



EMERSONS GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Full Council

13 February 2020
in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council

Present: Councillors S Al Hassan (Chairman), J Adams, S Hill, R Hunt, C Johnson, P Maytham, P Morgan, R Nichols, M Palmer, D Somers, P Todd,

Attendees: Kath MacConnachie (Clerk), PC Rochford (Avon & Somerset Constabulary), PC Maywood (Avon & Somerset Constabulary), PCSO Sophie Green, CD (member of the public)

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and advised of the evacuation procedure.

123. Apologies

Apologies were received from S Bassett, S Budd, J Hunt, J Sweeney and C Wilkins

124. Declarations of interest under the Localism Act 2011

No interests were declared at this time.

125. Public Participation

A member of the public (CD) joined the meeting and read a statement concerning her experience of the employment grievance process in relation to her employment with Emersons Green Town Council. CD noted that she would not be proceeding to an employment tribunal, and that she was addressing the Council to draw a line under the matter and move forwards.

126. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9 January and the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 13 January 2020

It was **Resolved** that the minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of the meeting of the meeting held on 9 January and the extraordinary meeting held on 13 January 2020.

127. Outstanding Items from these Minutes

Councillor R Hunt noted that the action under item 122 from the 9 January 2020 meeting was still outstanding.

It was confirmed that all other actions had been completed or were on the agenda for this meeting

128. Parking on the verge in Denton Patch (item moved up the agenda)

The councillors considered correspondence received from a resident regarding inconsiderate parking on the grass verge at Denton Patch. This was occurring around school drop off/pick up times and was causing damage to the grass verge.

Councillor Palmer asked the police present how often patrols around the school took place. They replied that there were quite a few schools within their patch, but that they do try to cover each school over the weeks as part of regular patrols.

It was noted that the verge in question was the responsibility of South Gloucestershire Highways. Advice from the South Gloucestershire Officer had suggested that it was their policy to not install items such as bollards/planters etc, but that the Town Council, or residents themselves, could apply for a planting license.

Councillors noted the costs and responsibilities of installing such street furniture. It was agreed to consider this at the forthcoming 'blue sky thinking' session, as there was a wider issue of how the Town Council responds to such requests. It was agreed that the subject should return to a future Full Council agenda.

Action: Clerk

129. Update from the local neighbourhood police team

PC Rochford, PC Maywood and PCSO Sophie Green gave an update on neighbourhood community policing.

PC Rochford noted that it was quite a large patch. There had been some issues with drug dealing and antisocial behaviour, particularly around the Emersons Green retail area park. A group of around six 12/13 year old youths had been identified as regular offenders and PC Rochford explained that they were keen to engage with them and break the cycle. They had been working closely with the South Gloucestershire antisocial behaviour team, the youth offending team, schools and social workers. The focus was on giving them the opportunity to reform and change their viewpoints.

PC Rochford explained that they had been monitoring speeding on Willowherb Road with speed guns. He explained that Lyde Green was a whole new community with whom the neighbourhood team needed to build relationships. He noted that the provision of electric bicycles would help cover extra ground in these areas, increasing the visibility of police within the area.

Councillor R Hunt asked if they had caught many people speeding on Willowherb Road. PC Rochford said there were not many breaking the limit and noted that 28mph was the highest he clocked with a speed gun. 22/23mph was the maximum in most cases. PC Rochford suggested that the bollards by the school were definitely helping. He noted that some people do see the speed guns as they approach but that many do not. It was noted that the neighbourhood police team had been contacted by the traffic management unit, the experts in this area, asking for taskings, so Willowherb Road had been referred to them. It was noted that the traffic management units had the best contacts with highways, councils etc. Councillor R Hunt asked if speed checks were sufficient in the area. PC Rochford noted that there was also a unit which dealt with dashcam footage. It was noted that it would never be possible to totally eradicate speeding, but that the deterrent factor certainly contributed to bottom-line prevention, as most of the speeding would relate to people who live there. If police were seen to be present, that would be a deterrent in itself, and encourage them to be more courteous neighbours and drivers. Councillor R Hunt noted that residents believed that Willowherb Road was being used as a cut-through to Yate.

Councillor Nichols enquired as to the antisocial behaviour at the retail park and whether this is more prevalent on certain nights. PC Rochford explained that there were different groups at play, the group mentioned earlier causing the problems at the Boots end of the retail park, and other youths, 14/15 years old, hanging about, sitting on trolleys at the Sainsburys end, but not being abusive.

Councillor Al-Hassan asked whether there had been reports from the staff in Boots, as he had heard accounts from people working there that it was a regular occurrence? Had accounts from father that kids running around causing trouble in Boots store. Other PC said have met with the businesses. Presence of some sort every day, but it is the same small group. Every other day if you include all the groups. They are patrolling up there every day, but it is dark, empty car park in the evenings which will encourage them in.

Councillor Palmer asked whether the escalation process was being followed. PC Rochford confirmed that it was and explained that this involved letters to parents, leading on to unacceptable behaviour contracts and potentially escalation on to arrestable event.

Councillor Maytham suggested that antisocial behaviour could be a topic for consideration at the 'blue sky thinking' session. Councillor R Hunt suggested it may be a follow up session.

The police noted that there were different groups at play. PC Maywood cautioned that there was a risk of the youths who were not causing serious issues being tarred with the same brush as the more problematic offenders.

PC Rochford highlighted that there were ongoing problems with high value bike thefts, totalling many thousands of pounds. He noted that owners were not making note of serial numbers or registering them on the Avon & Somerset Constabulary website. He explained it was far more likely to result in a conviction if owners registered their bikes in this way. The police officers undertook to provide details of the website for publicizing on the Town Council website.

Action: Town Clerk

PC Rochford highlighted that there had been successful arrests local for some of the gangs responsible and the suspects would be facing court in relation to dozens of offences, with convictions hoped for within the next few months. He noted that the perpetrators were youths of 14/15/16 years old and that they were getting more adept, and brazen, in their techniques.

130. Grant Applications

The meeting considered the recommendations of the Finance Committee to fund the following grant applications:

- **Avon & Somerset Constabulary - £7,138.38 for purchase of three electric cycles and associated cycle kit:**

The neighbourhood police team answered question from councillors. PC Rochford explained that with electric bikes they would be able to cover more ground, respond more quickly and gather intelligence more quickly. He explained that 15/20mph was far better than on foot.

PC Rochford confirmed that the bicycles would be kept at Staple Hill station under lock and key when not in use. He explained that they would predominantly serve Lyde Green and Emersons Green, which comprised the majority of the beat area.

It was **Resolved** that the Council in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:- £7,138.38 for the purchase of three electric cycles and associated cycle kit for the local neighbourhood beat team.

The grant was approved on the condition that the local police would report to the Town Council within 12 months to update on how the funds had been spent and its impact.

- **St Peter's Hospice - £2,500 towards cost of care provided by Community Nurse Specialists:**

It was **Resolved** that the Council in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:- £2,500 towards cost of care provided by Community Nurse Specialists. A condition of this grant is that St Peter's Hospice state in writing the use to which the money has been put.

131. Vehicles parking on Vinney Green Common

The councillors considered the issue of parking on Vinney Green Common in contravention of byelaws. Councillor Somers noted that when church events were taking place, many of the attendees were parking on the common. Councillor Somers noted that letters had been dropped off to residents, but that this appeared to not have had any effect. Councillor Hill noted that many of the residents had recently had their kerbs dropped to allow parking on their driveways, which should help.

PC Rochford was asked if the police are able to enforce byelaws, to which they replied no.

Councillor Al Hassan suggested that maybe the local police could cycle past on their patrols, which the police officers present agreed to do. It was agreed that the matter should be left with the Open Spaces Committee.

PC Rochford, PC Maywood, and PCSO Sophie Green left the meeting.

132. Correspondence and Actions Required

The Manager of the Premier Inn had contacted the Town Clerk, in response to the Town Council's letter, to notify that they had recruited somebody to pick litter twice a week in the car park area. It was **Resolved** to contact the Manager of the Premier Inn to thank them.

Action: Clerk

133. Finance Committee Update

The Chairman of the Finance Committee gave a verbal report from the last meeting.

134. Professional services - Legal / HR

The meeting noted that the procurement of advice from HR Dept to advise the council on an urgent HR matter, at a time when there was no Town Clerk in place, had not previously been approved by the council. Due to the fact this was an urgent and critical requirement, it was **Resolved** to retrospectively approve the appointment of HR Dept for the purposes of assisting with the recent staff grievance issue.

The meeting also considered arrangements in place for the council to approve such time critical instructions/spend, taking into account the current financial regulations and delegations.

It was **Resolved** to delegate authorisation to spend/instruct to the Chair and Vice Chair in conjunction, for professional legal advice should the need arise. This would apply where there was considered to be a significant risk or harm or loss to the Town Council, and only if the timescales did not allow for it to be brought to a Full Council meeting or delegated Committee. It was agreed that this delegation would last only until the next full review of the standing orders and financial regulations.

135. Town Council Budget 2020/21

The councillors received the proposed budget for 2020/21, as recommended by the Finance Committee. It was **Resolved** to approve the budget for 2020/21.

136. Personnel Committee Update

Councillor Nichols gave a short verbal report from the Personnel Committee. Councillors considered the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to approve the following updated policies, which were based on NALC model policies, where available:

- Adoption Leave and Pay
- Flexible Working Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Pay Protection Policy
- Probationary Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

It was **Resolved** to approve the policies as recommended by the Personnel Committee.

The Clerk undertook to circulate the policies to all members.

Action: Clerk

The Councillors considered the CiLCA Learning Agreement for the Clerk, which was based on the standard NALC model. As recommended by the Personnel Committee, it was **Resolved** to approve the CiLCA Learning Agreement for the Clerk for signature by the Chairman.

Action: Chair

The councillors considered the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to grant the Clerk 60 hours of study leave in relation to the CiLCA study requirement. It was **Resolved** to approve this recommendation.

137. Town Council Policies

The Clerk asked councillors to consider the schedule of Town Council policies and, in particular, the upcoming dates for review.

It was **Resolved** to set up a Policies Working Group. The Clerk confirmed that meeting days and times would be flexible to fit in with the availability of members. Volunteers for the Policies Working Group were asked to contact the Clerk. Councillor Johnson volunteered and Councillor R Hunt said she would give it some consideration.

Action: All members

138. Planning Committee Update

A verbal report was received from the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

The Town Council had contacted South Gloucestershire Council expressing concern that residents seemed unaware of the 4G mast proposal. Further to this, the planning department at South Gloucestershire Council promptly recirculated the consultation to residents. Comments from local residents were now showing on the planning portal.

Councillor Somers noted that he had raised the matter of the 4G mast at the Community Engagement Forum.

Councillor Somers reported to members that, over last three months, only one planning decision had gone against the comments of Emersons Green Town Council. Councillor Palmer enquired about the White House Farm application. Councillor Somers explained that the Town Council had voted against it, and against demolition of outbuildings, but the planning decision was that the listed outbuildings could be demolished. Councillor Somers said that, as far as he was aware, White House Farm itself could not be demolished. Councillor Hunt said the planning application would be approved, as it was part of the masterplan, with 89 houses allowed for.

139. Heads of Terms for Skate Park Lease

Members considered the draft Heads of Terms, drafted by South Gloucestershire Council, for the future responsibility of the Skate Park. There was some discussion around this.

CD left the meeting.

Clarification was requested from councillors concerning clause 4, relating to structures, and clause 12, relating to the path. Councillor R Hunt undertook to discuss the plans and timescales for the path with South Gloucestershire Council.

Actions: Clerk and Councillor R Hunt

There was discussion around timescales and resources. Councillors were mindful of not committing without confidence that the project could be followed through successfully. It was noted that this would constitute a longer-term project and that, as such, expectations would need to be managed. It was agreed to seek clarification on the points noted above, and that the item would return to a future agenda.

140. Risk Register and Risk Management Policy

It was **Resolved** to approve the Risk Management Policy as previously circulated.

141. It was **Resolved** to exclude members of the public and press for agenda item 18 (the following item), due to the CONFIDENTIAL and SENSITIVE nature of the business to be transacted.

142. South Gloucestershire Council protocol for marking a sensitive major public event

It was agreed to carry this agenda item forward to the next meeting for consideration.

143. Items from Members to Report

- Councillor Palmer enquired as to whether councillors wished to consider receiving sign language training.
- Councillor R Hunt noted that there was £30k available in grant funding from South Gloucestershire Council to commemorate VE Day.
- It was noted that there was a consultation out concerning the Emersons Green Sainsburys Junction. The proposal included cobblestones at the crossing, and they were looking into a raised table, visibility display, making the view clearer and adapting the middle island.
- Councillor Hill noted that there was a trench in the road, caused by potholes, filling with water in central Mangotsfield. This was causing pedestrians to get splashed. The Clerk reported that at the last Town and Council Parish Forum, South Gloucestershire Council had spoken regarding potholes, and that there was a high threshold for repair.
- It was noted that there was a litter picking event at Emersons Green Park the following weekend.
- Councillor Nichols expressed concern that anti-social behaviour still appeared to be an ongoing issue in the area and that the youth work being funded by the Town Council did not appear to be reducing this.
- The Clerk confirmed that the 'blue sky' strategy session would take place from 10.00am – 12.00pm on Saturday 7 March. Members were asked to suggest any particular high-level themes for the agenda.
- Councillor Somers raised concern relating to the dual cycle/pedestrian path at the Emerald Park north bound bus stop, where pedestrians were cycling at a high speed perilously close to pedestrians waiting for buses. He suggested that it may be worth requesting bollards to create some separation and to slow cyclists down. It was agreed that the Open Spaces Committee would consider this matter.

Action: Clerk

144. Next Meeting

19:00 on 12 March 2020 to be held in **The Council Chamber of Emersons Green Town**

The meeting closed at 9.30pm