

STALBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Approved minutes of Video Conference meeting held via Microsoft teams of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2020 commencing 7.00 p.m.

Present Councillors K Garland (Chair), D Andrews, J Convoy, M Dimmer, H Hatcher, R Lovell, R Roden & S Waite.

T Watson (Clerk)

In attendance

No members of the public had requested access to the VC meeting.

G Carr-Jones (Dorset Cllr) was present

1. Community Open Forum.

No comments

2. Apologies

M Robinson & B Penfold due to due to technical issues.

3. To receive and Declarations of interest & Requests for dispensations (Please notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting)

K Garland: Pecuniary item 12a.in relation to payments to IK services.

S Waite: Pecuniary Item 10g. as a Church Warden

R Lovell: Pecuniary Item 10g. as member of the Stalbridge Hall Management Committee.

J Convoy: Pecuniary Item 10g. as STC representative to the Stalbridge Hall Management Committee.

R Roden: Pecuniary Item 10g. as STC representative to the Playing Fields Committee.

4. Minutes of the meetings held 14.03.20 & 18.03.20. To be approved but signed at a later date

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting having previously been circulated to Councillors were approved including proposed amendments to be signed by the Chairman at a later date

5. Town Clerks report & Correspondence: As detailed in annex 1a.

Provisional TPO's – Have been made on at Lower Rd on 5 x ash, 3 x willow & 5 x oak trees

Stalbridge Hall grant – Have received a hospitality and leisure grant released to DCC by the government of £25,000 to assist with maintaining the hall whilst they have no booking income due to covid 19.

Hub & WC's rate relief – 100% relief whilst the buildings are closed

Corn store land – Invoice for the rent

Play area repairs from annual report- In hand

Pump on the ring – Temporary repair done to the wooden casing

Low branches overhanging the Bridgeway from the Jarvis Field hedge – dealt with

Grass at the open land at Pond Walk – has been cut

Lime tree on the ring – Application made for tree works in relation to the inspection

Allotments lease – Has been signed

Trailway and bridleway N51/93 - Have been cut back and signs erected to encourage social distancing. The response to this issue was very prompt, many thanks to the ROWO for her help and DC Rangers.

Stalbridge LMG – Are working with DC library service on the viability of re-opening the community library.

Building maintenance - The lock on the Clerks office door is faulty and there is a gap in the woodwork.

Complaint – Has been made against a Town Council member which has been passed to the DC monitoring Officer

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| 07.03.20 | Stalbridge Hall MC | Grant application for new doors | Noted that there are not adequate funds in the 20.21 budget general grant fund |
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| | | | section be able to award the grant at this time. Clerk instructed to reply. |
| 05.03.20 | DC Spatial Planning Team | Reply to the TC's letter regarding the capacity of Stalbridge as a town to support the population arising from recent planning permissions | Noted |
| 08.06.20 | Dorset Dairy Co | Request for a street Sign for the milk vending machine | Members felt that the location of the milk machine was well known and were not keen to have any additional street furniture on the Library bank. Clerk instructed to reply. |
| 17.06.20 | Stalbridge Hall | Letter ref grant review | Considered with item 10g. |
| 23.06.20 | DAPTC | E mail ref VC training | Noted |

6. To receive Town Councillors reports.

R Lovell: Concerned that there are earth works being carried out in the woods at the top of Barrow Hill (private land). Clerk instructed to communicate.

S Waite: Reported that the rear of the sports pavilion is overgrown with vegetation. Clerk to contact the PFMC

7. To receive the Dorset Councillors report.

G Carr-Jones advised that the consultation on the housing policy had been extended. Officers and members of Dorset Council have done an excellent job in dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic and are pleased to know that deaths to date in Dorset have been much lower than the considered potential and the temporary mortuary in Dorchester has been stood down. He went on to advise that DC are offering a local discretionary grant scheme for business and grants are available from the hospitality and leisure fund to support village halls, which is based on rateable value with no caveat on its use. However the cost of the Covid 19 pandemic and offering such support to the economy and communities of Dorset comes at a high cost and this combined with loss in revenue due to the closure of services leaves Dorset Council with a current overspend of 60 million pounds, which to date has not been re-reimbursed by central government. Due to the potential of austerity in the coming years being very real he urged the council to bear this in mind from this point forward. As there is a potential that Dorset Council may not continue to fund re-charged services that the TC supply. Future precepts may be capped and if there are less households paying council tax due to unemployment the burden of the local precept will fall to fewer households.

8. Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment.

It was noted that the total stands at £676,308.8. The additions of £15,337.40 attributed to the multi fitness track, Jubilee arch & the cross information board and the disposals at £3, 997.00 associated with the removal of the bus shelter and disposal of 2 x hub PC's. S Waite queried the nominal value of £1 attributed to the chest at the church and its insurance cover.

RESOLVED: To approve the changes to the inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment. Church wardens and Clerk to liaise regarding the chest at the church.

9. To commence a project for the Town Council to be compliant with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. K Garland

Papers had been provided to members prior to the meeting. Members understood that In line with legislation the objective is to make the website accessible to as many people as possible. This includes those with:

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Impaired vision, Motor difficulties, Cognitive impairments or learning difficulties & Deafness or impaired hearing. The deadline for compliance is 23rd September 2020. Some members were concerned that the compliance achieved may not be 100% and the Clerk advised that total compliance may be an ongoing piece of back office work.

RESOLVED: To accept the quotation for the works and commence the project for the Town Council to be compliant with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

**10. Review to Town Councils operations in relation to Covid19 and give further instruction in relation to:
K Garland**

a. Internal continuity plan

It was noted that the internal continuity plan (scheme of delegation) had been updated to reflect the Coronavirus Act 2020. No additional members requested to join the Interim Planning Committee.

RESOLVED: To update the plan to reflect decisions made at this meeting

b. Meetings including annual

The Clerk asked if their preference was to go back to scheduled VC meeting or hold meetings as and when required and if they wished to hold the annual TCM. It was understood that public meetings are not viable as yet. The Clerk and the Chairman advised that more frequent VC meetings may be required as the Council will need to make ongoing decisions about the provision of services in relation to covid 19.

RESOLVED: Not to hold the Annual Town Council Meeting and to hold Town Council VC meetings on an as and when required basis when decisions need to be made.

c. Services

It was noted that it has been possible to maintain this service 100% on grass cutting street cleaning and emptying bins to date. The Clerk referred to the risk assessments for the Hub, public WC's and Play areas.

RESOLVED:

- **To purchase banner signs with guidance and instructions for the play areas and then set a date for opening with associated publicity.**
- **A phased re-opening of the public WC's starting with opening the disabled WC as a multi-use / sex WC when works to install a ventilation system, non- touch taps, hand sanitiser and flush and change the locking system and completed. Purchase banner signs with guidance and instructions.**
- **Re-opening of the Hub as a social space it not possible under current guidance. CML to work with the TC regarding the viability of opening the library on reduced hours.**

d. Buildings & land

A copy of the building maintenance schedule had been provided prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: To amend the schedule based on any changes made to the use of the buildings and land in relation to covid 19 on an ongoing basis.

e. IT requirements

The Clerk advised the public WIFI was seldom used and a saving could be made by ceasing the WIFI monitoring of £59.00 per month. Further to this a project could be undertaken to review the IT set up with a view to making further savings whilst maintaining the set up function. The mobile phone has been invaluable in terms of communication with the Stalbridge helpers scheme and for monitoring e-mails. Members considered an upgrade for more data. The office PC is old and does not have a mic or speakers therefore is not suitable for

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Video conferencing so a home lap top is currently being used for TC VC meetings and training. Members are currently using their home machine for VC meetings with varying success this need to be monitored on an ongoing basis and the provision of equipment i.e. USB mics may be considered.

RESOLVED: To remove the WIFI monitoring for the current service contract. To commence a project to review the IT set up to include a mobile upgrade and Desktop PC that is VC compliant.

f. Staff

Staff leave from the 2nd July to 13th July. Recruitment for the assistant Clerks position has been put on hold during lockdown and the TC has a credit with the BMV due to a typo on the last advert.

RESOLVED: Delegate to HR committee when it is considered appropriate to resume recruitment

g. Grants awarded in the financial period 20.21

The Clerk explained that due to Covid 19 it became apparent that some of the awardees situations had changed in terms of the requirement for the grant at this point in time. It was therefore thought to be prudent and fair that the Council to have the opportunity to consider all the awardees situations at a meeting. Each awardee had been contacted for an update and a paper had been provided prior to the meeting. Each awardee was considered in turn

| <u>Organisation</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Purpose</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Stalbridge Hall | £5,000 | Re-surfacing of main hall floor |

J Convoy (HMC rep) advised members that the £25,000 the hospitality and leisure fund that the hall had received from Dorset Council was a separate matter and should not be considered in relation to the floor works which had been recently completed.

RESOLVED: Proposed by M Dimmer seconded by S Waite and majority agreed £5000 grant

J Convoy & R Lovell abstained from the vote

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| St Marys PCC | £5,000 | Churchyard grass cutting |
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It was understood that the contractor still cutting grass and 100% was required ASAP

RESOLVED: Proposed by J Convoy seconded by R Lovell and majority agreed £5000 grant

AS Waite abstained from the vote

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| Playing Fields MC | £2,000 | Public liability insurance and upkeep |
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It was understood that the public liability insurance portion of the grant can be paid in October and the PFMC will only call on the rest as and when required for essential maintenance.

RESOLVED: Agreed pay public liability insurance portion of the grant can be paid in October

R Roden abstained from the vote

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| Youth Club | £1,500 | Rent to Stalbridge hall for community area |
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It was understood that the youth club had not been open since lockdown and do not know when the club will re-open. Currently not paying rent to the hall therefore do not require grant at the moment.

RESOLVED: Agreed to hold. HMC representative to request that the HMC consider a portion of the hospitality and leisure fund grant be set aside to offset future Youth Club rent.

h. Community support

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The helpers scheme is still running. There may be issues arising from the probable future austerity that the council may have to consider in terms of community support. Members agreed to keep any future support that may be required in mind i.e. 'pay it forward'

RESOLVED: Agreed to purchase to thank you banners to be display at either end of the town

i. Recovery plan

RESOLVED: The recovery plan was agreed to include decisions made above.

11. To approve the content of the Town Council July newsletter

RESOLVED: To approve the content of the Town Council July newsletter

12. Finance.

a. To receive a list of payments made under the scheme of delegation in relation to covid 19.

RESOLVED: list of payments made under the scheme of delegation in relation to covid 19 noted

b. To receive the Y/E 31.03.20 financial report

Members had verified the bank reconciliation against the bank statements

RESOLVED: To accept the Y/E 31.03.19 financial report as presented.

c. To consider the 20.21 budget and give further instruction

Proposed amendments included income from room letting to zero, and hospitality expenditure to zero. Reduction in IT costs for removal of Wi-Fi monitoring increase in web site costs in relation to accessibility compliance. Hub rates reduced as building closed. Increase in WC cleaning costs associated with frequency of cleaning and increase in building maintenance costs associated with the purchase of equipment and alterations to buildings in relation to covid 19. Small projects budget reduced to facilitate other increases.

RESOLVED: To accept the 20.21 budget as presented

13. To receive notice of the advertisement and period for the Exercise of Electors rights for 19.20

Monday 29th June to Friday 7th August to be displayed on the TC web site notice board & TC office window

14. To receive the internal audit 19.20 report and consider its effectiveness.

It was noted that the internal audit cover all accounts and had been carried out in accordance with the suggested approach in the 2008 edition of 'Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales – A Practitioners Guide'. There were no matters arising. This year the audit had been carried out digitally.

RESOLVED: That the internal audit 19.20 had been effective and thorough.

15. To consider the Annual Governance Statement section of the Annual return 19.20

Sections 1-9 of the annual Governance statement was considered in relation to the Parish Council taking the following actions:

- Sections 1-9 of the annual Governance statement were considered in relation to the Parish Council taking the following actions:
- Preparation of accounting statements in accordance with accounts & audit regulations.
- Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
- Has only done what it has legal power to do and has complied with proper practices in doing so.

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- During the year all persons interested are given the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the accounts.
- Considered & documented financial and other risks and dealt with them.
- Has arranged for a competent person independent of the financial controls & procedures to give an objective view whether internal controls meet the needs of the authority.
- Responded to any matters raised by the internal auditor.
- Disclosed everything it should about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
- The Town council are not a sole managing trustee of any local trust or trusts.

16. To approve the Annual Governance Statement section of the Annual return 19.20

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to record Yes in boxes 1-8 & N/A in box 9 of the Annual Governance Statement. Chairman to sign at earliest convenience

17. To consider the Accounting Statements section of the Annual return 19.20

Box 7 in the accounting statements was verified against the bank reconciliation

18. To approve the Accounting Statements section of the Annual return 19.20

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to accept the figures presented for sections 1-10 and to enter no in section 11 of the accounting statement. Chairman to sign at earliest convenience

19. Date of the next meeting

TBC

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 9 pm

Approved 18/08/20

Signed.....

Chairman

Date