



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee  
held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 at 7.00pm  
at the Town Hall**

**Present:** Councillors: Leigh Binns, John Callinan, Mike Davis, Mick Gibbons (Chair) Gary Powell, Kevin Parsons

**In Attendance:** Carlos Novoth, Clerk

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

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**B/301 To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Town Cllrs Chris Brine, Carol Kambites and Ward Cllr Mattie Ross

**B/302 To receive Declarations of Interest**

Interest was declared by Cllr Gary Powell in relation to agenda item B/305

**B/303 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October '21**

Subject to amendment made to agenda item B/293 - the word 'Convener' replaced by Councillor, Committee APPROVED the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**B/304 To consider the budget position up to and including 27<sup>th</sup> October '21**

The Officer highlighted having received the second of two precept payments, that the receipt for the phone mast lease was due in February and reminded the committee that the town council no longer dealt with petty cash. There were no questions.

Committee NOTED the budget report with total 'Actual Net' Income of 343,206.63 and total 'Actual Net' expenditure of 139,906.24.

**B/305 To approve the latest payments list**

The following queries were raised:

- Transaction number 1992 - reimbursements for painting the rainbow bench - Officers explained that the paints and protective coatings used were specific to the bench and had to be of a certain type to withstand a degree of vandalism
- Transaction number 1985 - The working group decided at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October that it would recommend the council should purchase

1000 bags. There was some expectation that funding could be secured from the Council Council. A Cllr suggested that it was agreed that the bags for life would make reference to the soon to be opened Town Centre Market. The Clerk was not aware of this and stated that he would seek clarity. *(Since the meeting, the Clerk could find no mention of this in the Event Working Group minutes).*

Committee APPROVED the Payments list totalling £16,870.64

**B/306 To consider the town council entering into service arrangements beyond the conventional 12 month period**

The Clerk directed Committee to his supporting paper on this matter adding that the recommendation would provide a number of benefits, including releasing officer time over the long-term. Committee was given clarity over the total cost of any such future agreements over a three year period. The Clerk highlighted that should the cost exceed £3,000 over a three year term, the matter would be put before Committee/Council.

Committee RECOMMENDS that Town Council approve the officer's recommendation to include the following wording: **'Where appropriate, Officers to seek quotations covering a period of three years for works and services that are repetitive in nature and fall below a total value of £3,000'**.

**B/307 To note the outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Internal Control Checks**

A member of the Internal Audit Panel gave an overview of findings from his recent checks on the council's finance system. He was very impressed with the system, the ease with which information could be found and explanations given by the Communications and Facilities Officer.

Committee NOTED the report

**B/308 To consider and recommend to full council the latest amendments to the Council's Risk Management Policy**

Committee to RECOMMEND for Town Council approval

**B/309 To consider the Town Council's Business Committee budget for 2022/23**

The Clerk presented an Excel spreadsheet that he had distributed to Cllrs prior to the meeting; he explained the rationale behind its design and identified the source of the different sets of figures. It was suggested that Cllrs will be able to manipulate the spreadsheet in their own way to assess the final impact of any recommended changes. It was recommended that it would be beneficial for Cllrs to raise specific queries with the Clerk prior to the next meeting to save time - all queries would be collated and presented to the Committee at its next meeting. (The Clerk agreed to make some small changes and redistribute the spreadsheet)

Committee NOTED the information provided and agreed to follow the Clerk's recommendation

**B/310 To consider and recommend to full council a way forward on the Community Centre Lease**

The Clerk provided a brief report highlighting a number of concerns expressed by Council in relation to the Community Centre and these were discussed. Committee recognised the need to finalise the Lease agreement with SCA but considered it essential that it understood the Association's Governance arrangements; It was believed that SCA had at one time, either a Management Board or committee that once included a representative of the Town Council as a direct result of its leasing arrangements with the council. Cllrs acknowledged there was an issue in relation to the accuracy of the lease in terms of the land it included.

Committee RECOMMENDED that Town Council approve a formal approach through the town council's solicitor to:

- Request copies of Stonehouse Community Association's Constitution dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1970 and the amended version dated 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and,
- Establish the Association's Governance arrangements and whether the position of a town Council representative has been removed from these arrangements

**B/311 To consider the relocation of dog waste bins within the town's recreation fields**

The Clerk directed Cllrs to his support paper highlighting the fact that 'Ubico', the contractor engaged to empty the town council's dog bins had approached the town council with an intention to increase its annual charge by approx 35%. The Clerk has identified one of several options to reduce the town council's charges, the most favoured by officers being to relocate the dog bins from their current locations within the recreation fields to the entrance and exit points. It was pointed out that there would be adequate publicity on what was happening and why, through Facebook, the council's website and at the recreation fields. The Dog wardens would also be asked to provide a physical presence in support of the change. Where possible, a degree of consultation would take place with dog walkers prior to making changes. Concern was raised about the potential impact a change of this nature would have on dog walkers who may continue to leave the full dog waste bags where bins used to be located (*It was acknowledged that one dog bin from Oldends Lane had already be relocated to the entrance point and that dog walkers had left full bags of dog waste at the same location*). Whilst this could not be discounted in the future, it was highlighted that the issue would be monitored with a view to encouraging the right behaviour. The Clerk stated that bin capacity for each site would remain the same and bins would be monitored in terms of their need to be emptied.

Committee RECOMMENDED that the approach should be applied to Oldends Lane recreation field as a trial on the basis that the change would be supported by an adequate level of communications.

**B/312 To receive updates from the following working groups:**

- **Business Networking**

There has been no movement on this issue but it was acknowledged that there were willing partners within the industrial estate and that they would be willing to restart their efforts when the council was ready. There would need to be a review of the terms of reference for the working group

- **Communications**  
Update distributed
- **Climate Change Action Forum**  
Update distributed
- **Oldends Lane Development**  
The first meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The group felt that issues on site that were peripheral to the development should go through normal channels and fed into Committee and Council for decisions. It was agreed that the working group would at least be advised on such issues coming to the fore in case they conflict with the development.
- **Support Stonehouse**  
Mention was made of the Community Centre and its potential impact on 'Support Stonehouse's' future efforts
- **Youth**

**And, to receive an update on the progress of Stonehouse Market**

It was stated that as a result of a delay in funding from Glos County Council, it was likely that the first town market may not take place until after Christmas

**B/313 To note the date of the next Business Committee meeting: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November '21**

*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.*

**B/314 To consider recommendations made by HR Sub Committee at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021**

In light of the town council's current grounds staff position, HR Sub Committee has met on two occasions since the last town council meeting.

At its meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> November '21, the following recommendations were put before Business Committee

**'To consider a way forward for the replacement of the Head of Facilities and Grounds Maintenance':**

**Agenda Item 4 - Recommendation 'a' agreed - Revised post**

**Agenda Item 4 - Recommendation 'b' agreed - Current employee**

**Agenda Item 4 - Recommendation 'c' agreed - Backfill Grounds role**

**Agenda Item 5 - Recommendation agreed - Christmas opening arrangements**

*A recommendation from the Unfortunately, recommendations from only the latter (1<sup>st</sup> November) have been raised and voted on by Business Committee. Officers will include a further recommendation agreed by HR at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October to Full Town Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> November.)*