

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 11th November 2020

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 Mrs C Blackmore
Cllr Mrs P Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie
Cllr Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr E Phennah
Cllr G Shelton Cllr Mrs S Terry

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mr T Treacy, Clerk's Assistant (Temp)

C/206/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Porter.

C/207/20 Public Participation

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

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Terry commented that the local resident, who carried out a lot of voluntary litter picking along Northway Lane, had recently also been working to cut back overgrown branches and brambles.

Cllr Shelton asked about an email that he had sent to the Parish Council regarding the condition of a number of saplings. The Clerk advised that this was a topic that would be covered at the next General Purposes Committee meeting.

Cllr Ward reported that he had been made aware that an area of grassland on Lee Road was being used for car washing. It was noted that this was not Northway Parish Council (NPC) land, but came under Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC).

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

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/208/20 Declarations of Interest

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). No declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

C/209/20 Vacancy/Co-option

The Clerk reported that there had been no responses to the advertised vacancy.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/210/20 Minutes of the Council Meeting the took place on 14th October 2020

Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting that took place on 14th October 2020 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/211/20 Matters Arising from Council Minutes/Clerks Report

C/187/20 Notice of Vacancy – It was confirmed that the Clerk's Assistant had demonstrated to Cllr Shelton, the weekly test and reporting process for the defibrillator at the Northway Centre.

C/200/20 Corona Virus (Covid-19) – It was confirmed that Cllr Terry had met with the Clerk and that they had made the agreed updates to the first aid box at the Parish Council office, in line with ACRE guidelines.

C/212/20 Roads & Road Safety

- i **Concerns** – The Clerk read an email that had been received from a local resident, expressing concerns and raising a number of questions about what “*secret plans*” there might be for altering parts of Hardwick Bank Road, specifically the junction with Gould Drive.

Cllr Mackenzie had previously submitted an email to NPC asking if it would be possible to write a letter to the local Porsche dealership, to bring to their attention the issue of their cars speeding along The Park. There were no number plate details available but a description of one of the cars had been given. Cllr Mackenzie further reported that he had telephoned the dealership to raise the complaint and was advised that it would be passed to the sales department. It was noted that if any instances of speeding were by privately owned vehicles, the dealership would be unable to help. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that a letter outlining this issue should be sent to the company.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

With regard to the email that the Clerk had read out, Cllr MacTiernan asked for clarification of the location. It was confirmed that it was the junction of Hardwick Bank Road and Gould Drive. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that it would be appropriate to reply, to provide reassurance that there was some preliminary work taking place relative to the proposed bridge, but that no road closures were planned. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii **Correx Signs** – With regard to the purchase of Correx Signs, the Clerk provided price options to Members. One of the quotes had come from a local supplier that NPC had used in the past, although the signs still had to be approved. Cllr Mackenzie asked if it would be volunteer Members that would carry out the installations, which Cllr Ward confirmed. Cllr Mackenzie offered to volunteer with the installation of the signs. Cllr Terry PROPOSED using the local supplier, Severn Signs. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii **Walkabout** – The Clerk advised that the proposed walkabout with the Local Highways Manager (LHM) and County Cllr Smith had been cancelled and that a new date was to be advised. Cllr MacTiernan asked what it was that needed to be determined under this agenda item. The Clerk advised that as there had been no reply from County Cllr Smith, there was nothing to determine at this time.

- iv **Road Closure** – The Clerk advised Members about the temporary road closure on Northway Lane, to carry out work to the roundabout on Northway Lane at the Northway Trading Estate. The overall programme of work covered the time period from 16/11/2020 to 31/03/2021, and this piece of work was included in that programme.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/213/20 County Councillor's Report

There was no County Cllr's report presented at this time.

C/214/20 Planning Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting that took place on 21st October 2020.

C/215/20 General Purposes Committee

Members received the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting that took place on 21st October 2020.

C/216/20 Finance Committee

The Clerk advised that the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2020 were not yet available.

C/217/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 March 2020

The Clerk informed Members that no matters had arisen with regard to the audited Return. It was noted that it was a legal requirement that the Council received this information.

C/218/20 Meeting Schedule

The Clerk informed Members that there were two errors on the Meeting Schedule for the period January to June 2021, which would be corrected. One date entry of 8th January would change to 6th January and the 12th May entry would include the AGM.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED acceptance of the schedule, with amendments. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/219/20 Borough Councillor's Report

Cllr Godwin reported that funding was available for Community Group that were supporting vulnerable people. Applications could be made for up to £1,000 for work directly relating to those facing challenges from Covid-19, providing they fall under Tewkesbury Borough. Cllr Godwin advised that more information could be found on the TBC website or by contacting the Community Funding Officer (contact details provided).

Cllr Godwin also advised that financial support was available for those businesses that had been mandated to close between 5th November and 2nd December. Applications were welcome from 9th November on a rolling 28-day basis, as long as national restrictions applied. Cllr Godwin listed the business types that were eligible to apply and reiterated that they should apply via the Council's on-line form, available from 9th November.

Cllr Godwin reported that there had been a high level of interest in the preservation of Cleeve Hill Golf Club. Cllr Roberts commented that he was aware that a lot of money needed to be invested in the Club House, from information he had read. Cllr MacTiernan advised that she was aware of a number of influential parties, not necessarily local, that had expressed interest in the club. Furthermore, Cllr MacTiernan advised that TBC are requesting sight of financial statements and business plans from would be investors and that discussions were ongoing.

Overall, the situation appeared to be quite positive.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/219/20 Borough Councillor's Report – (continued)

Cllr Roberts raised the question of parking charges in the town during lockdown, and asked if there were any plans to waive them, as had been done previously.

Cllr MacTiernan informed Members that there were no plans to waive parking charges during the current lockdown. Cllr Roberts expressed the view that the charges may be a deterrent to people who might use the (Wednesday) market, whilst so many other facilities were closed. Cllr MacTiernan advised that a press release had been issued to explain the approach.

C/220/20 CCTV Working Party

Cllr Terry provided Councillors with the recommendation from the CCTV Working Party meeting held on 4th November. The proposal for the Council to consider was the four-camera option, as presented by Laser Alarms Ltd. Cllr Terry advised that NPC should also consider the installation of a broadband connection at the Village Hall building, to facilitate reading of data (video) from the Village Hall, at the Community Hub.

The Clerk informed the Council that in discussions with BT, she had been advised that the cost to install a new 'phone line at the Village Hall site would be £125.00, with an ongoing monthly broadband cost of £30.00, which appeared promising. By comparison, the Clerk advised that previous investigations revealed much higher costs, in the form of an invoice for £900.00, which led to a protracted dispute with Open Reach. The dispute was ultimately resolved through intervention by Cllr Roberts, who was able to contact a senior executive at BT.

Cllr Ward reminded the Council that there was now a line from Oak Drive to a nearby industrial unit, but was unsure if that could be used to enable a connection to the Village Hall, or if a dedicated connection and new pole would be required.

Following further discussion about the broadband options, Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council accept the recommendation of the Working Party, and initially manage with the dongle option, accepting that there may be bandwidth limitations. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

With regard to the installation of a 'phone line, to enable broadband, Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that NPC pursue the installation, based on the new costing that had been received and if that proved more costly or complex, then the option to continue with a dongle would still be available. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

For clarity, the Clerk's Assistant asked if it was acceptable to formally ask Laser Alarms to proceed with the installation, which Cllr Ward confirmed. Cllr Ward also asked for the fitting of two fake cameras to be included in the installation. Cllr Ward thanked the Working Party for all their work on the project, and the Clerk's Assistant for compiling the quotes and relevant information.

C/221/20 Garden Town Sub Group with Ashchurch Rural Parish Council and Northway Parish

i. The Clerk reminded Members that the updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the above Sub-Group had been provided with the agenda for this meeting. Cllr Ward asked for an approver for the ToR. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED acceptance of the updated ToR. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

ii. With regard to feedback from the Subgroup meeting, the Clerk advised that the information was likely to be shared amongst Councillors but would be confidential from a public perspective.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/221/20 Garden Town Sub Group with Ashchurch Rural Parish Council and Northway Parish (continued)

Cllr Ward asked Council Members not to discuss any of the forthcoming feedback in any open forum, and PROPOSED that the meeting move into Exclusion.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

For the benefit of Councillors who had not attended the meeting, Cllr Ward read through number of questions that had been addressed at the meeting.

Following discussions around the Subgroup meeting agenda, Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the meeting move out of Exclusion.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/222/20 Development of a Road Bridge over the Mainline Railway Bristol to Birmingham Application 20/00896/FUL Bridge

The Clerk advised that this agenda item had been included in case Members had anything further to address. The Clerk informed the Council that she had nothing new to report on but that she had copies of a number of letters from residents and other Councils' responses, but too many to read during the meeting. The Clerk reported that one local resident had been successful in seeking support from Sir David Attenborough, and had brought to his attention the damage that could result from the bridge development. This had prompted a hand-written response from Sir David, who had offered to help progress some of reasons why this development would impact the natural surroundings.

Cllr Robert asked if the closing date for comments had passed and Cllr Terry advised that it had, for Councils but that members of the public could still respond. Cllr Ward mentioned the level of response that had been received in relation to the bridge development, expressing the view that overall, it was rather disappointing.

C/223/20 Carbon Neutral

Cllr MacTiernan advised that in her view, it was too early to call for any external consultancy but that NPC should still make a decision on whether it wants to attempt to go carbon neutral, and if so, to set a date for that. Choosing not to take the carbon neutral route, would leave the Council in a poor light, given the high profile of this initiative nationally. Cllr MacTiernan advised that a 2030 timescale was being adopted by many Councils across the county. TBC have taken the view that they would do what they can on the buildings that they either own or have control over. Cllr MacTiernan recommended that for a higher likelihood of success, NPC should concentrate just on its own assets, and that the subject should be an ongoing agenda item.

Cllr Roberts commented that it would be hard to argue against trying to achieve a carbon neutral status and that the 2030 timeframe seemed reasonable. Cllr Roberts also suggested investigating NPC's energy suppliers to understand their position and to have knowledge of where the energy they supply comes from. Cllr Ward advised that the Community Hub building currently had an energy rating of 'A' (the highest being 'A+'). In support of the agenda item, Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that a Working Party be established. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Those wishing to be in the Carbon Neutral Working Party were recorded as Cllrs MacTiernan, Shelton, Godwin, Mackenzie and Barnes. Cllr Ward advised that the Working Party would get underway in the New Year.

C/224/20 Council Accounts

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that schedule of bills paid and cheques for payment at 11th November totalling £12,394.62 be approved. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/224/20 Council Accounts (Continued)

The Clerk advised the Council that the issue of outstanding business rates had arisen again and that a bill for £265 had been received. It had been explained by TBC Business Rates that the bill in question covered the period from 27th July 2017 to 4th December 2017. The Clerk advised that NPC had vacated the Village Hall on 27th July 2017 and had moved back into the Community Hub on the same day and that TBC Business Rates had been made aware of this. The Clerk advised that NPC had paid Business Rates for the time it occupied the Village Hall and that as communications continue, the situation would be cleared up.

C/225/20 Corona Virus (Covid-19)

Community Hub - The Clerk reported that there were no hirers coming back to the Hub at this time and that this would continue until at least 2nd December. The Clerk advised that it had still been necessary to carry out a risk assessment for the period and Cllr Blackmore was thanked for her help in completing that.

The Clerk also advised that a new Community Group may take up use of the Community Hub from 7th December on an agreed free of charge basis.

C/226/20 Crime and Disorder

The Clerk reported that since the last Full Council meeting, the police had moved a group of approximately 15 youths from the play area, on two separate occasions. The police have engaged with some of the parents of the youths, to inform them not about damage but about the way they are gathering.

The Clerk also reported that there had been some anti-social activity locally and the police were aware of the situation and had intended to take some action, but the nature of that action had remained confidential. Cllr Ward asked if there had been any development with regard to cutting back the trees and bushes opposite the Northway Centre. The Clerk advised that there would be an update at the forthcoming General Purposes Committee meeting scheduled for 18th November.

Cllr Ward reported that he had seen a heightened police presence in the area, both at the playing field and on patrols of the streets. Cllr Mackenzie commented that there were some new PCSOs being shown around the local area, which would be contributing to the higher profile.

Cllr Godwin reported that there had been a child assault that had taken place in Oak Drive, which the police had become involved with. It was understood that the incident was of one child assaulting another and that it was also thought to be drug related. Cllr Ward commented that the installation of CCTV at the Playing Field may help the situation.

C/227/20 Correspondence for Action

Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (GAPTC) – The Clerk reported that Cllr Blackmore had been enrolled on the 'Being a Better Councillor' course, which was to take place in two parts, one in January and one in February. There was also a 'Chairmanship' course but the enrolment date for that had passed.

C/228/20 Correspondence for Information

- i. **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** – Chief Executive's Bulletins dated 16th and 30th October 2020.
- ii. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils** – Information relating to Remembrance Sunday.
- iii.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/228/20 Correspondence for Information – (continued)

- iv. **The Clerk Magazine** – November 2020 Vol 51, No6.
- v. **Gloucestershire County Council** – Copy of an Open Letter to Care Homes, residents, family and friends regarding the suspension of visiting due to COVID - 19.
- vi. **Clerks and Councils Direct magazine** – November 2020 issue 132.

C/229/20 Correspondence received after 5th November 2020

- i. **Remembrance Sunday** - The Clerk reported that she had received mail from St Nicholas church, relating to Cllr Ward having attended a (virtual) service on Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Ward commented that the service had to be held via zoom, due to the lockdown, but he had been able to place a wreath on behalf of the Council, after the service.

Cllr Terry reported that there had been 32 people on the zoom meeting and that Cllr Ward's attendance was very much appreciated. It was also reported that Ashchurch Rural had not been able to attend.
- ii. **Pegasus** – Leaflet relating to Fiddington II that had been delivered to properties in Northway.
- iii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council** - Press Release relating to funding for Community Groups, as previously reported.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.20 p.m.