



WINCANTON TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2020
ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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

ALSO PRESENT: District Councillor Colin Winder and County Councillor Anna Groskop (from 19:23)

LOCUM CLERK: Zöe Godden

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

Due to a technical issue, it was not possible to live-stream the meeting to YouTube but the recording would be uploaded at a later date.

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

19:13 – The Chair allowed a public participation session.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public asked for an update on any alternative plans for funds allocated for the over 70's Christmas lunch, as this could not take place due to CV-19. The Chair said that this matter was on the agenda to be dealt with later in the meeting. The same member of the public asked for clarification on the rules relating to co-opted Councillors claiming expenses and regarding VAT reclaims on items purchased by the Council for use by other groups. The Chair said that these questions would be investigated and answers given at the next Full Council meeting on 7th December.

Action FC201123/1: Locum Clerk

A member of the public, representing local businesses, referred to a local business support motion being considered by Bruton Town Council and asked if Wincanton Town Council would be prepared to support it too. The Chair said that this matter would be added to the agenda for the next Full Council meeting on 7th December.

Action FC201123/2: Locum Clerk

19:23 – County Councillor Anna Groskop and one member of the public joined the meeting.

19:24 – The Chair brought the public participation session to a close.

19:26 - Two members of the public left the meeting. |

The meeting started at 19:26.

0168 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Thomas.

0169 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0170 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that the minutes for the meeting held on 26th October had already been approved. The minutes for the meeting held on 9th November would be presented on 7th December for consideration.

0171 PLANNING

An email had been received from South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to confirm that, in line with the Local Plan, it was now able to demonstrate a housing land supply adequate to accommodate population increases for the coming six years. **Noted.**

0172 CHEQUE LIST

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Smith 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.

0173 VERBAL REPORTS AND FEEDBACK

County Councillor Anna Groskop reminded everyone that the CV-19 helpline number was 0300 7906275, which could be used by anyone needing help or information in relation to the pandemic. Businesses could still apply for non-domestic rate relief if they were affected by the pandemic. Councillor Groskop reported that Wincanton Library was still open and was offering a click and collect service. Councillor Groskop reported that the One Somerset process had passed to the next stage and that Somerset County Council (SCC) has resolved at its last meeting to ask the Secretary of State to postpone the May 2021 elections until after a decision had been made on any new unitary structure for the county.

District Councillor Colin Winder advised that Natural England had raised concerns regarding the impact that high phosphate levels in watercourses feeding into the Somerset Levels would have on future development. As a result, phosphate management would be considered during the planning application process.

Chair of the Council reported that work on community development was progressing, which involved supporting and listening to young people and working with other agencies such as the Police, Balsam Centre, voluntary sector and qualified residents. Free webinars were being promoted on the Town Council website to support parents and young people with issues relating to County Lines and Online

Safety. (<http://www.wincantontowncouncil.co.uk/sos-and-avon-and-somerset-police-parents-webinar.html>)

The Community Fridge had been purchased from local donations and installed in Coles Yard. It was planned to purchase a resilience fridge-freezer through a grant and to join with other communities to provide free food and more information on this would be available soon. The Co-op Community Fund has been secured and would be supporting the Wincanton Community Fridge project. The Chair noted that the project supported the Town Offer, Wincanton Environmental and Ecological Plan, Charter and the focus on sustainability within the town.

The Chair said she had been privileged and honoured to take part in wreath laying at the Memorial Hall on Remembrance Sunday and had been impressed with the work of local groups who had made the day a success for the town, especially under CV-19 restrictions.

The Christmas tree in the Market Place had been installed, despite some difficult circumstances, which would be reported later in the meeting.

The Chair and other Councillors had attended a Young Peoples' webinar with Frome Town Council and a Stronger Somerset webinar.

0174 POLICE REPORT

The Chair noted that crime figures had increased since August and that it would be useful to understand the reasons for this. The Police would be contacted if more information was required.

0175 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Chair reported that a specialist internal auditor had been appointed and had been provided with all relevant information. The results of the investigation would be reported in due course.

0176 GOVERNANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair reminded Councillors that this group had been formed to review the Council's governance and financial structure. The group would bring its recommendations to Full Council for approval when they were ready. The group would be working with the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and South West Councils to ensure that all policy and other documents were correct and fit for purpose.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Vagg and unanimously agreed to approve the terms of reference as presented.

0177 FINANCIAL SOFTWARE

The Locum Clerk summarised her report, which gave information on three different accounting software packages, their prices, the advantages to the Council of switching to sector-specific software and a recommendation. The report had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. Councillor Ralph asked if the recommended software would be able to accommodate any future growth in Council activities. The Locum Clerk confirmed that it would, including the ability to monitor earmarked and general reserves. Councillor Vagg asked if the Deputy Town Clerk was happy with the recommended software. The Locum Clerk reported that she and the Deputy Town Clerk had experienced an online demonstration of the software and that the Deputy Town Clerk was in favour of purchasing the recommended package. Councillor Tudgay asked which budget could be used to pay for the software. The Locum Clerk said that, in future years, the Council would need to precept for the cost. The Chair said that there was adequate funding remaining in the Administration budget to pay for the package up to the end of the current financial year.

The Chair summarised the discussion. The three software packages had been tested and reviewed, three quotes had been received and the Clerk team had expressed a preference for the Scribe package.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to purchase the Scribe accounting package at a cost of £2071.00 for the first year, to include migration of all financial transactions from Sage to Scribe. The cost for subsequent years would be £1176.00.

0178 SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARK COMPENSATION SCHEME

The Chair reminded Councillors that it had previously been agreed that the Council would fund the car park compensation scheme but that SSDC had yet to provide a contract to that effect. An invoice for the full amount had been received from SSDC but would not be paid until the contract had been completed. The Deputy Town Clerk was continuing to follow this up with SSDC at regular intervals.

0179 CHRISTMAS FUND

The Council noted that it would not be possible to hold the over 70s Christmas meal due to the CV-19 situation. The Chair reported that the Council's budget for this activity amounted to £1500. The Chair suggested that this sum could be used to provide festive food parcels or hampers to over 70s in need. There followed some general discussion about how the scheme could work and it was suggested that the Balsam Centre and Methodist Homes Housing Association (MHA) could be involved in identifying over 70s in need. Councillor Vagg suggested that Churches could also be involved. County Councillor Groskop reminded Councillors to take care that each person only received one festive food box, as the different organisations mentioned might have the same people on their registers. Councillor Groskop said it was important to start sourcing the contents of the boxes straight away and offered to help wrap or prepare the boxes. The Chair said she had had an initial conversation with the Balsam Centre and MHA to ensure no register duplication and that a small working group could be formed to put the boxes together. The Co-op had agreed to put out a collection box so shoppers could donate suitable food items. The Chair went on to suggest a small number of food boxes could be reserved and allocated to people nominated by members of the public. There would be strict criteria for nominations.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Vagg and unanimously agreed to use the over 70s lunch fund to provide festive food boxes for over 70s in need and to form a working group to undertake this project.

Action FC201123/3 Chair

In addition, there was approximately £1500 remaining in the Christmas tree budget and it was suggested that festive gift boxes could be given to families in need. Councillor Power said that these should be allocated to families impacted by the CV-19 crisis, especially those who have experienced redundancies. There was some discussion about other uses for the budget but it was felt that providing for families experiencing hardship should be the priority.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Tudgay and unanimously agreed to use the remaining £1500 in the Christmas tree budget to provide festive boxes to families in need, identified by the Balsam Centre and that the project would be undertaken by the same working group dealing with the over 70s festive boxes.

0180 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – YOUTH OUTREACH PROJECT

The Chair referred to a report that had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting. The cost to fund the Outreach project for one month was £1150.00 and for three months, the cost was £3450.00. The Chair described the project, which aimed to establish consistent engagement with young people, give them a voice and empower them to get involved in local initiatives. The outcomes would be measured against specific targets and the project would be evaluated to inform a future youth outreach model. There was a general discussion about the project and Councillors felt that, to get the best results, the post should be advertised as soon as possible and that the three-month option would be more likely to produce good results. The Chair explained that the Town Council had a budget of £6000 for Community Events, which had not been spent due to the CV-19 crisis and that this could be used to fund the post.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed to fund the project on a three-month fixed contract.

Action FC201126/4: Chair

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Smith and unanimously agreed to divert funds from the Community Events budget to fund this project.

0181 WINCANTON STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Councillors **noted** the minutes from the group's last meeting. There were no recommendations to consider.

0182 WINCANTON ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

Councillors **noted** the minutes from the group's last meeting. There were no recommendations to consider.

0183 MARKET PLACE PLINTH

The Chair reported that, since it had been damaged by a lorry, the plinth had been covered with wood. The lamp and stonework had been moved into secure storage and an insurance claim had been submitted. Councillor Greening suggested that alternative uses for the plinth should be considered. The Chair said this could be addressed as part of the Town Regeneration project and would need to be subject to a residents' consultation. The Chair asked the Locum Clerk to read a statement of thanks to all those who helped:

Wincanton Town Council wishes to say a big thankyou to

- Crestmoor Construction Service, based in Wincanton and Kenny Higgins. The Crestmoor team responded to collect, store and catalogue the plinth and lamp post. In addition, they made the box to cover the plinth just in time for the Christmas Tree arrival.
- Travis Perkins team, based in Wincanton who helped in the following days and in an act of community support paid for the materials to cover the exposed plinth.
- Stalbridge Timber Supplies sent their hiab and driver Tony to make safe the plinth on the day of the accident so that SSE could isolate the electricity supply.

The Chair went on the thank everyone who had been involved on the day of the incident and those who worked hard to ensure that the Christmas tree could still go up as planned. In addition, the Chair thanked Travis Perkins, who had changed their postcode to reduce the likelihood of large vehicles from trying to access their premises via the Market Place in future.

0184 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC- To consider exclusion of press and public for remainder of meeting under Public Bodies Admissions To Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2) on the grounds that discussion of the following business is likely to disclose confidential information relating to residents.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Vagg, seconded by Councillor Tudgay and unanimously agreed to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

0185 ANNUAL COMMUNITY AWARDS

Councillors discussed the nominations and felt that the range of worthy recipients was such that additional categories should be put in place to enable more awards to be given.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay, seconded by Councillor Greening and unanimously agreed that Philip Rodgers should receive the Long Service Award for his 30 years service to the Town Council and that Susan Hinks should receive the Services to the Town Award for her 15 years service.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed that Wincanton Fire Cadets should receive the Group Award for being a shining example of the best of Wincanton's young people.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Ralph, seconded by Councillor Vagg and unanimously agreed that Ed Cutts should receive the Under 25's Award for the fantastic bake boxes he produced and distributed during the CV-19 crisis.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Greening, seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously agreed that both Lee Godwin and Annette Yoosefinejad should receive the Exceptional Service to the Community Award for going over and above the call of duty to support the community during the CV-19 crisis.

Councillors discussed how to present the awards and it was **agreed** that, due to the CV-19 situation, a ceremony would not be appropriate at this time. Instead, the Locum Clerk was instructed to write to all award recipients and invite them to an event next year, to be arranged.

Action FC201120/5: Locum Clerk

0186 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Responses to the questions posed by the public regarding expenses to co-opted Councillors and VAT implications of the community fridge.
- Minutes from 9th November meeting
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return
- Financial Regulations and Freedom of Information Policy for approval

The meeting ended at 21:21.

Zoe Godden
Locum Clerk
25th November 2020