



STONEHOUSE

TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held at 7pm on 23 May 2016 in the Town Hall.

Present: Councillors Gwen Atkinson, Jo Byrne, John Callinan, Ray Clegg, Deborah Curtis, Neil Gibbs, Tim Jackson, Gary Powell, Ginny Smart, Paul Stephens, Pam Swain, Theresa Watt

Also Present: 5 members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group, 3 members of the public, District Councillor Mattie Ross, County Councillor Lesley Williams, Town Clerk Gill Jennings

Councillor Watt, having been re-elected presided over the meeting.

TC1709 Councillors are to complete Declarations of Acceptance of Office and confirm compliance with the Council's Code of Conduct

The Clerk confirmed receipt of all 13 Councillors Declarations of Acceptance of Office. Councillors returned their completed Code of Conduct forms.

TC1710 Apologies

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Kambites (holiday)

TC1711 The Appointment of a Chairman/Town Mayor (there will be a ballot)

A Ballot was held. 1 vote each Pam Swain & Gary Powell. 10 votes to Theresa Watt.

Councillor Watt elected as Chairman/Town Mayor

TC1712 The Appointment of a Vice Chairman/Deputy Town Mayor (there will be a ballot)

A Ballot was held. 1 vote each Neil Gibbs/Gary Powell/Ginny Smart. 9 votes to Pam Swain. Councillor Swain was elected as Vice Chairman/Deputy Town Mayor

TC1713 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jackson declared an interest in TC1719 and left the room during debate and decision.

TC1714 Confirmation that the Town Council is eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence and to pass a Resolution to use that power

The Clerk confirmed the eligibility of the Council having over two-thirds of the Members elected and a qualified Clerk. Cllr Powell proposed/Cllr Swain seconded the Resolution to use the General Power of Competence. Unanimous vote in favour.

TC1715 Confirmation that the current Governance Documents are adequate and up to date

Councillors had been encouraged to examine the documents on line or request paper copies.

Cllr Clegg proposed/Cllr Byrne seconded that the Governance Document were fit for purpose.

Majority vote in favour. (Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1716 Confirmation of the accuracy of the Minutes of the last meeting of the Council of the 21st March 2016

The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Byrne, seconded Cllr Swain. Majority vote in favour (Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1717 Accept the Minutes of the Development Control Panel Meeting of 4th April 2016

The Minutes were noted. There were no questions.

TC1718 Accept the Minutes of the Regeneration & Environment Committee Meeting of 4th April 2016

The Minutes were noted. Cllr Callinan queried whether there would be Terms of Reference for the group with an area of work identified and what the toolkit consisted of. It was explained that the toolkit was a range of options for traffic calming etc. The Committee would draw up Terms of Reference and were working with Gloucestershire County Council.

TC1718 (continued)

Resolution: To agree the appointment of a Traffic Working Group which will, aided by a Toolkit, identify possible actions

Proposed Cllr. Callinan/Seconded Cllr. Atkinson – All in favour

The Working Group was appointed as: Theresa Watt, John Callinan, Gwen Atkinson

TC1719 Accept the Minutes of the Amenities, Recreation & Tourism Committee Meeting of 11th April 2016

The Minutes were noted. The Clerk explained that it was the Committee's proposal to pass the allotment site for management only, to the Association, and not to increase rents in advance or make a claim for rent from the Association. Following transfer the Council would not accept any costs associated with the allotments. Cllr Callinan asked how the Council had achieved unanimous acceptance by the tenants. The Council had consulted, 3 tenants had issues with their data being passed to the Association. A further opportunity of consultation existed within the 12 months notice period.

Resolution: To agree to devolve management of the Stagholt allotment site to Stonehouse Allotment Tenants Association, to agree the arrangements regarding plot holder rents and rent of the site by the Association, and to agree Notice is served on tenants to that effect.

Proposed: Cllr Atkinson, Seconded Cllr Gibbs : Majority in favour (Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1720 Accept the Minutes of the Finance & Strategy Meeting of 18th April 2016

Resolution: To agree to release of funds from reserves for election costs

Proposed: Cllr Byrne, Seconded Tim Jackson. Majority in favour. (Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1721 Appointment of 4 members to existing Committees in addition to Chair/Vice Chair:

(These appointments may be made by a draw of names)

Cllr Watt arranged the appointments by a consensus of choice.

Development Control Panel – Cllrs: Atkinson, Kambites, Smart, Jackson

Regeneration & Environment – Cllrs: Jackson, Atkinson, Clegg, Kambites

Amenities, Recreation & Tourism – Cllrs: Powell, Smart, Gibbs, Curtis

TC1721 (continued)

Finance & Strategy – Cllrs: Callinan, Byrne, Stephens, Vacancy

Staffing Committee – Council agreed this will be made up of Chair/Vice Chair and Chair of each Committee

TC1722 Appoint Members to Council Working Groups and confirm the remit of those Groups:

Town Council Auditors – to make quarterly checks on the accuracy of the accounts and prevent fraudulent activity – **Appointments were made as follows: Cllr. Stephens, Byrne, Clegg**

Neighbourhood Plan Group – to engage with residents in the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan

Appointments were made as follows: **Cllr. Smart, Powell, Kambites, Callinan**

(Working Groups which work under a Committee will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting)

TC1723 Appoint new cheque signatories as necessary

Note: these appointees must be accessible during the day and not on the audit team. The Clerk confirmed that existing signatories were re-elected and sufficient for purpose. **Agreed: Cllrs. Watt, Swain, Atkinson, Curtis**

TC1724 Appoint Members to external groups as representatives:

Stonehouse Allotment Tenants Association – Cllr Gibbs

Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr Kambites is currently a Trustee and would make reports

Cotswold Canals Western Executive Committee – Cllr Powell

Stonehouse Community Partnership – Cllr Byrne

Stonehouse School Trustees – Cllr Swain

Doverow Hill Trust – Cllr Watt/Clerk

Chartered Parishes – Cllr Jackson

Standish Partnership – Cllr Curtis

Cluster Group – Cllr Byrne, Gibbs

TC1725 Confirmation that a review of land, premises and investments has been carried out and current values are included in the Statement of Accounts

Cllr. Callinan queried when the Council had last reviewed the items. This was carried out by ART Committee during the year. Investments reviewed by Finance Committee.

The Council confirmed that current values were included in the Statement of Accounts.

(Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1726 Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks

To consider insurance quotations and agree cover

Following discussion of item 1736 the Council agreed not to proceed with a claim on the current insurer and to move the insurance to Zurich subject to a final check on cover being made by the Clerk, to obtain best value.

TC1727 Consideration of the Internal Auditor's Report, approval of the Year End Accounts and to make a Statement of Assurance

Cllr Callinan queried the number of audits carried out and whether the current independent internal auditor was independent and whether an employee of Selkirk. Cllr Watt explained that the Council were responsible for carrying out quarterly checks on the accounts and associated paperwork. The Independent Auditor was outside the Council but paid to check the accounts and advise on any appropriate changes or strengthening of procedure. The External Auditor was responsible for accepting the accounts. The Council viewed a copy of the Auditor's report and congratulated the Clerk on her work.

Late papers were considered concerning an amendment to the Notes to the Accounts.

The Council approved the Year End Accounts and made a Statement of Assurance. The Accounting Statements were signed by the Clerk and Chairman. (Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1728 To determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full Council up to and including the next Annual Meeting of full Council.

The list of meetings was approved and will be published on the website.

Ordinary Business Session

TC1729 Formal Consideration of the draft Neighbourhood Plan

The Council were in receipt of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors were encouraged to feed back to the Neighbourhood Plan Group with any individual comments.

The Council approved the draft Neighbourhood Plan for consultation and agreed to assist with publicity during the consultation period.

TC1730 Adjournment for Public Participation

3 residents raised concern about a planning application for 3 houses on a garden in Melbourne Close. Councillors could not recall the application and Cllr Watt suggested that the residents attend the next Development Control Panel meeting. Cllr Callinan stated that the Town Council were not the decision makers and residents should raise objections to Stroud District Council. He introduced residents to Cllr Mattie Ross who was present

Lesley Williams asked if new Councillors would get training? Could Traffic Working Group include top of Gloucester Road in their research? Could Neighbourhood Development Plan be publicised on Inform and Discuss?

TC1731 Brief Reports from County/District/Town Councillors

Request action on the request for Transfer of an Asset (Cllr Williams) – County Councillor Williams reported there was no outcome to date and this might be as a result of other matters in the area. She advised the Council that Neighbourhood Development Plans are getting improved status. The revenue support grant will be increasing in favour of local authorities. Children's centres will be reformed with some closures. Councillor Williams concerned about the way the county council consults with the public and whether their actions reflect what people really want. Cotswold District Council not moving to West Oxfordshire group. Glos County Council are not in support of forced academies.

TC1731 (continued)

Councillor Williams asked that the Town Council advise her very quickly of any expenditure required from Local Highways funding. She had already put forward a proposal for resurfacing the footpath by the Horsetrough.

Councillor Ross reported that Stephen Lydon had been elected as new Leader, with Doina Cornell as deputy. The Council was aiming to have improved representation of women.

Councillor Powell congratulated Councillor Ross on her re-appointment at Chair of Housing.

He was continuing as Vice Chairman. He advised the meeting that the In Bloom planting was complete in the High Street and volunteers all working very hard with further planting.

TC1732 To agree bank reconciliation to end of April 2016 and agree accounts for payment

Cllr Byrne proposed, Pam Swain seconded:

Bank Reconciliation at £24109.03 was agreed.

Payments to end of April £61450.79 Receipts £18497.09 were agreed.

Payments due in May £23522.46 were agreed.

(Cllr. Callinan requested that his abstention be noted)

TC1733 To consider any urgent planning matters/consultations

No matters to consider

TC1734 To consider issues for a Resolution for debate at the AGM of GAPTC in July.

Cllr Callinan queried whether Council still felt strongly about only having 1 vote. He advised that the council had previously felt that votes should be distributed according to the subscription paid. **The Council confirmed that they did not have an issue with having 1 vote and there were no resolutions put forward.**

TC1735 To agree to advertise a vacancy (Ebley Ward) for co-option

Cllr Callinan queried the powers of co-opted members. Requested to seek advice from the Clerk.

Council voted in favour of advertising the vacancy.

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from item TC1736/7 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC1736 To consider a County Court claim

Council voted in favour of following the advice of the Council's solicitor.

TC1737 To consider a pensions matter

There was insufficient information available.
