



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee  
held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 7.00pm  
at the Town Hall**

**Present:** Councillors, Mike Davis (Vice Chair), John Callinan, Carol Kambites and Gary Powell

**In Attendance:** Carlos Novoth, Clerk, Cllrs Rachel Armstrong and Neil Gibbs

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

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There were no representations from members of the public

**B/367 To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Chris Brine, Mick Gibbons and Kevin Parsons. In the Chair's absence, Cllr Mike Davis (Vice Chair of Business Committee) chaired the meeting

**B/368 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were declarations of Interest made by Cllr John Callinan in relation to agenda item B/382 and Cllr Carol Kambites in relation to agenda item B/376

**B/369 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February '22**

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

Following a Member request, and in the absence of any members of the public, Committee agreed to bring forward agenda item B/382. Cllr John Callinan left the meeting at 7.05pm prior to the start of discussions

**B/382 To consider a proposal for the potential purchase of open grass land at Verney Fields**

Town Council had delegated responsibility to Business Committee to determine whether to enter into negotiations for the purchase or lease of the land and to decide on the maximum value to be offered. The Clerk was tasked with securing an official valuation from a property consultant. The report dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 was distributed to Committee Members for consideration.

Cllrs Rachel Armstrong and Neil Gibbs were in attendance and invited to speak on the matter. Committee's current understanding was that Verney Fields was reasonably well protected through its designation as 'Local Green Space' within the 'Neighbourhood Development Plan'.

Committee unanimously agreed for the Clerk to seek confirmation from Stroud District Council's Planning team that the land was well protected under its current designation within the NDP as 'Local Green Space' and, establish how the council could apply for the land to receive a designation of Town Green status. Updates to be provided to committee members prior to the next meeting.

Cllr John Callinan re-entered the meeting

**B/370 To receive the latest budget position**

The budget report was distributed for consideration. The report showed the 'Actual Net' Income of £347,990.26 and an 'Actual Net' Expenditure of £217,322.38. The Clerk highlighted that whilst committee had committed to a recent high level of expenditure, the budget was likely to be underspent at year end - this would largely be due to the effects of covid mainly in relation to usage of the council's facilities and, staffing issues.

Committee **NOTED** the report

**B/371 To approve the latest payments list**

The Clerk highlighted the areas of major expenditure making specific note of transaction number 2184 in relation to the grounds maintenance contractor's costs - despite Officers requesting a steady monthly claim throughout the year, the contractor has been experiencing staffing difficulties hence the delayed invoice.

Committee **APPROVED** the Payments List totalling £27,768.06

**B/372 To consider for recommendation a revision to Business Committee's 'Terms of Reference'**

Committee **APPROVED** amendments to Business Committee's Terms of Reference in line with internal audit recommendations

**B/373 To consider for recommendation the Council's Communications and Engagement Policy**

Chair of the meeting presented the work of the Policy working group with particular mention of the Appendix V in relation to 'engaging in debate with residents' via social Media. The Policy is a combination of the town council's current Communications Policy, Community Engagement Policy and Social Media Policy

Committee **RECOMMENDS** the Council's revised Communication Policy for Town Council approval subject to the revised document including the publishing of two printed Newsletters each year.

**B/374 To consider for recommendation changes put forward by Ellis Whittam in relation to the council's Handbook and staff related Policies**

Committee **RECOMMENDS** the Council's Staff Handbook and following Policies for Town Council approval:

- Disciplinary Policy

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Induction Policy
- Training and Development Policy

**B/375 To consider for recommendation the Council's updated Policy register and programme of work for 2022/23**

It was felt that the Council's strategy should be reviewed earlier than 2026 and that it should include not only an update to the Action Plan but a review of the plan itself.

Committee RECOMMENDS the Council's latest Policy Register and associated programme of work for 2022 for town council approval

**B/376 To approve a grant application for £200 from Stonehouse Community Choir**

Cllr Carol Kambites took no part in either the discussion or the vote on this agenda item

Committee APPROVED the grant of £200 to Stonehouse Community Choir

**B/377 To consider for recommendation the following climate action proposal:**

**SWEA (South-West Energy Agency)**

- **3 Year Incentivised Local Carbon Reduction Scheme**

The proposal was discussed at a previous Business Committee meeting and it was considered at that time that further consideration should be given to homeowners that had limited or no personal funding to follow through with SWEA's final recommendations. It has since been found that much, if not all available external Government funding was centered specifically on homeowners that had limited means of making changes.

Committee RECOMMENDS SWEA's 3 year proposal totalling £13,726 for Town Council approval

**B/378 To receive updates from the following working groups:**

- **Communications**  
Owing to current staffing issues, the next Newsletter is to be scheduled for distribution May
- **Climate Change Action Forum**  
A climate change fair is scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> April - flyers and posters are being printed for distribution. The working group have also produced an 'ECO' Directory
- **Oldends Lane Development**  
The Clerk highlighted a need to support the current group with someone with project management experience. Options were currently being looked into
- **Support Stonehouse**  
Cllr Val Randell provided a written update that was delivered by the Clerk. The highlights were that APT were being approached by more elderly residents; APT mentioned in a recent meeting that they will shortly need to restock toiletries as these products were

not available free of charge through APT's current supporting outlets

- **Youth**

The Door were applying for OPCC funding to help support local efforts to expand on local youth services

**B/379 To receive an update on the Town Market**

The Clerk received a concern raised by Ward Cllr Mattie Ross about potential damage to the green.

Committee NOTED the written update from Cllr Nick Housden.

**B/380 To receive the Clerk's update**

Committee NOTED the Clerk's update

**B/381 To note the date of the next Business Committee meeting: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March '22**

Committee NOTED the next Committee meeting

***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/382 To consider a proposal for the potential purchase of open grass land at Verney Fields**

Discussion detailed above