

## SHERBORNE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the SHERBORNE TOWN COUNCIL held at The Manor House, Sherborne, on Monday 20 January 2020 at 6.45 p.m.

*Present:* Cllr J Andrews, (Town Mayor), Cllrs, J Carey, J Carling, V Colledge, Matthews, M Crossman, S Greene, R Legg, J Pentolke, B Taylor and J Warburton

*In attendance:* Mr S Shield (Town Clerk), Mrs S Woodford (Civic Administrator), Yvonne Hale (Responsible Finance Officer)

*Youth Advisors:* Freya Evans, Ella-Rose Keith and Millie Staples

### **102. PUBLIC SESSION**

102.1 Police Report – There was no police report given to this meeting, but it had previously been agreed with Inspector Stanton that the police will endeavour to attend alternate meetings in the future.

102.2 Cllr Legg informed members of correspondence between Yeohed Parish Council, Bradford Abbas Parish Council and himself regarding footpaths through Wyke (Castleton Parish) from Sherborne and onward to Thornford and Bradford Abbas, being N7/14 - footpath from Lenthay to Wyke, N7/16 - footpath from Wyke to Bradford Abbas and N7/15- bridleway from Wyke to Thornford. The land on which these footpaths run is now owned by Ilchester Estates and is farmed by Velcourt (an international firm of farm managers). Unfortunately, the land has been ploughed and the footpaths disrupted by the farming methods employed by Velcourt. Cllr Legg has drafted a letter and suggested it is sent to Velcourt from each of the affected Parish Councils. After brief discussion Members agreed that Cllr Andrews should sign a copy of the letter on behalf of Sherborne Town Council.

102.3 Cllr Andrews congratulated Ollie Devoto, ex Sherborne Rugby Club, who presently plays for Exeter Chiefs and has been selected to join the England squad for the forthcoming 6 Nations Tournament.

### **103. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR ANDREWS**

In Cllr M Hall's absence, Cllr Andrews reported on behalf of Cllr Hall and himself:

- The Joint Executive Area Panel is looking at barriers to employment ranging from transport to identification. The Executive is to write to the Minister seeking support and concessions.
- Dorset Council is also lobbying for a special rate for volunteer drivers and those involved in Community Car Schemes, the current tax relief is on 45p per mile and it is hoped this can be increased.
- MP's also being approached to put pressure on the Department of Work and Pensions to stop discrimination in parts of rural Dorset.
- Dorset Council Rangers have more work to do on the Laurel hedge in Horsecastles Lane, once the Tree Department Cherry Picker becomes available.
- Please be aware that not all street lighting is the responsibility of Dorset Council and the Dorsetforyou reporting system only allows for the reporting of faulty lights which are the responsibility of Dorset Council. The lights at Richmond Green belong to Magna Housing and are the responsibility of the Landlord.
- The slow work of amalgamating all the former Council's policies are on-going. In the meantime, all previous WDDC and DCC policies remain active in our area.
- The TRO for making the short section of Sheeplands Lane one way will be heard by the Northern Area Planning Committee in February.

- The planning application for the 66 houses on Barton Farm will be heard by the Northern Area Planning Committee on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 2pm The Exchange Sturminster Newton. In his absence, Cllr Hall has communicated his views to the Committee Chairman and Cllrs Legg and Andrews.
- There is an issue with the drains at the start of Bradford Road which need to be repaired properly. This is due to happen sometime in February.
- Dorset Council is currently working on its Budget and Council Tax plans. This is due to go before the Full Council in February.

Cllr Taylor asked Cllr Andrews when he thought the new Dorset Council would become truly integrated and Unitary? Cllr Andrews noted that the statutory date to meet this requirement is March 2021, although the provision of a new Local Plan is likely to be towards 2024.

#### **104. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Hall and M Hall.

#### **105. 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.

- 105.1 Cllrs Andrews and Legg, as Members of the Dorset Council, both declared an interest in Item No. 7 the Plans Committee Minutes.
- 105.2 Cllrs Carling and Warburton declared an interest in Item No. 8.4 as members of the PPG.

#### **106. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 December 2019**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carling and SECONDED by Cllr Warburton and AGREED unanimously that:

**The Minutes (Appendix A), having been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.**

The Town Clerk referred to the following matters arising from the Minutes of 16 December 2019:

- Item 91 – Further to the observation made by Cllr Hall on rough sleepers, two were found sleeping in the Band Stand in the Pageant Gardens and had probably been there for two nights. Council staff encouraged them to move on, having provisionally planned arrangements in relation to their safety and wellbeing.
- Item 97 – the Town Clerk has contacted Ellis-Whitham to introduce himself as he takes over responsibility for Health and Safety and Employment Law within the Council.
- Item 98 – the outstanding works on the refurbishment of the Digby Hall are being delivered and will soon be completed.
- Item 99 – the Working Group of Cllrs Andrews, Carey and Pentolfe met to prepare a response with delegated authority to the Town Clerk, to prepare a report to respond to the consultation on strengthening Police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. This has been done and the report submitted.

## 107. PLANS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Cllr Taylor referred to the meeting held on 6 January 2020. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr J Carling and AGREED (8 in favour and 2 non votes) that:

**The Minutes of the Plans Committees (Appendix B) held on 6 January were received and adopted.**

## 108. FINANCE AND RESOURCES

### 108.1 Payment Schedule

The paper was noted (see Appendix C) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Crossman and AGREED unanimously that:

**That for the period 16/12/19 to 20/1/2020 Cheques of £1,933.69, Credit Card Payments of £378.96, BACS Payments of £60,864.76 and Direct Debits amounting to £7,251.77 be approved from the Town Council Current Account and that for the period 16/12/19 to 20/1/2020 BACS Payment of £4,869.51 and Direct Debits amounting to £851.70 be approved from the Digby Hall and Library Account.**

### 108.2 Bank Balances

The paper was noted (Appendix D) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Coleridge-Matthews and AGREED unanimously that:

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

### 108.3 Budget Review - Quarter to December 2019

The paper was noted (Appendix E) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Carling and AGREED unanimously that:

**The Town Council receives and notes the Budget / Actual Comparisons report for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019.**

### 108.4 Grant Application – Grove Medical Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Members were in receipt of a grant application from the Grove Medical Centre PPG (Appendix F) and it was PROPOSED by Cllr Andrews and SECONDED by Cllr Legg and APPROVED unanimously to suspend Standing Orders to enable the Chairman of the PPG to speak in support of the grant application. It was then PROPOSED by Cllr Andrews and SECONDED by Cllr Carey to re-instate Standing Orders.

It was then PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Crossman and AGREED (9 in favour and 1 non vote) that:

**Sherborne Town Council grant £450 to the Grove Medical Centre PPG**

The Town Clerk advised that £1600 remained in the grants budget until 31 March 2020.

#### 108.5 New Kubota Tractor

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix G) requesting they consider the purchase of a new Kubota tractor. The current Town Council fleet will benefit from the introduction of this new equipment and associated attachments. The tractor will also come with a two-year warranty.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Andrews and SECONDED by Cllr Pentolfe and AGREED unanimously that Sherborne Town Council:

- i) **Notes the content of the report.**
- ii) **Approves the purchase the new machinery and attachments totalling £21,909.00.**
- iii) **Authorises the Town Clerk to conclude negotiations with EG Coles for the purchase of the new compact tractor and the various machinery attachments as listed at Appendix G.**

#### 108.6 Local Council Award Scheme

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix H) requesting they consider the Council registering for the Local Council Award Scheme. The scheme exists to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to meet their full potential. There are three levels of accreditation, being Foundation Award, Quality Award and Quality Gold Award. The Town Clerk stated that Sherborne Town Council already met most of the required standard for the Foundation Award.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Warburton and SECONDED by Cllr Coleridge-Matthews and AGREED unanimously that Sherborne Town Council:

- i) **Notes the content of the report.**
- ii) **Authorises the Town Clerk to register an application with NALC to pursue the Foundation Level Award.**
- iii) **Approves the registration fee of £50 to NALC.**
- iv) **To resolve at a future meeting of the Town Council that STC meets the requirements for the Foundation Level Award.**

#### 108.7 Fees and Charges Review

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix I) providing them with details of the proposed charges for 2020/2021, which predominantly remain unchanged for the coming year. The key principle of the recommended charges is that the fees and charges reflect both commercial and community hire with appropriate increases applied across the board. A reduction in hire charges for community hire will be applied.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Carling and AGREED unanimously that:

**Sherborne Town Council agrees that the charges for 2020/2021, as contained in Appendix I, are approved and implemented from 1 April 2020.**

#### 108.8 Budget and Precept 2020/2021

Members were in receipt of a report (Appendix J) detailing the draft budget proposals as discussed at the Budget Seminar for Councillors held on 9 December 2019. In preparing the budget, Members gave consideration to the modest increase in the Council Tax Base of 42.1, the Government's decision to again not cap, the importance of STC maintaining the existing

range of services it offers Sherborne residents and the desire to prepare financially for the possible devolution of services from Dorset Council.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Taylor and SECONDED by Cllr Andrews and AGREED unanimously that Sherborne Town Council:

**Approves the budget figure of £924,705, resulting in a Precept for 2020/21 of £807,898 which equates to a Precept figure for a Band D property in 2020/21 of £219.90.**

Members continued to discuss the advantage of publicising the Town Council precept request, in order to demonstrate that it forms only a very small portion of the overall Council Tax demand and has increased only marginally. Cllr Taylor offered to prepare a statement which could be included within the Town Council website and it was suggested this might be extended to the 'Sherborne Times' and the Blackmore Vale Magazine. Both publications will be contacted by the Town Clerk with a view to the Town Council publishing regular articles in future editions of these magazines.

## **109. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

109.1 Cllr Taylor reported on a 'Planning Peer Review' he attended, where Town and Parish Councils were able to offer their view of the way in which the current planning system operates. Many stating that the local knowledge that Town and Parish Councils can offer is not taken into consideration and noting that 92% of all applications received are determined by planning officers, creating a democratic deficit. Much consideration was given to the need to align the NPPF with current policy on the protection of the environment, as there are many shortfalls where green policies cannot be upheld as they clash with planning law. Cllr Taylor suggested that local MPs should be invited to attend a meeting of Dorset Town and Parish Councils so that they can express their views on these matters, and that perhaps DAPTC could facilitate this meeting. Cllr Warburton queried the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan, as this is something Sherborne Town Council has so far not wished to pursue.

109.2 Cllr Greene reported that Sherborne in Bloom is to plant shrubs at the entrance of the Coldharbour Car Park, which has been left barren for some time. Cllr Warburton added that Bradfords have donated some bark chippings to Sherborne in Bloom.

## **110. STREET NAMING**

Members had been circulated a copy of an email (Appendix K) received from the Affordable Housing and Healthcare Group who are looking to name a road within their development off Horsecastles Lane. They suggested 'Woodlanders Way' as a tribute to Thomas Hardy, as Sherborne features in his book of that title. Members were more inclined to favour the use of ancient field names which could be found on the old tythe map. Cllr Andrews suggested for future developments, the use of a name associated with a well known local person, such as the late Keith Batten, a local man, former Mayor of Sherborne and much respected Councillor. It was also agreed that a Working Group be formed consisting of Cllrs Carling, Greene, Pentolfe and the Town Clerk to discuss street names for local future developments.

## **111. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There was no exempt business

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

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Town Mayor

