

# STALBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Clerk: T Watson

8 Ring Street, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 2LZ.

Tel 01963 364276.

Email: [clerk@stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stalbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Draft minutes of The Town Council Meeting held in the Stalbridge Hall On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

**Present Councillors:** G Carr-Jones (Chair), J Smith, W Batty-Smith, D Hine, T Bishop, J Cowley, P Ashcroft, C Moore, R Knapp, A Dike & K Garland.

T J Watson (Clerk)

### In attendance

There were 39 members of the public in attendance.

### Welcome to members of the public and introductions.

#### 1. To receive apologies.

None.

#### 2. Declarations of interest.

None. General statement that members were library members.

#### 3. To approve the minutes of the meeting - held on 7<sup>th</sup> December

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting having previously been circulated to Councillors were approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### 4. Correspondence: as detailed in annex. 1a.

Date	From	Info	Action
12/12/11	Carol McKay (Rights Of Way Officer)	E mail ref. path Jarvis Way to Bridleway 74	It was agreed to reply and advise that The TC had previously already agreed to permissive horse riding rights and that members felt that the barriers were of adequate spacing to allow access for wheelchairs & electric buggies. Post meeting note from N Brown, Footpaths officer ( <i>The staggered barrier was installed as part of the original Liveability 'Trailway and Links' project and paid for by that fund. At the time the Town Council insisted on it being retained, and the stagger was increased to allow for cycles and electric buggies</i> )
undated	R de Pelet	Letter in reply to TC letter ref horse riding on Church Walk	Members understood permission is given for horse riding on Church Walk by the land owner. The Clerk was instructed to advise.
undated	Dorset Breast Screening unit	Request for use of public WC's for the unit visit between February & June	All agreed.
13.12.11	Wessex Water	E mail reply to the TC letter 06.12.11 concerning drainage on Ring Street.	Noted
02/01/11	J Turnbull	Letter ref proposed Community Hub. Opposed to the connection between the hub and the bequest.	It was agreed to take all letters regarding the hub with Item 5.

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09.01.12	Mr Butt	Letter requesting public consultation on the utilisation of the bequest to the TC	The Clerk had made contact with Mr Butt and apologised for confusing his previous letter as a hub issue rather than the bequest. Members understood Mr Butts request and instructed The Clerk to reply and advise that the estate had not been finalised.
		<b>All ref. proposed Community Hub</b>	
04.01.12	Mrs & Mrs Beardsmore	E mail. In favour of proposal	It was agreed to take all letters regarding the hub with Item 5.
05.01.12	Mr Scott	E mail. In favour of proposal to retain a library	As above
05.01.12	J Wardell	Letter. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
05.01.12	B Russell	E mail. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
05.01.12	A Chalcraft	E mail. In favour of proposal	As above
05.01.12	Mr & Mrs Wood	Letter. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
05.01.12	Mr & Mrs Murray	Letter. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
06.01.12	J Rabbetts	Letter. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
undated	R A Service	Letter. In favour of proposal to retain a library	As above
06.01.12	Mrs Pickard	Letter. Opposed to proposal suggested alternative use for bequest to modernise & add to Stalbridge hall or purchase the Methodist Hall. N.B previous e mail 13.10 In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	As above
09.01.12	A Mendleson	E mail. In favour of proposal and use of bequest to fund.	It was agreed to take all letters regarding the hub with Item 5.

**It was agreed to take item 8 on the agenda next and the agenda in order from that point.**

## **5. For the Town Council to support the setting up a Community hub, including the Town Council & Community offices at the library location. G Carr- Jones**

The proposal was amended as follows: For the Town Council to support in principal setting up a Community hub, including the Town Council & Community offices at the library location. Pending negotiation with the County & District Councils and financial constraints.

G Carr-Jones gave an update on the current status of the project since the steering group was appointed by Council in July 2011.

The meeting was adjourned for community open forum.

In answer to the question why the library would close if there was not a hub? Mr T Lee gave the following advice:- A professional librarian would cost approx £28,000 P/A in addition to utilities and building maintenance costs, as the County Council will not retain the building. A community managed library would need an adequate number of volunteers to open the facility for 20 hours per week. Any reduction in hours from this restricts access and may lead to the project failing. In order to achieve the required number of volunteers it is necessary to pool the time available from The Friends of the Library and the Community Office Volunteers. If the Community Office Volunteers are to have this dual role it is necessary for the Library and Community Office to have a shared location.

The following points were put forward by members of the public with regard to the proposed community hub.

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## Benefits:

- Combining 3 existing facilities, Library, Community Office, & Town Council office and saving the library by doing this.
- Benefits of combining facilities, economies of scale, more synergy
- Improving access to services & making them available in Stalbridge, e.g. to NDDC services, etc
- Keeping the library open by sharing volunteers will enable current library hours to be maintained/ slightly increased.
- The Current Town Council chambers need to be able to facilitate large meetings such as this.

## Problems:

- Car park by Library often full (counter view that it is rarely full)
- Location some distance from the town centre (counter view that location near to school is good for young families)
- Other Community Hubs in Somerset have had financial problems.
- The bequest to the Town Council should be spent on other projects, e.g. Stalbridge Hall. It was felt that other projects should be able to submit their requests for what the bequest, or parts of it could be spent on.

In answer to a question raised the Clerk advised that The Will does not specify capital or revenue spending. However, once it is transferred to the Town Council, Local Council financial regulations require it to be used as capital, so it can only be spent on a capital expenditure, given as a capital grant, or used for a PWLB loan, but cannot be used it as revenue.

David Fox (County Councillor) advised that it was not just about the library but extending the facilities available to Stalbridge residents in terms of connectivity and access to all local government services. He felt that there was no reason for the hub to be detrimental to existing leisure and community services in Stalbridge, as proved in other North Dorset Towns with similar if larger facilities. He advised that the County Council had expressed support for the sustainability of combining 3 public services in a Central Stalbridge location.

The meeting was re-convened and the Chairman asked for members comments.

There was a strong view that the library is worth keeping in particular for children, and as a place for the future. Consideration was given to the hub proposal which received general support, with strong caveats for the need to clarify specific issues / areas. It was agreed that if anyone has any other suggestions for keeping the library open members would be glad to receive them. It was felt that in taking the opportunity of this venture the hub, incorporating the library could be very efficiently locally managed as a facility for the Town.

It was felt that the project should move forward to negotiation with the District Council, detailed costings and investigation of funding sources.

On the subject of the bequest members made assurance that there was no set link between the hub and the bequest at this time and as the figure had not been finalised the TC has not been in a position to consider its' use to date. Members were happy to welcome suggested projects that were fully costed and met the criteria in terms of capital spending.

**RESOLVED:** It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Town Council support in principal setting up a Community hub, including the Town Council & Community offices at the library location. Pending negotiation with the County & District Councils and financial constraints.

6. To receive a request from the Lights Group for immediate and long term financial assistance for the lighting of The Cross and give further instruction.

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T Woods advised members that approximately 8 years ago it was decided to light The Cross year round. To date the finance for maintenance has been dependant on a generous benefactor with some contribution from the Lights Group. Immediately prior to Christmas 2 of the lights stopped working and the cost for replacement lights was approx £1,800. The Lights Group has paid this bill, assisted by a generous private donation of £500. As the Lights Group have already funded the works and extra lights on the lime tree during 10.11 this leaves their finances substantially depleted, which will make covering the costs for the Christmas lights and open evening for next year very difficult.

C Carr Jones thanked the lights group for our their efforts

**RESOLVED:** It was proposed and agreed to meet the balance of the recent repairs excluding the donated sum and that the Town Council will take financial responsibility for lighting the Cross from this point.

## 7. To respond the NDDC consultation regarding Gypsy & Traveller site allocation.

Deferred from the December meeting.

**RESOLVED:** There was general agreement not to respond to the consultation.

## 8. A proposal that public open forum is re-instated.

G Carr- Jones

G Carr-Jones explained the reasons for the proposal to encourage members of the public and local Clubs and organisations to come to the TC meetings and speak to members on matters which are not listed on the agenda. He felt that this would improve communication and understanding for all.

**RESOLVED:** It was proposed and unanimously agreed to re-instate a community open forum period at each full TC meeting.

## 9. For the Town Council to facilitate a tree planting event on the land adjacent to Pond Walk.

G Carr- Jones

The TC application for trees has been approved by the Woodland Trust and the trees will be delivered to CC Moores in February (kindly agreed to store). The Clerk had contacted The Scouts and the Allotment Society. The Allotment Society will discuss at their next meeting. It was suggested that members of the railway group may be interested in helping in exchange for some trees and G Carr-Jones offered to contact the Gardening Society. Failing this the Clerk will get quotes for planting.

It was agreed to defer items 10-12 to an extraordinary meeting Weds 18<sup>th</sup> January. The Clerk requested that any questions be received prior to the meeting as the figure will need to be resolved at the meeting for submission by 20<sup>th</sup> January.

**RESOLVED:** It was proposed and agreed to suspend standing order 1z. in order that the meeting could run over 2 hours.

## 13. Finance:

### a. To approve the accounts as presented in annex 1b. for payment.

Tracey Watson	Salary January	£581.81
HM Revenue & customs	Tax & NI January	£92.03
Direct office supplies	Diary	£2.52
Midwest Office Equipment	Toner cartridge	£107.28
Four Counties services	USB pen	£15.84
Great Western IT Ltd	Website maintenance and renewals	£600.60
Tracey Watson	In lieu of stamps purchased	£11.50
Community Office	In lieu of open evening refreshments & light fitting	£39.65
Sign Solutions	Sign Jarvis Field Way play area	£59.40
Williams Nursery	Bulbs for The Ring	£36.00
British Gas	Direct Debit Electricity office 31.10.11-24.11.11	£32.83

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British Gas	Direct Debit Electricity WC's 31.10.11-24.11.11	£21.06
Gillingham Town Council	Street Cleaning December 2011	£1,685.59
Stalbridge Lights Group	Grant 2011	£500.00
The Play Inspection Co	Annual inspection Jubilee Play Area	£180.00
BT	Internet services TC & CO 01.01-31.03.12	£174.00

The Clerk advised that the payment of £22.44 to the Community Office listed on the December annex had not been paid and had been replaced by the sum of £39.65 on this annex. The cheque for Sign Solutions has been removed from the approval list as the sign has not been delivered.

**RESOLVED: Proposed by W Batty-Smith, seconded by D Hine and agreed that approval of invoices as presented be made.**

**b. To approve a transfer from the deposit account to cover day to day running expenses.**

The Clerk requested a transfer of £12,000.00 from the deposit to the current account to cover day to day running expenses.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to make the transfer as requested.**

#### **14. Clerks report on matters arising.**

The arrangements made for emptying of the glass bin at the re-cycling point at Station Rd car park had been successful and the bin was able to accommodate the Christmas volume.

#### **15. To receive Town Councillors reports.**

T Bishop – Notice from SEE temporary interruption of power supply on Barrow Hill. Concerned at the possible effect on elderly residents in the area. It was agreed to advise the Signpost Liaison Officer who would be able to help any tenants requiring alternative heating.

J Cowley – Enquired on progress of establishing a relief Clerk. The Clerk agreed to contact SLCC & DAPTC

#### **16. To receive North Dorset District Councillors reports.**

None.

#### **17. To receive the Dorset County Councillors report.**

None.

**18. Date of the Next meeting** - The next Town Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February**. All items for inclusion on the agenda must be received by the Clerk by 9.00am on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

The meeting Closed at 9.20pm