

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 11th January 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2021 AT 7.00 PM

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

David Farrow (Town Clerk), Annette Kirk (Deputy Clerk), Alice Kendall (Assistant Clerk)

2 members of the press were in attendance.

Also in attendance for specific agenda items were Sergeant Daniel Bishop and Emma Jones, National Trust.

165 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting. She thanked the Assistant Clerk for all that she had done during her time as Acting Town Clerk before the new Clerk had taken up his role at the end of November.

166 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor W Battishill.

167 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 Thorne declared a personal interest item 4c being a personal friend of the Churchwarden giving permission for the grant application to be made.

Councillor Govier declared personal interests relating to item 4b as a social member of the Wellington Cricket Club and item 4c as a member of St John's Church and Churches Together

Councillors Stock-Williams and Powell-Brace declared personal interests relating to item 7 as volunteers for the National Trust.

168 MINUTES

RESOLVED approve and formally adopt the minutes of the Planning and Full Council meetings held on 7 December 2020.

169 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor read a report which is attached to the minutes.

170 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

Sergeant Daniel Bishop presented his Police report for the previous month which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and is attached to the minutes. The Mayor thanked Sgt Bishop and his team for all that they were doing particularly in relation to supporting the DVLA in dealing with untaxed vehicles and around COVID.

In response to a question from Councillor Thorne, Sgt Bishop confirmed that the two properties involved in the drug related issues were located in North Street and Riverside.

Cllr Hunt asked whether, given that Wellington appeared to be a COVID hotspot, the police had needed to intervene in many cases relating to breaches of lockdown requirements. Sgt Bishop reported that they had received 18 calls. Most of these were over Christmas and most were issues outside the town boundary. There had been minimal penalties invoked. He explained that their approach would continue to be to explain and encourage with penalties being used as a last resort. This approach had been successful to date.

171 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WELLINGTON MONUMENT RESTORATION PROJECT INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF THE PYRAMIDION STONES.

The Mayor welcomed Emma Jones from The National Trust. Emma reported that work at the Monument was proceeding well and was still on track to be completed by the end of May. All the stone that needed replacing in the shaft had been and work was now underway on the internal stairs with work on the plinth to follow. The sale of Monument stone has so far raised c£4,000 and this would start again when the current COVID lockdown ends.

There had been record number of visitors to The Monument which, whilst welcome, had led to the car park being full and cars being parked on the road which was a concern, but that there was nothing the National Trust could do about that. Emma confirmed that there were no plans to extend the car park but that consideration was being given to widening the entrance to it.

Regarding the relocation of the Pyramidion stones Emma reported that the contractors working on the Monument had offered to help with replacing missing stones and relocating and rebuilding the Pyramidion. The estimated cost would be in the region of £15,000. The site at the Monument would have to be cleared by the end of May so a decision regarding the Pyramidion would need to be made by then.

It was agreed that more work was needed to understand the scale of any relocation project and how it could be funded.

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RESOLVED

1. That Emma Jones would send photographs of the stones to the Clerk who would then forward to Councillors along with plans/drawings that had previously been sent by Emma to The Mayor
2. The Clerk would arrange a Zoom meeting in the next two weeks to involve any interested councillors, Emma and representatives of the architects and stone masons working on the Monument.

172 CLERK'S REPORT

The report prepared by the Clerk had been previously circulated to Councillors and it was so noted. The Clerk highlighted to the Council that due to the current lockdown requirements and also pressure on other public bodies there may be a delay in projects that Town Council staff were involved in.

In addition to the items in the report the Clerk gave a verbal report in relation to the Precept amount that had been agreed at the previous meeting. Since the meeting SWT Council had reviewed the basis on which the calculations were made which would have resulted in a slight decrease in the household precept. Given that at the December meeting the Council had agreed the principle of 'no change' an adjustment needed to be made to the Precept amount being requested by the Town Council.

RESOLVED that the Precept for 2021/22 should be changed from £353,543, being the amount agreed at the December meeting, to £353,354.

173 GRANT APPLICATIONS

(a) Rockwell Green War Memorial Institute Club

The Club applied for a grant of £5,000 for a kitchen refurbishment project. The application and supporting papers were circulated by e-mail in December 2020. Since submitting the documents, the Club have also applied to the Community Chest fund at SWT.

RESOLVED to defer this application to the next meeting until it is known if a grant will be given by SWT. Also that further information will be requested from the club regarding the number of current members and membership numbers over the last 5 years to inform a future decision.

(b) Wellington Cricket Club

The Club applied for a grant of £603 for a series of youth coaching sessions. The application had been circulated to Councillors by e-mail.

RESOLVED that a grant of £100 per weekly session be awarded. Due to lockdown, it is unlikely that all of the sessions will take place, therefore the Club will contact the Clerk to claim the grant retrospectively.

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(c) St John the Baptist

The Organisation applied for a grant of £3,000 to contribute towards the cost of a permanent electrical installation to support their Angels of Hope project. The application had been circulated to Councillors by e-mail.

RESOLVED that a £3,000 grant be awarded.

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

The Clerk advised that no representations had been received.

175 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk advised that no correspondence had been received.

176 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 7th December was attached to the agenda, with the full voting records available on the Council website.

RESOLVED to note and accept the voting report.

177 COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

(a) To note and approve the November bank reconciliation.

RESOLVED to accept the Bank reconciliation.

178 TO CONSIDER SECTION 106 MONIES AND CIL MONIES AVAILABLE FOR BIDS

The Mayor reminded Councillors that this had been discussed at the December meeting of the Council and that it had been agreed that it should be an agenda item at this meeting to share ideas about how funding could be used. Suggestions were needed, in particular for how the £5000 Section 106 funding should be allocated between play and outdoor recreation. Given the proximity of the site to the rugby club it was suggested that some funding may be allocated to the mini and junior section. At this point The Clerk declared an interest as the Chair of the Mini and Junior Section of Wellington RFC. Other suggestions were made in relation to the skatepark and Basins. Councillors were asked to forward any further suggestions to The Town Clerk.

179 DERELICT TOWN CENTRE BUILDINGS

Councillor Thorne raised concerns regarding the condition of the former Tears shop and 27 North Street. In relation to the former Tears shop, it was reported that the condition of the building was deteriorating and was having an impact on the neighbouring shop. The shop is also part of the town centre Conservation Area. Councillor Lithgow advised that the owners and SWT Council had been contacted

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regarding the concerns but that it appeared no action could be taken. IT was agreed that the Town Clerk should raise the Councils concerns with the SWT Heritage Officer.

In relation to 27 North Street concerns were raised regarding the scaffolding blocking the pavement and the length of time being taken to undertake the building work. Councillor Lithgow reported that SWT Council were aware of the concerns and were taking action. The Town Clerk will monitor the situation and make contact with SWT and SCC Highways officers dealing with the matter and report back at a future meeting.

180 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;

- Environment & Open Spaces – 19th January 2021 – 6.00pm
- Town Centre Committee – 20th January 2021 – 10.30am
- Staffing & Resources – 27th January 2021 – 2.00pm
- Wellington Network Partnership – 10th February 2021 - 6.30pm
- Allotment Committee Meeting – 15th February 2021 – 6.00pm

It was also noted that Gladman developers had asked for a meeting with the Town Council to discuss their plans for the site north of Exeter Road, Rockwell Green and that this would be taking place on 21st January 2021 at 6pm

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

181 COVID 19 – IMPLICATIONS OF NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

Councillors discussed the support that was available to particularly vulnerable residents. It was noted that as the current lockdown requirements are not as robust as in March/April last year, not all support that had been in place then was were now. The Town Clerk reported that he and the Deputy and Assistant Town Clerk were reviewing the information provided last year to see what was still relevant and would be publishing it again when that work was completed. Councillor Thorne reported that Spark Somerset had been commissioned by SCC to coordinate volunteers across the County and The Town Clerk said that he would contact them to see what was in place in Wellington. There were concerns that there would be unmet need in the Town and Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk if they became aware of any support arrangements being provided that the Council could publicise and possibly support through the COVID budget.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

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Councillor Janet Lloyd Mayor