

MINUTES
of the Full Council meeting held remotely via Zoom
on 13th July 2020 at 6pm

Present: Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), K Brennan, A Rudge, H Davis, S Raywood, M Sztymiak, J Raywood, C Cody, H Bowman, C Danter.

In attendance: D Hill (Town Clerk), J King (Assistant Town Clerk) and 2 members of the public

20/21 - 049 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Smith & Cllr Powell.

20/21 - 050 To receive declarations of interest
None received.

20/21 - 051 To consider requests for dispensation
None requested.

A Cllr noted that no telephone link had been provided in the meeting details. Zoom meetings are set up for telephone access and details are available on request.

20/21 - 052 To receive written questions from member of the public
No questions have been received.

20/21 - 053 Public participation

A member of the public made comments regarding the financial regulations: Accompanying notes were appreciated. Changes have been made to match the existing procedure, but it should be treated as an opportunity to change the procedure. Feel scrutiny has been sacrificed for efficiency and there are three main areas they would like Councillors to consider:

1. Spending limit for Committees should be £10,000. Proposal is for £25,000.
2. Interim staff can be hired by the Town Clerk without business case or scrutiny.
3. Would like the removal of the ability of committees to suspend financial regulations, feel this should only be done by Full Council.

20/21 - 054 To note the Mayor's announcements

Reopening the High Streets Safely Funding

A high level plan on how to allocate this funding was agreed at the Executive Meeting of Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) last Wednesday. The Town Council was not consulted in the preparation of this high level plan, however the Deputy Chief Executive and the Town Clerk have discussed the process moving forwards. An assurance has been given that the Town Council will be fully involved in plans relating to this funding available for Tewkesbury Parish.

The Deputy CEO has delegated authority to move this scheme forwards in conjunction with the Leader of the Council.

The first step is going to be to engage a third party to undertake some research on how the fund should be spent and we are advised this work will happen hopefully this month. This decision has already been taken by TBC and the Town Council was not consulted on this. This work will be paid for out of the £84k funding. In parallel TBC will be consulting with the Town Council and TTRP as soon as possible

Cllr Sztymiak advised that he had raised in the meeting the fact that neither Winchcombe nor Tewkesbury have been involved or asked about what has been proposed. He has been given assurance that the Town Council and local members will be included. There are three strands to the funding – the first is support for the public / communication, the second for business support – so that they have what they need to reopen safely and the third strand - to continue temporary public realm changes to ensure the reopening of local economies can be managed safely.
Action: Town Clerk to email out the hyperlink with the split of the funding.

Spring Gardens Toilet Block

There has been a significant increase in vandalism to the toilet blocks. At Spring Gardens, the damage to the door and lock of one toilet was so extensive that it has had to be boarded up. There have been seven instances of damage in the last few weeks, including damage to taps, toilets and toilet roll and soap dispensers being ripped off walls.

Action: Request that Environment & Amenities Committee discuss what action to take regarding replacement doors and consider the future of toilets in Tewkesbury.

20/21 - 055 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th & 15th June 2020

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2020.
Proposed by Cllr Bowman, seconded by Cllr Cody.

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2020.
Proposed by Cllr Cody, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

20/21 - 056 To note the following Committee Minutes:

Environment & Amenities – 4th February & 5th May 2020

Planning – 5th & 19th February, 4th March, 22nd April, 13th & 27th May 2020

Severn Ham – 5th March & 30th April 2020

Finance – 5th March, 7th May & 28th May 2020

Staffing – 11th & 27th May 2020

Buildings & Moorings – 12th May 2020

The above minutes were noted.

Cllr Sztymiak requested further details regarding the freedom of information request referred to in Finance Committee minutes of 5th March, item 19.162. He was advised that they related to a series of moorings related issues.

Action: Details to be sent to Cllr Sztymiak.

Further details were provided regarding the lease of the garden to 2 Saffron Road, as referred to in the Finance Committee minutes of 28th May, item 20.029. The lease for the garden is currently assigned to a previous owner and needs to be assigned to the current owner.

20/21 - 057 Matters arising from the Minutes – for information only

19/20-060 Press releases – Included in the review of the Standing Orders - complete

19/20-115 GCC Report – Flood defence spending – ongoing

19/20-163 Local Electricity Bill – Will return on September agenda as legislation is back in Parliament

19/20-187 Air Pollution – Deferred to a future meeting

20/21-024 Committee Vacancies – number of vacancies to be checked – complete – staffing committee issue to go on the September agenda

20/21-040 Watson Hall Trust Deed – Circulated to all Councillors - complete

20/21-046 Vacancies on Planning Committee – ongoing

20/21-048 Street Parking – time limits on street parking and charges have been reintroduced with effect from 13th July - complete

20/21 - 058 To receive the budget report for April 2020

The budget report was received.

The Clerk advised that the first instalment of the precept has been received and the major costs at the moment were the repairs to the toilet blocks and materials for the refurbishment of the Town Hall & Watson Hall.

A Cllr asked about the shortfall showing of £45,000 at the end of the budget figures. The Clerk advised that this amount represented the shortfall in the budget that had been agreed to be taken from the general reserve.

Action: Clerk to contact RBS to clarify how this needs to be actioned within the accounting system.

A Cllr asked about the impact that Covid will have an impact on income, particularly at the Town Hall and Watson Hall. It was noted that this has already been discussed at Buildings & Moorings Committee meeting.

Action: This will be an agenda item at a future Finance Committee meeting when the impact is better understood.

A Cllr asked why the staff costs were higher than expected in April. The Clerk advised that these related to one off redundancy costs.

20/21 - 059 To review and agree updated Standing Orders

Cllrs discussed the Standing Orders. Areas where changes were agreed were:

- All attendees will be encouraged to enable their video
- The right to grant dispensations is to remain with the Proper Officer
- Gender neutral pronouns should be used where possible
- To include that there be no eligibility criteria to become Mayor or Deputy Mayor as passed in Full Council in October 2018

- Press releases will be circulated to all Councillors following their issue, as requested in Full Council in September 2019
- To include the date, as well as the time and place in the minutes
- To allow 45% of Councillors to request a meeting, rather than seven
- To remove the suggestion that a copy any video taken, needs to be sent to the office

It was RESOLVED to adopt the new Standing Orders, subject to the changes made within the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Bowman, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

Actions:

Town Clerk to contact NALC to petition for the updating of the legally binding portions of the Standing Orders to be updated to gender neutral pronouns and the use of Chairperson, rather than Chairman.

Cllrs will be advised by email when minutes have been posted to the website.

Cllr Cody left the meeting at 7.30pm.

It was unanimously agreed to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

- 20/21 - 060 To review and agree updated Financial Regulations**
Deferred to the next meeting.
- 20/21 - 061 To note the insurance renewal (2nd year of a three-year agreement) at a cost of £6661.99**
The insurance renewal was noted.
Action: Clerk to advise Cllr Sztymiak as to the cost of the insurance last year, the basis on which it increases from year to year and what the expected cost will be for 2020-21. Together with the difference in the valuation of the buildings from 2019 to 2020, following the revaluation exercise last year.
- 20/21 - 062 To note the payment of £4000 to Focus Cancer Support from the Mayor's Charity Account**
The payment was noted.
- 20/21 - 063 To note the outcome of mediation in the Mr Garry Payne v Tewkesbury Town Council case**
Following mediation on Monday 16th March 2020, the County Court at Gloucester and Cheltenham ordered that the Claimant's claim be dismissed with no order as to costs.
- 20/21 - 064 To review the grant awarded to the 2020 Medieval Festival**
The original grant for £2000 was not issued as lockdown commenced as it was not known if the event would go ahead. The Medieval Festival have been in touch to advise that although it is not going ahead, they will still incur substantial costs

totaling £1800 this year for insurance, running the website, accounts, PO box and maintaining the land (hedge cutting and grass mowing).

It was RESOLVED to award a grant of £1800 to the Medieval Festival.
Proposed by Cllr Brennan, seconded by Cllr Rudge.

It was advised that this grant was earmarked in the end of year process, so will be paid from earmarked reserves. This will enable the Medieval Festival to apply for funds in this financial year, should they wish to.

20/21 - 065 To approve the payments list

It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totaling £8135.61.
Proposed by Cllr Rudge, seconded by Cllr S Raywood

20/21 - 066 Correspondence

The Clerk advised that correspondence has been received from the police regarding the Garry Payne case. This was discussed by the Buildings & Moorings Committee and the Town Council solicitor responded. There has been no further correspondence from the police and as far as the Town Clerk is aware, the matter is closed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.47 pm.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes 14th September 2020