

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 4 MAY 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 4 MAY 2021 AT 7.00 PM

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

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

3 members of the press were in attendance.

Also in attendance for a specific agendas item were Sergeant Daniel Bishop and Emma Jones from the National Trust

9. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

10. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor D Bradley who was unable to attend due to work commitments and Councillor Battishill. Councillor Barr provided apologies on behalf of Councillor Smith. The Mayor stated that in future apologies must be given directly to the Town Clerk. He also reiterated that when giving apologies reasons must be given and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis at each meeting.

Councillor Henley was not in attendance and no apologies had been received.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Barr, Booth, Govier, Henley, 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.

12. MINUTES

RESOLVED approve and formally adopt the minutes of the Planning and Full Council meetings held on 12 April 2021.

13. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE OUTGOING MAYOR ON ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

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

14. 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. He also took the opportunity to introduce PC Sarah Norman who has joined the Wellington Team and would be Acting Police Sergeant for the town in Dan's absence.

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The Mayor reiterated the advice that any concerns about anti-social behaviour must be reported properly and not just discussed on social media.

Councillor Stock-Williams thanked Sergeant Bishop for the increased police presence around the Basins which had had a positive effect.

Councillor Govier raised concerns regarding the recent vandalism in Wellington Park. Sergeant Bishop agreed that it was unfortunate and that investigations were ongoing. Photographs of two people that the police wanted to talk to had been posted on social media and these had been shared over 250 times. He also said that whilst any incident was unacceptable, for context, in the last year there had only been 19 calls relating to concerns about behaviour in the park and only 5 reports of damage.

Councillor Thorne asked about the increasing numbers of thefts of catalytic convertors. Sergeant Bishop explained that they happened at all times of the day including in broad daylight. There were suggestions that organised crime groups were involved. All officers were aware of the issues and additional patrols were taking place.

15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM EMMA JONES, NATIONAL TRUST

The Mayor welcomed Emma to the meeting and given that this was to be her last meeting thanked her for all her work in relation to The Monument. Emma explained that her work with the National Trust was coming to an end as the Monument project was almost completed. She said that it had been a huge privilege to work on the project and to see it to fruition and thanked the Council for its support. Councillors Powell-Brace, Pringle-Kosikowsky and Stock-Williams all expressed their appreciation for what had achieved and Emma's role in that. After Emma had left the meeting, it was suggested by Councillor Powell-Brace that the Council should find some way of recognising the contribution that Emma had made. The Town Clerk would investigate what could be done.

16. CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update. He confirmed that following a High Court ruling last week the Council would be returning to face-to-face meetings after the 7th May. Initially Council, Planning and Finance meetings will be held at Court Fields School and this would be reviewed as restrictions are hopefully relaxed. He said that it was also likely that committee meetings would have to be held away from the Council Chamber to allow for social distancing and that he and the other staff would be looking at the URC hall for that purpose. The Town Clerk also reported that consideration was being given to reopening the office in June when restrictions allow. In preparation for that, the Policy and Resources Committee would be considering a job description for the post of Administrative Assistant at its meeting the next day and whether it could be filled through the apprenticeship route.

Councillor Thorne reminded the Council that there was still a chance that a hybrid approach to meetings may be possible in the future and referred to the Government's call for evidence on the matter of virtual meetings.

15. GRANT APPLICATIONS
(a) Citizen's Advice Taunton

Citizen's Advice Taunton had submitted an application for a grant of £4,850 to continue delivery of their advice service covering a number of issues (benefits, debt, housing, employment). The application was circulated to Councillors by e-mail. *Officer's note: a specific heading was added to the 2021-22 budget for an SLA with CAB in the amount of £5,000.*

RESOLVED that a grant of £5,000 be awarded for 2021/22 and that an SLA be drawn up to secure funding for a further two years.

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

The Clerk advised that no representations had been received.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

Somerset West and Taunton is consulting the Council on an application for Premises Licence at Rosie's Larder, Fore Street, Wellington. It was noted that the Council should be supporting local businesses in developing their provision. No concerns were raised in relation to the application.

18. TO REVIEW ELECTRONIC DECISIONS MADE BY COUNCILLORS

At a Coronavirus emergency meeting on 19th March 2020, 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 12th April was attached to the agenda, with the full voting records available on the Council website.

RESOLVED to note and accept the voting report.

19. COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

To note and approve the bank reconciliation up to 26 April 2021

RESOLVED to accept the Bank reconciliation.

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

The meeting dates were noted.

- Allotments Committee – 24th May 2021 – 6pm
- Town Centre Committee – 5 May 2021 - 10.30am
- Staffing and Resources Committee – 5 May 2021 - 2.30pm

21. TO RECIEVE AN UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SACES COMMITTEE

Councillor McGuffie provided an update. Due to the unfortunate death of the Duke of Edinburgh, the date of the Committee meeting had to be changed which restricted the number of councillors who could attend which resulted in the meeting not being quorate. The meeting continued informally and there were useful discussions with the members of the public in attendance. The main conclusion of the meeting as the need for an overarching strategy for sustainability and the environment which Councillor McGuffie will begin to consider with the Town Clerk.

22. DUKE OF EDINGBURGH AWARDS; THE LIVING LEGACY FUND

Councillor Thorne proposed that the Council should contribute £1000 to the Living Legacy Fund. It was noted that this was a national initiative and would not necessarily benefit the young people of Wellington but it was considered that it was an appropriate way of marking the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh.

Resolved to contribute £1000 to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards: Living Legacy Fund and also that the Town Clerk should liaise with Court Fields School to consider how the Town Council could support local young people to participate in the Awards who may otherwise not be able to.

23. WELLINGTON PARK WAR MEMORIAL CENTENARY

Councillor Thorne asked that this item not be considered and that he would discuss the matter with the Town Clerk outside of the meeting.

24. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM COURT FIELDS SCHOOL

Having considered the information provided with the agenda it was considered that it was insufficient to enable the Council to make a decision and that further information was required. Councillor Powell-Brace and the Town Clerk will contact the Head of English to discuss the request.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

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Councillor Mark Lithgow Mayor