



EMERSONS GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Full Council

14 January 2021

held via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions

Present: Councillors S Budd (Chairman), D Somers, P Morgan, M Palmer (joined late), R Hunt, R Nichols, C Johnson, S Al Hassan, S Hill, J Sweeney, J Hunt, C Wilkins and J Adams

Absent: Councillor Bassett

In attendance: Kath MacConnachie (Town Clerk), PC James Rochford and five members of the public.

278. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received.

279. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011

There were no declarations of interest.

280. Public participation

The five applicants for the councillor co-option posts were in attendance. Also in attendance was PC James Rochford. There were no other members of the public present.

281. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10 December 2020

The Clerk undertook to amend the apology listed for 'Councillor Hunt' to 'Councillor J Hunt'. Subject to this one amendment it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December were a true and accurate record of the meeting and that these would be signed by the Chairman at the next opportunity.

282. Outstanding Items from these Minutes

There were no outstanding items from these minutes.

283. Update from the local neighbourhood police team

PC James Rochford gave an update from the local police team. He particularly noted that:

- There had been an increase in thefts from motor vehicles. This was noted to be a particular issue in Lyde Green and PC Rochford urged residents to ensure that they were locking their vehicles, as this was often a factor. A suspect had been arrested and was being charged for a number of offences.

- Cycle patrols were continuing using the three electric bikes purchased by the Town Council, enabling a far greater area of patrol coverage. PC Rochford noted that arrests had been made in relation to the recent assaults on the cycle tracks.
- Speeding on Willowherb Road: The Special Constables had been carrying out speed checks on Willowherb Road. He noted that the vast majority of drivers were sticking to the 20mph limit, or just over. Those over the limit were found to be Lyde Green residents. The maximum speed recorded had been 35mph.
- Enforcement of lockdown regulations was noted to be manageable.
- Councillor R Hunt noted that she had had increased reports of antisocial behaviour on the basketball court behind the park and ride at Lyde Green. PC Rochford was unaware of this and encouraged members of the public to report it online reporting, as he was unaware of many, if any, reports recently.

The Chairman thanked PC Rochford for taking the time to update the council.

Councillor Palmer joined the meeting during this agenda item.

284. Co-option to the Councillor vacancies

Each of the candidates for co-option to the councillor vacancies took it in turns to address the meeting in support of their applications.

It was **Resolved** that all applicants be put forward to vote for the vacancy/vacancies for which they applied.

285. Vote to co-opt a Councillor to the Emersons Green Ward

It was **Resolved** that James Dowling be co-opted to the Councillor position for the Emersons Green Ward.

286. Vote to co-opt a Councillor to the Blackhorse Ward vacancy

It was **Resolved** that Roberta Sunderland be co-opted to the Councillor position for the Blackhorse Ward.

All candidates were thanked for their applications and they were encouraged to apply again for any future vacancies.

287. Communications

- The meeting considered correspondence from a member of the public concerning further digging on Rodway Common. Councillor Hill noted that she regularly walked on the common and had not noticed any large holes appearing.
- The meeting considered correspondence from a member of the public enquiring about BMX facilities within the area. The Clerk's response had been circulated. Members had no further response to provide to the member of the public.
- It was noted that The Week publication had offered free space for the Town Council which the Clerk had accepted.

288. Planning Committee update

Councillor Somers gave an update from the Planning Committee.

289. Open Spaces Committee update

Councillor Somers gave an update from the Open Spaces Committee.

Councillor Adams raised the matter of hedgehog houses as raised under Items from Members at the last meeting. The Clerk undertook to add this to a future agenda and the Clerk undertook to investigate options/powers to fund.

Action: Clerk

290. Finance Committee update

Councillor Budd, who chaired the December meeting, gave an update from the Finance Committee.

291. Internal audit in-year assurance review

The internal audit in-year assurance review report had been circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting. There was one action relating to a supplementary standing order in relation to Covid-19 arrangements for remote meetings. The Clerk noted that his was not a legal requirement, but good practice, and this was listed on the agenda for this meeting.

292. Completion of the external audit review for the year ended 31 March 2020

The AGAR Part 3, certified by the external auditor and the publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audited was noted by members.

293. Draft 2021/22 budget for approval

The meeting considered the draft 2021/22 budget as recommended by the Finance Committee. The Clerk answered queries.

It was **Resolved** to approve the 2021/22 draft budget for the Town Council.

294. To set the level of precept for 2021/22

The meeting considered the precept level for 2021/22. The draft budget included a precept of 0.5% in line with inflation which equated to 20p per household. Members felt this was fair and reasonable.

It was **Resolved** to set the precept at £39.60 equivalent per band D household for 2021/22.

Action: Clerk

295. Covid-19 Supplementary Standing Orders

It was **Resolved** to adopt the draft supplementary standing order setting out Covid-19 arrangements as per internal audit recommendation.

296. To consider the business case for the purchase of IT hardware for councillors

In response to interest expressed by members, the Clerk had circulate a business case outlining options for the purchase of IT equipment for members, where required.

There was discussion around this with members considering the requirement to ensure both appropriate use of public funds and the requirement to ensure that all members were be able to carry out the councillor role (and for members of the public to feel able to apply for such roles) regardless of personal circumstances.

It was **Resolved** that the Town Council would fund a device for any councillor who requested one in order to carry out the role.

297. To consider letter of support for the Old Mangotsfield Station Arts project

A draft letter of support of the project was circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

It was **Resolved** to issue the letter of support for the Old Mangotsfield Station Arts Project.

Action: Clerk

298. EGTC Risk Register (for review)

The Town Council Risk Register was reviewed by members. There were no issues highlighted.

299. Next Meeting

19:00 on 11 February 2021, to be held remotely via Zoom