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Minutes of the **Full Council** meeting of Shepton Mallet Town Council that took place in the Council Chamber of Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet on **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7pm.**

**Present:** Councillors T Faith, S Hale, M Harrison, E Hobbs (to item 5.12), C Inchley (Chairperson), T Jones, G Kennedy, M Lovell, G Mayall, A McGuire, N Shearn and N Tolson

**In Attendance:** Charlotte Starkie, Town Clerk.  
PC Simpson  
Cllr John Parham, Somerset County Councillor.

**Public and Press:** There were 18 members of the public present.

Members of the public addressed the meeting and their comments are contained in Appendix A.

**05.1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Frapple, Height and Manley

**05.2 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that plans had been made for workshops for councillors to attend to start debating the ideas to create a Corporate Plan (dates to be confirmed)

**05.3 Declaration of interest of matters related to this agenda**

No declaration of interest were received.

**05.4 Update from PC George Simpson**

PC Simpson reported the following:

- 14 reported crimes this month but to note that the local crime figures are always impacted by the presence of the Glastonbury Festival
- Community Speed watch was up and running and would be setting up in 6 locations across town. There was a need for more volunteers (who can contact Cllr Parham)
- There had been 8 reports of arson in August and the police were now dealing with a minor who might have been involved

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- The recent PACT meeting considered youth activities, Anti-social behaviour and drugs. PC Simpson was pleased to report that there had been fewer complaints of anti-social behaviour this summer compared to last year
- Consideration was being given on how drivers can be encouraged to use the roundabout in Commercial Road correctly
- The recent offender responsible for the graffiti in the town centre was being dealt with through the courts for 9 offences and had been banned from entering Shepton Mallet
- Travellers had recently set up in Commercial Road car park but had been asked to move on and were likely to be moving this week
- The work continues on the new police station, with an open date of Spring 2020.

#### **05.5 Update from Somerset County Councillor John Parham**

Cllr Parham reported the following:

- Waterlood Road speed calming and road crossing was complete
- Charlton Road had been resurfaced
- Commercial Road roundabout was due for repair in Autumn 2019
- Speed watch was up and running
- Somerset County Council was now operating its own school bus fleet
- A new walking trail has been created on the Castle and Coast Way (13 miles circular footpath (from Nether Stowey to Stogursey))
- The County Council was committed to ensuring that it offered many apprentice opportunities, with 12 places being taken up by staff undertaking a degree in social work
- The Stand Up To Care petition was receiving support from the three local government bodies, petitioning about how to address the national social care funding shortfall. [www.petition.parliament.uk](http://www.petition.parliament.uk) (search Somerset)
- The Shared Lives Scheme was expanding to support a wider range of individuals
- Investment is being made in iAero, an aerospace technology centre in Yeovil.
- Emotional and Mental Health training is now being offered by the council.

#### **05.6 Update from Mendip District Councillors**

Cllr Kennedy reported the following:

- Families and mourners had been denied normal access to the cemetery while building work is underway. Concern was expressed that it how this has been badly organised with little publicity. A statement would be placed on the council's website. Whilst the town council is now involved in the matter, it apologises, to those who might wish to visit the cemetery, for the lack of access.
- That whilst the District Council had called for the Climate Emergency to be recognised, it was essential that it did more to protect trees
- The connection of the Strawberry Line remains a priority for the District Council
- A strategic review of the car parking will be undertaken
- The management of the Sunday market had been transferred to a community Interest Company

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Cllr Hobbs reported the following:

- That the council was considering reducing its environmental impact in relation to the control of weeds, hedge and verge cutting and the creation of wild flower areas

Cllr Inchley reported the following:

- That he was sitting on a scrutiny panel that was leading on a study into deprivation and would could be done to improve people's lives.

**05.7 To consider the Minutes from the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

The minutes were considered.

**Resolved that:**

The minutes from the meetings on 18<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019 be signed as a true record of proceedings.

**05.8 To note that minutes and draft minutes of the committee meetings have been circulated:**

Policy and Resources: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Town Development and Planning: 25<sup>th</sup> June, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 27<sup>th</sup> August

Collett Park Management Committee: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Open Spaces: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019

**05.9 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Public Consultation**

Cllr Kennedy updated the meeting about the consultation, that proposed that a fire pump from Frome and Wells be stood down during the day time, as a savings measure. However, this removes fire fighters from the day time shift, creating potential problems. There is an impact on Shepton Mallet, as the pump for this area will need to be used elsewhere and means that the whole area has much less coverage. In addition, there is the worry that it leaves Wells Cathedral more exposed. There was also concern expressed about major road incidents, that would see the force stretched.

Cllr Tolson also reported that the Ambulance Service was cutting some of its front line services, and that all of the emergency services needed to be considered in their totality and not individually.

**Resolved that:**

The Town Council will respond to the consultation with the Fire and Rescue Service, stating its concerns about the proposed reductions in pump numbers and the risk to public safety.

The Town Council write to the Ambulance Service expressing concerns about the reduction in front line cover and a loss of cover.

**05.10 Collett Park Events 2020 and beyond**

Councillors received an update that the proposal for the event in 2020 and beyond included a 3 event festival, maybe with a fringe event leading up to the main

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weekend and with the car boot sale moved to an earlier weekend and to relaunch the event next year with good marketing, to reach out to sponsors early and have a professional approach. For the planning to be undertaken by the Event Management Team Working Party.

To request for the £5,000 underspend from this year's event to be rolled forward into the marketing budget for the festival in 2020, and to request a budget of £20,000 for the first year's event.

**Resolved that:**

Collett Festival 2020 and beyond be prepared as per the outline in the SMART Objectives, and that the Collett Park Management Committee to have regular oversight of the plans

£5,000 from the current financial year underspend be rolled forward into a fund to pay for advertising and banners

A budget of £20,000 be made available to the Collett Park Working Party for the execution of the event

**05.11 To consider the introduction of an Environmental Policy**

Cllr Faith introduced the Environmental Policy and stated that more environmental projects would be introduced to the council at a later date, via the new Corporate Plan.

**Resolved that:**

The Environmental Policy be adopted.

The Chairman requested that the following matter be brought forward in the meeting, which was agreed.

**05.12 Utilising Section 106 monies of £15,000 on public open spaces/public parks**

Cllr Edric informed the meeting that the S106 money had originally been earmarked for Fosse Lane and Whitstone Lane, to create an extended cycle path. The Town Council and Mendip District Council has both invested in the future of the Strawberry Line and cycling in general and that a safe corridor for cyclists was needed in the area, therefore he proposed that this be utilised for the improvement and extension of cycle paths in the town.

Cllr Harrison supported this but put an alternative proposal forward: that the money be used to spend on a project, ideas being generated by a public poll, in the form of a People's Vote. This was discussed and it was agreed that this was a good idea, but that the S106 money had restrictions on it and instead the town council could put its own pot of money aside for a People' Vote.

Cllr Kennedy seconded the proposal made by Cllr Hobbs that the S106 money be used for investment in cycle paths. Put to the vote 7 were in favour with 4 against.

**Resolved that:**

The aforementioned Section 106 money of £15,000 be invested in cycle paths in Shepton Mallet.

*Cllr Hobbs left the meeting*

**5.13 Review of Standing Orders**

Councillors considered the revised version of Standing Orders and had the following points to make:

- That Chairman should become Chairperson
- That the document be gender neutral

**Resolved that:**

Standing Orders (subject to these amendments) be adopted.

**5.14 To agree membership of the Human Resources Committee**

The following councillors were nominated to stand on the Human Resources Committee:

Cllr Edric Hobbs, Beccy Manley, Nick Tolson, Gavin Mayall, Garfield Kennedy.

**Resolved that:**

The above mentioned councillors form the new Human Resources Committee

**5.15 To agree additional members to the Town Development and Planning Committee**

Two members were needed from the West Ward to make up number and ward balance. It was suggested that Cllr Manley might like to join this committee

**Resolved that:**

The Town Clerk invite Cllr Manley to join the Town Development and Planning Committee.

**5.16 To consider the introduction on a procedure to nominate an Honorary Freeman of the Town**

Councillors considered a report that had been prepared by the Town Clerk, at the request of Councillor Height. Various opinions were expressed that supported a scheme, or suggested an alternative scheme.

It was proposed that the introduction of a procedure to nominate Honorary Citizens be accepted, but that the public must be encouraged to nominate people who had made an outstanding contribution to town life and that the awards are made in threes, and to only proceed when there were 3 likely candidates for consideration. This proposal was seconded and supported.

**5.17 To consider the introduction of Civic Awards**

The Town Clerk explained that the former council has requested that a scheme be introduced. That the scheme was similar to that of the Honorary Citizen but was aimed as a wider audience and also at groups, rather than individuals. It was agreed that it was a good idea to have a 2 tier system, one which honoured extraordinary contribution every 4 years, and one that rewarded contribution every year.

**Resolved that:**

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The Town Council adopt a process for nominating Honorary Citizens, subject to minor changes.

That the Town Clerk present the Policy and Resources Committee with a policy for the introduction of a Civic Award scheme at the next meeting

**5.18 Press Release**

To consider if the committee wishes to prepare any press releases on matters considered.

The Town Clerk was requested to prepare press releases on the following matters;

- Disruption to the Cemetery
- 5G consultation at the next Town Development and Planning Committee
- Community Speed Watch

Cllr Mayall expressed disappointment that members of the public frequently directed criticism at councillors and office staff without fully understanding their wide remit and that they were determined to make a difference and make things happen. He wanted to reassure the public that councillors were listening, that they were open to new ideas and were being innovative but that things took time to be implemented.

Cllr Harrison added that it was essential that the public were aware that the Council's strategy was being developed.

**5.19 Date of next council meeting**

The next meeting of the council will be held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

The meeting closed at 20:55 hrs.

## **Appendix A**

### **Public Question Time**

#### **Loss of Open Green Spaces**

Jill Weston addressed the meeting with concerns about trees and green spaces that were not being protected.

The Inspector examining the Local Plan part 2 has implied that there are too many green spaces in Shepton Mallet. Therefore, if they are under threat, they need to be preserved with Tree Preservation Orders being placed on trees in areas that might be under threat. A particular area near Field House in Cannards Grave Road was described as having no significance to the public realm and that this area has many trees that include oak and copper beach.

Jill made a request for the Town Council to write to Mendip District Council to request that TPOs are placed on the trees that are under threat

The Chairman thanked Jill Weston for her presentation

#### **Request for Financial Support from United Charities Shepton Mallet Almshouses**

Geoff Curtis from the United Charities Shepton Mallet Almshouses addressed the meeting, being aware that councillors had already received an executive summary

The Almshouses currently has a waiting list of 15 people and whilst investment had been made in the existing homes over the last few years, there was a need now to build more Almshouses. The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Almshouses was in 2020 and therefore there was an intention to raise sufficient funds by then to establish a further 7 homes.

A request was being made to the town council for it to assist in the fundraising of a grant of £6,000 per year for a period of 8 years, contributing towards a target of £500,000. Whilst Mr Curtis did not expect an immediate response he requested that the council give serious consideration to his request and provide written support to the campaign which would also assist the united charities in seeking further support from the neighbouring parish councils.

The Chairman thanked Mr Curtis for his presentation and confirmed that the matter would be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration in their budget setting meetings

#### **To raise the Awareness of 5G network and potential impact on health**

3 members of the public spoke about the potential dangers of the 5G network, ranging from damage to health and wellbeing to security, satellites and to question the need for this technology. 5G had an impact on the environment and increased the demand on the energy grid, water and was disrupting migration paths of birds.

Councillors were asked to undertake their own research on the effect and to challenge the fact that no testing has been undertaken on the safety of 5G.

The Chairman thanked the speakers and announced that the next Town Development Planning Committee would be considering a response to a consultation on 5G at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October and members of the public were welcome to attend that meeting.

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