

Minutes of the Town Council remote meeting held via Skype, on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020** starting at 19:30hrs

**Present:**

**Chair:** Cllr P Burton

**Councillors:** Cllr S Shepherd, Cllr J Dewick, Cllr V Higgins, Cllr M Gunn, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr I Mackillop, Cllr L Taylor, Cllr F White, Cllr L Wilcock, Cllr M James and Cllr B Hamilton

**In Attendance:**

County Councillor Linda Vijeh

**Officers:** Mrs J Earp (Deputy Town Clerk) and Mrs H White (Town Clerk)

3 members of the public were in attendance.

**Speaker 1**

The speaker asked a number of questions:

1. The speaker mentioned that Ilminster Town Council submitted the application to the district council for the South Somerset Carnival Park, which secured a fifty percent discount on the planning fee for the carnival park committee, a saving of over £6,000. The new town clerk is unable to provide details of any discussions leading to this decision. How was this decision arrived at, and who was involved?
2. The minutes do not record the motion proposed, and there is no record of the proposer. What was put to the town council, in what terms, and by whom?
3. Did Ilminster Town Council discuss the consequential loss of income to SSDC, and if so, what were its conclusions?
4. At the time of the meeting Cllr Shepherd was, or had been, the President of the Ilminster Carnival Club, yet there is no record of a pecuniary interest being declared. Why was this?
5. At the time of the meeting Ms Keitch was Chairman of SSDC Area West Committee, but this was not disclosed until after the item was discussed and a vote taken. Why was this?

The speaker went on to say many residents of parishes affected by the proposed development are concerned about the secretive nature of the relationship between Ilminster Town Council, the district council and the carnival committee with regard to this planning application. These matters should be in the public domain, and we hope for an unequivocal response in a spirit of openness and transparency.

**Speaker 2**

The speaker had concerns, not only for themselves but for others. In less than one week there have been two accidents concerning people. The Covid.19 issue could be something that we have with us for quite a while, so with people social distancing and having to walk in the road the speaker sees this as a problem. There are two main concerns, car parking along the street and also items being placed on pavements whereby the only option is the road. Although many people do watch for traffic with social distancing there are concerns that pedestrians don't always think about traffic. The pavements in the town are really not wide enough. Speed is another issue which has been mentioned, although the speaker is not saying this is the case this time. They are not saying stop unloading, the speaker said this has to be done and it wouldn't be all the time anyway. Disabled drivers again maybe a

concession but they do have car parks that are accessible to the town for most people. The speaker thanked the council for their time and hopefully consideration for these points.

### Speaker 3

The speaker had great concern that following two elderly persons being knocked down within a week in Ilminster that they hoped some action would be taken to make Ilminster become a safe environment once and for all for local residents especially the elderly and for children (re the school) because they feel that is not the case at the moment until some concrete action is taken. The speaker said that there is a 20 mph speed limit down East Street and North Street but the traffic that goes down the roads are well beyond that speed. The speaker thinks Ilminster has become a dangerous place for local residents and urges action to be taken. They want traffic calming to be put in place as a matter of urgency to avoid another more serious accident.

The Chairman thanked the speakers.

### 794 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr A Shearman.

Cllr R Swann provided his apologies. Town Clerk confirmed he had not attended a council meeting for 6 months.

RESOLVED to accept Cllr R Swann's apologies for his 6 month absence.

### 795 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
S Shepherd	Cricket Pavilion – Sub Lease to Ilminster Cricket Club and South Somerset Carnival Park	810 and 805	President and Secretary of Ilminster Cricket Club	Prejudicial Personal	Left the meeting Spoke
V Keitch	South Somerset Carnival Park	805	Member of SSDC Area West	Personal	Spoke
M James	Archie Gooch Pavilion	813	Member	Personal	Spoke

### 796 Minutes

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 796 Office Action Plan

Consideration was given to the Office Action Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should check the website to ensure the link to the Cycle campaign petition is on the Ilminster Town Council website.

**797 Police Report**

Consideration was given to the police report received. The police report provided an update on policing in Ilminster. The written report was circulated ahead of the meeting.

**RESOLVED** for the Town Clerk to ask the local police if the report just covered Ilminster town, who is involved in the speed watch programme and what volunteers. The Town Clerk to investigate speed watch cameras. To ask the police to attend a virtual meeting.

**798 Reports from District Councillors**

Consideration was given to the District Councillors report received. Cllr Hamilton spoke about some additions to the report, SSDC District Executive Committee (SSDC DX) have agreed to work more collaboratively with other District Councils. The 'Somerset Building Control Partnership' (SBCP) and the 'Somerset Independence Plus Service' (SIPS). For those who may not be aware, the SBCP was formed in March 2016 by Mendip, Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Dean Councils and is the largest Local Authority Building Control Partnership in the South West. It provides a building control service to businesses and householders on behalf of its partner Councils. An urgent Executive Decision made by the CEO, Council Leader and Portfolio Holder was agreed 'To provide a letter of support to our Leisure providers LED, with an agreement in principle to provide adequate funding'. Details of the SSDC Annual Achievements Report 2019-20 was provided including the launching of the regeneration projects in Chard, Yeovil and Wincanton, the 10-year Economic Development Strategy in order to place themselves in a good position to 'attract new businesses, help start-ups and encourage diversity and innovation, continuing to invest in order to make us more sustainable and able to support service provision, continual improvement of our customer services, especially to the most vulnerable, alleviate homelessness and with the environment strategy, work hard to protect the environment. In recognition of their achievements, SSDC have received or been 'shortlisted for a range of national awards or commendations for their work.'

**799 Report from the County Councillor for the Ilminster Division**

Consideration was given to the report provided by the County Councillor for the Ilminster Division. The County Councillor spoke about the police report referred to earlier in the meeting and confirmed that the previous community speed watch group no longer provide the service. The local police beat teams were undergoing training to be able to train the community to provide this service again.

**800 Financial Update**

Consideration was given to the report received from the new RFO. No questions on the report but as members of the public were present an explanation was provided for the term RFO – Responsible Financial Officer.

**801 Budget**

Consideration was given to how the Town Council wish to discuss the budget this year. In previous years an informal gathering was held at the Bowling and Tennis

Club on a Saturday morning. With the current restrictions this was not going to be possible.

**RESOLVED** to look at creating smaller groups to work over Skype and to look at different sections of the budget. Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to provide some dates in November for approval.

### **802 Cemetery Fees**

Consideration was given to the decision made by the Open Spaces Committee at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to increase the cemetery fees by 10% and to remove the fee for Parishioner Internment up to the age of 16 years.

**RESOLVED** to accept the amendments as agreed by the Open Spaces Committee.

### **803 Removal of BT Phone Box**

Consideration was given to whether the BT Phone Box at Herne Rise and The Mead should be kept.

Comments were made that the mobile phone signal was poor in this area. A Councillor lives in this area and it can be problematic. The phone box is not currently maintained and needs to be cleaned. If the Council were to adopt it could be converted to hold a further defibrillator for the town. It could also be used for Green Ilminster's seed swap service. The Councillors also discussed the police report we had received and the content of that. The report showed that the phone box as still used and this could be a lifeline for someone. Comment was made that the calls could be being made by very young children who use the phone box to access Childline or the police.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to BT to maintain as a phone box. If BT refuse to maintain as a phone box consideration was be given to adopt the phone box.

### **804 Youth Committee**

Consideration was given to the possibility of setting up a Youth Committee to involve 13-19 year olds.

Cllr Taylor spoke about a new Youth Committee bearing in mind the nature of the issues that the town has at present. She would put together a report which detailed the Town Council's involvement. The Town Clerk would look into funding for a Youth Worker together with research on the role and scope of youth workers.

Natalie Wainwright was invited to speak. Natalie confirmed that she was a willing volunteer for a new Youth Committee. Cllr Taylor would like a small sub-committee which would include herself and 2 other councillors who would meet with a small agenda and then come back to the full Town Council to provide the strategy. Cllr Keitch mentioned that South Petherton had a similar committee and it would be good to speak to them. Cllr Dewick and Cllr Hamilton offered their support. Cllr Shepherd offered to assist with any promotion as a Governor at Wadham School.

**RESOLVED** to put together initial thoughts for a Youth Committee and to come back to the Town Council with recommendations.

**805 South Somerset Carnival Park**

To consider whether there were any further detail that could be provided regarding the planning application process. The Town Clerk stated that speaker one had raised a number of questions in an email and then had raised these questions at the start of this meeting for consideration. Cllr Keitch confirmed that she had received an email and she had responded to explain why she had declared an interest at the particular time of the meeting. Cllr Burton reiterated that we provide support and on this occasion we did this again. The Council are unsure of what else they can add that hasn't already been provided.

**806 Christmas Tree Festival**

Consideration was given to whether the Town Council would like to support with a tree if the festival goes ahead this year. Comments included that with the pandemic this year the festival will be appreciated by the people of the town and it raises lots of money for charity.

**RESOLVED** to support and to pass on the Town Councils thanks to Marie and David Jewson for their efforts.

**807 Recording Votes in Town Council and Committee Meetings**

Consideration was given to a request from a Councillor to include the number of votes in the minutes. Discussions included that a Councillor can call for a named vote.

**RESOLVED** to keep the current system.

**808 Local Government Reform**

Discussions to be made about initial consultations and for the Town Council to start to consider if the reform is looking to devolve areas back to the Town Council what they may consider.

Cllr Keitch advised that the Town Clerk may be too early with this agenda item. There will be a transition period. The Secretary of State will make the decision by April. Cllr Hamilton suggested that any ideas Councillors had regarding the devolvement of services were sent to the Town Clerk and a list was kept ready for discussion. Consideration could include corporations with other Town or Parish Councils.

**809 Clerk's Updates**

Consideration was given to the Clerk's updates provided since the last meeting. No comments or queries were raised.

Cllr Shepherd, County Councillor Vjeh and members of the public left the meeting.

**810 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 item 19 Ilminster Cricket Club Lease, Agenda item 20 Sale at Ashcombe Court, Agenda item 21 Town Council Premises, Agenda item 22 Archie Gooch and Agenda item

23 Staffing Levels due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted i.e. business information and information relating to potential negotiations.

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda item 19 Ilminster Cricket Club Lease, Agenda item 20 Sale at Ashcombe Court, Agenda item 21 Town Council Premises, Agenda item 22 Archie Gooch and Agenda item 23 Staffing Levels due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted i.e. business information, financial information and items relating to potential negotiations.

**811. Ilminster Cricket Club Lease**

To consider a report prepared by the Town Clerk.

The Town Council looked at the report and considered the ongoing liabilities and potential liabilities for the town. Manpower costs were also considered for the upkeep of the land. A discussion was held that if we no longer rent the land how would it be accessed by the community. Another councillor stated that it was not our land and ITC only rent it from the landlord. One of the councillors has contacted the Lawn Tennis Association and they have advised that a conservative estimate of £35-£40K to resurface the tennis courts. Consideration was given to whether Ilminster Education Foundation (IEF) would be prepared to sell us the land. It was suggested that maybe the Town Council should speak to IEF at this stage. If notice was given to quit consideration was given to whether a request could be put to rent back the tennis courts and green space and whether the IEF would contribute towards the upkeep.

Proposal to terminate the lease with the Ilminster Education Foundation.  
The vote was requested be a named vote.

Proposer – Cllr Hamilton – in favour  
Seconded – Cllr Taylor – in favour  
Cllr Wilcock – against  
Cllr Mackillop – in favour  
Cllr Gunn – in favour  
Cllr Dewick – abstained  
Cllr James – in favour  
Cllr Higgins – in favour  
Cllr Keitch – against  
Cllr White – against  
Cllr Burton – against  
(in favour 6, against 4, abstain 1)

**RESOLVED** to serve notice on the lease with the Ilminster Education Foundation

Cllr Shepherd re-joined the meeting.

**812 Sale at Ashcombe Court**

To consider the reduced offer detailed in a letter from Broomhead & Saul.



**RESOLVED** to accept the reduced offer.

**813 Town Council Premises**

Consideration was given to the two surveyors quotes provided by the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED** to go with the Town Clerks recommendation for the survey.

Consideration was given to other properties within the town.

**RESOLVED** to organise a viewing.

**814 Archie Gooch Pavilion**

Consideration was given to the current lease arrangements.

Discussions were had regarding areas outside of the Archie Gooch Pavilion. Discussion was brought back to whether the council felt a meeting with ISCL would be beneficial to discuss current and ongoing plans. It was agreed that this was reasonable. It was agreed that the Town Clerk is to try and set up a small meeting with possibly Cllr Burton, Cllr Keitch and Cllr Gunn with the Directors of ISCL.

**815 Staffing Levels**

Consideration was given to the current staffing levels.

The temporary contract with one of the grounds team was about to come to an end. Discussions were had as to whether we should offer the grounds person a permanent contract. The council looked at a chart of the work to be completed over the coming winter months.

**RESOLVED** to offer the temporary grounds team member a permanent contract.

The meeting closed at 22:17hrs.