



**Minutes of a Town Business Committee
held on Monday 8th July '24 at 7.00pm at the
Town Hall**

Present: Councillors, John Callinan (Committee Vice Chair), Neil Gibbs, Gary Powell, Madelaine Maraboli-Roman and Theresa Watt (Committee Chair)

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth (Clerk); representatives of Magpies Social Club (The Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the club)

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

There were no public questions. The representatives from Magpies Social Club were offered the opportunity to talk during agenda item B/729

B/716 To receive apologies

There were apologies from Cllrs Carol Kambites and Keith Terry. Cllr John Callinan confirmed that he would be late to the meeting.

B/717 To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

B/718 To approve the minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 3rd June '24

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

Cllr John Callinan attended the meeting at 7.07pm

B/719 To receive the latest budget position

Attention was drawn to the following budget lines: Contracted staff - a recent decision by FTC has increased the budget by £25k (not yet shown); Town Hall/Library and Pod rates - rates have been paid 'In year'; Pavilion Electricity usage - recharge not yet resolved from last year or this year but being monitored.

Committee **NOTED** the Clerk's comments and the budget report showing a total 'Actual Net' Expenditure of £96,709.92; a total 'Actual Net' Income of £194,409.21 and a Reserve expenditure of £3,344.46

Committee agreed for the Chair brought forward agenda item B/729 for discussion

B/729 To discuss and recommend the renewal of the council's lease

*Theresa Watt
21/07/2024*

arrangements with Magpies Social Club

The Club Chair provided an overview of the club's work to date to improve the inside of the building along with its plans to focus on the external parts of the building that are in real need of attention. He was able to confirm that their user base is increasing in light of the improvements made to date.

Committee was concerned that the Club had not formed useful links with Stonehouse Town Football Club (STFC) as their would be added benefit to the community of a joint facility. The Club Chair explained that attempts have been made but not well received. The football club appeared to have moved on with its own plans. There was also concern that the club continues as a Members only club. It was explained that whilst there are alternative options available to the club, these present additional challenges - an example was provided in relation to the cost of Sky subscriptions significantly increasing should the club become a Public House. The club were however keen to acknowledge that its current status as a Members only club presented its own difficulties and in an attempt to try and overcome them, the club suggested that it could offer a lower membership fee of £1 to allow anyone to drink and enjoy the facilities; the higher membership would be retained to allow subscribers to benefit from reduced alcohol prices.

Committee **DEFFERED** the matter until it had received a copy of the current lease. It was acknowledged that delaying a decision at this stage would create uncertainty amongst customers and the brewery.

B/720 To approve the latest payments list

Committee **APPROVED** the latest payment list totalling £15,303.21

B/721 To receive an update on the council's Nat West bank account


Committee **NOTED** the Clerk's update confirming to the last payment by Nat West to the council's Lloyds Operating account of £862.06. The Council's account with the Nat West is now closed.

B/722 To receive an update on the council's Lloyds operating account

Since forwarding the support papers for this meeting, the Clerk is now able to confirm that Lloyds bank have now corrected their IT glitch and as a result, once again, all payments require two full signatories to authorize payment. Further to this, the Deputy Clerk has now been accepted by Lloyds bank as a partial signatory and is able to load payments onto the bank payment process for authorisation by full signatories. Adding Cllrs John Callinan and Neil Gibbs as full signatories on the Lloyds account is still being progressed. The disruption to the council's payment process has forced Officers to take remedial action in terms of signing off payments on 'Edge'. Due to the fact that the Clerk had been able to authorize some payments (at the bank) without input from full signatories, he has signed off the payment on 'Edge' in order to show consistency. Details have been covered by the support papers. Committee **NOTED** the updates.

B/723 To review the council's Scale of Charges

The discussion centered mainly on the use of the Council's recreation parks by small businesses wishing to run outdoor classes for Yoga, dog training etc. free of charge. It was felt that the current 'Scale of Charges' allow for this. It was recommended that explanations relating to this and events generally (items numbered 2 and 4) needed to be refreshed; it was felt that Hopelands School would fit into this category. Also, the charge for stall holders needed to be altered to the current charge of £5 per stall per occasion. Business Committee **RECOMMENDED** Council to approve the revised Scale of



Charges 2024

B/724 To approve The Door's latest spending proposal

Committee **APPROVED** The Door's spending proposal totalling £2,918 - this represents the costs detailed in points 1-6 of the proposal.

Committee also **APPROVED** the optional cost of £2,000 associated with point 7 of the proposal subject to The Door being unable to fund the trips through other sources.

B/725 To approve the following grant applications in relation to Doverow Hill Woods

1. Printing of a publication called 'The history of Doverow Hill'

Committee felt that the publication was a very worthwhile project that would provide a great insight as to the history of Doverow Hill and also thanked John Parker for his time and commitment to the town.

However a decision could not be made as town council grants may not be approved for individuals. It was suggested that Mr Parker provide Council with a separate proposal for consideration outside of the grant application process

2. The holding of a public event

A decision could not be made as town council grants may not be approved for individuals. It was suggested that Mr Parker provide Council with a separate proposal for consideration outside of the grant application process


B/726 To recommend for town council approval the award of the sewer pipe installation contract at Oldends Lane

Committee members were brought upto speed on the working groups progress and resultant recommendation as detailed in supporting papers. Whilst the amount of money involved in the installation work will be substantial, the project will enable all the facilities at Oldends Lane to be fully functional and add significant offerings to the Stonehouse Community. Whilst Council has already put aside Earmarked Reserves for the project, it was felt that seeking Full Council approval to award the contract to the successful contractor 'Cambrain Engineering' at a cost of £75,810.68 plus vat (plus £250 STW admin costs) would be appropriate.

Committee thanked the working group and Project officer for the sheer amount of work they had undertaken.

Committee **RECOMMENDS** town council approve the award of the sewer pipe installation work at Oldends Lane to 'Cambrain Engineering' at a total cost of £75,810.68 plus vat plus STW admin costs of £260.

B/727 To note decisions made by HR Sub Committee at its last meeting on 1st July '24:

- HR Sub Committee resolved to make the incumbent officer's employment as Senior Maintenance Officer, permanent, following a successful probationary period
Committee **NOTED** the decision
 - HR Sub Committee resolved to retain the incumbent officer's temporary employment as Business Support Officer until the
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return of the substantive postholder from maternity leave; the decision being made following a successful probationary period. Committee NOTED the decision

And to Recommend for town council approval the following:

- To approve the Town Clerk's flexible working request of incorporating the standard weekly 37 hours work into a four day working week - Monday to Thursday with immediate effect and, to amend his contract of employment to reflect the new arrangement.

Committee RECOMMENDS Town Council approve the proposal:

'To approve the Town Clerk's flexible working request of incorporating the standard weekly 37 hours work into a four day working week - Monday to Thursday with immediate effect and, to amend his contract of employment to reflect the new arrangement'.

- To resolve to make the post of Project Officer, permanent, at the current level of remuneration.

Committee RECOMMENDS Town Council approve the proposal:

'To make the post of Project Officer permanent, at the current level of remuneration'

B/728 To review the Terms of Reference for each of Business Committee's Working Groups

Committee APPROVED the following changes:

- 'Business Networking Group' to be renamed 'Business and Tourism' (This group will require an additional Councillor to comply with the town council's Standing Orders)
- 'Internal Audit' to include the need to regularly change membership to undertake internal control checks (ICC); ICCs to exclude bank signatories

B/729 To discuss and recommend the renewal of the council's lease arrangements with Magpies Social Club

Agenda item brought forward - see above comments

B/730 To consider the potential closure of Stonehouse's remaining Public Houses

The Clerk had recently written to the company that owned the two public houses, 'Stonegate'. The response was that they were seeking new tenant landlords.

By way of an update at the meeting, it was believed that Stonegate had found a new tenant for the Globe. Committee NOTED the update.

B/731 To receive updates from the following working groups:

1. Climate Change Action Forum

A new e bike will soon be purchased by Transition Stroud - the scheme will be operating fairly soon.

2. Communications

A meeting is scheduled for 15th July

3. Oldends Lane Development

See above comments

4. Support Stonehouse

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Nothing to report

5. Youth

Update provided through quarterly report

6. Policy

Still to meet to discuss HR Terms of Reference

7. Internal Audit Panel

Cllr Keith Terry is due to undertake the ICC check for the 1st quarter

8. Court View

Officers have provided the developer with a list of requirements approved by council and are constantly seeking progress updates

B/732 To identify and discuss Councillor training needs

To date, three Cllrs have accepted councillor training

B/733 To note the date of the next meeting - Monday 9th September 2024

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.

Council voted to exclude the public from the next agenda item (B/734); this was unanimously agreed in light of the sensitivities involved.

CONFIDENTIAL

B/734 To recommend to Town Council the use of reserve funding for legal support

Convener of the PROW working group explained that the town council's Town Green Application has advanced to the stage where the town council as the applicant and the owners as the objectors are to argue their cases. The owners have already taken the step of employing a lawyer with expertise in the area of Town Green applications. PROW wishes at this point to seek Counsel's opinion on the strength of the Town council's case before submitting a recommendation to full council on its suggested way forward. Work is already underway to find suitable expertise and respective costs.

To date, council has set aside an Earmarked Reserve of £10,000 for legal work in support of its original application. The working group's request is to use a proportion of the earmarked reserve to secure this initial advice

Committee **RECOMMENDS** Council approve the use of the existing earmarked reserve set aside to support its Town Green application to seek expert advice on the strength of the town council's application.