



WINCANTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2020
ONLINE VIA ZOOM AND LIVE STREAMED ON YOUTUBE

PRESENT: Councillors Shelbourn-Barrow (Chair), Greening (from 19:24), Power, Ralph, Smith, Tudgay, Vagg and Walters

LOCUM CLERK: Zöe Godden

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

Before the meeting began, the Chair asked Councillors if they had received the meeting papers and it was confirmed that they had.

19:03 - The Chair allowed a public open session.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public reported that £620 had been raised to provide Christmas meals to elderly and vulnerable people in need. Volunteers were needed to deliver the meals. The member of the public asked for the names of any people who might be in need. The Chair said that the Council would make enquiries and respond in due course. Councillor Ralph commended the member of public for her efforts on behalf of the community.

Action FC201207/1: Locum Clerk

A member of the public asked when the public would be able to exercise their right to examine the Council's 2019/20 accounts and when precept preparations would be taking place for the 2021. The Chair confirmed that these matters would be dealt with later in the meeting.

19:09 – The Chair brought the public open session to a close.

The meeting started at 19:09.

0187 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Thomas and from Councillor Greening who would attend the meeting later.

0188 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0189 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Vagg, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes from 9th November without amendment.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes from 23rd November without amendment.

The Chair reported back on the following action points from the previous meeting:

FC201123/3 – A working group had been set up with members from local organisations, charities and churches to deal with the festive boxes. Recipients had begun to be identified although names would not be known to the Town Council due to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). There would be an exercise to ensure that no nominations were duplicated. Items for the boxes would come from a collection box in the Co-op, The Balsam Centre through donations from the general public and Morrison's.

FC201123/4 – The Youth Outreach project would provide Youth Workers to attend Wincanton once a week to engage with young people and feed back to the Steering Group. A longer-term objective was to give a voice to young people to enable them to represent themselves to the local community and Town Council and facilitate community cohesion.

0190 – RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

At the previous meeting, a member of the public said that Legal Topic Note (LTN) 33 stated that co-opted Councillors were not allowed to claim back expenses. The Locum Clerk reported that, in fact, LTN 33 referred to Councillor allowances. Town and Parish Councils were allowed to pay an agreed allowance to their Councillors to off-set any costs incurred in their work as Councillors. However, Wincanton Town Council did not pay an allowance to Councillors, so LTN 33 did not apply.

The second question posed by a member of the public at the previous meeting referred to the treatment of VAT on the recent purchase of a Community Fridge. The Locum Clerk confirmed that the Town Council would be able to reclaim the VAT on this purchase because the Community Fridge, while purchased with donations from the public, would remain the property of the Town Council, would be entered onto the Town Council's asset register and would be insured by the Town Council.

19:18 – Councillor Tudgay and one member of the public left the meeting.

0191 PLANNING

The Chair said that Councillor Tudgay had agreed to lead on planning matters. Councillor Tudgay had left the meeting due to connectivity issues and was expected to return later.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed to defer the planning item until later in the meeting.

0192 – CHEQUE LIST

The Locum Clerk explained that the cost of the wheel balance for the Town Council's works vehicle was actually for the complete replacement of a tyre, which included a wheel balance. The Chair explained that the timer had been purchased for use with the Christmas trees on the Town Hall, to stop excess electricity usage and to minimise light pollution for nearby residences.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Walters and unanimously agreed to approve the list of cheques for payment and that Councillors Vagg and Walters would sign the cheques at a later date.

Action FC201207/2: Cllrs Vagg and Walters

0193 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2019/20

19:24 – Councillor Greening joined the meeting.

The Chair explained that the Council had received regular updates and supported the extensions gained to the AGAR submission date, which had been needed due to difficulties in making the figures in Section 2 balance.

19:27 – Councillor Tudgay returned to the meeting.

a) Internal Audit report

The report and completed AGAR had been distributed to Councillors before the meeting. The Locum Clerk confirmed that the report had been written by her and summarised the content. The difficulties in balancing the figures in Section 2 of the AGAR had been due to incorrect recording of VAT debtors and unreconciled payments in previous years. The Council **noted** the report and thanked the Locum Clerk for preparing it.

b) Section 1

The Chair asked all Councillors to raise their hands to confirm that they had read and understood all of the statements in Section 1 of the AGAR. All Councillors confirmed that they had. The Locum Clerk explained that it had not been possible to answer 'yes' to questions 1 and 4 of Section 1 because the Council had not received regular reports to enable effective financial management, nor had it been possible to provide the opportunity for electors to examine the accounts during the specified period.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to approve the responses to the statements in Section 1 of the AGAR as presented.

c) Section 2

The calculations and figures in Section 2 had been explained in the Locum Clerk's report.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Vagg and unanimously agreed to approve Section 2 of the AGAR as presented.

The Locum Clerk confirmed that she would make arrangements for the exercise of public rights to begin on Thursday 10th December.

0194 FINANCE REPORTS

Councillors **noted** the Monthly Accounts Against Budget report and the Grants report to October 2020. The Locum Clerk explained that Wincanton Sports Ground Management Company Ltd could not be paid the £5000 balance of the grant approved for Wincanton Sports Ground because the Sports Ground was now being run by Wincanton Recreational Trust (WRT). As a result, a new grant application form had been completed to enable the £5000 balance to be released to WRT instead.

0195 COMMUNITY OFFICE LIGHTING

Councillor Power declared a personal interest in this matter because the proprietors of Mainstones Electrical were part of his extended family.

Councillors discussed the three quotes and expressed the wish to balance their support of local businesses with the need to make best use of public money. The Locum Clerk confirmed that Clifford Shean was based in Gillingham, Mainstones Electrical in Bruton and JD Electrical in Wincanton.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Vagg, seconded by Councillor Smith and agreed to choose the quote from Clifford Sheen at £520.00 because it was significantly lower than the other two quotes. All in favour except Councillor Power, who abstained from voting and asked for this to be recorded in the minutes.

Action FC201207/3: Locum Clerk

0196 INDEPENDENT BUSINESS STATEMENT

The Chair referred to the statement, which had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. All Councillors confirmed that they had read and understood the statement, as follows:

1. Wincanton Town Council supports our Local Businesses in the challenges that they have experienced during the Coronavirus pandemic and current second national Lockdown.
2. The Council calls upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to recognise that locally owned businesses are the root and trunk of our Somerset economy, and hence for the Government to provide
 - a. A level playing field of Regulations so that Local Businesses are not disadvantaged relative to national and international competitors;
 - b. Fair economic compensation for those Businesses that are required not to trade by Regulations to prevent the further spread of Coronavirus;
 - c. Protection from the Banks and other Regulatory bodies discriminating against Local Businesses that have had to participate in Government economic compensation schemes.
3. The Council will write to David Warburton MP, copying Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council to express its support for our Local Businesses.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to approve the statement as presented. It was further agreed to ask David Warburton MP to take this matter up on behalf of local businesses.

Action FC201207/4: Locum Clerk

0197 POLICIES:

- a) Freedom of Information policy

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Walters and unanimously agreed to approve the Freedom of Information Policy as presented. The Locum Clerk was instructed to have the policy added to the Town Council's website.

Action FC201207/5: Locum Clerk

- b) Financial Regulations

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to approve the Financial Regulations as presented. The Locum Clerk was instructed to have the document added to the Town Council's website.

Action FC201207/6: Locum Clerk

0197 OPEN SPACES REPORT

Councillors **noted** the report. Councillor Tudgay said that repairs to the tarmac at the MUGA should be prioritised and the Locum Clerk confirmed that she was working with Works Supervisor to obtain quotes, with the aim of presenting these to the Council early in 2021.

0198 MEETING DATES 2021

The Locum Clerk was instructed to change the date of the Annual Town Council Meeting to 4th May and to include dates for January, February and March 2022, so that the whole of the financial year was covered.

Action FC201207/7: Locum Clerk

The Chair said that dates for the Stakeholder Group meetings would be added to an additional list, which would also include meeting dates for the other working groups.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to approve the meeting dates as presented.

0199 SAVE CLIMATE INITIATIVE

The Chair explained that the initiative aimed to provide advice and information on actions people can take to reduce their carbon footprint via mobile roadshows. The Council was not being asked to pledge any funding but to confirm that it supported the project in principle.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Vagg, seconded by Councillor Tudgay and unanimously agreed that the Town Council supported the project in principle. The Locum Clerk was instructed to communicate this to the project organisers and to ask them to attend a future meeting to give a presentation.

Action FC201207/8: Locum Clerk

0191 PLANNING

To consider plans as received and make recommendations to South Somerset District Council.

20/03028/S73A S73A application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning approval 18/03272/FUL to allow a minor re-arrangement of the layout including plot orientation and the garage to plot 3 – Land OS 3969 Part Devenish Lane, Bayford, Wincanton

Councillor Tudgay summarised the application details and said that the changes were minor.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed to recommend approval of this application.

Action FC201207/9: Locum Clerk

To note decisions taken by South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council:

SCC/3706/2020 Infill of disused railway cutting with inert waste (part retrospective) at Former Railway Cutting, Land off Verrington Lane, Wincanton – Permission granted
Noted.

0200 CORRESPONDENCE

Three letters of thanks had been received from recipients of the Town Council's Community Awards.

0201 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- Review of S106 contributions possibly due to the Town Council.
- Minutes from Governance Working Group and Finance Committee meetings.
- Any policies from the Finance Committee to be referred to Full Council for approval.
- Review of Standing Orders and new budget and precept request from the Governance Working Group meeting, to be held on 16th December.
- An additional Finance Committee meeting for would be held on 11th January, prior to the Planning Committee meeting, for Councillors to consider the 2021/22 budget and precept request in advance of the Finance Committee on the 18th January and Full Council meeting on 25th January.
- Update on Festive boxes project.

The meeting ended at 20:25.

Zoe Godden
Locum Clerk
14 December 2020

DRAFT