

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th March 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) (until/from: C/56/21 / C/60/21)
Cllr M Barnes Cllr C Blackmore
Cllr P Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie
Cllr E MacTiernan Cllr E Phennah
Cllr G Shelton (from: C/51/21) Cllr S Terry
Cllr T Treacy

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

C/50/21 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

C/51/21 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 commented on how nice it was now that the road at the front of Saxon Park had been tarmacked properly and the pot holes were gone.

7.04pm – Cllr Shelton joined the meeting.

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

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/52/21 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/53/21 Disqualification of a Councillor

Tewkesbury Borough Council had confirmed that no election had been called and the vacancy could be advertised for co-option.

C/54/21 Previous Minutes

Cllr Mackenzie PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting that took place on 10th February 2021 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/55/21 Matters Arising from Council Minutes/Clerks Report

None received.

C/56/21 Roads & Road Safety

- i. **Issues of Concern** – Cllr Roberts raised concern about the number of potholes still causing issues in the parish but Members were asked to report these individually.

Cllr Barnes confirmed that he had reported a No Entry sign at the top of Northway Lane (by BCA) which had been pulled from the ground.

- ii. **Radar/Speed Gun** – Members considered whether the Council should put in a bid for use of a speed gun in Northway (Min Ref: C/33/21 refers) but felt that it would be best to wait until after lockdown, when the traffic would be back to normal. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Council should try and arrange use of the speed gun for in July or, failing that, August.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Shelton asked whether it would be police or councillors operating the speed gun, it was believed that it would be down to councillors/volunteers. Cllr Mackenzie mentioned that he owned a speed gun that the Council could also use, if necessary. Cllr Ward wondered whether it might be worth using this as well as the police speed gun.

- iii. **Community Speedwatch** – Cllr Ward explained that Community Speedwatch schemes were coordinated by the police but managed and run by volunteers in the community. Signs would be put up at the entrances to the parish and volunteers would monitor vehicles and report the details of any that were speeding to the Police, who might, as a result, write a warning letter to the driver. It was AGREED that it might be beneficial to use social media to gauge whether any residents would be interested in getting involved with this scheme. Cllrs Mackenzie, Shelton, Treacy and Barnes also expressed that they would be happy to support the initiative, should it progress.
- iv. **Correx 30mph Signs** – Members considered when it would be suitable to relocate the correx 30mph signs that had been put up in February. Cllr Mackenzie commented that when the signs first went up he noticed that speeding had reduced, however, it had since increased again. It was felt that the signs would be most effective if moved, taken down or even turned around every six weeks. Cllr Mackenzie offered to move the signs to other locations. Cllr Ward PROPOSED agreement to this.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- v. **The Spine** – The Clerk confirmed that she had forwarded the Council's concerns relating to surfacing along the 'spine' footpath to Gloucestershire County Council, following February's General Purposes Committee Meeting (Min Ref: GP/28/21 refers). A response had been received from the Highways Manager stating that the areas of deterioration on the spine would not meet defect criteria. He did, however, go on to suggest that County Cllr Smith might want to address this footpath with his HL contributions for the year.

Cllr Ward pointed out that he would be concerned if County Cllr Smith's contributions towards this took away from the money promised towards road/speeding initiatives. Cllr Roberts said that he was under the impression that this would be from a different pot of money (highways, not one relating to footpaths).

7.12pm – Cllr Roberts left the meeting.

C/57/21 County Councillor Report

None received.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/58/21 **Planning Committee**

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting that took place on 17th February 2021.

C/59/21 **General Purposes Committee**

Members received the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 17th February 2021.

C/60/21 **Borough Councillor Report**

Cllr Godwin provided a report in her role as a Borough Councillor as follows:

The examination of the Local Plan in public was started on 16th February, this would run three days a week over four weeks (with a one week break in between).

Residents on low incomes living in the Borough were being granted a £75 discount on their Council Tax bills, this would be deducted automatically.

Tewkesbury Minor Injuries and Illness Unit would be re-opening in April, which was good news.

The public consultation undertaken by the County Council for the M5 junction 10 was now closed and feedback was being reviewed. A summary of the findings would be published in March and made available via the Gloucestershire County Council website. A full report on the public consultation would be published alongside the preferred route announcement in mid-2021.

Cllr Phennah asked when the Borough Council would be reconsidering the parking arrangements along the High Street (specifically removal of the barriers that were in place to support social distancing). Cllr Godwin confirmed that this would not be until after the shops had at least reopened.

Cllr Phennah also enquired as to the works that were taking place at M5 junction 11, which signs stated would be ongoing until 2022. Cllr Ward confirmed this was the case and the works were in relation to something being wrong with concrete in the bridges, a few other bridges in the area were also being addressed.

C/61/21 **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)**

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED renewal of the Council's subscription to GAPTC, at a cost of £1,230.52. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/62/21 **Changing Rooms/One Legal**

The Clerk explained that professional fees relating to legal work involved in renewing of the Changing Rooms lease had amounted to more than the initial 'guestimate' of £300 that was quoted. The work required had been more significant than anticipated, amounting to £1,448, however, One Legal were asking for £600 and they would meet the remainder of the cost. Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that the Council agreed to pay the £600. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR:	Cllr Shelton	Cllr Barnes
	Cllr Godwin	Cllr Mackenzie
	Cllr MacTiernan	Cllr Phennah
	Cllr Roberts	Cllr Shelton
	Cllr Treacy	Cllr Ward

ABSTENTIONS:	Cllr Blackmore	Cllr Terry
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NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/63/21 Council Accounts

Members received the schedule of bills paid and cheques for payment totalling £17,711.32

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

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/64/21 Internal Audit Report 2020/21 Interim

A copy of the audit report had been circulated to Members. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED thanking the Clerk for all the work that had been done on her part. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was noted that there had been a recommendation made that the petty cash was checked occasionally, and Cllr Roberts had since been in to undertake a check.

C/65/21 Tewkesbury Garden Town and Ashchurch Bridge Over Rail

Exclusion of the Public and Press – Cllr Ward PROPOSED that, in view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be discussed i.e. relating to discussions with the TGT Team and Ashchurch Rural Parish Council Meeting, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded and they were asked to withdraw.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

EXCLUSION ITEMS – Councillors Only – A report was given following several councillors' attendance at a joint meeting with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Ashchurch Rural Parish Council in relation to the proposed development of the Tewkesbury Garden Town / Northway/Ashchurch over rail bridge (Min Ref: C/31/21 refers). Further comments were also agreed for inclusion in the Parish Council's letter of representation to be submitted to the Borough Council Planning Committee.

C/66/21 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- i. **Hirer** – The Clerk mentioned that a group had requested to hire the Hub for some supervised family meetings. Cllrs Roberts, Terry and Ward had assessed the risk assessment and approved the hire by delegation. The group had asked for a Northway-residents discount, as well as any further discount that could be offered. Unfortunately, during the first hire, the users did not stick to the Covid-19 rules that were a condition of hire. The Clerk had wrote to them concerning this and although there were still breaches the second visit was slightly better. Members expressed concern that this hiring could put the Clerk and Caretaker's welfare at risk.

Cllr MacTiernan explained that she would be against giving any sort of reduction in fees, especially when disregarding of the rules meant extra work for the Caretaker when it came to cleaning. If the hirers and attenders were unable to adhere to the rules, they should not be permitted to use the building.

Cllr Roberts pointed out that this was a vital service that the Council ultimately wanted to support, he suggested a final warning letter asking that the families be encouraged to follow the rules to ensure the welfare of staff.

Members considered whether a discount should be given, Cllr MacTiernan pointed out that, although the families may be from Northway, they were not the ones getting the discount, it would be the hirer.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council should not offer a discount at this stage, also a final warning

should be given re-stating the standards that needed to be met if the building was to be used in by them in the foreseeable future.

Cllr MacTiernan added that the Council should also mention that it was the responsibility of the hirer present on the day to ensure that families followed the rules. Cllr Roberts accepted this addition to the proposal. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was further AGREED that this should be reviewed again at the following Full Council meeting once further hires (including one with a different family) had taken place.

Cllr Blackmore felt that the hirer should be using their own offices instead of the Hub and that they should not be allowed use in the future. Failing that, the risk assessment should be updated. Cllr Roberts explained that the risk assessment was already quite clear and good, the issue was that it was not being adhered to. It might be that this was the only way the family could meet and so he wanted the Council to try and support it still going ahead, if possible.

- ii. **Covid-19 Grant** – The Clerk mentioned that she had made enquiries into whether a donation could be made to a local man who fixed up laptops and computers for schools and local children. Tewkesbury Borough Council had confirmed that it would be acceptable to put the Covid-19 grant money towards this. However, the man had since advertised that he would be stopping this service. He had advised the Clerk that the Council could help by purchasing modems with credit on to hold at the Parish Office to loan out to anyone considered suitable, but it did not seem like it would be easy to manage. Cllr Ward suggested that, with children going back to school again, it might be better to review this again later.

The Clerk also mentioned that she had also contacted youth providers to gather information on what help was available for young people. One youth worker she had spoken to from 'Aspire to Inspire', a new firm that seemed to be very proactive, offered to provide information on the packages and services she could provide.

Cllr Roberts felt it would be good to enquire with Tewkesbury Borough Council as to whether the grant could be used for something such as this, similarly, he also liked the idea of the grant being used to help encourage retired/older people back out, once it was safe. Perhaps paying for Luncheon Club, bingo or other activities. The Clerk agreed to enquire as to whether this would be a possibility.

Cllr MacTiernan praised Miss Smith, who ran the Northway Luncheon Club, who had phoned all of the members and the helpers every week since April 2020.

- iii. **Spring Clean** – Cllr Terry gave a report following her attendance at GRCC's Community Buildings Network Zoom meeting relating to Village/Community Halls. She explained that most of those in attendance had been trustees of various Village Hall's in Gloucestershire.

The meeting started with a quiz and discussions covered things such as building relationships with residents and interacting through social media, however, most of the suggestions being made had already been approached by Northway Parish Council. They also talked about online booking systems (one being recommended was 'Together'), keyholders, trustees and event organisers.

The installation of electric charging stations was being considered by some Village Halls, Cllr Ward explained that this might be worth looking into in the future when different sockets were not required for different cars.

Basic training for trustees was being offered and so Cllr Terry wondered whether it would be a good idea to pass this information on to the trustees of the Village Hall. Overall, the meeting made her feel proud and positive that the Parish Council was doing well in running of the Hub and she hoped to attend the next meeting on 27th May 2021.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/66/21 **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** (continued)

- iv. **Elections** – The Clerk confirmed that Slimming World had changed their dates to accommodate use of the Hub for upcoming elections. TBC had advised that someone would undertake a risk assessment on their behalf. Except for the caretaker staff would stay away between 6th and 10th May 2021.
- v. **Face to Face Meetings** – The Clerk mentioned that NALC and SLCC were lobbying the government to get legislation allowing virtual meetings to be extended, if this was not possible the Council needed to have things in place to ensure the process of going back to face-to-face meetings was as safe as possible, for all. It was noted that this heading went hand-in-hand with the following item, 'Forward Planning'.
- vi. **Forward Planning** – The Clerk mentioned that, following release of the government's roadmap advising of the anticipated timeline for easing of lockdown, requests were already being received for use of the Hub. Consideration needed to be given to how many groups were in each day and if there would be sufficient time to clean between uses.

Cllr Terry pointed out that there was no guarantee that the dates on the timeline would not be changed again at some point, decisions relating to when groups should be allowed to use the facility again was down to the Council alone and did not need to be based on the government's guidelines.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the issue of face-to-face meetings and forward planning should be directed to the Councillors with delegated authority for Covid 19 issues to put decisions in place and move things forward. Cllr Blackmore SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/67/21 **Parish Assembly**

- i. **Necessary Actions** – Members considered whether any precautions needed to be made in order to ensure that the Parish Assembly ran smoothly over Zoom. Cllr Ward raised the risk of hackers taking over the meeting, as this had happened in other parishes. Cllr Roberts suggested that it was made clear at the start of the meeting that any persons causing abuse or disruption would be removed.
- ii. **Community Awards** – The Clerk reminded Members of the people that had already been suggested as potential nominations for a community award (Min Ref: C/44/21 refers) – the gentleman who made bug hotels for the Hub grounds and local school(s), the volunteer gardeners, the resident who had created a work sheet for other families to use while home schooling during lockdown as well as the man who refurbished computers and equipment for local children.

The Council had also included an article in the newsletter and the Clerk read a letter from a resident nominating their mother for all her community works, including volunteering to help run Luncheon Club, shopping for other residents during lockdown and volunteering with Northway Community Volunteers. Members felt that this resident was very deserving of an award.

Cllr MacTiernan felt it would be nice organise an event later in year and perhaps recognise the nominees, in particular special recognition to the resident nominated by her daughter. It was felt that each should receive a Certificate of Appreciation at the Parish Assembly (via zoom) as normal but with a gift given to the resident, at the event receiving special recognition. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that a budget of £50 was allocated to purchase champagne and flowers for the resident's nomination. Cllr Phennah SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/67/21 Parish Assembly (continued)

It was AGREED that further details relating to the event should be considered at a later date, however, remaining funds from the Chairman's allowance should be rolled over towards the cost of this.

C/68/21 Water Meter at Northway Community Hub

The Clerk informed Members that she had contacted Bromford for additional help in finding the missing water meter for the Community Hub (Min Ref: C/42/21 refers). She had asked to be given the details of a direct contact who dealt with such matters but was still waiting on these.

In addition, the Clerk had met with a contractor who would be willing to take down the palisade fencing and hire equipment to try and trace the meter, however, this might prove ineffective without removal of Bromford's fencing as well. She had been advised that Severn Trent had a duty to provide information on where the stop tap was located, and had written requesting this but was waiting to hear back regarding this.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council should instruct a contractor to take down the fencing in order to establish if the meter was behind and progress, as necessary, subject to Bromford giving permission.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED an amendment to Cllr Roberts' proposal, that the Council should write and inform Bromford of what it intended to do and advise that, if they did not get in touch within seven days, they would be billed for their share of the work accordingly. Cllr Roberts accepted this amendment. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/69/20 Civic Protocols

Exclusion of the Public and Press – Cllr Ward PROPOSED that, in view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e. relating to sensitive protocols, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

EXCLUSION ITEMS – Councillors Only – The Council agreed to adopt civic protocols under confidential cover.

C/70/21 Standing Orders

Members received an amendment relating to EU procurement threshold figures in Section 18 of the Standing Orders. It was noted that this section still applied even though the UK was no longer in the EU although it was suspected that, at some stage, the wording would be changed to reflect that it applied to the UK. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED approval of this amendment. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/71/21 Crime & Disorder

The Clerk asked whether the Council had any specific questions they would like addressed in the Police report for the Parish Assembly.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/71/21 Crime & Disorder (Continued)

Cllr MacTiernan said that she would like to know the number of incidents that had been recorded over the past year (split down into months, if possible). Cllr Terry suggested a general overview of what crime had been happening in Northway would be useful. Cllr Roberts suggested reiterating how well received the mounted patrols had been.

C/72/21 Correspondence for Action

- i. **Local Government Association** – A new Model Code of Conduct was issued in December 2020. The Clerk mentioned that the Borough Council believed this Code was very similar to the existing. When time allowed, the Borough Council would review this more thoroughly and provide sessions to update the Parish Council on the new code.
- iii. **Hope for Tomorrow Charity** – Consideration of possible clothes bank locations had been deferred from the previous meeting (Min Ref: C/49/21 refers). Due to problems that had occurred previously with clothes banks in the parish, and in other areas, Cllr Terry PROPOSED that this should not be progressed. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iv. **DigiBus Gloucestershire** – The Clerk read a further response from IT Schools Africa regarding the DigiBus project. The bus was a double-decker, 4.2m high, it would require enough room to enable wheelchair access via a ramp. They planned to visit each host location twice over the course of a year (depending on uptake). The length of each stay would depend largely on population size and information gathered from local organisations about expected uptake. Once more responses had been received a rough route map would be established, this would give a better idea of dates.

It was AGREED that the Council should await further information.

C/73/21 Correspondence for Information

- i. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Council's** – Newsletter (23rd February 2021).
- ii. **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** – Chief Executive Bulletins (12th & 19th February 2021).
- iii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council:**
 - a. Press Release 'More help with council tax for those on low incomes'.
 - b. Details of Winter Grants available (in partnership with Tewkesbury Foodbank and Caring for Communities and People).
 - c. Press Release 'Council sets budgets for 2021/22'.
- iv. **Society of Local Council Clerks** – Newsletter (February 2021).

C/74/21 Correspondence received after 4th March 2021

- i. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils**
 - a. Information relating to PURDAH and the possibility of returning to face-to-face meetings.
 - b. Details of vacancy on Executive Committee for a representative from Tewkesbury or Cheltenham.
- ii. **Society of Local Council Clerks** – AGM Agenda.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/74/21 **Correspondence received after 4th March 2021** (continued)

- iii. **Know Your Patch** – Meeting summary.
- iv. **Tewkesbury Borough Council Funding Officer** – Details of funding available towards Neighbourhood Plans.
- v. **National Association of Local Councils** – Bulletin.
- vii. **Clerks and Councils Direct** – Magazine.
- viii. **Northway Playing Field** – Cllr Ward informed Members that travellers had recently attempted to access Northway Playing Field but they had not been able to get past the height barrier. The bottom gate had since been shut to further secure the Field. The Clerk mentioned that consideration of additional security measures would be considered by the General Purposes Committee at its next meeting.

Cllr Ward felt that it was a shame there was no alert system in place between the various Council's to give a warning of when travellers were in the vicinity and looking for somewhere to camp.

Cllr Mackenzie mentioned that he had seen someone inspecting the steel bollards on The Park recently. The Clerk confirmed that this would also be considered by the General Purposes Committee.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the gate to the Playing Field should remain shut a further week from the following Monday (unless earlier access was required by a resident that had requested access to allow for work to the back of her property). Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 9.09 p.m.