

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 2ND NOVEMBER 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.00 PM

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

Alice Kendall (Acting Town Clerk)
Annette Kirk (Deputy Clerk)
David Farrow (Incoming Clerk)

There was 1 member of the public present and 3 members of the press.
Sergeant Daniel Bishop was present, as was Emma Jones, Community Fundraiser and Engagement Officer (Wellington Monument) – National Trust.

105 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting with a welcome to attendees and reminded Councillors to raise their hand when they wished to speak.

106 APOLOGIES

Councillors Booth and Powel-Brace had informed the Clerk they might arrive late to the meeting. Apologies from Councillor Smith were noted by the Clerk as he attempted to join the meeting but experienced technical difficulties.

107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

Councillor Lloyd declared a personal interest relating to payments to MTMIT (items 11/12b/12c), being a former customer of MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant.

Councillor Thorne declared a personal interest relating to payments to MTMIT (items 11/12b/12c), being a customer and personal friend of MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant. Also, on item 12b (income) as a payment had been received from his daughter's business associate, J Alway, in relation to the Pop-Up Shop.

Councillor Govier declared a personal interest to payments to MTMIT, being a customer of MTMIT

108 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and formally adopt the minutes of the Planning and full Council meetings held on 5th October.

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109 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported that she had visited the Women's Institute memorial display in Wellington Park where knitted and hand-crafted poppies have been installed. She had also visited the field of remembrance at the Baptist Church and laid a cross. The local branch of the Royal British Legion will be running their poppy appeal from the Pop Up Shop until Wednesday. It was planned to hold a small, socially distanced, wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial on Sunday 8th November but this might change due to the new lockdown restrictions being announced. Councillor Thorne reported that further guidance on remembrance services had been issued earlier that day. The Mayor will circulate an update the following day once the new guidance has been read.

She had contacted the organisers of the annual Christmas window competition and unfortunately agreed that it should be cancelled for 2020. This was due to the new Coronavirus restrictions.

She was saddened and shocked to receive a report that Network Rail employees working on the Tonedale Bridge had been subject to verbal abuse by members of the community. She has written to National Rail to issue an apology on behalf of the Town.

110 POLICE REPORT

Sergeant Dan Bishop presented his Police report for the previous month which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. His team had carried out a number of licence checks and they had been impressed with the COVID-19 related measures being taken by local businesses. He further reported that officers had dealt with a gathering of around 40 youths at the skate park adjacent to Wellington Sports Centre. This led to eleven ASB warning letters being issued to youths and their parents. Two £200 COVID-19 penalty notices were issued to those over 18. On the same evening, a youth was also arrested for causing criminal damage to a window of a high street property. It was understood however, that the incident did not involve genuine users of the skate park but the area was used as a meeting place for those in question.

Councillors noted that this report was prepared and circulated before the new lockdown measures had been announced. Sgt Bishop was thanked for his team's hard work and it was asked that the kind thoughts of the Council be passed to PSCO Hallett who had unfortunately fallen ill.

At this juncture, Sgt Bishop left the meeting.

RESOLVED to move forward item 10 (update from National Trust) to follow the Clerk's report.

111 CLERK'S REPORT

The report prepared by the Acting Clerk had been previously circulated to Councillors and it was so noted. Councillor Stock-Williams asked if there had been an update from ID Verde regarding the Longforth Road toilets. The Acting Clerk informed that this will be followed up as soon as possible.

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112 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM NATIONAL TRUST

Emma Jones, Community Fundraiser and Engagement Officer (Wellington Monument), gave an update on the fundraising for the Monument's refurbishment. £380,000 is left to raise but she is confident that this will be reached. The project is only one of a few that the National Trust continued through lockdown and is only around two weeks behind schedule with an anticipated finish date of May 2021. 1,500 stones are being replaced in the structure including a newly built pyramidion. However, they are pleased to be able to re-instate the original capstone which is in excellent condition. Fundraising activities have included 'stone donations' where it has been possible to purchase a piece of stone that has been removed with a certificate of authenticity. Another scheme has seen people submitting donations accompanied with a letter or note on A5 paper which will be placed behind the new plinth stones when they are installed. Emma was also pleased to report that the stones required to rebuild the steps had been ordered and that the scaffolding will be dismantled in the coming months. The project, when finished, will have taken 3 years in total. She put forward an idea that the original pyramidion could be used to create a feature in the centre of Wellington. Councillors were very keen on this and installation in the park or on a roundabout was suggested. Emma will gather further information and report back to the Council.

113 GRANT APPLICATIONS

An application had been received from Wellington Tennis Club for £200 which will contribute towards work to trees adjacent to their premises. The application and supporting documents had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED**, by majority vote, not to grant the application for £200. Councillors felt that as the County Council owned the trees, that they should carry out the works required or provide the funding to do so.

114 IN LIEU OF PUBLIC SPEAKING TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Clerk advised that no representations had been received.

115 TO REVIEW ELECTRONIC DECISIONS MADE BY COUNCILLORS

At a Coronavirus emergency meeting on 19th March, Councillors made several proposals that were subsequently approved by full Council. This included electronic voting for decisions about the Council's affairs. A summary report of electronic decisions made since the Council meeting of 5th October was attached to the agenda, with the full voting records available on the Council website.

RESOLVED to note and accept the voting report.

116 COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

(a) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER BANK RECONCILIATION

(b) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ITEMS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

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(c) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR THE YEAR TO DATE AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED to accept the Bank reconciliation, income and expenditure, and budget reports as presented.

(d) PRELIMINARY BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2021-22

It was noted that an informal meeting will be held on 18th November at 6.30pm to discuss items to be included in the upcoming budget.

117 NALC CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEY

An online survey had been issued by NALC relating to Climate Emergency declarations. It was agreed that the Acting Clerk will complete the questions with input from the Mayor.

118 TO REVIEW COUNCIL OPERATIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CORONAVIRUS-RELATED WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

It was noted that the following meeting dates had been agreed by their Committees/groups;

- Town Centre Committee – 25th November – 10.30am
- Staffing & Resources Committee – 25th November – 2pm
- Wellington Network Partnership – 25th November – 6.30pm
- Environment & Open Spaces – 19th January 2021 – 6pm

119 REVIEW OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED to re-instate the Finance Committee and accept the Terms of reference as presented after amending bullet 4 under 'Operation of the Committee' (page 2) to read; If the Chairman is not able to attend a meeting, the Committee shall vote to appoint a Chairman for that meeting before any business is conducted.

120 FEEDBACK FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

(a) Environment & Open Spaces Committee Meeting

The Committee met on Tuesday 13th October; the minutes of the meeting were circulated. Councillor McGuffie gave an update. The minutes were noted after moving Councillor Thorne from 'Present' to 'Also Present' as he is not a member of the committee.

(b) Recommendations

As per the minutes circulated at the item above, the Committee recommended; "that the Environment and Open Spaces move forward with the application to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund led by the Chairman, Councillor McGuffie." Councillor McGuffie's proposal had been circulated by e-mail in advance of the meeting.

(c) Additions to the application to the Climate Emergency Fund

As per the e-mail forwarded from Councillor McGuffie, a decision is required if the Council would like to provide match funding of £9,000.

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RESOLVED to accept the recommendation that Councillor McGuffie move forward with making an application the Climate Emergency Fund for the street trees project. Also, to provide match funding of up to £9,000 from the Council's environmental budget. An additional suggestion of tree sponsorship will also be included.

At this juncture, Councillor Hunt gave his apologies and left the meeting.

121 FEEDBACK FROM THE WELLINGTON NETWORK PARTNERSHIP

A meeting was held on Wednesday 14th October; the minutes of the meeting were circulated and noted. Councillor Lithgow gave an update to explain what the group had worked on so far including gathering information on what services the neighbouring Parishes currently provide. The next meeting will be held on 25th November.

122 FEEDBACK FROM THE TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

The Committee met on Wednesday 21st October; the minutes of the meeting were circulated and noted. Councillor Lloyd gave an update. Unfortunately, given the announcement of a second lockdown, some of the projects for Town Centre Emergency Fund had to be put on hold.

123 FEEDBACK FROM THE STAFFING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(a) Staffing and Resources Committee

The Committee met on Wednesday 21st October; the minutes of the meeting were circulated and noted. Councillor Lloyd gave an update; The incoming Town Clerk is kindly looking at the upgrade of the office telephone system with the IT consultant. SWT will be approached about the possibility of taking on the Community Office on the ground floor.

(b) Recommendations

As per the minutes above, the Committee recommended; "that any additional hours worked by the Deputy Clerk during the next 6 weeks can be taken as time in lieu up to 10 hours. Any amount over this will be paid as overtime."

RESOLVED to accept the recommendation.

124 FEEDBACK FROM THE POST OFFICE WORKING GROUP

The group met on 27th October, notes of the meeting were circulated and noted. Councillor Thorne gave a brief update, although there were no actions arising from the meeting, Councillors endorsed the approach being taken.

125 BEATING THE BOUNDS

This item will be deferred until mid-2021

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

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Councillor Janet Lloyd Mayor