



Castle Cary Town Council

The Market House

Market Place

Castle Cary

BA7 7AH

Telephone: 01963 359631

Email: town.clerk@castle-cary.co.uk

Website: www.castle-cary.co.uk

MINUTES OF CASTLE CARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

held on Monday 14th December 2020 at 7pm

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

Present: Judi Morison (Chair), Margaret Bebbington, Philippa Biddlecombe, Stephen Biddlecombe, Julian de Bosdari, Bob Gilbey, Kenneth Gray, Pek Peppin, Sally Snook, Penny Steiner, Rob Worth

In attendance: Stephen Hill and Patrick Pender-Cudlip (Interim Clerks)
Claire Craner-Buckley (Assistant Clerk)
Mike Lewis (County Councillor)
Two members of the public

19:00 – Open session. No member of the public wished to speak.

2020

TC96 Apologies for absence

Nick Crowley and District Councillors Henry Hobhouse & Kevin Messenger had sent their apologies for being unable to attend.

TC97 Declarations of personal or pecuniary interests - no Councillors had interests to declare.

TC98 To approve the minutes of previous meetings of the Full Town Council, to be signed by the Chair at a later time.

a) Meeting of 16th November, 2020

After it was pointed out that in the draft minutes the phrase “the room rental costs” in Resolution TC89a) should read “the Assembly rooms rental cost” the Clerk was instructed to correct the minutes accordingly.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed 9-0-2 [for-against-abstain] that the minutes as corrected be approved.

b) Extraordinary meeting of 23rd November, 2020

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed 8-0-1 that the minutes as corrected be approved.

TC99 Community Safety and Security update – no update was received.

TC100 To receive reports, updates and correspondence:

- a) County Councillor:** Mike Lewis reported that there had been a spike in the numbers of South Somerset residents (especially those in their 20s and 30s) infected with the Covid-19 coronavirus and he urged residents to observe the Hands-Face-Space guidelines. He also warned Councillors and residents that the County Council Highways Department had recently changed the scheduling of many local road works. In response to a question he confirmed he had asked the Chief Executive Officer of Somerset Waste Partnership to encourage the management of Dimmer Recycling Centre to respond to the Town Council’s request for more communication, including via Zoom (see TC100 c) below).

- b) **District Councillors:** Henry Hobhouse and Kevin Messenger were unable to attend the meeting because of another official engagement. Mike Lewis who represents a neighbouring ward on South Somerset District Council (SSDC) passed on the information that SSDC propose to buy Yeovil Town Football Club's Huish Park ground and lease it back to the Club, but the Club itself would remain in its current ownership. He also reported that the four District Council Planning Authorities in Somerset were pressing the Government to find a solution to the problems of high phosphate levels in parts of the Somerset Levels designated as Special Protected Areas under the Ramsar Convention. Following a recent judgement of the European Court of Justice a letter to the District Councils from Natural England has had the effect of stymying virtually all development in most parts of the County.
- c) **Dimmer Liaison Group**
Sally Snook expressed some frustration that, despite repeated requests, Viridor seem unable or unwilling to take part in online meetings with the Liaison Group and rarely respond to emails, but the Group would meet on site as soon as Covid-19 regulations make this practicable. There is a December 2020 Update on the Town Council website. It was agreed that Sally Snook would contact Viridor again about attending an online meeting.
- d) **Annual Review of Environmental Actions & Achievements**
The Annual Environmental Review was presented by Claire Craner-Buckley, the Deputy Town Clerk and Environmental Champion. There was some discussion as to whether the Council's ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030 could properly be urged on residents and businesses as well as being applied to the Council's own activities.
- e) **Anti-social behaviour**
PCSO Tim Russell had reported that since the Police have included regular visits to Fairfield on their rounds they had seen no evidence of continuing anti-social behaviour.
- f) **Government consultation on the Future of Transport - rural strategy.**
This would be discussed at a Greener Cary meeting in January 2021.
- g) **Correspondence noted**
SAVE climate - an opportunity for parish & town councils in Somerset.
- h) **Basketball hoop**
A resident had written to the Council's solicitor enclosing a photograph of three young people climbing on the basketball hoop. The Council would be fixing a sign warning that climbing on the hoop was dangerous.

101. Possible appointment of a Retrofit Co-ordinator

Claire Craner-Buckley presented an update on the Retrofitting project led by Bruton Town Council and supported in principle by the Council. She recommended that the Council contribute £4k. to the Project subject to a £75k. bid to the Climate Emergency Community Fund of Somerset County Council (SCC) being successful. There was some discussion of the merits of the scheme and it was noted that Bruton Town Council had not as yet committed any funds, even provisionally.

- a) **RESOLVED:** It was proposed and seconded that the Council contribute £4k. to the Retrofitting Project subject to the bid to SCC being successful.
The proposal was REJECTED 5-6-0
- b) It was agreed that in the light of the decision not to contribute funding it would be inappropriate for the Council to express a view on the recruitment of a Coordinator and a Project officer.

Committee Reports, Recommendations & Progress on Major Projects

TC102 Planning Committee & Neighbourhood Plan – the Council received a report of the Planning Committee meeting of 7th December, the draft minutes of which have been published.

TC103 Properties and Infrastructure Committee:

a) Appointment of a Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that Rob Worth be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee.

b) Pither Project & Fairfield:

i. **Fairfield Fencing** - The Council received an update on the fence installation in Fairfield.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the Friends of Fairfield be thanked for their excellent work restoring the fence and adding an extra rail.

ii. **Climbing fort on Fairfield** – The Council considered the Committee’s review of the three quotations for the installation of a climbing fort:

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the contract be awarded to Home Front Outdoor Play.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that authority be delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Council Chair and Vice Chair and the Chair of the Properties and Infrastructure Committee, to negotiate details of the Climbing Fort contract with Home Front, to place the order and to pay the deposit.

c) **Millbrook Hub** - The Council received an update on arrangements for using half of the building as a Food Sharing Hub and letting the other half as an artist’s studio. Building works are proceeding satisfactorily but the requirement to obtain the necessary planning consent and permission from the landlord (SSDC) to sublet have caused delays.

d) **Water testing** – The Council discussed the problems and possible sources of pollution in the River Cary:

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that in accordance with the Committee’s recommendation the water testing specialist previously engaged by the Council be commissioned to test the water in the river Cary for agricultural and landfill pollutants as appropriate, subject to budgetary constraints, and that neighbouring parish councils be invited to contribute.

e) **Cemetery** – the Council received an update on the deterioration of and repairs needed to the paths, drives, stonework and woodwork, and on the idea of moving the wildlife garden to another part of the cemetery.

f) **Station Road bench** – it was reported that the bench would be repaired imminently.

g) **Community Larder** – preparations are well advanced and the Larder be able to start operating at Millbrook Hub as soon as the requisite legal consents have been granted.

h) **Playground** – it was agreed that the Committee should investigate whether or not repairs to the surface by the basketball hoop were required. It was noted that the carousel and some of the decking would need to be repaired or replaced before long.

i) **Shambles lift** – the Council is still trying to get a suitably qualified lift engineer to carry out the necessary repairs.

j) **Tree Strategy 2020-21** – Julian de Bosdari will draft a Tree Strategy early in the new year.

k) **Horse Pond** – The chair of Properties and Infrastructure Committee has been approached by the Horsepond volunteers to consider the possibility of installing a fountain. In addition there is also a separate proposition, to consider a celebratory water fountain for the Queens' jubilee in 2022. It was agreed to discuss this at the next Committee meeting.

TC104 Marketing & Communication Committee

a) **Bookings and Tuesday market** – the Tuesday market is very popular and is running well. It was agreed that the Council would wait until the new Town Clerk is in post before considering the appointment of a Bookings and Promotions Manager.

b) **Tourist leaflet** - The Council considered and discussed the Committee’s review of the three quotations for a new edition of the tourist leaflet.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the contract be awarded to Mark Matcham Design.

- i. **RESOLVED:** It was proposed and agreed unanimously to delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of the Marketing and Communication Committee, to negotiate details of the contract with the chosen contractor.

TC105 Human Resources Committee – it was confirmed that the new Clerk and RFO would be taking up her position on 21st December 2020.

TC106 Finance and Management Committee

a) **Market House: commission of specialist architect**

The Council received a detailed explanation of the provisions of the Council's Financial Regulations, the standing advice of the Statutory body responsible for Listed Buildings (Historic England) and best practice in relation to the awarding of Council contracts to specialist professionals. It also considered the expertise and relevant experience of a professional who has detailed knowledge of and longstanding interest in the Market House.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that, in accordance with clauses 11.1a)ii and 11.1.d) of the Council's Financial Regulations, the requirement for competitive tendering in respect of architectural work on the Market House will be waived and Mr Robert Battersby of Architecton should be invited to tender for the specialist work on the Grade II* Listed Building.

It was agreed to defer detailed discussions of the contract until the new Clerk was in post.

b) **Payments –**

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the December 2020 payment schedule for the Town Council be approved, with the proviso that the electricity account be double-checked before payment.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the December 2020 payment schedule for the Donald Pither Trust be approved.

It was agreed that Margaret Bebbington would check the invoices against the payments and that Judi Morison would execute the payments.

At this point Pek Peppin left the meeting.

TC107 Exclusion of Press and Public.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that in accordance with the *Public Bodies Admissions To Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2)*, the press and public be excluded on the grounds that discussion of the following business would disclose confidential information relating to rent payments.

TC108 Rent payments for Council property.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed unanimously that the Council's solicitor be instructed to write to a former tenant of Council property concerning the settlement of a rent account.

The meeting concluded at 21.32 hours.

Members of the Council are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of its functions, that "No member of the public, job applicant, elected member or employee shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, marital status or disability"

The next meeting of the Town Council will be held on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7:00pm. Any items for inclusion on the agenda should be forwarded to the Town Clerk by Thursday 7th January 2021.