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MINUTES FROM FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Held on: Tuesday 16th March at 7.00pm. This was a virtual meeting On Zoom

Attendance: Councillors S Hale (Vice Chair, to the end of item 11.16), M Harrison (Chair), B Height, C Inchley (to the end of item 11.16), G Kennedy (to the end of item 11.16), M Lovell, G Mayall, A McGuire, T O'Connor, N Shearn & N Tolson (Joined at Item 11.3, left after Item 11.15)

Present: C Starkie, Town Clerk, L Evans, Assistant Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Becky Kingston-Wood, Democratic Support Assistant

Public: 4 members of the public were present and PCSO Amanda Ware

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – Comments can be found at Appendix A.

TC11.1 Apologies for Absence

No Apologies received. All Councillors were present

TC11.2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr M Lovell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of The Book Roost and the LGR, due his standing as a Somerset county councillor at the next election.

Cllr B Height declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Royal British Legion.

TC11.3 Chairs Announcement

- The Responsible Financial Officer has successfully completed the Certificate in Local Council Administration.
- PC George Simpson, the former beat manager for the SM Neighbourhood Police Team, has moved to a new role. The Chairman thanked him for all the work that he has done for the towns' folk. A visible and highly regarded individual, he has given a great deal of support and time to the council to make the town a safer place

- The application process to fill the 4 vacancies at a by election on 6th May is now open
(Clerk's Note: There are now 5 vacancies)
- Councillor Tristan Faith has resigned from the council. The Chair thanked him for his contributions to the Council and wished him well.

TC11.4 Update from local community policing team

Councillors received a written report and presentation from the local PCSO and thanked them for the information.

Councillors asked the PCSO questions in relation to town matters.

TC11.5 Update from Somerset County Councillor John Parham

Councillors received a written report from Councillor John Parham and thanked him for the information.

TC11.6 Update from Mendip District Councillors

No written reports were received.

TC11.7 To consider and approve the minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021

The minutes from this meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Resolved that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2021 were agreed and signed

TC11.8 To note that the following draft minutes from the committee meetings have been circulated

People & Promotion - 19th January and 2nd March 2021

Town Development & Planning - 26th January, 16th February and 9th March 2021

Place making & Protection - 23rd February 2021

Human Resources - 9th February 2021

Collett Park Management - 2nd February 2021

TC11.9 Update from the Chairs of the above committees on any key decisions and next steps

Councillors received a verbal update from the Chairs of the above committees

People & Promotion

Councillor O'Connor reported that the arts working party had been well attended.

Councillor McGuire is the lead councillor on matters relating to children and young people.

Councillor Lovell is the lead councillor on Tourism.

A Working Party has been set up to consider summer activities in the town.

The application for the Walkers are Welcome scheme has been made.

Town Development & Planning

Councillor Harrison reported the committee received an average of nine planning applications every 3 weeks

Thanks were given to Cllr Lovell for his diligence in considering the recent government planning consultation.

Place Making and Protection

No updates from Councillor Inchley

Human Resources

Councillor Mayall reported that a revised job description for the position of Communication and Community Engagement Officer is being finalised ready for issue.

Collett Park Management

Councillor Kennedy mentioned the need to plant more trees in Collett Park and that a scheme was being developed, in conjunction with Mendip District Council

TC11.10 To fill the vacancies on the Town Development & Planning Committee

Following the resignation by Cllr Mayall from this committee there were four vacancies to fill and councillors were asked to consider joining this committee.

Resolved that:

Cllr Tolson will join the Town Development & Planning Committee.

TC11.11 Future meetings

Councillors received a written report from the Town Clerk on the proposal to hold the Annual Assembly on 27th April, and to consider the move of the Annual Town Council Meeting, and to consider returning to face to face meetings

Resolved that:

The Annual Parish Meeting will remain on 27th April 2021 on zoom, with guest speakers

All meetings to continue virtually until regulations prevent this.

The Annual Town Council Meeting to remain on 18th May 2021 via Zoom, subject to government legislation allowing this.

TC11.12 Request from the Community Groups: Town Twinning Association and Royal British Legion

Councillors received a written report from the Town Clerk that included a request from the Town Twinning Association for the Town Council to purchase either a commemorative tree or bench and a request from the Royal British Legion to install a commemorative floral display in Collett Park. Both were discussed in detail.

Resolved that:

Councillors delegated responsibility to the Town Clerk to work with the Twinning Association to arrange for a suitable tree and plaque to be positioned in Collett Park, as per the recommendation in the report.

Councillors, whilst supportive of the aims of the RBL, did not support the request from the Royal British Legion to have a floral display created In Collett Park, as insufficient information had been provided In relation to design, cost and ongoing maintenance and repairs.

TC11.13 To Consider the reinstatement of Parkrun

Councillors received a written report from the Town Clerk on the reinstatement of Junior Parkrun and Parkrun in Collett Park, following the return to organised outdoor sport in line with the government's roadmap out of the pandemic.

Resolved that:

Councillors agreed for junior Parkrun and senior Parkrun return to Collett Park, providing they are both able to be Covid-safe and abide by government guidelines for the safe return of outdoor sport.

TC11.14 Year End Movement into Earmarked Funds

Councillors received a written report from the Responsible Financial Officer to seek permission to move underspends into appropriate EMF's as part of the year end activity

Resolved that:

Councillors approved the following movements in to Earmarked Funds:

- a. The Peoples Fund of £10,000 will be moved into a temporary EMF and released to the People and Promotion committee for spend during 2021/22.
- b. The unspent tourism budget of £6,000 will be moved in to the People and Promotion committee budget and used partly for the new Heritage Trail and the remainder to be used for tourism.
- c. The events budget of £5,000 and markets budget of £400 be moved to the new People and Promotion committee.
- d. Any underspend from the general expenditure budget In Collett Park (approx £5,000) be moved into the Collett Park Capital replacement EMF.
- e. Councillors gave delegated authority to the RFO to carry out the above functions.

TC11.15 Future priorities of the council, received committee structure and Identifying priorities for new financial year

Councillors received a written report from Chair and Town Clerk with contributions from others that considered an alternative committee structure, in order to efficiently progress the priorities and objectives as outlined in the Town Plan. There was a general discussion about needing to reduce the number of meetings In order to make the most efficient use of officer and councillor time. A recorded vote was requested by Councillor Kennedy.

Proposal: Collett Park Management Committee and Place Making & Protection committee to merge Into one committee

In Favour: Councillors Harrison, Hale, Height, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Against: Councillors Mayall, Lovell, Kennedy and Inchley

Resolved to merge the Collett Park Committee and Place Making Protection Committee

Proposal: Charity meetings to take place Individually but on the same evening of a Place making and Protection Committee meeting

In Favour: Councillors Harrison, Hale, Height, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Against: Councillors Inchley and Kennedy

Resolved to held the 3 annual charity meetings on one evening, on the same evening as a Place making and Protection meeting

Proposal: That Policy and Resources Committee, In the future, to be composed of the Chair of the other committees and three other councillors, that It meets 4 times a year and that It transfers the Community Donations and Grant scheme to the People and Promotion committee

In Favour: Councillors Harrison, Hale, Height, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Against: Councillor Inchley and Kennedy

Resolved that the Policy and Resources committee to be made up of the chairs of each committee and a further three other councillors and to reduce the number of committee meetings to 4 a year. To transfer the function of the community donations and grant applications to the People and Promotion committee

Proposal: To increase the number of Human Resources committee meetings to four meetings a year

In Favour: Councillor Harrison, Hale, Height, Inchley, Kennedy, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Resolved that the Human Resources Committee meets four time a year.

Proposal: For the Town Development & Planning committee to remain as It Is

In Favour: Councillor Harrison, Hale, Height, Inchley, Kennedy, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Resolved that the committee remain as It Is

Proposal: For the People and Promotion Committee to meet four times a year

In Favour: Councillor Harrison, Hale, Height, Inchley, Kennedy, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Resolved that the People and Promotion committee meet 4 times a year

Cllr Kennedy announced his resignation from all committees to give the other councillors a chance to attend more committee meetings.

Proposal: That councillors must attend a certain number of meetings

In Favour: Councillor Harrison, Hale, Height, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Against: Councillor Inchley

Resolved that the Town Clerk write some guidelines of best practice for committee attendance, and issue to new councillors as part of the Induction process

Cllrs Inchley and Kennedy lost connectivity and therefore are no Included In the next vote

Proposal: For Working Parties to continue but to meet no more than four times for the specific purpose of moving forward the particular matter, and to be Issued with specific Terms of Reference

In Favour: Councillor Harrison, Hale, Height, Lovell, Mayall, McGuire, O'Connor, Shearn and Tolson

Resolved that Working Parties are created to meet only four times, at times that suit councillors (outside of the working day) and to include members of the community who are either interested stakeholders, or classed as experts in the field of discussion.

The meeting reached 9pm and the Chair asked members of the council if the meeting could continue. It was agreed to continue the meeting

Cllr Tolson left the meeting.

TC11.16 Local Government Reorganisations

Councillors received a written report from the Town Clerk on the proposed local government reorganisation (LGR) and to consider how this council will respond to it.

Resolved that:

Councillor O'Connor to attend the SALC webinar on 7th April 2021

- a. Councillor O'Connor to attend the SCC webinar and draft a report for a WP
- b. Councillors Harrison, O'Connor, Shearn and Lovell to form a working party for the purposes of developing a draft response to this consultation and to prepare a response for consideration at a future council meeting
- c. For an additional council meeting to be held in order to consider the council's response in order to submit a response on 19th April 2021.

Councillor Inchley, Kennedy and Hale left the meeting at 21:10

TC11.17 Update on the Market Place resurface project

Councillors receive a written report from the Project Officer on progression with the market place regeneration project

Resolved that: the Report was noted.

TC11.18 Date & Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the council (Annual Town Council meeting) is scheduled for Tuesday 18th May 2021, but may have to be reschedule to meet government legislation over the hosting of virtual meetings. An additional meeting will be scheduled in early April 2021 to consider the response to the Local Government Reorganisation.

The meeting closed at 2112 hrs.

Appendix A – Public Comments – 16th March 2021

Two members of the public spoke at the meeting:

One member of the public made the following comments/observations

- Thanks expressed to Cllr Parham for representing Shepton Mallet at Somerset County Council
- To offer the advice of his daughter in relation to any tree planting in Collett Park.
- To suggest that the local horticultural society assist the RBL with their floral displays
- To ensure that there are some funds to assist with the Community Speed Watch scheme
- That the Annual Assembly Invite grant recipients to talk about how their grants have been used.

Another member of public spoke about the proposed closure of a mental health ward at the hospital In Wells In the summer of 2021.

- A year ago a Facebook action group was set up called 'Save Somerset community services' In response to a future consultation
- It was announced on the 24th September 2020 to move the 14 beds from St Andrews Ward In Wells to a ward at a hospital in Yeovil.
- A petition has been set up, two local demonstrations had been set up In Wells In March and October 2020 and an awareness event In December to connect with the other
- A request was made that SMTC write a letter to CCG to encourage to keep the ward open, as well as additional beds in Yeovil

It was agreed that the Town Clerk write a letter to the CCG to demonstrate that the Town Council wishes to support the retention of St Andrews Ward In Wells and ask the CCG to reconsider their proposal