

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th February 2021

Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7), Councils were unable to meet in person during the COVID emergency. This meeting was therefore held via a Zoom link, with Councillors connecting remotely. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Cllr S Ward (Chairman) Cllr J Roberts (Vice Chairman)
Cllr M Barnes Cllr C Blackmore
Cllr P Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie
Cllr E MacTiernan (until Min Ref: C/41/21) Cllr E Phennah (from Min Ref: C/27/21 refers)
Cllr G Shelton Cllr S Terry
Cllr T Treacy

In Attendance: County Cllr V Smith, Gloucestershire County Council (until Min Ref: C/34/21)
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

Cllr Ward commented on recent headlines relating to a Parish Council Zoom meeting that had gone viral. He thought that Northway was fortunate to have a Council which did not bring personal issues and/or bullying to meetings and thanked Members for this.

C/26/21 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

C/27/21 Public Participation

- i. **Invitation for Members of the Public to Address the Council** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the meeting should adjourn to allow for any public participation.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Roberts mentioned that the pothole by the Northway Lane motorway bridge had been dealt with quickly, however, the road was continuing to deteriorate in other areas, so it was more of a temporary fix than a permanent one. County Cllr Smith said that this was part of the section that the County had wanted to resurface along Shannon Way but there had been problems due to restricted access for businesses. It was now in the programme for 2021, starting in the Spring, but would need to be done in stages.

7.04pm – Cllr Phennah joined the meeting.

Cllr Ward commented that he had noticed a big difference between Worcestershire roads and Gloucestershire roads – with Worcestershire roads seeming a lot better maintained. He asked why this was. County Cllr Smith agreed and added that the contractor for Gloucestershire Highways was now Ringway, who had been in Worcestershire Highways for thirteen years. Hopefully this meant that Gloucestershire would catch up to the same standards.

Cllr Mackenzie mentioned that the section of Hardwick Bank Road between Northway Lane and the junction with Grange Road was continuously being dug up. It appeared that this was in relation to a gas leak but was ongoing and caused a lot of disruption. County Cllr Smith explained that utility companies were allowed to dig up the roads regularly, however, if this became too excessive and things were not moving forward within a certain timescale, they could be issued with a fine. County Cllr Smith agreed to investigate the matter further.

- ii. **Reconvening of Meeting** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED re-convening of meeting.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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C/28/21 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 11th July 2012 (Minute Ref C/159/12), including paragraph 12(2).

C/29/21 Disqualification of a Councillor

It was noted that C Porter had been disqualified as a Councillor due to lack of attendance. This had been reported to Democratic Services at Tewkesbury Borough Council and a Notice of Vacancy had been advertised.

C/30/21 Previous Minutes

Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting that took place on 13th January 2021 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR:	Cllr Shelton	Cllr Mackenzie
	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Blackmore
	Cllr Godwin	Cllr MacTiernan
	Cllr Roberts	Cllr Terry
	Cllr Treacy	Cllr Ward

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Phennah

C/31/21 Extraordinary Council Meeting

- i. **Minutes** – Cllr Barnes PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting that took place on 27th January 2021 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Planning Document** – It was noted that the planning application relating to proposed development of a road bridge (20/00896/FUL) was no longer being considered by Tewkesbury Borough Council at the February Planning Committee Meeting, instead it would be deferred until the March Planning Meeting. The Clerk explained that this was due to the addition of a 'technical detail' which would add value to the application.

Members considered whether the planning document/representation, as agreed upon under Min Ref: C/24/21, should be shared on the Northway Parish Council webpage. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the document was shared on the webpage, but not until after it had been received by the Borough Council Planning Committee in March.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Mackenzie asked whether it could also be published in the newsletter. Cllr Ward pointed out that there was very little space remaining in the next issue of Northway Voice, unless the Council wanted to consider paying for an additional insert.

C/32/21 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes/Clerks Report

C/12/21 Precept Requirement for 2021/22 – A request for a precept of £187,700 has been submitted to Tewkesbury Borough Council.

C/32/21 **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes/Clerks Report** (continued)

C/15/21 COVID Grant – The Clerk confirmed that she had been in correspondence with various organisations about the possibility of mentoring for young people in Northway, which could possibly be funded with the remainder of the COVID grant if it fit the criteria. Further information was still being awaited.

C/18/21 Crime & Disorder – The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Gloucestershire Police a letter of thanks for the horse mounted patrol visit to Northway at the start of January. Further correspondence had followed and, as a result, they had advised that the mounted Police would be deployed in the area again on 5th February 2021, which was advertised on the Council's Facebook page. Following the visit, they had informed the Clerk that, although there were not a lot of people out and about, those they did see were pleased to see them and there was a lot of waving from windows. They also chatted with the Council Chairman and explained how the deployments and patrols were organised and prioritised. It was noted that, while there were so few commuters, the train station car park was a good place for them to leave the horse lorry, however, when numbers picked up they would need to find an alternative place to park, so if there were any businesses that might be agreeable to this they would be grateful to know.

C/19/21 Correspondence for Action > Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner – The completed questionnaire relating to 'Safe & Social Roads' had been submitted to the OPCC.

C/24/21 TBC Planning Application 20/00896/FUL Land to the North East of Hardwick Bank Road, Northway – As mentioned under Min Ref: C/31/21 (ii), this application would no longer be considered at the Borough Council Planning Meeting on 16th February 2021, but would be going to the March Meeting instead. Cllr Ward had forwarded a copy of a map that the Borough Council had included on its webpage highlighting various areas of potential/proposed development as part of the Garden Town plan. He explained that it had been disappointing to see this on the Borough Council webpage before it was shared with the Garden Town liaison group. Jonathan Dibble, Programme Manager, had apologised and the document had since been removed from the webpage.

C/33/21 **Roads & Road Safety**

- i. **Issues of Concern** – No issues of concern were raised.
- ii. **Highways England** – Details had been received of resurfacing works due to take place between A46 M5 junction 9 and Teddington Hands roundabout. Cllr Ward asked whether this work would involve alterations for the Garden Town and land behind the BP proposals. County Cllr Smith said he believed it was resurfacing works only and was not aware of any other details relating to it.
- ii. **Vehicle Activated Sign**
 - a. The Clerk passed on feedback from the Local Highways Manager regarding why a VAS (vehicle activated sign) was refused (Min Ref: C/06/21 refers), it failed to pass the criteria due to traffic volume and speed.
 - b. The Clerk had made enquiries as to whether or not it would be possible to place a VAS on Parish Council land (i.e. The Park). The Local Highways Manager said that, although not a bad idea, it would be worth approaching the Borough Council to seek advice on whether planning permission would be required. There was also the added complication that there was potential to distract the road user and it would not be covered by traffic sign regulations if placed on private land. He felt that a good way forward was village gateways on The Park when coming over the bridge where the speed can be displayed again, along with a 'Welcome to Northway Parish, Please Drive With Care'-type sign, however, this was something that could be considered further at the walkabout with the local improvements team (Min Ref: C/06/21 refers).

County Cllr Smith added that the Safety Manager had agreed to attend the walkabout meeting which was due to be arranged after lockdown had ended. After this, the Parish Council could decide on the best way to move forward – and there was still the allocated £5,000 that could be used towards it.

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C/33/21 Roads & Road Safety (continued)

Cllr Ward expressed disappointment that the County Council had not permitted progression of a VAS for Northway, especially since it would have been at no cost to the County because a company had offered to pay for the device. It was also a shame that traffic figures, the decision had been based on, were taken when vehicle activity was reduced due to Covid-19 and the Parish Council's figures would not be taken into account.

Cllr Mackenzie asked if it the Parish Council could not raise this with the media and local MP. County Cllr Smith explained that it was unlikely that the County Council would move on this, the only way was for more traffic surveys to be undertaken after lockdown when things were more back to normal, a lot of other parishes were in a similar position.

Cllr Roberts said that he understood Members' frustrations, however it would be counter-productive to get the press involved before the walkabout, if nothing positive resulted from the meeting it would still be an option.

- iv. **Radar/Speed Gun** – The Clerk confirmed that she had made enquiries with Gloucestershire Constabulary as to the availability of a new speed gun that generated tickets. A response was received advising that the gun had only been on trial and a bid had to be made for use of it in the area (along with staff trained to operate the device).

Members wondered whether it was worth putting in a request ready for April when lockdown would be over, although some felt that April was still be too early. It was AGREED that consideration of this should be deferred until the March Full Council Meeting.

C/34/21 County Councillor Report

County Cllr Smith had forwarded a flooding report for information as well as details of proposed new cycle paths (all circulated to Members). He asked that Members looked through the information and got back to him with any questions at the next Full Council Meeting.

The County Council had been busy with gritting due to the cold weather, County Cllr Smith encouraged reporting of any potholes via the County Council's webpage.

Cllr Ward referred to the cycle path over the Northway Lane motorway bridge which was not wide enough to be compliant with regulations, as well as the path over the humpback bridge by the Railway Station. County Cllr Smith explained that the proposed cycle path brought you virtually to Northway, he offered to bring maps for the Council to study once lockdown was over.

Cllr Mackenzie mentioned the need for a footpath that allowed residents safe access to Joan's Field - currently they had to walk along a narrow verge next to a 60mph road. County Cllr Smith encouraged Members to raise this at the walkabout meeting as it would back up the Parish Council's need for a VAS, alternatively, the Safety Manager could talk the Parish through getting the speed of the road changed with a Traffic Regulation Order.

7.50pm – County Cllr Smith left the meeting.

C/35/21 Planning Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting that took place on 20th January 2021.

C/36/21 General Purposes Committee

Members received the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 20th January 2021.

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C/37/21 GP Projects Working Party

Members received the Notes of the GP Projects Working Party Meeting held on 3rd February 2021.

C/38/21 Carbon Neutral Working Party

Members received the Notes of the Carbon Neutral Working Party Meeting held on 3rd February 2021.

C/39/21 Finance Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 27th January 2021.

C/40/21 Risk Assessment

Members received a recommendation from the Finance Committee for approval of the Risk Assessment (including amendments) (Min Ref: FIN/22/21 refers). Cllr Terry PROPOSED approval. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/41/21 Borough Councillor Report

Cllr MacTiernan mentioned deferral of the bridge/Garden Town application but said she had nothing more to add to what had already been mentioned above (Min Ref: C/31/21 refers).

7.55pm – Cllr MacTiernan left the meeting.

Cllr Terry wondered whether the application would need to go back out to consultation for six weeks as a result of this addition of a 'technical detail'. The Clerk agreed to ask the question.

C/42/21 Council Accounts

- i. **Schedule of Bills** – Members received the schedule of bills paid and cheques for payment totalling £8,791.66.

Cllr Godwin queried why electricity charges were listed in relation to the Community Hub and the Village Hall but not the Changing Rooms. The Clerk explained the invoices came in at different times and an invoice for the Changing Rooms' usage was still being awaited or may have been paid the previous month.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the accounts for payment be approved. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Local Government Transparency Code 2015** – Members considered displaying all payments over £500 on the webpage. The Clerk explained that Councils with a turnover of £25,000 or less have to display payments over £100.00 and Council with a turnover of £200,000 have to display payments of over £500.00 (excluding staff payments) and for the area between there was no legal requirement to do this. As Northway Parish Council sat close to the £200,000 mark it would be considered best practice to include these payments on the webpage, the Internal Auditor also recommended this action.

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C/42/21 Council Accounts (Continued)

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Council should display all payments over £500 on the website from the start of the new financial year.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk updated Members on the situation with Severn Trent and the missing water meter (Min Ref: C/245/20 & C/05/21 refer). Historically, records showed that the meter was accessed via Fairway which led Severn Trent to believe it might be located between fencing at the back of the store area in the Hub car park and fencing behind Styles Close. A new meter could not be installed until the existing one had been found and it was left up to the Parish Council to resolve this. It was AGREED that the Council should investigate whether a contractor would be able to help, if not, Bromford Housing should be approached for assistance.

C/43/21 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

No issues were raised.

C/44/21 Parish Assembly

- i. **Presentation** – Members considered whether the Council should have a speaker make a presentation at the Parish Assembly. Members felt that, since the Assembly would be held over Zoom it was unlikely that many people would attend. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that no presentation was given. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Invitees** - It was noted that the Council was legally obligated to hold a Parish Assembly. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Assembly was advertised in the paper and invitations sent out, as in previous years, however people wishing to attend should be asked to contact the Clerk for the Zoom link. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Community Awards** – Members were invited to suggest nominees for the Community Award. Suggestions were as follows – resident who made bug hotels for the Hub grounds as well as the local school, resident who offered free work sheets to parents during lockdown, the residents who undertook voluntary gardening of the Hub grounds, a man (living outside of the parish) repairing laptops for schoolchildren to use (Northway residents had benefitted from this).

The Clerk was asked to further investigate whether a donation could be made to fund computer parts for the man fixing up laptops.

It was AGREED that the Council should call on residents to submit nominations for the Community Award and these should be received at the next Full Council Meeting.

C/45/21 Voluntary Work in the Parish

No new reports of voluntary work being undertaken in the parish were raised.

C/46/21 Crime & Disorder

No issues were raised.

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C/47/21 Correspondence for Action

- i. **Worcestershire County Council** – Consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement regarding Waste and Minerals Development. Members did not wish to submit a response to this.
- ii. **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** – Details of consultation/questionnaire. Members did not wish to submit a response to this.
- iii. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)** – The Clerk gave details of upcoming courses.
- iv. **IT Schools Africa** – The Clerk provided information on a new project from IT Schools Africa (a Cheltenham based charity), the 'DigiBus', would visit community venues in an 'accessible, converted, double decker bus packed with digital technology aimed at the needs of communities with poor connectivity, digital knowledge, access or skills.' Members were keen to see if this was something that could be utilised in Northway, perhaps at the Playing Field car park or Community Hub car park (or even the Co-Op car park). It was suggested that the Clerk email back and ask if any of these options would be suitable and also enquire as to how long the bus would stay at the various locations.

C/48/21 Correspondence for Information

- i. **Society of Local Council Clerks:**
 - a) Branch Newsletter February 2021.
 - b) The Clerk Magazine January 2021.
- ii. **National Association of Local Councils:**
 - a) Chief Executive's Bulletin.
 - b) Coronavirus Updates.
 - c) Newsletter 26 January 2021.
- iii. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Towns Councils (GAPTC)** – Newsletter 18th January 2021.
- iv. **Tewkesbury Borough Council (Press Release):**
 - a) 'Thousands more added to Emergency Community Fund'
 - b) 'New lockdown grant for closed businesses'

C/49/21 Correspondence received after 4th February 2021

- i. **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council** – Details of 'Spring Clean' event; managing community buildings on a day-to-day basis on 24th February 2021. Cllr Terry agreed to confirm with the Clerk whether she was able to attend this event.
- ii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council** – Press release related to COVID-19 grants.
- iii. **GoCompare** – Request for inclusion of useful link on the Parish Council's webpage. It was AGREED that this should not be included.
- iv. **Zurich** – Newsletter about coping with winter weather.

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C/49/21 Correspondence received after 4th February 2021 (continued)

- v. **Rotary** – Details of Hope for Tomorrow charity who are looking for locations at which they can place clothing banks.

Cllr Roberts mentioned that he had been looking at suggestions to put forward as a result of the Carbon Neutral Working Party including the possibility of clothing banks.

Members were reminded Members of the fly tipping problems which had resulted from the clothes banks being located at the Co-Op car park.

It was AGREED that this should be further considered at the March Full Council Meeting.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 8:40 p.m.