



## **Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 7pm at the Town Hall**

### **Present:**

Councillors: Councillors: John Callinan, Keith Creighton, Debbie Curtis, Mike Davis, Marcus Dixon, Mark Edwards, Carol Kambites (Chair of Council) Gary Powell, Val Randell, Keith Terry and Theresa Watt (Vice Chair of Council).

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Carlos Novoth

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

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- TC3097 To receive apologies**  
Apologies were received from Cllrs Rachel Armstrong, Mark Edwards, Neil Gibbs and Wendy Thomson. Ward Cllr Mattie Ross also offered her apologies
- TC3098 To receive declarations of interest**  
Cllr Marcus Dixon declared an interest in relation to agenda item TC3108
- TC3099 To approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023**  
Council **APPROVED** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments: to add the Chair and Vice Chair to the list of Councillors present at the meeting and in relation to agenda item TC3095B to add the following sentence to the minutes 'what the Commissioner is doing in order to enable the Police to take action in future'
- TC3100 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors**  
The Chair provided an overview of the grounds staffing situation confirming senior grounds person has now left the authority and thanked all those who contributed to his collection totalling which was used to buy him a gift card. His post is now being reviewed by HR Sub Committee with an intention to recruit as soon as possible.

The Chair mentioned the walking festival, her attendance at the Sunflower Suicide event, In Bloom teat and entertainment. She also mentioned a recent interview with Radio Glos about the potential re opening of the Bristol road station. The SWAE home energy improvement scheme was drawing to a close with an event being held for local residents in the Library on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October, to report on outcomes.

The Vice Chair asked for a volunteer to replace Mark Edwards on the Youth working group. Cllrs offered their thanks for the event organisers of the recent Stonehouse events.

Cllr Gary Powell stated that he had talked to the asset team leader at GCC dealing with the town council's DMMOs and Town Green application and commented that they will be dealt with towards the end of the year.

- TC3101 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**  
There were no Ward or County Councillors attending the meeting. Ward Cllr Mattie Ross emailed to confirm that she would circulate a report updating the town council on District Council matters.
- TC3102 To receive RFO's budget report and bank reconciliations for July and Aug '23**  
A question was raised in relation to the Total Net Balance for the 23/24 budget. The Clerk stated that this was agreed by full town council at its meeting in January 2023. It was agreed that the Cllr raising the query would discuss his concerns with the Clerk  
Council **NOTED** the budget report up to the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 showing a total 'Actual Net' Income of £197,410.03; an 'Actual Net Expenditure of £188,133.45 and Reserve movements of £19,343.13. Council also **NOTED** both bank reconciliations (July - closing balance of £69,206.66 and August - closing balance of £47,767.37).
- TC3103 To retrospectively approve payments made to suppliers since council's previous meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July (Agenda item TC3088)**  
Council retrospectively **APPROVED** the payments totalling £21,712.45
- TC3104 To approve the latest payment list**  
Council **APPROVED** the latest payment list totalling £36,206.23
- TC3105 To receive the External Auditor's report for financial year 2022/23 and to approve payment of £1,260 incl vat to the auditor**  
A question was raised in relation to the AGAR and current Asset Value. The Clerk confirmed that this did not include the council's financial investments  
Council **NOTED** the report and thanked Officers for their hard work. Council **APPROVED** the payment to the external auditor for £1,260 incl vat

- TC3106**      **To seek retrospective approval for the engagement of ‘Setford’ solicitors to provide Council with legal advice and, the advance payment of £500 to secure their services**  
Council retrospectively **APPROVED** the engagement of ‘Setford’ solicitors together with the advanced payment of £500. The Council’s current solicitor has now moved to ‘Setford’. Officers felt that for the sake of continuity, the legal agreements he was been working on should be completed before considering services offered by rival firms
- TC3107**      **To approve the contractor to undertake the demolition of the Old Changing Rooms at Oldends Lane**  
Council noted the Officers support paper which identified that although Smith’s (Gloucester) Ltd was not the cheapest bidder, they had visited the site to allow them to properly assess the work and provided value added elements such as the provision of an Environmental Impact Assessment and were going to reuse much of the construction waste at their local plant. Council **APPROVED** the award of the contract for the demolition of the Old Changing Rooms at Oldends Lane to Smith’s (Gloucester) Ltd at a cost of £5,353 plus vat.
- TC3108**      **To receive the minutes of the Business Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> Sept ’23 and approve its recommendations:**
- **To approve the revised council policies (B/591)**  
Cllr Mike Davis provided an overview of the amendments made to each policy.
    - **Scheme of Delegation**  
Council **APPROVED** the revised ‘Scheme of Delegation’
    - **Data Protection**  
Council **APPROVED** the revised ‘Data Protection’ Policy
    - **Role of Working Groups**  
Council **APPROVED** the revised ‘Role of Working Groups’ policy
    - **Memorials**  
There were no changes to the ‘Memorials’ policy but it was noted that it was due for review  
Council **APPROVED** the reviewed, but unamended, ‘Memorials’ policy
  - **To approve the disposal of two old laptops (B/592)**  
Officers explained that the laptops would be returned to its IT support provider for wiping clean and sending for reuse if possible. Council **APPROVED** the disposal of the two old laptops
  - **To approve the appointment of GAPTC as a competent and independent Internal Auditor to undertake the town council’s internal audit for 2023/24 (B/594)**

Council **APPROVED** the appointment of GAPTC to undertake the internal audit for 2023/24 at an approximate cost of £401

- **To formally respond to the Market CIC's proposal (B/595)**  
Cllr Marcus Dixon abstained from entering into debate or voting on this issue in light of his declared interest. Council debated the issue and felt that those involved in trying to set up a town market should be applauded for their efforts. It was felt that the Market CIC's business plan was proven to be financially unsustainable and therefore anyone taking on the existing stalls would face similar issues unless they could be erected and dismantled by unpaid volunteers.

Council **APPROVED** Business Committee's recommendation to regrettably decline the Market CIC's proposal, suggesting the Director finds an alternative outlet for the stall's continued use.

- **To approve staff annual increment rises for 2023/24 (B/599)**

Council noted that staff appraisals had been successfully completed and the comments made by appraisers in support of staff receiving an increment rise in line with their Contracts of Employment.

Council **APPROVED** the award of increment rises to the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Business Support Officer and two grounds staff; the total value of the increment rise equates to approximately £2,850.

**And to note the payment of the second of three staged grant payments to 'Homestart' of £10,000 (B/585)**

Council **NOTED** its decision in July 2022 to make reserve payments to Homestart over a three year period and that the second of the three payments of £10,000 was approved by Business Committee following receipt of an update from Homestart

**TC3109 To receive the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept '23 and approve its recommendations**

Council **APPROVED** the Memorial application to install a bench seat by the skatepark at Oldends Lane in memory of Sam Askew.

**TC3110 To approve a response to Stroud District Council's consultation of the location of Stonehouse's Polling Station**

Councillors felt that some of the information relating to previous locations used for the Town Polling Stations was incorrect and the Clerk was asked to make this known to the District Council. In addition the Clerk was asked to confirm the town council's preference for the Polling stations used for each ward:

North Ward - St Joseph's Church

Central Ward - Douglas Morely Hall

South Ward - Stonehouse Community Centre

**TC3111 To approve electrical works to provide a more sustained power supply to the Town Green's Christmas lighting**

Officers highlighted the ongoing difficulties experienced by the town council and medical centre each Goodwill event and the risks posed to the medical centre's stock of medicines. It was noted that the upgrade to the electrical supply would solely benefit the town council in providing much needed events for the community. In light of the fact that the medical centre is unable to fund the improvement, the town council was asked to consider funding the upgrade - the Medical centre insisted on using their chosen electrical contractor who has provided a quote for the work.

In light of the benefit to the wider community, Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the funding of £350 plus vat for the necessary electrical works once confirmation was received that the town council would be able to access the medical centre's power for future events on the town green

**TC3112 To note the award of funding by GWR for the installation of a cycle shelter at the Stonehouse Railway station**

The Chair confirmed that council was successful in securing a £10,000 grant from GWR to provide and install a covered cycle shelter for the railway station car park at Burdett. This would be match funded by Stroud District Council. Cllrs thanked Cllrs Carol Kambites and Debbie Curtis for their efforts

**TC3113 Date of next meeting - Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October '23**  
Council **NOTED** the date of the next meeting