sportily’s support for the Stonehouse Community especially during difficult times. The latest update from the organisation demonstrates a continued need for similar support going into the autumn. There was concern about the organisation being church based and therefore many within the community would not feel they would be included. It was identified from the submitted accounts that the Diocese had been financially supporting the organisation and held a very healthy balance. A question was raised as to why the Diocese did not fill the funding gap knowing there was still a need. There was a suggestion that, in making its decision, the town council should consider the application more in terms of its potential outcomes rather than about the overall wealth of the church.
Council **APPROVED** a reduced grant of £630 for the delivery of the breakfast café for the secondary school.
- TC3083 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors**
There were no updates this month outside of the numerous projects being delivered by the town council - these are updated through committees
- TC3084 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**
There were no Ward or County Councillors present at the meeting and none offering their apologies; nor were there any written updates provided.
Council **RESOLVED** that in light of the fact that there had been minimal attendance from Ward and County Councillors over a sustained period, the Clerk write to each to encourage them to attend future meetings and provide the town council with regular updates.
- TC3085 To receive RFO’s budget report and bank reconciliations for June ‘23**
The Clerk highlighted an issue with a salary overpayment of £1,715.82. This was caused in part, to the archaic nature of Lloyds online payments system and a change in the individual’s bank account
Council **NOTED** the bank reconciliation for June 2023 with a closing balance totalling £110,147.69.
- Officers noted the budget did not show a reserve payment of £5,000 for the canal grant nor the income from investment interests by virtue of the fact they had been inputted onto the Edge financial system after the month end being reported on. Officers were asked how they could ensure adherence to the £85,000 rule on investments and the main Operating account - Officers explained that the latest situation was largely down to timing of payments.
Council **NOTED** the latest budget report with a ‘Actual Net income of £193,725.46; an ‘Actual Net Expenditure of £91,093.38 and Reserve Movement of £8,536.98

- TC3086 To approve the latest payment list**
Cllrs raised the question of why the town council was paying for 'Tiny Toes' use of the Scout Hut when the agreement was for them to use Stonehouse Community Centre - Officers explained there had been a change to arrangements at least a couple of months ago and note that there would be no duplicate payments. Mention was also made of the relatively low cost of using 'Gooch' for the recent clearance works at Oldends Lane playing field. Officers stated that this was the amount quoted by the company. Discussions are being held with the company who is now looking to charge three times as much - this is being looked into. In the meantime, only the amount quoted by them is being made Council **APPROVED** the payment list totalling £26,681.21
- TC3087 To approve a grant application from 'Sportily'**
Matter brought forward - See above
- TC3088 To resolve to suspend section 5.2 of the council's Financial Regulations during August 2023**
Council **APPROVED** the suspension of S5.2 of the council's Financial Regulations allowing Officers to continue to make timely payments to suppliers during August on the basis that all payments continue to be authorised by two signatories and they are reported to Full council at its meeting in September '23
- TC3089 To receive the minutes of the Business Committee meeting on 26th June '23 and 17th July '23 and approve its recommendations:**
- BC 26th June '23 Agenda Item B/555**
- 1. Approve installation of Sky Broadband to the Workshop, Pavilion and POD**
The Clerk stated that whilst the agenda item does not state so, it includes the running costs over two years with SKY.
Council **APPROVED** the installation and running of SKY Broadband to the Council's workshop, Pavilion and the POD for the period of two years at a total cost of £1,796.40 (this equates to £24.95 per month for each location over two years)
- BC 17th July '23 Agenda Item**
- 2. That subject to an acceptable Business Case, the following facilities (Workshop, Pavilion and Hospitality Suite) are to be joined to the main sewage unit in Midland Road.**
Council **APPROVED** the recommendation made by Business Committee

3. That the council's earmarked reserve of £70,000 for the car park in Oldends Lane to be changed to 'Oldends Lane Sewage Development' and this reserve is used to fund the drainage works.

Council **APPROVED** the recommendation made by Business Committee

TC3090 To receive the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 10th July '23
Council **NOTED** the draft minutes

TC3091 To receive an update on the 'Tree Preservation Orders' (TPO) for Verney Fields and approve a consultation response

Town Cllr John Callinan had provided Council with the latest update including the reason for the re issuing of the Temporary Tree Preservation Order. The District Council recommended it advisable for the town council to send in a letter of support for the TPOs to be made permanent if that was the way it felt.

Council **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk, in consultation with the Cllr Callinan, to send in an email in support of making the temporary TPOs permanent, on the basis that the trees, currently under a temporary TPO

- are attractive and continue to be enjoyed by walkers after several decades
- Had great value to the community and the area and is benefited by the approach to their management through the Stonehouse Community Arboretum Plan
- Were supported by the countless residents within the Stonehouse Community who had provided clear evidence of their continued use and enjoyment of the land and the trees, in support of the town council's recent application to designate Verney fields as a Town Green and also, evidence provided in support of establishing designated Public Rights of Way through Designated Map Modification Orders (DMMOSs)

TC3092 To receive the final recommendations of the 'Community Governance Review'

Council **NOTED** Stroud District Council's final recommendations.

TC3093 To vote in a replacement Council representative on Stonehouse Community Association's Board of Trustees

Council **RESOLVED** to replace Cllr Mark Edwards as a Trustee of the Stonehouse Community Association, as and when he resigns from office, with Town Cllr Keith Terry

TC3094 To approve a response to planning application S.23/1310/FUL

Change of use from C4 (house in multiple occupation) to C3 (holiday let) - amended description 17.07.23 - Leonard Stanley House Beards Mill Leonard Stanley Stonehouse Gloucestershire GL10 3QY

A paper, detailing reasons why the recent application for a change of use should be objected to, had been submitted to the town council by an ex Ward and County Councillor, Tom Williams. The paper was well received by Town Cllrs and discussed in detail with issues. Tom Williams was thanked for his contribution to the discussion.

Council **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** to the application. In its detailed response, Council wished to emphasise that the planning application should be a retrospective one due to its current proven use and as such, the current application should be withdrawn. In addition, should the application be considered at this stage by the District Council, the town council feels it has material considerations to support refusal of the application; these to be detailed in the town council's response to SDC.

TC3095 To receive the Clerk's report

The Clerk provided a brief update in particular noting the need to deal with two late issues that could not be added to the agenda in time; the Chair was asked to consider suspending Standing Orders on this occasion to discuss the items especially in light of their importance and the fact that the council will not be meeting until September.

By agreement with Council, The Chair suspended Standing Orders to consider the two following issues:

TC3095A To approve the erection and dismantling of a stage for the Goodwill festival

The Events working group presented council with an urgent decision that was needed in support of ensuring that an adequate stage was provided for the Goodwill festival later in the year. Previously, the stage was erected in a piecemeal way and this was considered unsuitable from a safety perspective going forwards.

The working group identified three options, the lowest totalled a cost of £1,000 plus vat - the other options had costs of £1,300 and £1,500 respectively.

Council **RESOLVED** to award a contract for the erection and dismantling of a 6 metre by 4 metre stage for £1,000 plus vat to 'R U Event Services'.

TC3095B To approve the installation of security measures to the town council's four main green open space sites

Following the recent damage caused to the council's Oldends lane playing field and adjacent facilities (Estimated at approximately £4,000 to £5,000), Officers feel that measures should be considered urgently to

ensure the security of these sites as a preventative action. Officers have costed some of the preferred solutions and estimate a total cost of approx £1,500.

It was felt that throughout the travellers presence on the Oldends Lane site, the Police had not provided the Stonehouse Community with sufficient support to help remove them. It was also felt that part of the problem was due to the fact that GCC had not provided adequate camping points for travellers in Gloucestershire resulting in them forcing entry onto adhoc bits of land. Council asked the Clerk to write to the Police Commissioner to ask for an explanation as to why they did not take direct action, what their policy is in relation to dealing with unauthorised access and occupation of a privately owned site by Travellers. In addition, what efforts are being made by the Police in seeking a resolution to the problem of inadequate number of sites travellers can use when travelling within Gloucestershire.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the spend of up to £1,500 to install security measures at its four sites, subject to the Clerk consulting further with the Chair and Vice Chair of Council

TC3096

Date of next meeting - Monday 18th September '23
Council NOTED the date of the next meeting