

CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL remote meeting held on Monday 26 October 2020 at 6.45 p.m.

PRESENT

Cllrs. K. Head (Chairman), C. Aslett, M. Best, R. Cottle, R. Pailthorpe, J. Roberts, and D. Wakeman.

In Attendance

The Clerk P. Davidson, Deputy Clerk L. Gowers and 8 members of the public (via YouTube).

116 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 20/21

Apologies were received from Cllrs. B. Hodgson (personal), J. Roundell Greene (personal) and A. Stuart (personal).

117 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS 20/21

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on Monday 28 September and Monday 12 October 2020 be **APPROVED**.

118 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 20/21

on items on the agenda

None.

119 OPEN FORUM 20/21

The Clerk reported that he had received requests from two residents who were unable to attend the meeting but who each wished to raise a question relating to planning application 18/01737/OUT, the outline application for residential development of 150 dwellings at Kit Hill.

The Clerk read out the first question, which asked why the Council had not acted in a timely manner in seeking barrister advice on the appeal decision. In response, Cllr. Aslett made the following points:

- The Town Council was only a statutory consultee and it was SSDC who were the planning authority.
- The appeal decision was made on 17 June but the Town Council did not meet until 29 June.
- At the time of the meeting, the Council was not aware of the 6 week deadline.
- At the June Council meeting, it had been made clear that the costs of a Judicial Review were likely to be exorbitant. The Town Council's only effective option was therefore to seek specialist barrister advice, which might lead to a letter being able to be sent to the housing minister.
- The timescale for engaging a specialist barrister had not been excessive.
- The barrister had confirmed that there were no grounds on which to submit a challenge through a Judicial Review.

In conclusion, Cllr. Aslett reiterated the point made at the October Planning & Highways meeting, that the future focus should be on ensuring that the crossing point was not stopped up.

The Clerk then read out the second question, which was directed at the District Councillors present at the meeting, and asked for a progress update regarding the seeking of clarification of how 32 local objections and 3 reports had been missed from the paperwork submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. In response, Cllr. Best reported that he was aware of email exchanges between the resident concerned and SSDC. He added that he had discussed the matter with the Leader of the Council, who had confirmed that the required information was being chased and that a response would be sent directly to the resident concerned.

120 **TO RECEIVE VERBAL REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT**
20/21 **COUNCILLORS**

County

County Cllr. Best reported on the recent Somerset County Council cabinet meeting regarding the proposed reorganisation of the local schools and the forthcoming public consultation. It was agreed that this subject should be brought to the Council as an agenda item.

District

Cllr. Pailthorpe reported on the recent meeting of the District Council. Members had been given a progress update on the South Somerset Environmental Strategy. Cllr. Pailthorpe also reported that two motions had been tabled. The first motion related to supporting DEFRA's ambition to phase out badger culling. The second motion was regarding the Government's planning white paper, where it had been agreed to oppose the Government's proposals.

Cllr. Pailthorpe asked that the subject of the future of local government in Somerset be brought as an agenda item at the next meeting of the Council.

121 **CLERKS PROGRESS REPORT**
20/21 **To receive a report**

The Clerk reported on the following:

- Councillor vacancies: Regarding the vacancy created by the fact that Alan Smith was no longer a councillor, SSDC had confirmed that there had been more than 10 requests for a by-election to be held to fill the vacancy. There would therefore now be an election for two vacancies on 6 May 2021.
- FOI requests: The Council had recently received two Freedom Of Information requests, which were as follows:
 - i. FOI request received on 21 September 2020: Information requested regarding the involvement of the Town Council in the sale of land behind 48 North Street. A response had been given, confirming that the Council did not hold any information regarding this transaction.
 - ii. FOI request received on 16 October 2020: Information requested regarding the dates that legal advice had been sought, and to whom, with regard to the Kit Hill planning application appeal. A response had been given, which consisted of

scanned copies of all email correspondence between the Deputy Clerk and the law practice.

Details of both FOI requests would be displayed on the Council website.

- Open actions from previous meetings: The Clerk and Deputy Clerk had compiled a list of open actions from previous council meetings. These would be added as agenda items at the appropriate Council/committee meeting.
- Grant application: A grant application has been received from Radio Ninesprings. As consideration of grant applications had been deferred at the Council meeting of 12 October, this latest application would be added to those already received, for consideration at a forthcoming Council meeting.
- Barn Street recreation ground community orchard proposal: It had been agreed at the September 2020 Full Council meeting that a plan should be drawn up of the proposed tree planting at the Barn Street recreation ground. In this regard, the Deputy Clerk had contacted a former SSDC officer who had a great deal of experience of managing grounds. His advice had been to place canes in the ground on the site, spaced as the trees would be, to best illustrate the effects of the tree planting. Councillors supported this suggestion, adding that it would be essential to advertise to residents that the canes were in place and to ask for feedback. Cllr. Aslett added that the Council should establish the cost of purchasing the proposed 30 trees.
- Millers Garage car park: SSDC had been in contact with the Clerk to discuss the drafting of a legal agreement associated with the fact that the car park project required the conversion of a small section of the Henhayes recreation ground into a "joining strip", connecting the Millers Garage car park to the existing Henhayes car park.

122
20/21

FINANCE

- a) To approve the accounts for payment for October 2020

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Wakeman had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Risk Management.

Accounts for payment for October 2020, in the sum of £65,243.86 + VAT were APPROVED.

- b) To report the bank reconciliation for September 2020 has been completed

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Wakeman had verified the bank reconciliation for September 2020. It was noted that cash in hand as of 30 September 2020 was £387,423.77.

123
20/21

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To consider the following applications requiring observations before the next Planning and Highways Committee meeting

20/02569/HOU - 44 Langmead Square, Crewkerne TA18 8EB

Single storey extension to front elevation to increase the size of the living room and include a porch. **RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

124 **FENCING AT THE REAR OF THE GEORGE REYNOLDS CENTRE**
20/21 To consider the quotations received for the replacement of the fencing at the rear of the George Reynolds Centre

Cllr. Wakeman suggested that the second quotation was the preferred one, as this used Ofsted-approved fencing. Cllr. Aslett added that the second quotation also provided the pre-school children with more outdoor open space which was secure.

Cllr. Pailthorpe expressed his opposition to the second proposal, as the fencing would enclose public open space.

After further discussion, it was **AGREED to adopt the proposal to extend the fencing at the rear of the GRC to border the newly created concrete path.** Although one quotation was available for this scheme, the Clerk was asked to make efforts to obtain a second quotation, and to bring both quotations back to a future Council meeting for consideration.

125 **CHRISTMAS MARKET**
20/21 To further consider whether the Christmas market should take place and, if so, at what location

Cllr. Best expressed strong reservations about holding the Christmas market. He pointed out that, whilst covid infection rates were currently low in South Somerset, the Town Council should be making every effort to ensure that infection rates remained low. The Christmas market would inevitably bring people together into close proximity, which would increase the risk of the spread of the infection.

After further discussion, it was **AGREED that, regrettably, the Christmas market should be cancelled this year.**

126 **NEWSLETTER**
20/21 To agree the articles for inclusion in the next edition of the Council newsletter

It was **AGREED to approve the articles for the next edition of the newsletter, with the additions suggested at the meeting.**

127 **TO RECEIVE DRAFT COMMITTEE MINUTES**
20/21

a) Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on 12 October 2020

Noted.

b) Joint Burial Committee meeting held on 6 October 2020

Noted.

128 **TO RECEIVE ANY MATTERS OF REPORT**
20/21

Free school meals: Cllr. Cottle asked whether it was possible for the Town Council to make a donation towards the provision of free school meals. Cllr. Pailthorpe suggested that a donation of £500 would be appropriate and proposed that the Mayor and Clerk be given delegated authority to arrange this, a proposal supported by Councillors.

Crewkerne Business Group: Cllr. Cottle reported that a recent zoom meeting of the group had been well attended and that the group was growing in strength. A major theme emerging was that of improving communications. Cllr. Cottle suggested that the planned new Council website should assist with this, a point supported by Cllr. Roberts, who stated that the design of the new website would include a specific focus on business links. Cllr. Cottle also pointed to the proposal for town centre wifi as another area where the Council could make a contribution towards supporting local businesses.

Social media: Cllr. Aslett reported that he had been attempting to engage with the members of the Crewkerne forum on Facebook. He emphasised the need for the Council to improve its social media presence, a point supported by Cllr. Roberts, who added that the Council needed a definite social media policy.

129 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

20/21

Monday 30 November 2020 at 6.45 p.m.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Signed:

Dated:

