

Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held at Greenfylde First School, Silver Street, Ilminster on Tuesday 23 June 2015 at 19:30hrs.

Present:

Mayor Cllr R Neave

Councillors F Albin, P Burton, R Drayton, J Fagan, J Fowler, C Goodall, V Keitch, D Kinder, A Shearman, S Shepherd, J Sothern, S Storey, R Swann and T Walker

In Attendance:

Officers: Miss J Norris (Town Clerk) Mrs S Whitefield (Deputy Town Clerk) Ms F Case and Ms L Wickes from South West Audit Partnership

43 members of the public attended the meeting, 3 of whom spoke during the public participation session.

Scarecrow Competition

The Mayor awarded the prizes to the winners of the Scarecrow competition which had been held as part of the Midsummer Experience event In first place was the Locke Family who had made a scarecrow of a landgirl and in joint Second place were Ilminster Brownies and the Lawson Family.

Speaker 1

Speaker 1 was the Chair of Ilminster Entertainment Society and he gave information on some of the activities in which the Society participates. The Society would like to be more formally linked with the Town Council and asked for a Town Councillor to be nominated to attend trustee meetings ideally someone who has interest in theatre & entertainment. The Mayor responded that this would be put on the agenda for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

Speaker 2

Was speaking on behalf of local Carnival Clubs, particularly the seven who have build homes in Ilminster or Chard. There is currently a lack of available build grounds so a South Somerset Park Committee has been formed to raise awareness of the issue, identify a suitable site ideally be 1.5 – 2 acres and raise funds for its acquisition. There is a high level of community support for the project. The Committee would like the Town Council's help to identify sites and lobby other organisations for support and may request for a cash injection in the future. The number of carnival clubs is in decline and help is needed to secure the future of carnival. Written literature was provided to be circulated to Councillors after the meeting. The Mayor said this will be placed on the agenda of a suitable future meeting.

Speaker 3

Speaker 3 was an architect speaking on behalf of the owner of the former Methodist building which had been closed due to falling congregations. It has been difficult to identify a suitable project for which to use the building and the provision of accommodation for adults with learning disabilities seemed an ideal use. It is appreciated that conversion of church buildings needs to be done carefully, retaining original character whilst adapting to modern standards. The proposal was developed following consultation with the Conservation Officer. English Heritage did not visit site but objected to the proposed plans and said they would call the application in if it was approved. The planning application was refused by letter and Ward Members did not call it in, this meant that the local community did not

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have an opportunity to comment. This application seemed to have failed due to problematic process issue and it was hoped that it doesn't happen again.

Cllrs Goodall and Kietch explained that they had received a full report from the Planning Officers and bearing in mind the views of English Heritage there was little choice but for the application to be refused. The Leader of the District Council was aware of the problems of English Heritage commenting strongly on applications without visiting sites and was trying to address the issue.

26 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence as everyone was present.

27 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors or Officers in respect of any items on the agenda for this meeting.

At this point in the meeting a recorded vote was requested for agenda items 9-16 inclusive

28 Minutes

RESOLVED

- (i) to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2015 as a correct record
- (ii) to note the office Action Plan relating to the Town Council Meetings

29 Mayor's Announcements/Engagements

A) The Mayor made announcements relevant to Town Council and Mayoral activities and engagements:

- a Mayor's Twitter account is being set up as an attempt to get younger people interacting with the Council. It will provide day to day information about what the Mayor is doing and what life is like being the Mayor. It will be made clear that this is a personal viewpoint.

B) The Mayor's engagements between 19th May 2015 and 23rd June 2015 had been published on the agenda for the meeting.

30 Police Report

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Police to report on any matters relevant to policing in Ilminster. A written report was tabled before start of meeting.

31 Reports from District Councillors

The written report was tabled before start of meeting. Issues highlighted by the District Councillors included:

- the mobile number given on the report for Cllr Keitch is incorrect
- Very intensive training has been provided for the District Councillors since the elections and this has been impressive in terms of both depth and quality
- An overview was given of the Committee seats and responsibilities that the Ward Members of Ilminster will be taking on
- Councillors were reminded of the free play days in Ilminster 22 July, 29 July and 12 August
- Wassail Theatre Company will be performing at Yeovil Country Park on Sunday 12 July

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- Click Into Activity lottery funding will be available for some healthy lifestyles projects in Ilminster
- The District Councillors intend to hold monthly surgeries and are currently looking for a suitable venue - suggestions were made by Town Councillors of the Youth Club and the Dr's surgery but both of these have already been investigated by the District Councillors and for differing reasons are not available.

The District Councillors were asked why they may vote differently on the same issue at a Town Council meeting compared to how they vote at a District Council meeting?

The District Councillors explained that at the District they may have different information available to them which may influence how they vote. This is particularly relevant with planning applications because as a consultee only limited information is available to the Town Council; at the District Council meeting the Planning Officer's report takes into account all responses to consultations and comments received.

32 Report from County Councillor for Ilminster

The County Councillor report had been circulated with the agenda.

Issues discussed included:

- The County Councillor has been approached by individual Town Councillors regarding the overgrown state of highway verges on routes in and out of the town
- The highways land near Gooch & Housgo is particularly overgrown and causing a danger to pedestrians
- A resident has done a fantastic job clearing the pavement by Bradfords

33 Internal Audit Report & Approval of Audit Days

The Representatives from the Town Council's Internal Auditors (South West Audit Partnership) introduced themselves and explained the format of their reports.

They emphasised that when they are undertaking audits and preparing reports they endeavour to be mindful of the culture of the organisation being audited and the resources in terms of staff time so that they can make recommendations which are relevant and effective.

The two audits for Ilminster are newly completed, hence written copies are not available for the meeting, they contain some recommendations – but none of the highest priority and the internal auditors can offer a reasonable assurance on both audits regarding the processes in place.

A) The Internal Audit report for Financial Controls – 2014/15 Annual Return

The recommendations relate to

- Risk management
- Compiling a fixed asset register
- Bank reconciliations being undertaken more regularly by Councillors.

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B) The Internal Audit Report on the Football and Community Facility Project

This audit was undertaken at the request of the Town Clerk as it is a significant project for the Town Council, the audit encompassed overall project management, the business plan, governance and financial management and planning.

There are five areas for improvement

- A risk register should be compiled for the Football and Community Facility Project
- Formalise the terms of reference, management and performance monitoring for the Contract Administrator
- There needs to be an audit trail when financial assumptions are made
- Controls should be put in place for the project bank account
- The project mile stones need to be reviewed and updated

C) To approve of number of audit days

The original budget is for 5 days but due to Football & Community Facility Project audit the audits this year have taken 9.5 days.

RESOLVED to approve the 9.5 audit days to encompass the audits for the Financial Controls – 2014/15 Annual Return and the Football and Community Facility Project

34 Football & Community Facility Lease

RESOLVED to defer this item as information from the Town Council's Solicitors had not been received in sufficient time to make it available to Councillors or for the Football Club's Solicitor to be given an opportunity to respond.

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix A

35 Sport England Grant for Football & Community Facility

The Council was asked to agree acceptance of the grant offer and conditions from Sport England and nominate 2 signatories

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Sport England documents only refer to the Football facility and the word "community" is not used
- The football club is aware of the conditions that need to be met regarding publicity

RESOLVED

- (i) to accept the Sport England grant and conditions for the Football and Community Facility
- (ii) that the Mayor and the Town Clerk are authorised to sign the acceptance document on behalf of the Town Council

Note: A recorded vote was taken on these resolutions which are attached to these minutes as Appendix B and Appendix C

36 Bat Survey

The Town Council considered the quotations for undertaking a bat survey on Britten's Field which is required to meet one of the planning conditions for the Football and Community Facility.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

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- The importance of Herne Hill and maintaining it as a natural habitat
- The usefulness of the survey data in the light of potential planning applications close to Britten's Field and Herne Hill
- The advice received from South Somerset District Council's Ecologist

RESOLVED

- (i) That the contract to meet the planning condition for a bat survey is awarded to Contractor no 2 for the sum of £ £1,920 plus the data request fee
- (ii) That the same contractor is asked for price to extend the survey towards Herne Hill.

Note: A recorded vote was taken on these resolutions which are attached to these minutes as Appendix D & Appendix E

37 Lookout Point

The Council considered seeking quotations to form a viewpoint / platform on Herne Hill. This work had been planned to take place at least a year ago using Town Council staff and volunteers. Unfortunately a combination of circumstances meant that it had not been possible to progress the project and the most pragmatic way forward would be to seek a cost from contractors.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The stone from the cemetery wall which was to be used to construct the lookout was still at the cemetery and was unsightly
- The vantage point would be an enhancement to the Hill

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk seeks prices for constructing the lookout point which includes moving the stone from the cemetery and using it in the construction.

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix F

38 Party On The Park

The Town Council considered if it wished to have a presence at Party on the Park (30 August 2015) and, the nature / format of that presence.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Last year the kiosk opened at the Party on the Park and it was used as a focal point for Councillors to meet people; this informal presence was well received

RESOLVED that the Town Council has an informal presence at Party On The Park using the kiosk as a focal point.

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix G

39 Resources Committee Recommendation

The Chair of the Resources Committee presented the recommendation made by the Committee from the meeting held on 9th June 2015, regarding maintenance works to the Market House.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- References have been obtained for the contractor

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RESOLVED that the revised quotation for the maintenance works to the Market House, in the sum of £11,856. Is accepted.

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix H

40 Open Spaces Review Group

A) Amendment to the Terms of Reference

As a result of discussion at the Annual Town Council Meeting, Council was requested to approve a change to the Terms of Reference for the Open Spaces Review Group to increase the number of Town Councillors who sit on the Group from 3 to 4

B) Nomination of Councillors

The Council was asked to appoint Councillors to Open Spaces Review Group

RESOLVED

- (i) To increase the Town Councillor membership of the Open Spaces Review Group from 3 Councillors to 4 councillors
- (ii) That Councillors Storey, Drayton, Sothern, Swann be appointed to sit on the Open Spaces Review Group

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix I and Appendix J

(iii)

41 Membership of the Dementia Action Alliance

The Town Council was asked to consider becoming a member of the Dementia Action Alliance

RESOLVED that the Town Council becomes a member of the Dementia Action Alliance

Note: A recorded vote was taken on this item which is attached to these minutes as Appendix K

Note: Cllr Storey sits on Dementia Action Alliance Ilminster group and Councillor Sothern is the Ilminster Town Council representative on the group

42 Kiosk Report for Ilminster Midsummer Experience

Cllr Storey provided a brief oral report saying that the kiosk was very busy over the IMEX weekend a volunteer opened the kiosk between 9.30am and 4.00pm on the Sunday taking over £500.00. The feedback had been very positive. Cllr Storey thanked the volunteer who was present at the meeting and said that her work was very much appreciated.

43 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies provided information as follows:

- Ilminster Christmas Lights Committee AGM Report (1 June 2015)
- Ilminster Chamber of Commerce (10 June 2015)
- Twinning – French visitors had been in Ilminster for the Midsummer experience which they had really enjoyed – they had attended the Rotary lunch on the Rec and had a cream tea.

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- A date has yet to be set for the next PACT meeting but is likely to be early September
- Arts Centre is hosting a fundraising event - this is a great facility with lots of things happening including displays and exhibitions by young people
- Greenfyld First School thanks everyone who spoke to the children at the Civic Service
- Swanmead Middle School have just appointed their first “home grown” teacher; there is an open invitation to newly elected councillors to call in – door always open please go and visit and check facts as there are concerns about recent misinformation being disseminated by Councillors
- Wadham School has been fundraising in the memory of Bradley Cullen.
- The youth club is still struggling volunteers are needed and more children to attend. The facility is under utilised.

The Chamber Of Commerce meeting feedback regarding parking will go on appropriate agenda

44 Project Plan

Councillor sponsors were agreed for each project plan item and these will be incorporated into the version presented to the next Town Council meeting.

45 Authorisation of Payments and Notification of Virements

The Schedule of Payments for authorisation was circulated with eth agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED that the payments listed in eth schedule presented to the Council totalling £ £11,456.11 net be approved

46 Clerk’s Updates

The updates sent by email since the last Town Council agenda was published were listed on the agenda. No matters pertaining to the updates were raised.

47 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED To take agenda item 25 without members of the public and press present due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

48 Hammerhead Land

The Town Clerk to provide an oral update on progress with implementing the Council’s instructions regarding the Hammerhead Land.

The meeting closed 21:40hrs

Chair’s signature & date
