



EMERSONS GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Full Council

8 October 2020

held via Skype due to COVID-19 restrictions

Present: Councillors S Budd (Chairman), D Somers, P Morgan, J Hunt, M Palmer, R Hunt, R Nichols, C Wilkins, C Johnson, S Bassett and J Adams

Attendees: Kath MacConnachie (Clerk)

220. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Todd, Hill and Al Hassan.

221. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011

Councillor Runt H declared an interest in agenda item 15 and confirmed that she would not partake in any vote. The Clerk advised that as she were declaring an interest, she should also not take part in debating the agenda item. Councillor J Hunt said that the Clerk was wrong, and that this only applied to a pecuniary interest.

There were no other declarations of interest.

222. Public participation

A member of the public, TC, joined the meeting. The Full Council had previously considered correspondence from TC on the subject of the makeshift BMX tracks at Rodway common and TC had subsequently discussed the issue with Councillor J Hunt. TC explained that he represented a group of young people who would like to put forward a proposal on how the makeshift track at Rodway Common might be managed in the future.

TC explained that he had put together, with his father, a map of potential areas on the common that might be suitable as a BMX track, and he noted a company called Architrail who would be able to visit the common with a view to making recommendations and quoting for works.

Councillor Basset noted that the land was registered Common Land, which meant it had to remain accessible to everyone. The Clerk confirmed that the Commons Act also stated that the ground should not be disturbed, and confirmed that the land had to be made accessible to all users.

The Town Council agreed that any proposal from TC should be received at a future Full Council meeting.

Action: Clerk

Councillor R Hunt undertook to put TC in touch with the Commons Officer at South Gloucestershire Council to talk about what may or may not be possible.

Action: Councillor R Hunt

Councillors thanked TC for taking the interest and time to attend the meeting.

The Clerk noted that TC had been made aware that the Council were seeking to involve young people in developing youth provision and facilities within the area and that he TC had signalled his interest in being involved in this.

223. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10 September 2020

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were a true and accurate record of the meeting and that these would be signed by the Chairman at the next opportunity.

224. Outstanding Items from these Minutes

There were no outstanding items from these minutes.

The Clerk confirmed that she had met with the Assistant Clerk, RH, regarding potential administrative ways to reduce the burden on the Open Spaces Committee, and that these would be reported by RH to the next Open Spaces Committee meeting.

225. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to note.

226. Climate Emergency Declaration

Councillor Johnson reported that she had attended the ALCA Climate Action Day on behalf of the Town Council at the end of July. Councillor Johnson presented her briefing, which was circulated in advance.

Councillor R Hunt said she was unsure what was meant by the term 'Climate Emergency' and other councillors were not keen on the terminology. Councillor R Hunt felt that the Town Council should not declare a Climate Emergency without having an action plan and strategy lined up, so as not to set expectations of members of the public.

The Clerk noted that her understanding from what other Town and Parish councils were doing, was that the declaration was considered the first step, and that the plan followed on from the declaration. Councillor Johnson confirmed that this was her understanding from the ALCA Climate Action Day and that following actions could include easily achievable small steps such as committing to the use of environmentally friendly products at the Town Council offices and choosing green energy providers.

Councillor J Hunt suggested that consideration should be given to whether a budget should be assigned.

It was suggested that a working group should be formed to take the proposal forward.

It was agreed that this item would return to the next Full Council meeting.

Action: Clerk

Councillor Palmer suggested involving Lyde Green Open Spaces in any discussions.

227. Litter and general condition of the car park at the Town Council offices

The Clerk noted that the state of the car park at the Town Council offices had considerably deteriorated, both in terms of litter but also in terms of overgrown shrubs and weeds. The Clerk noted that she had entered this on the Town Council Risk Register as a reputational risk, noting that a member of the public had complained previously.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Premier Inn Manager had had previously communicated that they had employed somebody to litter pick in the car park twice a week, but this did not appear to have materialised. The Clerk also noted that the main Premier Inn/Beefeater section of the carpark appeared to have been maintained, but that the Town Council section did not.

It was **Resolved** that the Town Council write to the management at the Premier Inn to report the concerns of the Town Council regarding litter and maintenance of the car park, and to request remedial action.

Action: Clerk

228. Speeding Vehicles in Emersons Green

The meeting considered the prevalence of speeding in the Emersons Green 20mph zone. This was an agenda item raised at the July Full Council meeting.

Councillor Johnson noted that some other local councils had distributed 20mph stickers for residents to display on their wheelie bins and enquired as to whether this was something Emersons Green Town Council may wish to pursue.

Councillor Palmer wondered whether it may be possible to request additional 20mph markings on the roads, as featured outside schools.

It was **Resolved** that a Town Council Voice publication article should canvas ideas for tackling speeding and the appetite for 20mph stickers to display on bins.

Action: Clerk

229. Personnel Committee Update

Councillor Budd, as Chairman of the Personnel Committee gave an update from the meeting. He noted that changes to the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee were suggested, including that the Chairman of the Town Council should not act as the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, as was the advice of the ALCA representative. The Clerk added that ALCA had further suggested that the Chairman of the Town Council should not sit on the Personnel Committee which Councillor Budd accepted.

The meeting considered the draft revised Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee. Councillor J Hunt did not agree with the proposed amendments that would give delegation to the Personnel Committee. He suggested that delegation would mean that decisions were taken 'behind closed doors'. Councillor J Hunt expressed concerns that he felt decisions taken, and conduct of the Committee in the past, may have been inappropriate.

The Clerk noted that the advice of ALCA/NALC was that the Personnel Committee should have delegation, otherwise there was little point in having a Committee. Councillor R Hunt suggested that you could still have Committees without any decision making powers to make recommendations and the Clerk suggested that this would more appropriately constitute a 'working group'. Councillor R Hunt suggested that if decisions regarding pay and decisions regarding employment/termination of employment had to be taken to Full Council, what was left that would require delegation. The Clerk pointed out that there were other matters, including the Clerk's appraisal, personnel policies, leave, sickness management and training.

Councillor J Hunt suggested that the Clerk had previously stated at the Personnel and Finance Committee that the Personnel Committee should have full delegation for all decisions. The Clerk clarified that this was not the case, and that the draft Terms of Reference, which had been taken to Personnel Committee, Finance Committee and circulated to all councillors, clearly stated the proposed levels of delegation.

The Clerk noted that the Terms of Reference had been recommended for adoption by the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee.

The Chairman asked that the Personnel Committee Terms of Reference be brought back to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk was asked to circulate the draft Terms of Reference alongside the previous one so members could see the proposed changes. The Clerk confirmed that this had already been circulated to all members, complete with all suggested changes highlighted in the document.

The Chairman noted that there were two vacancies on the Personnel Committee, one to replace former Councillor Maytham, and one to replace himself. The Chairman asked councillors if there were any volunteers to join the Personnel Committee. There were no volunteers.

The meeting considered the draft Pay, Recognition and Rewards Policy as recommended by the Personnel Committee, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the Pay Recognition and Rewards Policy.

Action: Clerk

230. Finance Committee Update

Councillor Nichols gave a verbal update from the recent Finance Committee meeting, noting that payments for October had been authorised. Councillor Nichols thanked Councillor Somers who had visited the Town Council offices to carry out the outstanding reconciliations of payments against bank statements. It was noted that Councillor Somers would report on the reconciliations to the next Finance Committee, as he was absent for the September meeting.

Action: Councillor Somers

Councillor Nichols noted that the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee had been reviewed and that some amendments were suggested. The draft Terms of Reference had been circulated to all members in advance and the Finance Committee recommended them for adoption.

It was **Resolved** that the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee be adopted by the Town Council.

231. Planning Committee

Councillor Somers gave an update from the Planning Committee.

232. Open Spaces Committee Update

Councillor Somers gave a verbal update on behalf of the Open Spaces Committee.

233. Items from members to report

- Steve Bassett reported that Emersons Green surgery appeared to be struggling in the midst of the Covid-19 situation, and that they were under tremendous pressure. He asked if there was any way the Town Council could assist them to run more efficiently, possibly involving information transfer.

Councillor R Hunt also said the Town Council had to be cautious of raising expectations of the public.

Councillor Palmer was keen to understand what happened to the capital money he said the surgery was awarded to develop a service at Lyde Green. He asked what options there may be to find this out.

Councillors considered whether it might be desirable to write a letter to the surgery. The Chairman requested that this item be added to the next agenda for consideration.

- **Action: Clerk**

- Councillor Budd noted that there would be no remembrance parade in Mangotsfield this year due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, but that an online event was planned.
- Councillor Wilkins gave an update on Linking the Greens, in particular plans to update the Newlands Bridge and path, reporting that some of the roads in the area would be repaved. Councillor Wilkins suggested this could be something for the potential Cycling and Walking Working Group which had been suggested by Oldland Parish Council.
- Councillor Palmer noted that the block paving on main entrance road to Lyde Green was set to be replaced in the near future with an alternative surface, after which responsibility for the road would be handed over to South Gloucestershire Council.

234. To pass a resolution to exclude members of the public and press for agenda item 4, due to the CONFIDENTIAL and SENSITIVE nature of the business to be transacted

Due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the business to be transacted, it was **Resolved** that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for agenda item 16, *'Youth Facility Project – to consider submission by Councillor Wilkins'*.

235. Youth facility project

This agenda item was held in private, in accordance with the resolution.

236. Next Meeting

19:00 on 12 November 2020 via Skype