



**Castle Cary Town Council**

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**APPROVED MINUTES OF CASTLE CARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS, THIS MEETING WAS HELD USING ZOOM.**

**Present:** Judi Morison (Chair), Philippa Biddlecombe, Stephen Biddlecombe, Bob Gilbey, Pek Peppin, Sally Snook, Penny Steiner, Nick Weeks and Rob Worth

**Also present:** District Councillor Henry Hobhouse, County Councillor Mike Lewis and District Councillor Kevin Messenger

**Clerk:** Zöe Godden

There were three members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

**The meeting started at 19:00.**

**2020**

**TC30 Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Margaret Bebbington and Julian de Bosdari.

**TC31 Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest (these must be declared BEFORE the agenda items concerned are discussed. Persons with a declared pecuniary interest must leave the meeting room when these are discussed)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**TC32 To approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 15th June 2020 to be signed by the Chair at a later time.**

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the minutes as presented.**

**TC33 Co-option - To fill the vacant seat on the Council by voting on the one candidate by secret ballot.**

To facilitate the secret ballot, the candidate was moved to the Zoom waiting room during voting.

Kenneth Gray received eight votes. Nick Weeks abstained from voting and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes. Therefore, Kenneth was voted onto the Town Council with a clear majority and took part in the remainder of the meeting. A declaration of acceptance of office form would be completed at a later time.

### **TC34 Community Safety and Security update**

The Clerk had received a report from Judi Morison of anti-social behaviour and littering at the Pavilion. The Clerk had reported this to the Police who had agreed to patrol the area. The Caretaker would monitor the area and remove any litter.

### **TC35 To receive any reports/updates:**

- a) **Mike Lewis (County Councillor)** reported that there had been no CV-19 related deaths in Somerset in the preceding three days. The relaxation of lockdown restrictions had gone well, with the exception of an outbreak amongst patrons of a pub in Burnham-on-Sea. As a result of the improvement in the CV-19 situation, Somerset County Council would no longer be releasing Friday briefings, although these would resume if the number of cases increased.

Mike said that the One Somerset debate was ongoing. Sally Snook asked if consideration had been given to delaying this process for Somerset, in light of the postponement of elections and the ongoing CV-19 crisis. Mike said that this had been considered but that the process would continue because Government was willing to press ahead with work to form unitary authorities. Mike said that ten counties were in the process of forming unitary authorities.

Nick Weeks asked if any progress had been made with the installation of brown tourist information signs on the A303 to direct drivers to Castle Cary. Mike said that he hoped these would be installed as part of the duelling project but that he would follow up with the Highways department. Mike went on to say that it was likely that the duelling project would be delayed.

- b) **Henry Hobhouse (District Councillor)** reported that SSDC had installed three electric vehicle charging points in Wincanton, Ilchester and Ilminster as part of a project in which SSDC was working in partnership with Devon County Council. SSDC was investigating the possibility of installing an EV charging point in Castle Cary. Henry said that the free-standing charging points were preferable to those attached to streetlamps as they charged vehicles more quickly. It was noted that residents without driveways would find it difficult to charge an electric vehicle. Henry reported that, at its recent Full Council meeting, SSDC had voted against SCC's One Somerset proposal for a single unitary authority. Henry said he was in favour of the two unitary model and felt that there should only be one councillor per ward. There was a short discussion about the merits of some of the One Somerset options and the importance of ensuring that Town and Parish Councils had an input into the process.

**Kevin Messenger (District Councillor)** reported that the Lead Specialist from the Planning department had resigned.

Regarding One Somerset, Kevin said he agreed that Town and Parish Councils should have a voice.

Kevin had made a site visit to Avalon Farm to review ongoing developments and said that the increase in activity at the site would impact on surrounding roads and on Castle Cary itself.

Nick Weeks expressed concern at the changes in staffing at the Planning department as decisions on planning applications were already being delayed. Henry Hobhouse explained that it was difficult to retain staff in the Planning department as qualified planners could expect higher salaries in the private sector. It was **agreed** that the Town Council would write to SSDC to express its disappointment at the loss of key Planning staff.

**Action 200720/1: Judi Morison and Pek Peppin.**

- c) To receive an update the Dimmer Liaison Group – Sally Snook reported that she had uploaded the May update to the Town website. Sally had asked Viridor to clarify where waste from the Dimmer site was being taken while the Avonmouth site remained closed, how many truck movements were involved and how much fuel was being used to transport waste. Viridor had responded, saying that waste was taken to other sites in England but did not specify where. Viridor would not reveal the number of truck movements but said that it operated its fleet to maximise fuel efficiency. It was still not known when the Avonmouth site would be opened.
- d) To hear an update from Caryford Hall – Philippa Biddlecombe reported that, since the resignation of some key personnel, a new committee was being created. The Hall was applying to become a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO), so recruitment of a treasurer was especially important. The building company that was being used for the improvements to Caryford Hall had gone into administration, so a new company would have to be found to carry on with the work. Before phase two of the improvements could begin, the trustees needed to raise £40,000, adding to the urgency to recruit more volunteers. Trustees were also planning to redesign the Caryford Hall website.
- e) Update on Key Objectives/Projects – Pek Peppin said that the Neighbourhood Plan group would be looking for volunteers to help when the Neighbourhood Plan review started.  
Judi Morison said that she was waiting for an update on progress with the Drill Hall.
- f) To review action points from previous meetings – All action points had been completed except one, which the Clerk confirmed she would complete as soon as possible.

### TC36 Chairs' Report:

- a) To hear an update on Covid-19 work in Castle Cary.

Judi Morison reported that Cary Cares was continuing to offer shopping services to people who could not do this for themselves and that fewer people were accessing the service now. Kevin Messenger added that various businesses were continuing to make home-deliveries. Judi went on to say that the town charity was still providing the funding for food boxes and that these would be offered throughout the summer holidays to families whose children were in receipt of free school meals. Judi asked for thanks to be recorded to Cary Cares for their valuable work throughout the CV-19 crisis.

- b) **PROPOSAL** – that Greener Cary becomes the Town Council's Environmental Working and Advisory Group to include representatives from Castle Cary and Ansford Councils, Greener Cary, the Chamber of Commerce and other interested lay members to work in collaboration to achieve carbon neutrality for Castle Cary and Ansford by 2030.

Judi Morison referred to the recently approved Environmental Checklist and noted that it included actions for the Town Council and for the wider community.

### 19:36 - The Chair allowed a public open session

David Osborne from the Greener Cary group said that he was impressed with the environmental aims and objectives adopted by the Town Council and felt that these were in line with the overall aims of Greener Cary. David said that the Greener Cary group wanted to become the Town Council's environmental working group, especially as the Town Council

was already working in partnership with Ansford Parish Council and other local organisations. David went on to say that Greener Cary had a list of local people who were interested in being involved and taking action on environmental issues.

**19:39 – The Chair brought the public open session to a close.**

Pek Peppin suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan group should also be involved in the environmental working group.

Judi Morison noted that terms of reference would need to be drawn up and agreed for the environmental working group.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Greener Cary would become the Town Council's Environmental Working and Advisory Group, subject to the adoption of terms of reference.**

- c) **PROPOSAL** - That the Town Council agrees to support the seven recommendations from SALC and Frome Town Council on the role of Parish and Town Councils in the Local Government Reorganisation process in Somerset.

Judi Morison reported that she, Pek Peppin, Sally Snook and Penny Steiner had met to discuss the recommendations from SALC and Frome Town Council in relation to the One Somerset proposals. Sally said that it was clear that, should Somerset become a unitary authority, town and parish councillors would have to take on many more onerous tasks and would need to dedicate a lot more time to council activities.

**19:45 – The two remaining members of the public left the meeting.**

Nick Weeks expressed concern about the effectiveness of the boundary review process and the risk of community decisions being taken centrally, far away from the communities that would be affected. Mike Lewis said that, under the One Somerset proposal, parish boundaries would remain unchanged but that each unitary councillor would look after more parishes. Mike also said that the Government would be looking at examples of other unitary authorities, with the intention of avoiding problems that had occurred elsewhere.

Penny Steiner said that it was important to support the recommendations in the SALC/Frome Town Council document as these would give town and parish councils a voice in the Somerset review. Kenneth Gray said that it was important that the Town Council kept up with changes that would be made as a result of the Somerset review.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the recommendations in the SALC/Frome Town Council document. Seven votes for; Rob Worth abstained from voting and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.**

- d) **PROPOSAL** – that a small working group urgently looks at the initiatives that could be 50% funded by a Market Town Investment Group grant, as per the proposed list discussed at the last strategy group meeting and to include the addition of a 20mph speed limit in the town centre.

Judi Morison reminded councillors that MTIG funding was available to cover up to 50% of the cost of various improvement projects. Judi also reminded councillors of the list of projects proposed at the last strategy meeting.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Stephen Biddlecombe, Judi Morison, Pek Peppin, Nick Weeks and Rob Worth would form the small working group. The Clerk was instructed to add the issue of MTIG funding projects to the next Properties and Infrastructure Committee agenda.**

*Action 200720/2: Town Clerk*

- e) To reconsider a request from a member of the public that the Town Council allows the Cobbles to be used by customers of food and drink outlets as a venue to consume their purchases.

Penny Steiner reported that she had spoken to two of the food and drink outlets and neither had wanted to use the Town Council's chairs and tables on the Cobbles because they had their own outside serving areas and did not have enough staff to serve and clean tables on the Cobbles. Rob Worth noted that no food or drink outlets had approached the Town Council to ask for use of the Cobbles. Philippa Biddlecombe noted that additional outside space was likely not now needed as cafes and restaurants were able to reopen.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the original decision not to allow use of the Town Council's tables and chairs on the Cobbles should be upheld.**

**TC37 Correspondence** – To consider responding to a NALC consultation on a new model Code of Conduct.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Council approved the new Code of Conduct. The Clerk was instructed to respond to the consultation on the Council's behalf and to comment that the Council approved the inclusion of the Nolan principles.**

*Action 200720/3: Town Clerk*

### **Committees Reports, Recommendations & Progress on Major Projects**

#### **TC38 Planning Committee & Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) To note receipt of appeal documents in relation to the BMI site (application number 18/01602/FUL).

Pek Peppin explained that the BMI site was an industrial area off North Street, containing some listed buildings. Pek said that the Town Council should respond to the appeal, clearly listing the reasons for opposing the application. Pek would produce a document detailing her proposed wording and arrange a Zoom meeting in advance of the Planning Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, so that Councillors could comment if they wished. Kenneth Gray and Kevin Messenger said they would like to attend this Zoom meeting.

*Action 200720/4: Pek Peppin*

Mike Lewis suggested that the Town Council should focus on SSDC's main points. Kevin Messenger said he had attended SSDC's Regulation Committee meeting at which this application was discussed. The two main issues were that the road was unadoptable and the housing was too dense.

- b) To hear an update on recently considered planning applications.

Pek Peppin said that the buyers of the site known as Foxes Run (16/03447/FUL) had pulled out and that Yarlington Homes was going to try and develop the site itself.

#### **TC39 Properties, Infrastructure, Pither Project & Fairfield-updates**

- a) To note receipt of a Walking and Cycling Manifesto for Somerset from Bruton Town Council and to consider supporting the document.

Judi Morison noted that the Manifesto was from the Somerset Climate Action Group, not Bruton Town Council.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to support the document as presented.**

- b) To hear an update on works to Millbrook Toilets.

Nick Weeks reported that the ladies and gents toilets had been gutted. A new door had been installed to link the ladies end of the building to the accessible toilet in the centre. Quotes for electrical, plumbing and building works were in the process of being gathered. A sink and kitchen unit would be installed in the ladies and a sink, kitchen unit and toilet with cubicle would be installed in the gents. Nick said that the gents space should be advertised for rent soon. The Clerk was instructed to add an item to the next Properties and Infrastructure agenda to agree the advertising of the gents space.

**Action 200720/5: Town Clerk**

Nick went on to report that the basketball hoop had been installed. The final stage of the project would be to install fencing at the rear of the equipment to prevent balls from being thrown too far away.

- c) To note that the Catherines Close play area and the outdoor gym and play equipment at the Fairfield have been re-opened.

**Noted.**

- d) To note that several CV-19 signs, supplied by SSDC, have been put up around the town centre.

**Noted.**

- e) To note that SSDC is considering installing an electric vehicle charging point in Millbrook car park.

Nick Weeks said that the power supply at Millbrook car park was good and that the EV charging points should be located in the short stay car park to prevent them being blocked by people parking for prolonged periods in the long stay car park. The Clerk was instructed to refer this matter to the Properties and Infrastructure Committee.

**Action 200720/6: Town Clerk**

f) Fairfield - To hear an update from a Fairfield Group meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Penny Steiner reported that a Friends of Fairfield meeting had taken place on Zoom. The Group was going to be split into a Fairfield Advisory Group, which would report to the Properties and Infrastructure Committee. Terms of reference were being drafted for consideration by the Properties and Infrastructure Committee. The Friends of Fairfield Group would remain and would consist of the volunteers who carry out the practical work. A project plan for phase two of the Fairfield work would also be considered by the Properties and Infrastructure Committee, along with a community consultation questionnaire to determine what sort of equipment to install. The next volunteer work day would be on 26<sup>th</sup> September and would be advertised nearer the time.

**20:47 – Mike Lewis left the meeting.**

#### **TC40 Marketing & Communication**

- a) To hear a report on the reopening of the Tuesday Market.

Penny Steiner reported that the Tuesday market had reopened on 7<sup>th</sup> July and had been well received. A lot of work had been done to implement safety measures and, although there had been some resistance from stall holders to the instruction to wear face masks, the second week had been better in this respect. Penny thanked everyone who had worked hard to support the Market Manager. Kevin Messenger asked if the Town Council was keeping track and trace records of the market traders. Penny said that the Market Manager kept these details and that all traders had signed to say they would abide by a site risk assessment. All traders had also had to provide risk assessments for their stalls. Judi Morison thanked Philippa and Stephen Biddlecombe in particular for all their help.

b) To note that the Welcome Pack folders have been printed and received.

**Noted.** Penny Steiner reported that two of the Information Point volunteers were working on the inserts for the new Welcome Pack folders, although it was difficult to source up to date information at present.

c) To hear an update on the Shop Local flyer.

Penny Steiner reported that Cary Cares volunteers had distributed the flyers and would send the Clerk an invoice for their time. The amount paid to Cary Cares for distributing the flyers would be the same as the amount that would have been paid to the Caryford Hall volunteers for distributing the newsletters.

d) **PROPOSAL** – that the Town Council considers supporting the organisation and holding of a Big Christmas event on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, subject to any CV-19 restrictions that may be in place at the time.

Penny Steiner referred to a document that had been circulated prior to the meeting, detailing draft plans for the 2020 Big Christmas event. It was proposed that there would be no stalls but shops would be open and would provide street food where possible. The Big Christmas group would provide entertainment. The reason for these changes to the usual format was to comply with CV-19 restrictions, which would be reviewed nearer to the date of the event.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to support the organisation and holding of a smaller Big Christmas event, with the proviso that any event complied with any CV-19 restrictions in place on the date of the event.**

e) To consider a recommendation from the Marketing and Communications Committee that the Town Council approves re-adoption of the Privacy Policy and Document Retention Policy without amendment.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to re-adopt both policies as presented.**

#### **TC41 Finance and Management**

a) To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Management Committee that the Town Council approves re-adoption of the Cookies Policy and the Market House Licensing Policy without amendment.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to re-adopt both policies as presented.**

b) To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Management Committee that the Market Manager's fee is increased from £3360 to £3800 per year.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to increase the Market Manager's annual fee to £3800.**

c) To consider a recommendation from the Finance and Management Committee that the earmarked reserves are amended as per the list provided.

There was some general discussion about how to deal with the £16,000 wayleave amount that had been erroneously left in the Fairfield earmarked reserve.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Management Committee regarding amendments to the earmarked reserves.**

**Five votes for; One vote against; Two abstentions.**

- d) To note receipt of the Internal Auditor's end of financial year report.

**Noted.**

e) To approve section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Judi Morison read out each of the statements from section 1 and councillors agreed with each in turn.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return without amendment. All in favour except Kenneth Gray, who abstained from voting and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.**

- f) To approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return without amendment. All in favour except Kenneth Gray, who abstained from voting and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.**

- g) To approve the cash book and bank reconciliations for the current account for May and June 2020.

The bank reconciliations had not been checked by a councillor prior to the meeting, so it was **agreed** to defer this item to the next Full Council meeting.

- h) To note that Judi Morison and Penny Steiner verified and authorised the June 2020 payments.

**Noted.**

- i) To approve the July 2020 payment schedule for the Town Council and the Donald Pither Trust and to nominate Councillors to verify and authorise payments.

Councillors questioned why the Town Council was being asked to pay the electricity bill for the second floor before the license agreement had been signed by the proprietor of the dance studio. The Clerk was instructed to query this.

***Action 200720/7: Town Clerk***

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve all payments except the electricity bill for the top floor of the Market House; it was further unanimously agreed that that Philippa Biddlecombe would verify the payments and that Judi Morison would authorise the payments after verification. The Town Clerk would email copies of all invoices to Philippa and Judi.**

**The meeting ended at 21:35.**

**Approved as a correct record.....17th August 2020**