



DRAFT
Minutes of a (Virtual) meeting of the Town Council
held on Monday 6th July 2020 at 7.00pm using
‘Microsoft Teams’

Present:

Councillors: (Chair) Neil Gibbs, (Vice Chair) Carol Kambites, Gwen Atkinson, Leigh Binns, Debbie Curtis, Michael Davis, John Parker, Kevin Parsons, Sally Pickering, Pam Swain and Theresa Watt

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth - Town Clerk; County Cllr Lesley Williams, Ward Cllr Mattie Ross and one resident.

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

A G E N D A

- TC2438 To receive apologies**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Tim Jackson and David Thorpe
- TC2439 To receive declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- TC2440 To approve the minutes of the Town Council held on 8th June 2020**
Council **ACCEPTED** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting; the minutes to be duly signed by the Chair at a later date.
- TC2441 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors**
Cllr SP stated that the Climate Change Action Group were now meeting. Cllr CK mentioned that feedback had been received in relation to the Bristol Road Station bid and so the council are now looking at the next steps noting that Ward Cllrs and the County Cllr

were on board. Cllr PS highlighted the Stonehouse Trustees meeting with regards the provision of laptops to help support students with their school work; Cllr LW suggested that Cllr PS engage with GCC as they have recently taken possession of laptops to help deal with isolation issues

- TC2442 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**
County Cllr Lesley Williams was thanked for her written report. The Chair highlighted a report to GCC on the condition of the footpath from Upper Queens road running east parallel to the railway line - it was difficult for pedestrians to walk along due to overgrowth and the presence of weeds.
Ward Cllr Mattie Ross apologised for not providing a written report but highlighted that this was due to reasons out of her control. She highlighted that she was the Lead Member for the District Council on Health and Wellbeing and that there was a lot to do in the coming months. She also mentioned that SDC's regular updates were being sent to Town and Parish Councils.
The recent changes to the footpaths on Doverow Hill were highlighted with access to the unofficial footpaths being removed by the local farmer and gates to the official paths improved/updated. It was hoped that the unofficial footpaths could be adopted at some stage. A missing finger post and a damaged gate were reported
- TC2443 To receive RFO's budget report including the bank reconciliation for June 2020**
The Clerk presented the bank reconciliation for June (Closing balance as of 30th June 2020 - (£862,701.73).
Council **NOTED** the bank reconciliation for June 2020

The Clerk stated that errors found in the previous months budget report (budgets allocated to each heading) have been rectified. The Clerk also provided an overview of the report drawing attention to significant income and expenditure variations especially highlighting the lack of spending within the 'In Bloom' budget.
Council **NOTED** the budget reports for June 2020 (Total Net Balance up to and including 30th June 2020 - £110,174.87)
- TC2444 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed**
Council **APPROVED** total payments of £32,849.68 as presented by the RFO in his payment approval list dated 2nd July 2020
- TC2445 To receive confirmation that the requirement for the council to auto enrol staff members into its Pension Scheme has been met**
Council **NOTED** that the Council had met the Pension Regulator's requirement in relation to Auto enrolment/Re-declaration

Cllr Lesley Williams left the meeting at 19:36

- TC2446** **To consider the Internal Audit Report dated 16/4/2020 for the year ending 31st March 2020 and to note the Clerk's resultant actions.**
- The Clerk provided an overview of the report confirming that whilst the auditor had made a number of recommendations, there were no non compliances.
- Council **NOTED** the report and the Clerk's response.
- TC2447** **To approve the Annual Governance Statement**
Council **APPROVED** the Annual Governance Statement
- TC2448** **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 provided an explanation of the accounting statements together with an overview of the key differences between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Financial Year's figures.
- Council **APPROVED** the accounting statement. The statement was signed and dated by the Chair of the meeting on Tuesday 7th July.
- TC2449** **To approve the amended Financial Risk Assessment for 2020/21**
- The Clerk provided an overview of the risk assessment noting in particular a lowering of the Public Liability cover from £15M to £10M. The insurance company suggested that the revised amount was more suitable for a Council of Stonehouse's size.
- Council **APPROVED** the Financial Risk Assessment
- TC2450** **To receive the Council's Annual Report for the 2019/20 Financial Year**
- The Clerk highlighted completion of the Annual Report following input from a number of Cllrs. The report is to be circulated amongst all Cllrs as a final proof check.
- Council **NOTED** the report
- TC2451** **To consider the Goodwill event for 2020**
- Council considered there were too many imponderables to commit to a Goodwill event this Christmas. It was suggested that the 'Events Working Group' consider smaller scale options including a street party (closing off the High street), cyclist parade, setting up collection boxes for community groups, Christmas bus travelling round Stonehouse asking for donations, expanding the Council's Christmas 'Present' tree to other locations within the town.
- TC2452** **To consider the application for funding for the Old Chapel Garden**

Cllr Pam Swain provided a verbal update on her report in support of the funding request. She noted the prime reasons for the request being the impact of Covid on local businesses being able to financially support the work and the recommendation to reinforce the new railings around the car park with stronger material.

Council **APPROVED** the funding application of £1417.17 to cover additional costs of the Roll top fencing and purchase of two Picnic tables

TC2453 To consider remedial works to the three London Plane trees in front of Park Infant School

The matter was debated in detail owing to the lack of a known landowner. The trees were viewed as an essential part of the landscape and concern was shared over the close proximity to both the Junior and Infant schools. Owing to the landowner not being identified, Council felt it had to step in to ensure safety of the public in such a critical high use area. It was highlighted that all the works in recommendation 1 should be undertaken to ensure that the impact of work on tree one would not adversely affect the adjacent trees.

Council **RESOLVED** to accept all three recommendations presented by Cllr John Parker (Technical Director of the Arboricultural Association) on the basis that recommendation 1 be implemented as soon as possible at a total cost of £1,572 plus vat and, that further efforts are made by the council to identify the owner of the land and associated trees before undertaking recommendations 2 and 3.

TC2454 To consider the reintroduction of the town Business Committee from 27th July 2020

Council **RESOLVED** to reintroduce the Town Business Committee meetings from the 27th July 2020

TC2455 To consider extending the contract with Richard Lacey to detail the council's assets for updating the council's new asset register
The Clerk highlighted the need for work on the asset register and that the cost would be covered within existing budgets. The Chair commented that Richard Lacey was also helping Officers to sort through historic Council papers so that there was less reliance on storage capacity in the long term

Council **APPROVED** the extension to the 'zero hours' contract until completion of the work.

TC2456 To consider the external redecoration of the Town Hall building
The Council has received two quotes and are expecting a third. The lowest quote received to date was for a total of £2,975 plus vat. The Clerk's updated recommendation was to accept this quotation unless

the third quote was received within the next few days and was lower and, that due to the fact that this work was not factored in to the current year's budget, the work should be funded by the council's income from Network Rail.

Council **APPROVED** the spend of £2,975 plus vat in line with the Clerk's updated recommendation to repaint the Town Hall roof soffits and that the cost be funded through the Network Rail income.

TC2457 To consider and agreed broadband and phone provision at the Pod, Stonehouse Youth Centre.

Council **APPROVED** the spend of £36.99 per month in line with Officer's recommendation on the proviso that the new service was an improvement on the previous service to the Youth Pod

TC2458 To consider the date of the next Town Council Meeting scheduled for Monday 14th September 2020