

Minutes of the Town Council remote meeting held via Skype,
on **Tuesday 23rd March 2021** starting at 19:30hrs

Present:

Chair: Cllr P Burton

Councillors: Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr R Swann, Cllr M Gunn, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr I Mackillop, Cllr L Taylor, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr B Hamilton, Cllr J Dewick,

Officers: Mrs J Earp (Deputy Town Clerk and RFO)

In attendance: Cllr L Vijeh, Martha Covell (ECA)

874 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr M James, and Cllr L Wilcock.

875 Declarations of Interest

Councillors made Declarations of Interest as detailed in the table below:

Name	Agenda Item	Minute No	Nature of Interest	Type of Interest	Action
Cllr Shepherd	14		Member of cricket club	Personal	Spoke
Cllr Swann	14		Member of cricket club	Personal	Listened

876 Minutes

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2021.

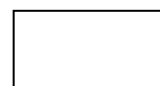
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

877 Report from District Councillors

Consideration was given to the District Councillors report received. Cllr Hamilton informed the council of the new recycling scheme which has already started and been successful in the Mendip district. The amounts recycled had increased and the level of rubbish in black bags and been reduced. As this will soon be coming to Ilminster, he highlighted the various communication channels that will be used to inform the community such as leaflets through doors, and information distributed via social media and South Somerset District Council (SSDC) website. Cllr Burton added that he would include this in his talk with the pupils of Greenfylde School on Friday 26th March. No further comments were made.

878 Report from the County Councillor for the Ilminster Division

Consideration was given to the report provided by the County Councillor for the Ilminster Division. As Cllr Vijeh had technical problems with her microphone and camera, the Mayor, Cllr Burton, summarised the contents of the report. He highlighted the successful vaccination programme being carried out across Somerset. No further comments were made.



879 Neighbourhood Plan

Consideration was given to the proposed draft Neighbourhood Plan and to seek the Town Council's acceptance. Cllr Shepherd started by giving an overview of the history of the Neighbourhood Plan which started in 2017 alongside the appointment of Martha Covell from ECA. The Local Plan stated a requirement for 839 houses, and with the help of the established Neighbourhood Plan Development Group (NPDG), they investigated a number of potential places for these houses. They needed to consider the environmental, leisure and economy issues, access and movement. He expressed his and the Town Council's gratitude to all of the members of the NPDG for giving up their time and their hard work to get the Neighbourhood Plan to this stage. It was a monumental task. He was now seeking Town Council approval of the contents of the plan, so that it could be moved onto Regulation 14, which gives the community an opportunity to comment and have an input to the plan before it goes to a referendum on the final version. He then handed over to the Town Council's consultant, Martha Covell of ECA, who gave a presentation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Martha began with introducing the Pre-submission of Regulation 14 Consultation Version of the Neighbourhood Plan and summarised the background, the process and the next steps. SSDC's Local Plan listed a requirement of 839 houses to be built in the area, and so the Neighbourhood Plan was a positive option for the local residents to be involved, and it was seen as an opportunity for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan is a planning policy document with appendices A to D. The plan covers the same period as the SSDC Local Plan, up to 2036. The Evidence Base is made up of the 2018 Housing Needs Assessment, the Habitat Regulations Assessment, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and a Site Allocation Assessment and public consultation. It is an ambitious plan that is supported by SSDC. By going through Regulation 14, there should be more involvement of the residents to give their views on the plan. There are 12 aims for the Neighbourhood Plan which can be found under the Vision, Mission and Aims. There are 15 policies within the Neighbourhood Plan which are based on four themes. The most challenging being the location of the houses. It was very complex and was scrutinised on a continual basis for two years. The proposals on the map include protected green areas, and an amended boundary line in red. The houses were spread across the town with little impact on heritage and character of the town. Martha described how the problem of Covid regulations that arose in March 2020, prohibited Regulation 14 from happening as the Neighbourhood Plan was ready to go. However, during the lockdown period, it gave the NPDG the opportunity to double check the information and reports in more detail. Martha suggested that the six-week consultation period could be carried out in May/June by placing copies of the Neighbourhood Plan in the library, the Town Council offices and other suitable venues where members of the public are able to access and give their views. She recommended a survey online and a hard copy leaflet. Martha concluded that the next steps would be the six-week consultation to receive the residents comments and to make any amendments to the plan before it goes to an independent examiner following the referendum. Cllr Hamilton raised a point about the area of the map which related to industry. Cllr Gunn requested that the part of the map of Herne Hill be altered as it contained a cycle path which does not exist and is against the byelaws of the open spaces.

RESOLVED to accept the plan with an amended map.

880 Youth Project

Cllr Taylor gave a report from the Ilminster Youth Project which contained more details of a service level agreement of £15,700, which could be negotiated with Young Somerset, to provide a Youth Worker for 2 days a week over a 2-year period. The price would include certification, insurance, and travel costs. She added that Young Somerset would look favourably on any reasonable application for support to enable a successful relaunch of a Youth Club. Cllr Burton asked of what capacity the Church would be involved to which Cllr Taylor replied that they have an Outreach Worker, but it is up to the Church how that person is used. However, the Youth Project is not linked to the Church. Cllr Keitch added that the Town Council need to support the young people. Cllr Taylor asked whether a Youth Worker had been included in the budget for 2021, which Deputy Town Clerk then stated that it had been taken out.

RESOLVED

- (a) Cllr Taylor to ask Young Somerset to contact the Deputy Town Clerk to discuss a possible service level agreement.
- (b) Deputy Town Clerk to identify which part of the budget would be used to pay for the service level agreement.

881 Payments and Virements

Consideration was given to the schedule of payments for authorisation.

RESOLVED to accept the schedule of payments

882 CCLA Public Sector Fund

Consideration was given as to whether the fund should remain in the account or withdrawn based on the possibility of a change in the economy forcing negative interest rates. Discussion about the possibility of negative interest rates took place.

RESOLVED to leave the money in the fund and review if the situation changes.

883 Insurance Policy (all assets)

Consideration was given to accept the renewal quotations for the following 12 months (2nd year of a 3-year contract) and whether to make an insurance claim for the repairs following a vehicle engine fire. The Town Council recognised that the insurance quotes were part of a 3-year contract. Discussion focused on the possibility of a claim being made.

RESOLVED

- (a) To accept the renewal quotations and continue the insurance cover.
- (b) To give Deputy Town Clerk delegated authority to claim through the insurance company if the cost of repairs exceeded £2,000.

884 The Magistrates Court Purchase

Consideration was given to give delegated authority to the Deputy Town Clerk to make a single payment transaction to include the purchase price and associated legal fees and disbursements as the Financial Regulations state a limit of £50,000 over a 3-day period.



RESOLVED To give Deputy Town Clerk the delegated authority to make a single payment transaction to cover the purchase cost of the Magistrates Court, the legal fees and disbursements.

885 Policy and Procedure Review – Recommendations from Resources Committee

At its meeting on 2nd March 2021, the Resources Committee considered one of the Town Council's Policies and made the recommendation stated below:

Financial Risk Register

That the Financial Risk Register is approved as amended.

Cllr Hamilton pointed out the missing colour of the risk score for no.4 Banking. Deputy Town Clerk apologised for the error and stated that it was a low risk and should be green.

RESOLVED to accept the recommendations from the Resources Committee with the amended low risk colour green being added to risk no.4 Banking.

886 Health and Safety Policy

Consideration was given to the approval of the amended policy.

RESOLVED to approve the amendments to the policy

887 Ilminster Cricket Club

Consideration was given to the Ilminster Cricket Club's grant application requesting funds for the purchase of new nets. Cllr Shepherd gave a brief overview of the application. Discussion was led by the information available on the form and confirmation of the maximum grant of £500 was available in the budget.

RESOLVED to support the application and a grant of £500 was given.

888 Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider exclusion of the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), for: Agenda items 16 Recruitment

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda item 16 Recruitment due to the confidential nature of staff matters.

889 Recruitment

Cllr Burton announced that the Town Clerk was leaving and that a locum Town Clerk was being sought via an agency. Initially, the plan would be based on 16 hours per week based on reviewing the job description to ensure the important areas of the position were covered. Reasons given by the departing Town Clerk covered the difficulties faced with not being able to make decisions in the office, living in the town was becoming a problem as people knew her and her position in the council leading to accusations, and also the lack of help in a time of crisis. Cllr Keitch added that there would be competition for locums as Chard and possibly Crewkerne would also be seeking help. Discussion about recruitment for the office followed. It was also noted that Cllr White was helping in the office with the Cemetery Lodge grant and tender.



Cllr Dewick left the online call at 21.14

RESOLVED Cllr Shepherd to continue seeking a locum on behalf of the Town Council via the agency, and to organise a Skype meeting with the locum alongside Cllr Burton, Cllr James and the Deputy Town Clerk.

Meeting closed: 21:48

Chair Signature:

Date:

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