

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting
held on Wednesday, 27th 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 approximately 7:00 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

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

C/109//20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bailey, Mackenzie, Porter, Shelton and Phennah.

C/110/20 **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), Cllr MacTiernan declared an interest in the Garden Town agenda item as she sat on the Borough Council Members Reference Panel for the Garden Town as well as Executive. Cllr Godwin also declared an interest as she sat on the Borough Council Members Reference Panel for the Garden Town. No further declarations of interest were made.

C/111/20 **Garden Town**

a) **Ashchurch/Northway Bridge**

- i. **Road layout to/from bridge** – Cllr Ward reminded Members that County Cllr Smith had informed the Council (Min ref C/98/20 refers) that Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) had been contacted by Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) asking for input into the road design around the bridge. Since that meeting Cllr Ward advised that he been called by Cllr Smith regarding the road design, and had spoken to him subsequently where he confirmed that this was now being pushed forward, and he wanted to encourage the Parish Council to provide views that could be passed back to GCC during the early stages of the design process.

Cllr Ward pointed out that the Council had been led to believe that the bridge would come first, and no roads or houses would be forthcoming for a long time. The road seemed to be coming forward more quickly than originally suggested and would probably have a bigger impact on Northway than the houses themselves.

Cllr Ward presented an image of the field, north of Hardwick Bank Road, where the proposed bridge was to be located, which included four potential adjoining road exit points. Cllr Ward pointed out that these four points were just his opinion of possible locations.

Position 1 - The bend close to the junction of Hardwick Bank Road and The Park

Position 2 - Opposite the Gould Drive entrance.

Position 3 - The gateway on the bend of Hardwick Bank Road, at the Sinderberry Drive junction

Position 4 - The gateway to the field in Sinderberry Drive, at the opposite end to position one.

(Picture shown on next page)



Cllr Ward went round all Members and, following a wide ranging discussion, the Council was in agreement that Position 1 was the preferred choice and most logical one, a roundabout would also open up all the land making it easier for development. There were safety concerns relating to Position 1 as the speed along Hardwick Bank Road from Bredon Road was 60 mph dropping immediately to 30 mph on the Northway side of the motorway bridge. Position 2, opposite Gould Drive, could be problematic due to the width of the existing road and would probably require a roundabout and road widening. Position 3 would come with significant road safety issues due to the sharp bend and its closeness to Carrant Brook School. Position 4, off Sinderberry Drive, was not practical as the bend that would be necessary coming off the bridge to join could be impossible to engineer, more costly and have the greatest negative impact on residents

Cllr Ward had asked Cllr Smith whether GCC had undertaken a traffic survey but was informed that this had not be done because of Covid-19. Cllr Ward wondered how a road could be designed without results from a survey that would normally be used to dictate the size of roads and junctions. There was also the issue of the weight limit on the Hardwick Bank Road motorway bridge, although it was noted that it was environmental and 'Except for Access'. Cllr Ward went on to express concerns that traffic could go from the M50, junction one into Tewkesbury, past the White Bear, along Bredon Road into Northway to access the new development. Also, The Park could suffer greatly with additional traffic heading towards Shannon Way, and perhaps an 'Except for Access' should be considered.

Cllr MacTiernan said that the Members Reference Panel had been told that the road would be paid for by the developers who develop the land for housing. She went on to say that she had talked to the Atkins representative (at the Parish Council pre-share event) who had expressed concerns about the large vehicles required to carry equipment to the site that would find it difficult to turn onto the haulage road without swinging out onto the wrong side of the road.

Cllr Roberts expressed concerns about the locations of cycle paths and walkways and how they would fit the road network. Also any design needed to allow for buses to turn effectively as it would be a tragedy if not enough turning space was included at this stage. He also pointed out that visitors to Joan's Field often parked their cars opposite and walked across the road, so perhaps any design might be able to allow for parking spaces there. Cllr Ward added that a footpath from Sallis Close to Joan's Field should also be considered.

Cllr Ward felt that The Park should be considered in the design as it was important it did not become a 'rat run'. A roundabout could be designed for the junction with Northway Lane, which was dangerous as it would also provide safer crossing for school children, as well as a cycleway over the Northway Lane motorway bridge.

Cllr MacTiernan suggested that access to The Park was cut off, taking all traffic from Hardwick Bank Road as well as the new access road straight to the Bredon Road. Cllr Ward suggested that instead of cutting it off having an 'Except for Access' as used in Pamington could work. He also wondered if the wider plan was to link the new road to the proposed 1000 housing development at Mitton.

Cllr Roberts reiterated views previously expressed that Positions 3 and 4 from the bridge were not suitable as they would be very close to a residential area and would impact the houses the most. It was best to choose the location with the minimal impact and that would be Position 1.

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Council draft a letter to County Cllr Smith, expressing all the concerns raised and recommending Position 1 as the Council choice. Cllr Terry PROPOSED an amendment that there was a caveat included, that although Position 1 was the best choice the Council was not happy about any road, and could not say it was fine, because for most it was not. Cllr Ward accepted the amendment.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Draft Response to forthcoming Planning Application** - Cllr Ward opened a discussion aimed at drawing together the collective views of the Council about the proposed bridge project although there was no planning application to consider at this point.

Cllr Roberts expressed concerns about the bridge development but felt that, if there was going to be development around the whole of Northway / Ashchurch area, it was better to be coordinated with the infrastructure that facilitates the development. Being allowed an input at a preplanning stage was not a negative but was still concerned about what the whole impact would be, and it was difficult to make further comment until the Planning Application was seen.

Cllr MacTiernan reminded Members of constraints recently when trying to express views on-line, due to the limitations imposed by the form of the questions. She went on to say that the Council should write a letter to address the its concerns that, if the future road was following the access road, it would affect The Park and Northway Lane. It should be asked whether TBC had looked at any other ways of getting that bridge road done e.g. across to Mitton.

Cllr Ward expressed frustration that it was not possible to view the plans for the bridge and the roads together. Cllr Roberts suggested that this was most likely because the bridge plan needed to be progressed in order for the funding to be secured. If the road networks had been included many more issues would have been raised, slowing down the process and they needed the bridge approved quickly.

Cllr MacTiernan pointed out that, as far as it went with planning, the locations of the roads would be designed and that would then dictate what the developer could or could not do when it came to building as they had to adhere to the road plans.

Cllr Ward raised the point that designs were underway to alleviate traffic on the A46, at junction 9 of the M5, but this was more to do with the proposed garden centre. Concerns had been raised that traffic could be removed from the A46 at Teddington using the new road to the bridge, through Northway, to bypass the A46, giving people the option to turn into The Park or head towards Bredon Road. No other plans for the Midlands Expressway or cross county road to junction 10 had been forthcoming. Cllr Ward also expressed the view that discussions may have taken place at Cabinet level regarding the re-development of Junction 9, and that there may be a bigger plan that the Council was unaware of.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the County Council should be asked whether it would be them that put forward a planning application for the construction of the road or would that be coming from Tewkesbury Borough Council. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

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NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/111/20 Garden Town (Continued)

Cllr Ward enquired when the Planning Application would come forward and was advised by Cllr MacTiernan that this was likely to be August or September, but she was unsure how long the consultation period would be. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that Tewkesbury Borough Council were asked how long the consultation would be. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Public Access** – Cllr Ward said it was apparent from social media that residents were very confused and he wondered whether the Parish Council could do anything to ease that. Cllr MacTiernan said that they had told the Tewkesbury Garden Team Officers that the letter was not clear enough and should be improved, all they managed to get changed was the feedback date from 30th May 2020 to 12th June 2020.

The Clerk had printed off some of the comments that had been made on social media and highlighted one lady who had, upon receipt of the letter sent by the Tewkesbury Garden Town Team, telephoned the number advertised. The lady who had answered said she did not know anything about it and passed on another number, she was then advised that someone would call back. Four days later she put a further post up on Facebook stating she was still awaiting a call back and then, on day eight, confirmed that she still had not heard anything back from TBC. Cllr MacTiernan had read the same comment and was going to raise it at the Executive Committee Meeting later that week.

Cllr Ward informed Members that one resident had suggested a 'Zoom' meeting with the Parish Council but he believed it was not the responsibility of the Council to answer any technical or planning questions, this should be down to the Tewkesbury Garden Town team.

Members discussed the amount of comments on social media which showed there was a lot of confusion amongst residents with many thinking the location of the bridge was elsewhere. Cllr Terry commented that some of the images that had been published were not accurate and she had been contacted by residents who were very confused. Cllr Ward said there was even a view that the bridge was intended to provide access to the Garden Centre at the new development at Junction 9 of the M5.

It was suggested that the Tewkesbury Garden Town Team should be asked to hold a Zoom meeting to allow residents to ask questions about the plans, as they would have had the opportunity to if the Public Share Event had taken place. Cllr Roberts expressed the view that the excuse of Covid-19 was useful, but it was not TBC's fault, although they could have done more to inform the community and presented the letter to residents in a far better way. Trying to hold a Zoom meeting with a large number of people would be very difficult and the quality of debate would not be good.

Several ideas were put forward as to how more information could be put out to residents. A pre-paid envelope approach was suggested so people could mail in responses, but this was thought to have limitations, as not everyone would have access to the internet to view project details, limiting their ability to reply constructively. The ideas of holding a presentation, putting posters on the Hub doors and in parish noticeboards were also considered.

Cllr Roberts suggested that the Parish Council could put together a document explaining what was happening and get it delivered to every household in the Parish. Cllr MacTiernan said the cost would be astronomical. The Clerk pointed out that if the next newsletter was cancelled and the funds diverted there would be no additional cost to the Parish Council. This would allow for printing information on four sides, including the plans

In conclusion, the most popular approach was to compile information in the form of a detailed document, ready for distribution at the time the planning application was made. It was noted that the required plans were available on the Tewkesbury Garden Town website (with the exception of display board number eight), although Cllr Terry suggested that these could be changed in the final Planning Application.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/111/20 **Garden Town** (Continued)

Cllr Terry PROPOSED putting a newsletter together with the capacity for feedback from residents making it easier for them to respond to the Planning Application once it was validated. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Barnes suggested it was all 'moot', 'water under the bridge' and Northway had been 'sold down the river'. He made the observation that the land they were proposing to build on flooded so wondered how high the road was going to be. Cllr MacTiernan responded that it was going to be very high. Cllr Terry said that the height specifications needed to be included in the newsletter. Cllr MacTiernan expressed the view that feedback exercises and consultations were 'box-ticking' measures that had to be undertaken by law.

Cllr Barnes said that if people were enamoured enough about the development, they should go to the TBC Planning meeting and let their feelings be known. Cllr MacTiernan explained that at the Borough Planning meetings only one person could speak in favour, one in opposition and the Parish Council could speak. Other people would have to sit and watch from the gallery but would not be allowed to speak.

Cllr Ward PROPOSED asking TBC to arrange a Zoom meeting with residents.

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- b) **Garden Town** - The Chairman had been invited to join a regular joint meeting with Tewkesbury Garden Town Project Officers and Ashchurch Rural Parish Council (ARPC). Ahead of a request for Council to approve this, Cllr MacTiernan asked if ARPC had been spoken to about this. As this had not been the case, Cllr MacTiernan suggested that it could be advantageous to have a private discussion with ARPC, ahead of the meeting, to make sure both parishes were 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. This would provide an understanding of their approach and response to the invitation.

Cllr Roberts advised that Members should know who was going to be present and that a formal agenda should be made available prior to the meeting. He also wondered whether it would be sensible to have a Deputy in case Cllr Ward was unable to attend at any point. Cllr MacTiernan said that an agenda should be requested at least a week in advance of the meeting although she imagined the first meeting would probably be an update from Officers, with little opportunity to respond.

Cllr Barnes enquired whether there would be Minutes made available following the meeting, Cllr Roberts responded that if there were no Minutes Cllr Ward would feed back to the Council, Cllr MacTiernan added that feedback was more likely to be in the form of Notes.

- c) **Any Other Matters** - No other matters were raised.

C/112/20 **Covid-19 Emergency Community Grant**

There was some discussion about how the remaining funds from the Covid-19 Emergency Community Grant should be used (some had already been designated to cover the cost of the Covid-19 Newsletter the Parish Council had printed and distributed). The Clerk stated that, whatever was agreed, she had to provide receipts to Tewkesbury Borough Council of how the money had been spent.

Cllr Roberts enquired whether there was a deadline for spending the money and Cllr MacTiernan said that no time limit had been included in the application form. He suggested that a way to benefit Northway, when lock down eased, was that the Council could give a break on hiring charges for community users (not business) as they may struggle getting people straight back in again, this would include the Lunch Club. Cllr MacTiernan advised that the Council also had £10,000 from the Business Grant, but Cllr Roberts was of the view that this fund was more to assist the Council itself, to cover its own losses incurred during the lockdown period.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/112/20 Covid-19 Emergency Community Grant (Continued)

Cllr Roberts said that a Community Day could be organised for the other side of lockdown. Cllr Ward suggested an event to coincide with VJ Day, but as the weather was not likely to be so good in September something like a picnic in the park could be arranged for the following year, which local companies could get involved with.

Cllr MacTiernan said that the application was very broad and could even been used to produce another newsletter where an update relating to Covid-19 was provided, perhaps alongside the bridge information, especially as the Share Event was cancelled as a result of Covid-19. Cllr Roberts extended his thanks to Cllr MacTiernan for her work in obtaining the grant.

C/113/20 Correspondence received after 20th May 2020

Lee Walk Hedge - The Clerk said she had only one item to raise and reminded Members that they had agreed for a letter to be written to a resident in Lee Walk last November following them cutting the hedge on the Community Hub boundary and then dumping the cuttings on the grassed triangle at the front fence. The same residents had cut the hedge again, with the cuttings fly tipped on the same area.

Cllr Roberts enquired whether Members were happy for him to put a few paragraphs together for the Clerk to send to the residents, if that was still unsuccessful, then the next step would be to ask the PCSO to visit them regarding fly tipping issues.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED putting a letter together to forward to the residents. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 8.10 p.m.