

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 2020/10/12 – 28

Minutes of the meeting held via Zoom¹ on Monday 12th October 2020 at 7.01pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs W Leach (Chairman), J Carr, A Harley, R Holmes, S Holmes, R Kemsley, P Macklin, S Stockham and S Turner

Three members of the public

Mr S Holley – Town Clerk

Miss C Wheeler – Assistant Clerk – Minute Taker

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Preest.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **OPEN FORUM**

None.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The public Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14th September 2020 were APPROVED as a correct record, following a Proposal by Cllr Kemsley, Seconded by Cllr S Holmes, subject to the following Amendment:

Minute 10 (Christmas Arrangements): In the third line of the fifth paragraph, delete the words “The Motion was APPROVED with the following...”

5. **DESTINATION LYDNEY HARBOUR – PARTNERSHIP WORKING PROPOSAL**

The Clerk advised that Forest of Dean District Council was now seeking a contribution of £18,000, rather than the historic figure of £31,294. The District Council had also advised that, while the Council had resolved in September to allocate up to £3,000 from the £10,000 Government Grant it had been awarded, the amount could actually be taken from the £18,000 being held for the Harbour in the Council’s Reserves; i.e. the Town Council was being asked to commit to no more than £18,000 for all work at the Harbour.

The Council noted that the Council had been provided with a list of other activities at the Harbour which it may wish to contribute to from the remaining £15,000. The Clerk was requested to ask the District Council to provide estimates for the projects listed, so the Council could select a project for which it could be the principal funder.

The Clerk informed the Council that it had not been possible to confirm the arrangements for the Council taking on temporary custodianship of the public toilets and information centre at the Harbour because the Officer at Forest of Dean District Council was still waiting for UBICO to provide their quotation. Furthermore, the Clerk advised that he had contacted a number of commercial cleaning companies to ascertain if they were interested in quoting for the work and he encouraged the Council to provide him with details of any companies which it felt may be interested in the work.

The update was NOTED.

¹ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

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6. **DEAN FOREST GREENWAY/MULTI USE TRACK**

The Clerk advised that he had received an update from the Project Chair (the Chair of West Dean Parish Council) on discussions taking place with relevant landowners and enquiring if a Town Council representative would engage with landowners who had concerns about the proposed scheme. The Clerk was requested to contact Cllr Greenwood asking for an e-mail update to all Councillors.

Action by – the Clerk

The Clerk informed that the update from the Project Chair referred to a proposed extension to the 20mph zone so as to include the track entrance/exit point at the rear of Light Fantastic. It was reported that this had been discussed earlier in the evening by the Planning and Highway Committee and the Committee Chair, Cllr Preest, had been requested to progress the matter with Gloucestershire County Council.

7. **STREAMING AND/OR RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

A member reminded the Council that, when the recording of Council meetings had been discussed a number of years ago, a decision had been taken not to pursue the matter; however, he felt the Council elected in 2019 should reconsider the matter. The apparent high cost had been an objection previously, but Cinderford Town Council streamed its meetings very cheaply just with a webcam and a microphone. A number of members spoke in support. The Mayor Proposed from the Chair that the Council wished to live stream its meetings and requested the Clerk to obtain costings for a suitable camera and microphone. Vote carried.

Action by – the Clerk

The Clerk was requested to produce a suitable policy and procedure to cover live streaming meetings for approval by Council.

Action by – the Clerk

8. **REMEMBRANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Mayor advised that a meeting had taken place between himself, the Clerk, representatives from the Lydney Branch of the RBL and St Mary's Church to discuss how Remembrance could be organised this year in the Covid-19 pandemic. The Mayor advised that Remembrance arrangements were a Civic event and that Remembrance Sunday this year fell on Sunday 8th November.

The Council was informed that, to be 'Covid-safe', it would not be possible for a parade to take place. Instead, a Service would be conducted at the War Memorial and a Bugler would play at the start and end of the Service. Efforts would be made to live-stream the Service to allow members of the public to watch from their homes and that the RBL would only invite two representatives from each organisation to attend. Cllr Leach advised that Wreaths would be erected prior to the event, with only three Wreaths laid on the day.

At the time of the meeting referred to above, it had been understood that the gentleman who organised a 'Citizens Act of Remembrance' on 11th November each year was unwell, leading to discussion on the possibility of helping out. The Council was pleased to learn that the gentleman concerned was back in good health and intended to continue with a 'Citizen's Act of Remembrance' again, with Councillors invited to attend. The Clerk would contact the member of public concerned and inform him of the discussions which had taken place, explaining that the Council was not seeking to take over his usual

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arrangements for 11th November so much as to help out if he was indeed unwell.

Action by – the Clerk

9. **BUDGET PROCESS FOR 2021/22**

9.1 **Budget Aspirations**

The Council was requested to consider the circulated report detailing the progress which had been made to date, the contents of which were noted.

The Council was asked to consider its aspirations for the level of Precept for 2021/22. The Clerk felt that it may be possible to identify up to £32,000 of earmarked reserves which could be used to fund a major project which the Council may wish to pursue. The Council was reminded that its current and previous Budgets had been calculated on a Gross Expenditure basis, whereas the new accounting software and acceptance practice required it to convert to budgeting on a Nett basis from 2021/22. The Clerk suggested that the Council consider whether the Budget should include provision for a Regeneration and Covid-19 recovery project for the Town.

A member felt that the Council's Precept for 2021/22 should be as low as possible, but not less than 2020/21 and stressed the need for the Council to closely examine its budget figures. Other members felt that the Precept did not need to be increased from its 2020/21 level as they felt that it, together with the release of up to £32,000 of earmarked reserves, could fund a significant project such as Regeneration and Covid Recovery. The Mayor felt that up to £50,000 would be required to fund a regeneration exercise and suggested that the Council may be able to identify sufficient funding in its accounts. The Mayor also cautioned against freezing the Precept over consecutive years which was effectively a cut in real terms that may result in higher increases being levied in future years.

After a short discussion, it was AGREED that Officers and the Finance and Scrutiny Committee should work on a zero increase in the Precept, but identify funding for projects as a result of savings which could be achieved in its budgets.

9.2 **Youth Engagement Project**

The Council was asked to consider changing the current budget provision of £200 in respect of a Youth Engagement Project to a grant to Lydney Hub (the Hub) for delivering such a project on behalf of the Council, repeated as a standing grant in future budgets.

A suggestion to increase the sum to £500 was not Seconded and did not proceed to a vote. It was AGREED to request Cllr Macklin (the Council's appointed representative for the Hub) to approach the Hub to ascertain if there was a specific engagement project which the funding could be utilised for, with his report to be considered at the next meeting.

Action by – Cllr Macklin

9.3 **Grant Applications**

The Council was reminded of the dates when the Finance and Scrutiny Committee would consider grant applications in line with their Policy, these being February and June each year.

Cllr R Holmes, Chair of the Finance and Scrutiny Committee, highlighted the need to publicise the Council's grant system. The Clerk spoke in favour of reviving the Council's

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Newsletter as he felt that it could be used to promote the Council's grant system and hoped to be in a position to bring a report to the November meeting of the Council.

10. **CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS AND CHRISTMAS TREE EXHIBITION**

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, advised that St Mary's Church usually organised an annual Christmas Tree exhibition, however, due to Covid-19 it would not be possible to hold the exhibition in the Church and they had expressed a desire to hold the event in the Town. The Council was not being asked to organise or manage the event.

Cllr Harley, Chair of the Amenities Committee, reminded the Council that the arrangements for Christmas had been delegated to the Committee and requested that Cllr Leach bring the latest update regarding the event to the next Amenities meeting. The Committee would be considering whether it was possible to enhance the Council's existing Christmas lights and Cllr Harley welcomed discussion on how the Christmas Tree exhibition could be supported.

11. **FINANCIAL MATTERS/RFO REPORT**

11.1 **Payments**

The Council was requested to approve the circulated list of accounts for payment. Proposed by Cllr S Holmes Seconded by Cllr Harley and unanimously APPROVED.

The Council was asked to agree that electronic banking would become the Council's approved method for all future payments. Proposed by Cllr Carr Seconded by Cllr Stockham and unanimously APPROVED.

11.2 **Income and Expenditure Report/Balance Sheet/Bank Reconciliations**

The Council was requested to approve the above financial reports for Month 6. Proposed by Cllr S Holmes Seconded by Cllr Stockham and unanimously APPROVED.

11.3 **Legal advice on Council-operated Trusts and Training**

The Council was asked to consider accepting a quote from Weller's Hedley, Solicitors, for legal advice on the two Trusts operated by the Council and a training session of not less than two hours at £950 plus VAT. Acceptance Proposed by Cllr R Holmes Seconded by Cllr Harley and unanimously AGREED.

It was noted that Cllrs S Holmes, Stockham, Kemsley, Macklin and Turner had yet to attend 'Being a Better Councillor' training. The Clerk confirmed that he would investigate if such training could be accessed on-line.

Action by – the Clerk

11.4 **Government Grant of £10,000**

The Clerk reminded Council of the advice earlier in the meeting that it was no longer necessary to allocate £3,000 from the funding towards the project at Lydney Harbour (refer to Minute 5 – Destination Lydney Harbour – Partnership Working Proposal). Accordingly, it was suggested that, if no other new projects were proposed, the Council could allocate the whole of the £10,000 Small Business Rate Relief Grant towards a regeneration project for the Town, in addition to the £32,000 which had been identified in the earmarked reserves. This met some support, but would require further consideration.

A member suggested that funding be allocated towards the purchase of an attachment for

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the new Toro mower to enable it to collect grass cuttings from areas where the Council wished to encourage wild flowers. It was AGREED that the matter should be discussed at the next meeting of the Amenities Committee in order that it may consider including such funding in its budget.

Cllr Harley spoke on the Amenities Committee's wish to use a portion of the grant to encourage the formation of a Chamber of Commerce which could then lead into the Town's regeneration. Furthermore, that the Committee intended to ask the Gloucestershire Chamber of Trade and also the Gloucestershire Market Town Forum for their assistance.

12. TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY AREA

The Mayor reminded the Council of the suggestion by District Cllr Vaughan that the Council consider taking over an area of the Newerne Street Car Park to provide a market area. Having considered the matter, and after speaking to members of the public, Cllr Leach suggested that the Council could utilise a 20 m x 40 m area at the rear of Lloyds Pharmacy and the side of the Co-operative Store in order to create a community space. Cllr Leach felt that a trial operation of the area could be easily facilitated and he called for the Town Council to open dialogue with Forest of Dean District Council. Furthermore, Cllr Leach felt that any cost for the creation of the area could be defrayed by utilising the £10,000 Government Grant which had been received.

During discussion questions were raised regarding the possibility of receiving funding for Town Centre improvements from S106 funding and it was noted that whilst planning applications had been received for two further supermarkets for the Town, only one would be expected to provide a contribution. A member felt that the project should be undertaken as part of a regeneration project for the Town; highlighted that the Town Council would need to cover the cost of obtaining a licence for a market; and felt that it may be premature to take action at this stage as if the decision was taken to adopt a Unitary approach the land may become available to the Town Council. Another member felt that the proposal may cause upset due to a loss of disabled parking provision and highlighted the need to remark the car park. The Clerk doubted that the Town Council would be offered the car park if discussions on Unitary Council status went through and he felt that the Council was still able to engage in the discussion the Mayor had suggested.

The Mayor Proposed that the Town Council initiate discussion with Forest of Dean District Council to see if it would be feasible to utilise a 20 m x 40 m area at the rear of Lloyds Pharmacy and the side of the Co-operative Store in order to create a community space. Unanimously APPROVED.

Action by – the Clerk

13. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Council was provided with a copy of the Clerk's report prior to the meeting, the contents of which were NOTED.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

15. REPORTS

- (i) Cllr Stockham advised that he had attended the virtual Forest of Dean Climate Action Day on behalf of the Town Council, however, there had been problems with

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technology. Attendees had been advised that they would receive a written report from the event which Cllr Stockham gave a commitment to circulate to his fellow Councillors. Cllr Carr also advised that she had also attempted to participate.

- (ii) Cllr S Holmes advised that over the weekend an issue had occurred with the water tap in the Cemetery and she called for Members to be informed of a procedure to be followed to contact a member of staff in an emergency.
- (iii) Cllr Kemsley felt the Destination Lydney Harbour project to be very exciting and was delighted to report that the toilet facility and the information centre were almost completed. Cllr Kemsley also spoke on the funding which was available from the Yorkley Court Farm S106 fund which Lydney organisations were eligible to apply for provided they met the criteria.
- (iv) The Mayor reminded all Members of an e-mail from a member of the public regarding a complaint against a member of staff. The complaint had been sent to the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) which had referred the complaint to the Town Council to address under its procedures, however, GAPTC did consider the complaint as part of its investigation into the Black Lives Matter Event. The complainant had accepted the Personnel Committee's unanimous RESOLUTION to exonerate the member of staff of any wrongdoing. The Mayor stressed the need to move forward positively.

16. **MEETING DATES**

The Council NOTED that its next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 9th November 2020 at 7.00pm, via Zoom.

CLOSED SESSION

17. **MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Council RESOLVED to continue in 'Closed Session' under the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following business to be conducted was considered to be of a confidential nature.

18. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

As a process had not been agreed for the approval of Confidential Minutes whilst the Council was meeting remotely, it was suggested that they be approved en masse at the Council's first physical meeting. However, if the Council continued to meet remotely for a significant period of time it was felt that alternative arrangements would need to be made for Members to visit the Council's office on specific dates to review said minutes in order that they may be agreed at a future meeting. Also, the Clerk would look into uploading Confidential Minutes to a secure server, for access by members only.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm

Chairman

Date

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Appendix A

Lydney Town Council
PRELIMINARY PURCHASE DAYBOOK

Order by Invoices Entered

Purchase Ledger for Month No 7

12/10/2020
15:38

Invoice Date	Invoice Number	Ref No	Supplier A/c Name	Supplier A/c Code	Net Value	VAT	Invoice Total	A/C	Centre	Amount	Analysis Description
06/10/2020	CSI-115007	193	BRIDGEND COLLEGE	BR1002	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	4060	100	2,000.00	College Course AM and RB
05/10/2020	02829	194	RICHARD COLE	RIC001	5,135.00	1,027.00	6,162.00	4450	400	5,135.00	Grass Cutting Aug-Oct
23/09/2020	3509	195	MAKINSON	MAK001	57.00	11.40	68.40	4055	100	57.00	September Payroll Costs
15/09/2020	IN75083	196	MINCOST	MIN001	51.58	10.32	61.90	4515	400	51.58	Engine Oil/Strimmer Cord
30/09/2020	158472	197	OFFICE STAR	OFF001	94.78	18.95	113.73	4155	150	94.78	Stationery
11/09/2020	3746	198	SIGNS 4 YOU	SIG001	986.00	197.20	1,183.20	4100	150	986.00	Lamp post Banners
30/09/2020	28308	199	RIALTAS	RIA001	200.00	40.00	240.00	4060	100	200.00	Omega Training CAW
01/10/2020	18433	200	TATE	TAT001	82.00	16.40	98.40	4130	150	82.00	Mihly Mailbox Charges
30/09/2020	18440	201	TATE	TAT001	25.00	5.00	30.00	4130	150	25.00	Hire of Lap Top TC Sept
30/09/2020	18509	202	TATE	TAT001	127.00	25.40	152.40	4130	150	127.00	Netgear 5 Port/Office Move
21/09/2020	0856 AHA529	203	TRAVIS PERKINS	TRA001	11.60	2.32	13.92	4470	400	11.60	Postcrete for Dog Bin
12/10/2020	8563	204	LIGHT FANTASTIC	LIG001	64.46	12.89	77.35	4110	150	17.07	Office Mat and Scrapper
02/10/2020	28314	205	RIALTAS	RIA001	200.00	40.00	240.00	4060	100	34.20	Stock for Repairs
										8.54	Drill bits for Repairs
										4.65	Repairs on the Meend
										200.00	Training -SH
										9,034.42	

TOTAL INVOICES	9,034.42	1,406.88	10,441.30
VAT ANALYSISCODE OTS @ 0.00%	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
VAT ANALYSISCODE S @ 20.00%	7,034.42	1,406.88	8,441.30
TOTALS	9,034.42	1,406.88	10,441.30