



TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
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MINUTES FROM THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH APRIL 2020 AT 7PM

This was a virtual meeting On Zoom

Attendance: Councillors T Faith, M Harrison, E Hobbs, C Inchley (Chairman), G Kennedy, M Lovell, B Manley, G Mayall and Tolson

Present: C Starkie, Town Clerk, and L Evans, Assistant Town Clerk

Public: 2 members of the public observed the meeting.

There were no public questions.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Councillor Hale.

2. **Chairman's Announcement.**

Councillor Inchley confirmed that a grant of £2,000 had been awarded to the Salvation Army Food Bank.

3. **Declarations of Interest.** There were none.

4. **To elect a new Chairman for the Town Council**

Councillor Inchley had resigned from the role as Chairman, just 2 weeks short of what would have been the annual meeting, in order to give the opportunity to another councillor to lead the town council out of the pandemic.

Nominations had been submitted to the Town Clerk, with support from 3 councillors (Cllrs Manley, Inchley and Frapple) for Edric Hobbs to become Chairman. There being no other nomination, and with all in favour, Councillor Hobbs was duly elected as the new Chairman

Resolved that:

Councillor Edric Hobbs be the new Chairman for the municipal year. He would sign a declaration of acceptance when next in the office.

SIGNED: (CHAIRMAN) DATE:.....

Councillor Hobbs thanked Chris Inchley for his contribution to the council over the last 2 years and takes over the role, aware that there are a big pair of shoes to be filled.

5. Update from the Crisis Management Team

a. Statutory Bodies

Food parcels were now being delivered and positive feedback had been received by those who were relying on local companies to deliver food. There was currently no need for the school kitchens to be utilised to make hot food for home delivery.

b. Update from Councillors Harrison and Tolson on the Volunteer Group

They had 163 active volunteers in the community, with 582 supporting them on social media. A new website has been launched and a link will be created to the town council's website. They have also launched a chat line for those who need someone to talk to and even received a referral from a GP for someone to use the chat line.

The volunteers have undertaken 98 shopping trips and 139 collections from pharmacies as well as providing 23 hot meals.

In addition, the meeting noted that the ambulance team in Shepton Mallet is responding to approximately 5 Covid-19 calls a day and had received a boost in support from a fireman operating as an emergency care assistant.

Thanks were expressed from the Chairman to Cllr Tolson and his colleagues for their support as ambulance crew during this difficult time.

c. Update from Councillor Kennedy on the new website

The Chairman thanked Cllr Kennedy and Harrison, with Digital Carrot, for the huge effort they had put into creating the new website in a very short time frame. Its aim was to point people in the right direction to get help, and was to work alongside the emergency phone line.

It had been agreed by the Crisis Management Team that A3 boards would be distributed around town to advertise the web address, and to encourage people to keep a record of the address, by taking a photo of the board, where possible. The 0800 line was receiving calls and most were being referred to the Coronavirus Volunteers group.

Resolved that:

The efforts of the Crisis Management Team be noted.

6. Outstanding matters

The Town Clerk presented a report on some of the activity that was happening in the "office". She had recently attend a virtual meeting with other clerks in the area and noted that every parish was responding in a different manner, and to a different degree. An updated report will be presented at the next meeting. Concern was expressed that several councillors had not made any contact with the Town Clerk or

other Councillors in a while, nor had made any offers of support during this busy period, despite sending out weekly bulletins and news.

The Town Clerk alerted the council to a recent complaint that had been received about a councillor who was not observing social distancing and had given concern to a resident to complain. Whilst the individuals were not named, it was agreed that this matter fell within the realms of the Code of Conduct and the complaint should be directed to the District Council's Monitoring Officer.

The Clerk was pleased to present a report, prepared by the PSCO, to the meeting, which is attached at Appendix A.

Thanks were expressed to the police for their input. The Town Clerk reported that the new police station was now open.

The staff were also thanked for their hard work and change to their working regime.

Resolved that:

The update be noted.

7. Staffing Update

The Town Clerk reported that Tara Jessop will begin her employment with the Town Council as the Project Officer on 12th May 2020. Initially, her focus would be on Collett Park and the feasibility study into its development, play equipment, environmental matters and community engagement. Councillor Harrison will hand over all his files in relation to fundraising and planning for new play equipment. Councillor Harrison was thanked for all his hard work in developing the project.

The Town Clerk gave an update on the activities of the other staff who were all working very hard and from home.

It was noted that the flexible arrangements and working from home presented a strong model for the future working of the office.

It was noted that the Tourist Information Office had had to cease existence. It was noted that the helpshepton.info website was proving to be useful and could remain as a community site beyond the pandemic.

Resolved that:

The report be noted.

The meeting paused to clap for the NHS and show its appreciation to the hardworking NHS and other front line care and delivery staff.

8. Future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 28th April 2020 at 7pm where decisions would be made about future meetings.

The 2 members of the public were thanked for their attendance and invited to give feedback on the outcome and success of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm