

SHERBORNE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the SHERBORNE TOWN COUNCIL held at The Manor House, Sherborne, on Monday 18 February 2019 at 6.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr D Elliott (Town Mayor)
Cllrs, J Andrews, J Carey, S Greene, A Hall, M Hall,
R Legg, J Pentolfe, K Pike and J Warburton

In attendance: Mr T Savage (Town Clerk)
Mrs S Woodford (Civic Administrator)

Youth Advisors: Apologies

112. PUBLIC SESSION

112.1 Police Report – Sgt Want was unable to attend due to operational needs.

112.2 Mrs Edwina Burns, Treasurer of Sherborne Town Youth Football Club, spoke with regards to the increase in charges of £1 for youth football matches at the Terrace Playing Field. She asked if the rate paid by the Football Club was comparable to that paid by the Rugby or Cricket Clubs. The Town Clerk responded confirming that the Rugby and Football Club have entered into a 10 year lease with the Town Council for the Terrace Club building and are not paying any charges as they are committed to refurbishing the Terrace Club at an estimated cost in the region of £400,000. He stressed that the Town Council endeavour to keep all hire costs as reasonable as possible and considered them to be very modest when taking into account the quality of the playing surfaces, changing rooms and services provided by the Council. Mrs Burns also mentioned the danger of rabbit holes and the health and safety issues raised by these. The Town Clerk gave assurance that the field is checked by the groundsman every Friday evening and it is checked again on the Saturday or Sunday morning by Town Council staff on duty who fill in the rabbit holes in readiness for use of the pitch. He also pointed out that the terms and conditions of use of the field require the manager of any club to undertake an inspection of the field prior to the match. The Town Clerk invited Mrs Burns to contact him with any further queries.

113. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

- Cllr Andrews reported there had been no Cabinet meeting as it had been cancelled.
- He had attended a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, at which the budget and precept setting had been discussed and informed the meeting that the precept for policing will be increased by £24, which will result in one less officer in the whole of Dorset as the proceeds of this increase will be used to compensate for a pension issue which has caused an unplanned rise in the budget.
- Cllr Andrews pointed out that at any one time there are approximately 120 police officers on duty in the whole of Dorset, although there are 400 or more employed within the County.
- A Shaping Dorset Shadow Council meeting was due to be held on Wednesday to discuss the budget. There is concern that an extra £3.73m has not been included within the highway budget.
- Cllr Andrews will be meeting with Mr Martyn Underhill, the Police and Crime Commissioner along with Town Clerk and representatives from the Chamber of Trade, to discuss CCTV provision in Sherborne on Thursday
- Cllr Greene expressed concern about the method of tree pruning being undertaken at the Quarr, the Town Clerk agreed to make enquiries.
- Cllr Green also queried the failure to repair the lights at the Newland North car park. The Town Clerk suggested she contact Nicola Keyworth-Wright the Car Parking manager at WDDC.
- On behalf of a resident, Cllr Greene complained about the state of the pavements in Sherborne which are universally in poor condition.

- Cllr Pentolfe suggested that the Sherborne Neighbourhood Watch be invited to join the meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Town Clerk responded noting that this meeting is intended to be low key and informal, so at this stage he did not want to involve further groups, but they would be invited to future meetings.
- Cllr Pentolfe also queried the efficiency of the 111 police contact number. When attempting to contact the police on 111 a local caller was put through to Devon and then Somerset operators, who were not able to assist. Cllr Andrews agreed to raise this issue with the Commissioner.

114. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Birley and Cllr Cook. Sherborne Girls and The Gryphon School.

115. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS**

Councillors were reminded of their obligations to declare their interests in the following items and to indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered in accordance with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Code of Conduct prepared to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

115.1 Cllr Elliott, Cllr M Hall and Cllr Legg declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 7 as District Councillors.

116. **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 January 2019**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Pentolfe and SECONDED by Cllr A Hall and AGREED unanimously that:

The Minutes (Appendix A), having been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, following a minor amendment at Item 101, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

117. **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

118. **PLANS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Cllr Pike briefed members on the committee meeting of 4 February 2019.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Pike and SECONDED by Cllr Andrews and AGREED (8 in favour and 2 non-votes) that:

The Minutes of the Plans Committee (Appendix B) held on 4 February were received and adopted.

119. **FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

119.1 Payment Schedule

The paper was noted (Appendix C) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr Andrews and SECONDED by Cllr Pentolfe and AGREED unanimously that:

That for the period 21/1/19 to 18/2/19 payment of Cheque (108404) of £463.73, Credit Card Payments of £260.50, BACS Payments of £48,589.25 and Direct Debits of £5,150.45 be approved from the Town Council Current Account and that for the 21/1/19 to 18/2/19, BACS Payment of £18,126.78 and Direct Debits of £2,439.44 be approved from the Digby Hall and Library Account.

119.2 Bank Balances

The paper for January 2019 was noted (Appendix D) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr A Hall and SECONDED by Cllr Warburton and AGREED unanimously that:

The Bank Balances/Reconciliations for Sherborne Town Council and the Digby Hall and Library as of the 31 January 2019 are approved.

119.5 Internal Audit Report

The paper was noted (Appendix E). The Internal Auditor referred to two low rated observations that had been identified and these were agreed by the Town Clerk.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Pentolfe and SECONDED by Cllr Carey and AGREED unanimously that:

Sherborne Town Council:

- i) **Notes the contents of the report at Appendix E.**
- ii) **Notes and approves the Management Response in relation to Observation Recommendation Number 3.1 and 6.1 of the Internal Auditors Report.**
- iii) **Approves an amendment to Minute No. 77 of the Town Council meeting held on 22 October 2018 as there is a typographical error as the minutes refer to the meeting as being on the 18th September 2018 and the correct date is the 17th September 2018.**
- iv) **Approves the amendment of Minute No. 93.1 of the Town Council meeting held on 10 December 2018 as there is a typographical error in the value of BACS payments approved – the total reads £282,379.29, but the related payment schedule is £281,379.29.**

120. Sherborne Area Schools Trust

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix F) introducing an update on the Sherborne Area Schools Trust (SAST), as agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 10 December 2018. It was proposed by Cllr Elliott and SECONDED by Cllr A Hall and AGREED unanimously to suspend Standing Orders to enable Mr Nigel Rees (Chairman of Trustees) and Mr Steve Hillier (CEO) to speak on behalf of SAST.

Mr Rees began by answering the query raised by council members at their meeting of 10 December 2018 and the suggestion that students were travelling between the Gryphon, Yeovil College and King Arthurs for various different lessons. Mr Rees explained that a small group of Year 10 students attend a course based in Yeovil on building skills, structured so that they have their lunch early and take all necessary breaks. There is presently no relationship between the Gryphon and King Arthur School with respect to shared lessons. The relationship with Yeovil College is at the Colleges request and it works well, as does their strong links with the local Primary Schools and with Sherborne Girls.

For many years the Gryphon has worked with the feeder primary schools in a pyramid structure, this continued when the Gryphon became an Academy in 2012. With the formation of the Trust in 2017 all the local church and local authority schools involved are included equally within the trust, enabling cost savings through centralisation. They are confident that the Trustees of SAST are equipped with a good skills set with a CEO a National Leader of Education who is a recognised expert in education, and the Chairman a National Leader of Governance, with great experience in Governance issues, who are called on to provide guidance to other schools and trusts.

Mr Hillier explained that the Trust needs to keep growing, to reach a critical mass. To that aim, a further 6 schools will join the Trust by the year end. Charlton Horethorne and King Arthurs are to join the trust in April/May 2019, 2 further schools are approved to join in June/July 2019, St Mary the

Virgin at Gillingham and the Sherborne Learning Centre, along with Okeford Fitzpaine and Shillingstone later in the year. They are aware that there is an ideal size for the trust and that it should not grow too large, so have set an aim of a 30 minutes travel time radius; those who have approached to join the trust from further afield have been declined.

Cllr Legg asked if there is an optimal size for the trust, being afraid that it is becoming a mini educational authority and if straying further afield, other trusts or authorities may be regard this as predatory? Mr Hillier confirmed that SAST are being approached by other schools and trusts seeking to join. They are conscious that it must not grow too large, the present operation with all the Schools is working well and they are equal partners despite the disparity in size.

Members were surprised at the extent of funding cuts within education, Mr Hillier highlighted the cut in Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding and sixth form funding, which is down 20% or more. All sixth form students are responsible for their own transport costs.

Cllr Warburton asked about the liaison between external groups such as The Rendezvous and the Abbey, how does the trust bridge the gap with the charity type provision and how does it deal with issues such as mental health and self-harm? Mr Hillier responded that working with mental health issues is time consuming and costly, needed special training and support and this is therefore not necessarily available in the mainstream schools. A new centre is being set up at Bovington with special education needs in mind. Locally, the Sherborne Learning Centre is largely a referral unit for those who are unable to cope with mainstream education and does not involve any SEN provision.

Cllr Hall suggested that SAST need to educate the wider community on their work. He understands that there is a perception within the community that the Gryphon is expanding, but the facilities are failing, siting the history block as an example. Mr Hillier confirmed that the Gryphon actually has fewer pupils, approximately 80 students less this year than last. They have plans submitted for a new teaching block which would enable them to do away with the current 'temporary' history buildings, but funding issues are holding back this new building at present.

Cllr Greene was concerned to see so many children entering Sherborne on double decker buses, asking why are they not receiving their education in Yeovil? Mr Rees confirmed that there is choice for parents and many take the option to send their children to the Gryphon. This may be less common in the future as there will be less available places out of catchment in the coming years. The 6th form is a different matter where students will inevitably travel to receive a better subject choice.

Cllr Legg was afraid that the Gryphon will be perceived as the academic hub whilst Yeovil schools and colleges will be seen as a place for apprenticeships. Mr Hillier explained that more pupils doing diverse subjects will ultimately fill those classes and increase the A level choice range, so that is not a bad thing.

Cllr Warburton suggested that SAST provide a written update every few months to report back to the council, both Mr Rees and Mr Hillier agreed with this and offered to attend future meetings to give an update as and when required.

Cllr Warburton also asked if there was a way in which the Town Council could assist SAST. Mr Hillier thanked the council for their support in the past, for instance with the pedestrian crossing in Bristol Road, in having School Youth Advisors at meetings and hoped that this sort of support would keep going. Providing a more modern facility for the Sherborne Learning Centre would be welcomed but will be a challenge. He also welcomed any feedback on the perception of SAST within the community and invited members to contact them should they be aware of any mis-conceptions or issues.

The Mayor thanked Mr Rees and Mr Hillier for attending the meeting and giving such an informative briefing to the Council.

It was then PROPOSED by Cllr A Hall and SECONDED by Cllr Andrews to re-instate Standing Orders.

121. SHERBORNE CEMETERY EXTENSION

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix G) requesting that they consider the formation of a small Working Group to meet with officers to review the Rules and Regulations for the Cemetery Extension. This is as a result of a query from a local resident which might impact on the extension.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Andrews and SECONDED by Cllr Carey and AGREED unanimously that a Working Group be formed consisting of Cllrs Andrew, Carey, Elliott, M Hall and Pike.

122. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Pike gave a brief report on a recent meeting of the CPRE, noting changes to the membership as several long-standing members have now resigned. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 4 April at the Raleigh Hall.

123. EXEMPT BUSINESS

123.1 Staffing Update

The Town Clerk informed Members that the recent vacancy for a Ground Maintenance Operative had been filled, subject to final references.

He also proposed that a second candidate interviewed for that GMO post be employed for the summer season (March to October) to assist the team, who are already a man short due to staff sickness. This candidate is to meet with the Clerk to discuss this proposition.

He reported that one member is off sick with a back injury pending scan results and may be off for sometime. This injury may have been exacerbated when the staff member was removing the shoring from around a grave and then again when lifting a hand-held generator whilst at work. As result of this, the team are reviewing working practice procedures for grave shoring and for other lifting operations.

Consideration is being given to making an insurance claim to help fund an additional member of staff, but this is under review. The Clerk will continue to liaise with the Mayor and Deputy and Staffing Portfolio Holder.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

..... Town Mayor