



DRAFT

**Minutes of a (Virtual) meeting of the Town Council
held on Monday 14th September 2020 at 7.00pm using
'Microsoft Teams'**

Present:

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

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth - Town Clerk; County Cllr Lesley Williams.

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

- TC2459 To receive apologies**
Apologies were received from Cllrs David Thorpe, Kevin Parsons, Leigh Binns, Theresa Watt and Ward Cllr Mattie Ross
(A spokesperson from Stroud Rugby Club was due to attend to present on agenda item TC2472 but had to offer his apologies just prior to the meeting)
- TC2460 To receive declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- TC2461 To approve the minutes of the Town Council held on 6th July 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.
- TC2462 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors**
Active Travel consultation - SP asked for all Cllrs to encourage residents to respond to the consultation. LW asked for copy of the latest stats on the consultation - SP to provide these.

- TC2463 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**
LW remarked on the A419 issues highlighting the need to encourage drivers to reduce speed. It was agreed by all Cllrs that the new road layout needed a major redesign. STC confirmed that it had recently made a decision to support a complaint from John Franklin (a cycling consultant) about the safety issues relevant to cyclists.
LW confirmed that most GCC staff were still working from home and that Mark Hawthorne (Leader of GCC) would be visiting the Bristol Road station, now referred to as the Stroudwater Station
- Ward Cllr Mattie Ross's written report was received and noted - there were no comments
- TC2464 To receive RFO's budget report including the bank reconciliation for the months July and August 2020**
- The Clerk presented the latest budget position detailing the main variances. It was highlighted to Members that there was budget available for Members travel expenses and training. It was suggested that the clerk provide Members with a list of courses available. The clerk highlighted the budget underspend and that consideration should be given later in the year to establishing whether local groups, clubs and organisations needed financial assistance.
The Clerk stated that a reconciliation report could not be provided in time for the meeting for the months of July and August. The process of filing the first quarter's vat claim through the new finance software meant that earlier work had to be undone. Reconciliation reports for July and August will be presented to October's meeting
- Council **Noted** the latest budget positions for income and expenditure of £190,594.48 and £123,461.95 respectively up to and including August 2020. Council also **AGREED**, in light of current circumstances that the Clerk should proactively engage with local groups, clubs and organisations to identify those experiencing financial difficulties and to raise these with Council for their consideration
- TC2465 To approve payments in accordance with the budget to date as listed**
Council **APPROVED** Gross payments totalling £4866.80.
- TC2466 To receive minutes of Environment Committee held on 20th July 2020**
Council received and **NOTED** the minutes
- TC2467 To receive minutes of Business Committee held on 27th July 2020**
Council received and **NOTED** the minutes

- TC2468 To receive minutes of Environment Committee held on 7th September 2020**
Council received and **NOTED** the minutes. Comment was made in relation to the need to scope a review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and that this would require a Working Party. Willing Members to contact the Deputy Clerk. It was recommended that the Centre for Sustainable energy support should be approached to support the review
- TC2469 To receive feedback from the council's working group 'Support Stonehouse' and consider the group's concerns about the ongoing impact of Covid on the community**
The Council's Food working group had been renamed 'Support Stonehouse' in light of the wider impact expected following the end of the Government's Furlough scheme this October. The group felt that a prevailing thought within the community was that COVID had come to an end; in-fact further problems lay ahead. Therefore, more work was needed to potentially support a greater number of families that may struggle over the coming months. To this end, 'Support Stonehouse' had recently produced and delivered a leaflet to all residents in Stonehouse advising of key organisations that could provide support in times of need (Four Members confirmed that they had not received the leaflet - the Clerk said that he would follow this up with the delivery contractor) - it was suggested that a copy of the leaflet is placed in the Town Hall window. It was agreed that further work was needed to establish a baseline within Stonehouse of residents already experiencing hardship; continued access to the source (potentially 'This is Gloucestershire') of this information would allow the council to identify future trends.
- TC2470 To consider the following grant applications**
- **a local resident organisation 'Look for a Book' - £150**
Council **APPROVED** the grant of £150
 - **'SARA', Severn Area Rescue Association - a donation request**
Council **APPROVED** a grant of £500 in light of the extenuating circumstances
- TC2471 To Note the arrangements/surveys undertaken in preparation for the reopening of the various council facilities**
The Clerk provided a report on the opening arrangements for the council's offices and other buildings.
Council **NOTED** the report
- TC2472 To consider the use of Laburnum playing field by Stroud Rugby Club's youth teams at less than the council's current 'scale of charges'**

The Clerk led the discussion in place of Stroud Rugby Club's representative; a last minute problem prevented him from attending the meeting.

Stroud Rugby Club had for sometime been looking for a home ground to train their younger players up to the age of 11 years each Sunday. The club had approached the Town Council with the view to using Laburnum Playing Field as they felt it offered a good accessible location, has parking nearby for parents and has toilet and kitchen facilities immediately adjacent to the ground. The club wishes to encourage the youth of Stonehouse to join the club and is willing to proactively encourage this through contact with schools and other youth organisations.

Members expressed a concern in relation to potential damage to the field but also considered was that the club's presence could encourage more people to Stonehouse

The Clerk suggested offering the rugby club free access to the playing field for a short period until they could establish take up of local membership.

Following lengthy discussion, Council APPROVED a departure from its charging policy and felt that given such exceptional times, Stroud Rugby Club would be allowed the use of the field free of charge for a period of three months on the basis the club operates a no fee basis for all Stonehouse Children and provides the council with a copy of its latest audited accounts - the arrangement to be reviewed after three months.

TC2473 To consider use of the council's Pavillion on a free of charge basis by the voluntary organisation 'Sunflower Suicide Support' for an eight-week period

The Clerk provided an overview of the organisation's request with a recommendation that the council allow free of charge use of the Pavilion meeting room over the next eight weeks, in support of its work.

Council APPROVED the Clerk's recommendation

TC2474 To consider Network Rail's request to use Oldends Lane Car park for rail repair works during the period October 2020 and June 2021

Council APPROVED the Clerk's recommendation to allow Network Rail the use of Oldends Lane car park for a maximum period of 10 months commencing October 2020.

TC2475 To consider Stonehouse Rotary's funding offer of a maximum of £2,000 for the installation of a water fountain in the Old Chapel Garden

Council **RESOLVED** to accept Stonehouse Rotary Club's generous offer of 2,000 to install a drinking fountain and external water outlet within the Old Chapel Garden

TC2476 Receive an update from the Canal Rejuvenation Working Group and discuss a proposal to make a public commitment to achieving maximum social and economic benefit from the Stroudwater canal rejuvenation.

The Canal Rejuvenation Working Group (CRWG) had updated Members of its more recent meetings highlighting the Town Council's support for Stroud District Council's bid for the latest round of Heritage Lottery Funding, the results of which are due in September of this year. It was agreed that due to its continued support over the years, Stonehouse Town should see the social and commercial benefits from the Canal's rejuvenation project.

It was agreed that Stroud District Council's recently appointed Strategic Director for 'Place', Brendan Cleere is to be invited to the Town Council's next (CRWG) meeting.

Council **AGREED** the proposal:-

'To make a public commitment to achieving maximum social and commercial benefit from the Stroudwater canal rejuvenation'

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from the following items as due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC2477 To consider staff remuneration for the 2020/21 financial year as recommended by HR Sub Committee

Council **APPROVED** the three recommendations made by the HR Sub Committee at its Meeting on the 14th September and subsequent emailed discussion on the 15th September 2020.

TC2478 To consider the date of the next Town Council Meeting scheduled for Monday 19th October 2020