

## Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7), Councils are 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 7:10 p.m.

Present: Cllr S Ward (Chairman) Cllr J Roberts (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr M Barnes Cllr Mrs P Godwin  
Cllr Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr Mrs S Terry  
Cllr G Shelton (from Min Ref C/94/20) Cllr P Mackenzie (till Min Ref +C/93/20)  
Cllr E Phennah (from Min Ref #C/102/20)

In Attendance: County Cllr Vernon Smith (Until Min Ref \*C/95/20)  
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council  
Mr T Treacy, Clerk's Assistant (Temp)

### C/86/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bailey and Porter.

### C/87/20 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 Terry informed the meeting that she had been made aware via Facebook, that there had been reports of Giant Hogweed along the Carrant. Cllr Ward pointed out that the Facebook post referred to last year. Cllr Roberts informed the meeting that he would carry out an inspection of the Hogweed as soon as he had an opportunity.

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

FOR: UNANIMOUS

### C/88/20 Declarations of Interest

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

### C/89/20 Vacancy

It was noted that no applications had been received for the Councillor vacancy, following the resignation of Colin Woodward.

### C/90/20 Council Meetings

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting that took place on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

## NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

### C/90/20 Council Meetings - (Continued)

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting that took place on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Terry SECONDED

FOR: UNANIMOUS

### C/91/20 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes/Clerks Report

**C/42/20 Roads and Road Safety** – Corex 30mph signs had been requested for various locations in Northway. The Local Highways Manger was going to see if he could source some.

**C/80/20 Voluntary Work in the Parish** – Cllr Terry informed the meeting that her brother had been very pleased to receive the letter of thanks from the Council regarding the installation of the bug box that he had made.

### C/92/20 Annual General Meeting

Following a discussion to defer the Annual General Meeting until May 2021, it was agreed that, subject to the current Chairman agreeing to remain in post for another year, the meeting should be deferred until next May. The Chairman confirmed that he would be happy to remain in post for another year. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED the deferral. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

All other Council Members were asked if they also agreed to remain in post for the same extended period, and there was general agreement. Cllr Ward PROPOSED the retention of Councillors in their posts.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

### C/93/20 Roads & Road Safety

- i. **Issues of Concern** – Cllr Mackenzie reiterated his concerns regarding the speed of traffic over the motorway bridge and into The Park, hence the request for 30mph speed signs for that area. The Council was advised that Highways were looking to provide some temporary corex signs for the lamp posts. Cllr Roberts enquired about the progress of a Vehicle Activation Sign but was informed that Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) still needed to undertake a traffic analysis. The Clerk added that she had reported the speed concerns to the local PCSO.

+7.30 p.m. Cllr Mackenzie's internet connection removed him from the meeting.

- ii There was a brief discussion regarding potholes and resurfacing work in the area. County Cllr Smith advised that he expected Ash Road to be resurfaced in July and The Park, probably in the fourth quarter.

### C/94/20 Planning Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting that took place on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### C/95/20 General Purposes Committee

Members received the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting that took place on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

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### C/96/20 Events Working Party

Members received the Notes of the Events Working Party that took place on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### C/97/20 Staffing Committee

Members received a copy of the Minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting that took place on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

7.35 p.m. Cllr Shelton joined the meeting

### C/98/20 County Councillor Report

County Cllr Smith had previously provided his Highways report for this meeting, and that report is included below, for completeness.

County Cllr Smith also led a discussion regarding road designs, in relation to the proposed Ashchurch Bridge Project. There had been an approach from Tewkesbury Borough Council to the County Council, requesting input to the design of the roads to the bridge. However, as County Cllr Smith noted, there remained the issue of not knowing if the bridge was in the right place, so any contribution to the design effort would be extremely difficult.

County Cllr Smith encouraged the Parish Council to formulate a collective view about the project, so he could forward this information to Gloucestershire County Council Planning and Design Team but conceded that this could be made difficult by the current conditions.

#### **Highways Briefing (1st May 2020)**

*This briefing note is intended to bring you an update on what works our highways team are doing to support the current pandemic emergency situation. We continue to work closely with all our external providers – Ringway, Atkins, Skanska, Tarmac and Telent.*

*As you will have understood from the previous updates, we are not operating the same highways service as usual, we are running a reduced output because of the complications around staff, resources, supply chains and social distancing guidelines – realistically a return to completely ‘normal’ business will be some way off. But, we are making the most of maximising what we’re doing and taking the opportunities to do things which would otherwise have been much more difficult and/or expensive because of the traffic volumes on the network. It is our priority to keep the network safe so all the support and emergency services can operate safely.*

*GCC highway staffing levels remain stable, as do most of our partner businesses, and we are seeing some stability returning to the supply chain now too. Smaller sub-contractors are still affected, particularly those where the operations involve working in close proximity to others.*

*- **Emergencies and Inspections** – we continue to deal with emergencies and reported safety defects 24-7. The temporary Safety Inspection Policy remains in place and we are now actively considering options for how to resume inspections safely as part of the recovery process. Inspections for bridges, structures, and landslips are continuing.*

*- **Winter maintenance** – the season has now finished.*

*- **Cyclical maintenance works** – gully emptying is continuing as normal. Drainage CCTV/investigation work has resumed this week with revised working methods. Grass cutting is planned for mid-May and will start with a visibility cut of junctions etc.*

*- **Community maintenance gangs** – a gang is operating in each area now, works are being co-ordinated locally.*

### C/98/20 County Councillor Report (continued)

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- **Structural maintenance (£150m Investment)** – design work for this and future programme development have been largely unaffected and we've been able to take advantage of our coring contractor's resources to get further ahead. In the resurfacing programme Tarmac have been able to ease the initial labour shortages and will be returning to two gangs full time on the network from 11th May. The focus will continue to be on schemes that will benefit most from the quieter conditions – A436 Birdlip to Air Balloon, A435 Southam to Racecourse, Rodney Road and The Promenade in Cheltenham and Southam Lane all currently feature in the planned programme. Preparation works are progressing well for this year's surface treatments season (patching, surface dressing etc.) with patching works by Ringway ongoing. Ringway are also helping us to enhance and increase the programme as much as we can. Ringway have also boosted resource for footway works to the highest level for some years. Both design and delivery are progressing at pace for two gangs working as we now go forward. Starting next week will be footway schemes in Denmark Road and Hempstead Lane in Gloucester, followed by Merrywalks in Stroud and then a programme that goes through until August. Details will be updated on our website. In terms of overall delivery on the £150m programme, programme adjustments have been made to accelerate delivery through the remainder of the year. The early loss in production due to Covid19 in April has been taken into account. With no further escalation in lockdown a full delivery of programme should be achievable.

- **Other Planned Works** – there are also construction gangs continuing to operate across the network on smaller scale jobs such as drainage improvements/maintenance and localised patching schemes. We are also still intending to bring in some spray injection patching machines to address sites identified by safety inspectors and local area teams in May.

- **Street Lighting** – reactive repairs and annual routine maintenance is being carried out. Impact on service is mostly where Western Power Distribution (who are only dealing with emergency works) are involved in resolving underground cable faults.

- **Traffic Signals** – work continues on dealing with repairs to traffic signals by Telent and some major works.

- **PROW** – Extremely busy with many users on paths. Cyclical vegetation cut back is planned from mid-May, as well as a programme of works for damaged/failing footbridges. Peak of enquiries is around paths being blocked and social distancing concerns. Enquiries and works being prioritised which means that work on public path orders (orders to change PROW routes permanently) are paused currently.

- **Highways Local** – please allocate your funds as quickly as possible to enable us to programme this at the earliest opportunity.

- **Design work** – our design teams continue to work from home progressing preparatory works where feasible.

- **Major Projects** – the M5 J10 project team continue to work with Homes England and partners on the contract funding conditions. Getting into contract is expected to take a minimum of 6 months and scheme drawdown can only begin once GCC is in contract with Homes England. To that end, further detail is being prepared on understanding what works (prep/surveys/design) can be done during this interim period; A4173 Pitchcombe scheme is substantially complete on the ground, albeit with street lighting checks required alongside post-work snagging; A419 Stonehouse works continue – some sub-contractor work (landscaping/street lighting) is likely to be impacted and we are working with the main works contractor to understand what elements of the scheme works may see programme extended in order to complete them. Work on the A38 Whitminster canal bridges has restarted after a brief pause to ensure that the contractor is able to comply with the current guidelines. Utility companies are on site working with the contractor to manoeuvre the existing services around the new bridge installations. The main bridging units need to be shipped in from Ireland, due to the pandemic situation the precast concrete company is currently closed and exports suspended; it is hoped that restrictions are relaxed and the company can reopen in the coming weeks. Works continue at the old A40 at Northleach where we are depositing some of the excavated material to stabilise the highway. West of Cheltenham Stage 1 and 2 are still moving ahead, there has been a short delay to the award of the contract, with the intention to begin works in June.

- **Utilities** – most utility companies are concentrating on reactive works - faults, leaks etc. Gigaclear are continuing to work on the network on some of their Fastershire works.

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\*7.40 p.m. County Cllr Smith left the meeting.

### C/99/20 Borough Councillors' Report

Cllr MacTiernan explained that there would not be a Borough Councillors' report at this time but that she would update the Council later in the meeting at agenda point 19, the 'Ashchurch/Northway Bridge Project'.

### C/100/20 Council Accounts

Cllr Shelton PROPOSED ratification of the schedule of bills paid and cheques totalling £10,0662.35 that were paid in April 2020. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the schedule of bills paid and cheques for payment at 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, totalling £13,065.89 should be approved. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk reminded Members of the ongoing problems with the billing for water to the Hub, since Water Plus took over from Severn Trent. There continued to be an issue with locating the water meter, and because of this, the bill was estimated. Despite a strand of communications, requesting an accurate meter reading, the estimated billing was all that had been provided and was now in excess of £3400.00. There has been considerable effort on behalf of the Council to try to locate the meter, but to no avail. The Clerk made the point that the Council should not be attempting to lift heavy manhole covers to locate the meter, due to Health and Safety issues. It was the responsibility of the service provider to identify the location of the meter and read the meter.

The situation had now reached the point where a debt collection notice had been received, which appeared to leave two options: Pay the estimated bill, or wait for legal action.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the bill be paid. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Continuing the discussion on the billing and meter location, and although it had been done previously, Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED a letter from the Parish Council should be sent to Water Plus. This needed to emphasise their responsibility to provide accurate meter readings and to press them for a prompt response. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

There was also a brief discussion about whether the Council should seek legal advice. Cllr Roberts believed that paying the bill removed the pressure off Water Plus to read the meter and wondered whether Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) Legal team might be able to help. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that TBC Legal Team were asked for support and its charges. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

### C/101/20 Parish Assembly

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that, as the Parish Assembly had not been able to take place, the Council should release the Community Award certificate to Elizabeth Brown, to include a bunch of flowers.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

## NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

### C/102/20 Insurance Renewal

Cllr Roberts had reviewed the Insurance Schedule received from Zurich prior to the meeting and noticed that subsidence cover was not included for Northway Village Hall and the Community Hub. He also believed there was a shortfall in Loss of Revenue. The Clerk obtained a quotation from Zurich to include these at an additional cost of £93.65. Cllr Roberts recommended the Council accept this small increase to allow for subsidence and the increase in loss of revenue figure from £10,000.00 to £20,000.00. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED acceptance of the renewal to include Cllr Robert's recommendation. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

#7.50 p.m. Cllr Mackenzie re-joined the meeting.

### C/103/20 Corona Virus (Covid-19)

- i. **Cancelled Events** - Details were provided relating to events cancelled as a result of the Corona Virus. Ten events had been listed, including various Committee meetings, between 16<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> May.
- ii. **Changes to Standing Orders** - Members received copies of 'The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 along with a Memorandum of Explanation. With regard to any potential changes to Standing Orders, the Clerk advised that she had been trying to find information about this and some Councils were making changes to their Standing Orders but others were placing a copy of the legislation as an appendix to their existing Standing Orders. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Regulations should be placed as an appendix to the current Standing Orders. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)** - It was noted that the date for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 had been put back to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. This would be considered at the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- iv. **Community Grant** - To ratify Cllr MacTiernan's application for a £1000 grant for the benefit of the Community. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- v. **Small Business Grant** - To ratify the Clerk's application for a Covid-19 Small Business Grant (Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant). Cllr Ward PROPOSED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk was able to confirm that the application had been successful, and that the £10,000.00 award would be in the Parish Council's account in the coming few days. Cllr MacTiernan congratulated the Clerk on the success of the application, also noting how quickly it had been processed.

- vi. **Health & Safety** - With regard to safety measures at the Hub there was a discussion about hand sanitisers, signage and face masks. Cllr MacTiernan requested that costs be obtained for wall mounted dispensers. Cllr Roberts commented that it would be a shame if there were holes left in the walls after the Covid-19 emergency came to an end. Cllr Ward was able to show the Council some images of safety signage. Cllr MacTiernan commented that equipment costs seemed high and that she was not in favour of purchasing anything immediately, so any decision should be deferred until next month.

Cllr Roberts highlighted the risk of facing long lead times for equipment, but Cllr Terry suggested that as the Hub would not be impacted until later, in the short term, background research should be done, so that the Council would be prepared. Cllr Terry PROPOSED. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

## NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/103/20

### Corona Virus (Covid-19) (continued)

Cllr Shelton asked who the Council would be providing face masks for and Cllr Ward advised that it would not be the public. It was also noted that the better the quality of the masks, the higher the price was likely to be. The Clerk agreed to obtain some prices.

- vii. **Flyer** - For ratifying costs of producing and distributing a Covid-19 flyer in Northway, Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- viii. **Risk Assessment** - In consideration of any further actions relating to Corona Virus, and using templates already on the internet, the Clerk had compiled a Risk Assessment relating to the impact of the Virus on the workplace. The Clerk was asked to circulate the actions list to all Councillors to give them an opportunity to review it and it should be brought back to the June Council Meeting.

8.05 p.m. Cllr Phennah re-joined the meeting

C/104/20

### Internet Banking

The move to internet banking was discussed, and it was generally agreed that this now seemed necessary, as the ongoing practice of signing cheques was not practical. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that this was investigated further and discussed in more detail at the forthcoming Finance Committee meeting.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was agreed that this will be discussed in more detail at the forthcoming Finance Committee meeting.

C/105/20

### Ashchurch/Northway Bridge Project

Following a letter being sent to the residents of Northway and Ashchurch Cllr MacTiernan offered to give an update following a Zoom meeting herself and Cllr Godwin and been party to the day before. She started by saying that she had sent a strong email to the Garden Town Team stating that a feedback date stated on the draft letter of 31<sup>st</sup> May was too short a response time and asked for it to be changed to mid-June, as a result of this a revised of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 had been set.

It was made clear during the discussion, that the feedback being requested was for the bridge proposal only. No consideration was to be given to any road layout that might join the bridge at either end, to the corresponding areas; Ashchurch and Northway. Cllr MacTiernan reiterated this a number of time with Jonathan Dibble (Programme Director), and was assured the planning application that would be put forward would be for the bridge and the bridge alone. The reason for the favoured location of the bridge (as shown in red on the Plans) was determined by the requirements of Network Rail i.e. future electrification and visibility of signals for the drivers.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of Northway Parish Council sending out leaflets to local residents, to provide more detail, but without knowing what Ashchurch Rural Council was intending to do, Cllr MacTiernan thought it was better to not send anything out, due to the risk of the Councils appearing to be 'not joined up'.

Cllr Ward was able to display the Garden Town website, and it was noted that of the nine display boards originally listed, board eight was now missing, which was possibly the board that had shown the proposed haulage/future roads. It was not clear why this had happened, but Cllr MacTiernan stated she had seen it the day before, so it was a very recent amendment to the website.

Cllr Ward reminded the meeting that Cllr Smith had advised, earlier in the meeting, that Gloucestershire County Council had been asked to draw a design for the roads to the bridge but Cllr MacTiernan insisted this would not take place until money had come in from developers by way of Section 106 or a CIL agreement.

## NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/105/20 Ashchurch/Northway Bridge Project (Continued)

Cllr Terry commented about the Hardwick Bank Road junction with The Park, there was already a dangerous bend at this location. Cllr MacTiernan said that in her discussions with the Atkins representative, at the pre-share event, he had suggested that there were concerns about getting the junction designed safely to allow for heavy goods vehicles to turn onto it without first having to go on to the other side of the road to make a wide turn.

The Clerk had written to the Tewkesbury Garden Town Project Team regarding the name for the bridge, explaining the current name of Ashchurch was causing confusion as the bridge would equally be in Northway. The response was that it was too late, at this stage, to change the name but Jonathan Dibble (Programme Director) would take it to the Programme Board to look at when it came to the official naming of the bridge by Highways. Cllr Terry reminded the meeting that the name "The Bridge to Nowhere" has been heard on numerous occasions. Cllr Ward agreed with Cllr Terry about the name, and was also able to show an image of what the bridge might look like, from a ground level perspective. The source of the image was unknown, so could not be attributed to an individual or organisation.

In terms of the proposed housing development that the installation of the bridge was intended to enable, Cllr MacTiernan advised that the target figure was for 10,195 new houses across the Garden Town, with the first phase of 420 new builds in Northway. Cllr MacTiernan also suggested that it would be closer to 2030 before any houses were seen as they were not in the Plan until 2030.

Cllr Ward was concerned that Tewkesbury Borough Council were rushing this through, making use of the current Corona Virus situation, and it seemed more sensible to ask the Government to extend the timeline for when the money for the bridge had to be spent. Cllr MacTiernan said they would not get an answer at this time and they say, they have to follow the time frame given.

Cllr Terry had forwarded some views to the Clerk and which were shared, Members requested a copy. The Clerk also added that Cllr Mackenzie had forwarded concerns that if residents did not know about the proposed houses they could read the letter as the bridge being by the train station, as most would assume the houses were for elsewhere so more information should have been provided. Cllr Ward recommended that Councillors should start compiling their respective views about the bridge ready for when the formal planning application was received, and forward them to the Clerk.

As a start to the feedback process, Cllr Ward called up the Feedback Form on the Tewkesbury Garden Town website, which was filled in, following careful consideration of each question. There was a widely held view in the meeting that the way the questions had been formed was manipulative and structured to steer individuals away from giving negative feedback as they allowed for an agree, disagree or neither agree or disagree response.

The Council responded as follows:-

1. The proposed location of the bridge makes sense? – *Neither agree or disagree (AGREED)*
2. The bridge will enable new communities to come together by enabling access from east to west? – *Neither agree or disagree (AGREED)*
3. The bridge will enable old and new communities to walk and cycle more? – *Neither agree or disagree (AGREED)*
4. The bridge represents good use of public spending by investing in infrastructure to support new communities in the areas? – *Disagree (Cllr Ward PROPOSED)*

FOR:	Cllr Ward	Cllr Barnes
	Cllr Godwin	Cllr Mackenzie
	Cllr MacTiernan	Cllr Phennah
	Cllr Terry	

AGAINST:	Cllr Roberts
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## NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

### C/106/20 Correspondence for Information – (continued)

- vi **South Worcestershire Development Plan Review** – This confidential document was forwarded to Members on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020
- vii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council:** - Numerous updates relating to the Corona Virus (forwarded to Members)

### C/107/20 Correspondence Available in the Clerk's Office

**Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)** – Newsletter (containing an article relating to Ashchurch expansion and upgrading the A46).

### C/108/20 Correspondence received after 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

- i. **National Association of Local Councils** - Local Council Election Report has been forwarded by email.
- ii. **Play Rangers** - The Council was made aware of the offer of a donation of 30 Play bags, for distribution within the local community. It was agreed that it was a generous offer, but the question of where to distribute them remained.

It was suggested that they could go to the local nursery by the train station, childminders, Northway Infant's School, Northway Community Response or the Foodbank. Cllr MacTiernan expressed concern regarding where to send them as it would be unfair on those that could not be included.

Cllr Ward suggested asking Northway Infant's School. Cllr Terry PROPOSED finding out how many children there are at the school, and if the numbers matched they should go there. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 9.15 p.m.