



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council
held on Monday 9th September 2019 at 7.00pm
in the Town Hall, High street, Stonehouse

Present:

Councillors: Neil Gibbs (Chairman), Deborah Curtis, Kevin Parsons, Sally Pickering, Pam Swain, David Thorpe, Theresa Watt

In Attendance: County Cllr Lesley Williams. District Cllrs Gary Powell, Chris Brine and Mattie Ross and Richard Lacey (Project Manager)

Public Questions: No public questions were raised at the meeting

The Chairman brought forward item TC2266 and welcomed Carlos Novoth as the new clerk to Stonehouse Town Council

TC2260 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Town Cllrs Jennie Smith, John Parker, Tim Jackson, Leigh Binns and Carol Kambites

TC2261 To receive declarations of interest

No declarations of interest

TC2262 To approve the minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the Town Council held on 5th August 2019

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman

TC2263 To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr Williams congratulated the Britain in Bloom team for their recent successes. Cllr Williams mentioned that she had been approached by two residents of Burdett Close about the parking problem. The Labour Group had a motion to increase tree planting in the district – Cllr John Parker was noted as leading on increasing trees in Stonehouse. Cllr Williams was thanked supporting our application for a Growing Our Communities grant to redo the path in the Rest Garden and for improvement works to certain footpaths – the Chairman raised a further problem footpath. A mention was made at the lack of flashing speed signs in Stonehouse especially in light of their existence in other towns/parishes.

TC2264 To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Brine highlighted a budget report at District Council on Thursday re the Market Towns Initiative – all paperwork from the Towns/Parishes needed to be presented in time to be considered. Also mentioned attendance at a civic event where Di King was thanked for all her work with Children over the years.

Mention was made of Stroud District Council's review of its Public Conveniences. Cllr Pickering highlighted a high number of people with disabilities in Stonehouse which needed to be considered. The clerk to report back on its initial meeting with SDC's Asset Management team.

TC2265 To receive brief reports from the Members on external meetings attended

A recent 'Stonehouse in Bloom' meeting was held to plan the campaign ahead. It was hoped further financial support from the Town Council will be forthcoming. The 'SIB' team were congratulated on their success

TC2266 To note the appointment of the new Town Clerk, Carlos Novoth

As detailed above

TC2267 To consider and approve the Locum Support Assistance for September 2019

Members thanked the Locum RFO for her assistance to date. It was explained that in light of the budget review, extending her services to include October 2019 would be helpful.

TC2268 To receive the RFOs report including the bank reconciliation for August 2019

The council received the RFOs report and monthly bank reconciliation

A query was raised about the lack of lease income. It was thought this was due to the time of year invoices were sent out. The unrepresented cheques were queried – these were of varying ages; the Locum explained the process followed to get them cashed.

Information was noted

TC2269 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed

The council approved the accounts for payment as presented by the RFO. It was proposed by Cllr Watt and Seconded by Cllr Pickering

TC2270 To consider what actions to take in respect to a request for material modifications to the Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Chair highlighted that advice had been sought from Simon Maher (SDC Planning Officer) in reaching the Town Council Officer's own advice and recommendation.

The Chair proposed accepting the Officer's recommendation; this was seconded by Cllr Watt. Cllr Curtis abstained; remaining Cllrs were in favour

TC2271 To consider response received to a recommendation for diversion of Stonehouse Footpath 2 through Oldends Lane recreation Field due to the closure of a level crossing and agree further action

Discussion took place highlighting the fact that the detour took the footpath across a main road (Oldends Lane) twice. Members were keen to refrain from the need to do this and suggested that the footpath could follow the inside of the Town Council's recreation field boundary albeit this cause a problem with the existing plans for the development of the Magpies site. It was decided therefore that Officers should go back to the developer to suggest a more suitable route which could entail the removal of the hedge running from the pedestrian gate opposite Midland road up to the Magpies vehicle entrance, install a footpath and plant a new hedgerow on the Magpies side of the new footpath.

TC2272 To reaffirm the responsibility for funding of the Licence of Alteration for the Town Hall project.

Members were advised of the Town Council decision (TC2106) that the Licence for Alterations was to be at GCC's expense. The Chair explained that the best deal that could be negotiated with GCC was a 50/50 split in costs. All were in favour of the progressing on this basis.

TC2273 To finalise the terms of lease for the Town Hall premises to GCC Libraries and approve the signing of the lease.

This item was co presented by the Chair and Project manager Richard Lacey.

Negotiations remain ongoing with GCC; they have been slow to amend the lease document to include final amendments. Members were presented with a Final list of 28 amendments and these were discussed in turn – also discussed was the issue of a 'Sinking Fund' and the fact this was unnecessary in light of the agreed split (37% STC and 67% GCC) in costs 'towards the cost of replacement and renewal of services and amenities including the fabric of the property'.

All were in favour of the suggested amendments. Members were advised that once the agreement had been updated, it would be presented to the Town Council for final approval.

Should GCC take the agreement to Full Council then a start date is likely to be around 1st November. The Project manager highlighted the difficulties in making arrangements for the move as he needed to work to a definite date. Once the agreement has been approved by both parties, he will be able to make progress.

Further discussion highlighted:-

- the high standard of finish expected for the refurbishment
- the advice to stay with existing Phone and IT suppliers (Members particularly agreed with this in light of the potential for system failures)
- New IT infrastructure to be as future proof as possible
- Light tubes to be incorporated within the design

Members asked for solar panels and associated battery storage to be considered.