

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

Minutes of the meeting of Wellington Town Council held online via Zoom on Monday 6th July 2020 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J Lloyd (Mayor),
Councillors C Booth, D Bradley, A Govier, J Hunt, M Lithgow, M McGuffie, S Pringle-Kosikowsky, N Powell-Brace, V Stock-Williams, J Thorne

Kathryn Hemensley (Town Clerk)
Annette Kirk (Deputy Clerk)
Alice Kendall (Assistant Clerk)

There were 5 members of the public present and 1 member of the press.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and reminded Councillors to raise their hand when they wished to speak and to keep any mobile phones on silent. Members were also reminded that there is now a Virtual Meeting protocol in place which sets out a code of conduct at such meetings. Any representations received from the public will be read by the Town Clerk.

2. TO RECEIVE A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE PETER HORSFORD

A former Town Councillor for many years, as well as serving on Taunton Deane Borough Council, including as Taunton's Mayor, Peter Horsford sadly died in late May of this year. The Mayor invited Councillor Govier to lead a tribute and spoke fondly of former Councillor Horsford. Councillors Stock-Williams and Thorne reiterated what Councillor Govier had said.

At this juncture, Councillor Booth joined the meeting.

The Mayor invited all to stand for a one-minute silence in remembrance of Peter.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were given and accepted from Councillor Smith.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Govier, Lithgow, Lloyd, and Stock-Williams declared personal interests as members of Somerset West and Taunton Council.

Councillors Thorne and Govier declared personal interests as members of Somerset County Council.

Councillor Lloyd declared a personal interest relating to payments to MTMIT, being a former customer of MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant.

Councillor Thorne declared a personal interest relating to payments to MTMIT, being a customer and personal friend of MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant. He also declared a prejudicial interest in item 8 on the Clerk's report as he had received a paid commission from the IT consultant to write and source articles for the new website.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

Councillor Lithgow declared a personal interest in the Grant Application as a former director of the organisation.

Councillor Govier declared a personal interest in payments to MTMIT as a customer of the business, and in relation to the Grant Application as he had helped set up the organisation. He confirmed that ne no longer has any involvement with them.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approved the minutes of the Planning and Council meetings held on 2nd March 2020 as a true and accurate record of proceedings after amending minute 243, (Council meeting) to read 'Councillors once again noted the high cost of the street lighting at Rackfield'. The Mayor will sign the minutes once the amendment had been made.

Councillor Thorne requested that his vote against this motion be recorded.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor gave a verbal report which is attached to these minutes.

7. POLICE REPORT

Sergeant Dan Bishop gave an overview of his report that was circulated to Members before the meeting. He asked that Councillors who are approached by members of the public regarding issues in the Town should strongly encourage those people to report matters to the Police so that they can be dealt with efficiently. Members asked if there had been any call outs the previous Saturday (4th July) as a result of the re-opening of pubs and restaurants. Sergeant Bishop confirmed that there hadn't been any issues and that he had visited premises before the re-opening to discuss procedures with the business owners. The Mayor and Councillors thanked Sergeant Bishop for his, and his colleagues, hard work in these unprecedented times. The Mayor also asked if the press would perhaps make note of this in the Wellington Weekly newspaper.

Sergeant Bishop left the meeting at this juncture.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

The report had been previously circulated to Councillors and it was so noted. The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on item 8 within the report (Toilets). She reported that there had been a delay with the delivery of the new soap dispensers but they have now arrived and will be installed as soon as possible. She hopes that the toilets will be opened by the end of the week.

Councillor Thorne asked a question on item 6 (Complaints and Compliments), the Town Clerk replied to report there had been a number of compliments and only one complaint. Under item 7 of the report (Office and Public Services), he asked the Town Clerk if there had been a change in the number of enquiries now that telephone lines are manned until 2pm. The Town Clerk reported that while there had been a number of calls received, most correspondence was received via e-mail and the website contact page, the number of which has been much higher.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

9. TO REVIEW PLANNING MATTERS

(a) To receive a summary of Councillor feedback on recent planning applications submitted to Somerset West and Taunton Council and referred to the Town Council.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions applications since mid-March have been circulated electronically for comment and a collective response sent to Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT).

This report was noted.

(b) To consider reinstating the Council's planning meeting, and if agreed, to set a date for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Council's Planning Committee would meet virtually going forward, with dates being set around current SWT and Somerset County Council (SCC) meetings as best as is possible. The Deputy Clerk will inform Councillors of the next meeting date. Councillors agreed Mondays were a good day to continue holding the planning meetings.

10. TO REVIEW COUNCIL DECISIONS MADE ELECTRONICALLY SINCE MID MARCH

The Mayor expressed her disappointment in the large number of 'no response' marks on the circulated spreadsheet. Councillors Thorne and Lithgow also spoke of their disappointment in the same matter. It was agreed that going forward, e-mails from Officers will include 'VOTE REQUIRED' or 'FOR INFORMATION' at the start of the subject line.

RESOLVED that from today, Councillors' attendance and electronic voting records will be made public on the Council's website.

Councillor McGuffie requested that his vote against this motion be recorded.

11. TO RECEIVE THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2019 – 2020 OPERATIONAL YEAR

The Council's annual report, jointly prepared by the Clerk and Mayor, was circulated with agenda. Councillor Govier led Members in thanking the Town Clerk and Mayor for preparing the report. The Town Clerk was asked to set up a new meeting with Summerfield Developments at the Westpark Commercial Centre.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

12. TO DISCUSS THE MANAGEMENT OF FUTURE LONGFORTH FARM ALLOTMENTS

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the new allotment site. The Town Clerk read an e-mail received from Transition Town Wellington who are advocates of allotment provision and have conducted surveys relating to the issue. Councillors discussed the rental charges for allotments and would like information regarding the increase of fees.

RESOLVED to progress the matter of taking on the new allotments with Bloor Homes and SWT in principle. The particulars of any agreement will be brought back to Council for approval once established.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

The only public representation received was covered under the previous item.

14. TO FURTHER CONSIDER THE RECENT ADVISEMENT OF A POSSIBLE UNITARY AUTHORITY FOR SOMERSET AND SEEK COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

A joint report from Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) was circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED to support all recommendations in the report.

The Town Clerk was further asked to approach neighbouring Parish Councils with a view to set up a meeting of their Clerks and Chairmen to establish their views on the proposed changes.

15. GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Wellington Community Counselling

A grant application had been received from Wellington Counselling CIC requesting £6,000 to support their work in providing free and low-cost counselling to local children. The organisation has also been providing free online counselling to key workers during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Council granted this organisation funding of £6,000 in the previous financial year. The application form had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

After reviewing the application and the Council's Grant Policy, Members agreed that a Service Level Agreement might be the best way to proceed. Councillor Thorne indicated that he had questions regarding the application but did not wish to ask them at the meeting. Members were asked to contact the Town Clerk before 13th July so that any queries can be forwarded to the Organisation. After which time, the Town Clerk will discuss the Service Level Agreement with the applicant and bring the matter to the next Council meeting.

(b) Review of Feedback from the 2019-2020 financial year Grant recipients.

As the Council's Annual meeting did not go ahead it was not possible to have feedback at the time from recipients of grants in the last financial year. Instead organisations were contacted in writing with a request for an update of how their funding was put to use and the benefits to the town and its residents. A summary report was circulated with the agenda.

The Mayor reported that although no written report had been received from Courtfield's Pre-School and Churches Together in Wellington, she had visited the organisations to view how grant monies had been spent.

The Town Clerk informed Members that she would shortly be writing to those who had received Grants but had not provided a report. Should a satisfactory reply not be received, this may result in the Council requesting the return of the Grant funds.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

16. POP UP SHOP

Updated documents and tariffs were circulated to Members before the meeting.

RESOLVED to accept the updated documents, tariffs and deposit amount for new bookings. Delegated authority was given to Officers to make payments in the form of returned deposits (minus any charges as set out in the licence agreements).

17. TO REVIEW COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON AND GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THIS AND FUTURE YEARS' CHRISTMAS EVENTS

The Town Clerk reported that the company from which the lights are hired has offered to submit a quote for the repairs required. They have also indicated that the rental agreement on the existing lights can be extended for one year at a reduced rate or new lights can be rented for one year or three years.

RESOLVED to defer this item until the next meeting.

Councillor Thorne clarified for the meeting that he hoped the town could have a Christmas Market this year as part of festivities, should circumstances permit.

18. TO CONSIDER ADDING A NAME TO WELLINGTON'S WAR MEMORIAL COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

A request had been received from the acting Head of Court Fields school to add the name of Private Eleanor Dlugosz to the town's commemoration to service men and women who have fallen in action. In summary:-

Eleanor, a former student of Court Fields School was killed whilst on active duty in Iraq in 2004. Previous rules appear to have prevented the name of a fallen member of the armed forces to be added to one memorial and Eleanor's name is on a memorial in Hampshire where her mother lived in 2004. It has been suggested that this ruling has now changed, hence the request. Court Fields, as her former secondary school, feel it would be most fitting to have her name added. Eleanor was local to Wellington for many years before she and her family left the area, and the addition of her name to the memorial would be supported by the many local people who still remember her.

Discussions took place regarding this matter and it was agreed that the Town Clerk will investigate all the required permissions for the addition of a name to the War Memorial. Councillor Govier will also provide details of another name that Members felt should also be added.

19. TO REVIEW COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND CONSIDER FUTURE CORONAVIRUS-RELATED ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED that the staff prepare a summary of when Committee meetings would have taken place under normal circumstances. This would be reported back to the next Council meeting to enable a decision as to which Committee or Working Group meetings would be reinstated as remote meetings.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6th July 2020

20. TO NOTE AND APPROVE FINAL YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR 2019 – 2020

Councillor Govier led Members in thanking the Town Clerk for the preparing the final accounts.

RESOLVED to approve the year end accounts for 2019-20.

21. TO REVIEW AND APPROVE NEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

- (a) Environment and Open Spaces Committee
- (b) Allotments Committee
- (c) Community Safety Committee.

RESOLVED to accept the TOR after making small amendments to the document for the Allotments Committee so that it reads in a more generic manner, rather than specific to the Basins site.

22. TO CONSIDER A TOWN COUNCIL BENCH FOR THE BASINS

RESOLVED to accept the anticipated donation of a bench for installation at the Basins, subject to the location being agreed with the Wellington Basins Volunteer Group.

23. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE MONTHLY ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MAY 2020

RESOLVED to accept the income, expenditure and bank reconciliation reports.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.10 pm.

.....
Councillor Janet Lloyd
Mayor