



Beaminster Town Council

Minutes of the Virtual Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 via Zoom.

2524 Members on line – Cllr Monks (Chairman), Cllr Beswarick, Cllr Body, Cllr Cheeseman, Cllr Mrs Cooke, Cllr Corbett, Cllr Dawkins, Cllr Langridge, and Cllr Turner; also the Town Clerk, Dorset Councillor Mrs Knox and 6 members of the public.

Dorset Police - In the absence of a representative the Town Clerk read a report received from PCSO Bishop.

Dorset Councillor Mrs Knox reflecting on PCSO's report Cllr Mrs Knox felt more information should be provided together with what we, as Dorset and Town Councillor's could do to assist with issues such as Anti Social behaviour.

She was also pleased to report:

- The Covid-19 vaccination programme had been successfully rolled out and urged anyone of the age groups currently being vaccinated who had not been contacted to contact her direct.
- Schools in the area were taking steps for the safe return to school and she suggested the Town Council form a closer connection with the schools. Schools in Dorset were challenging central government on the Health & Social Care white paper.

In response to a question from Cllr Dawkins in which he challenged the 5% Council Tax increase when compared to larger towns and cities particularly as Dorset did not have the same level of infrastructure, Cllr Mrs Knox expressed her disgust that as a County, Dorset had to be more reliant on Council Tax revenue and that Central Government did not acknowledge that essential services in rural areas were more costly to provide.

In response to a question from Cllr Turner as to what extent Dorset Council had challenged Central Government with regard to the level of Revenue Support Grant and the County's reliance on business rates particularly at this difficult time for small businesses Cllr Mrs Knox Stated there had been no complicity at Dorset Council and the business rate return was a concern.

2525 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Drinnan, Cllr Mrs Page and PCSO Bishop.

2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS

No declarations were made.

2527 MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2021

Having previously been circulated with a copy of the minutes of the virtual Town Council meeting held on 26th January 2021 were **RESOLVED** for signature by the chairman.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman introduced Mr Michael Dower and Mrs Gillian Perrott representing the Beaminster Area ECO Group and St Mary's Church ECO Group respectively and welcomed them to the meeting.

For the benefit of those attending the meeting via social media Mr Dower gave a brief presentation detailing the background behind the report from the Beaminster Climate and Long-term Resilience Working Group.

The report had been submitted to the Town Council on 1st February 2021 this being the first opportunity for the Council to consider the recommendations therein with regard to the proposed structure to deliver a vision going forward for Beaminster and the preparation of a Climate and Long-term Resilience Plan.

Mrs Perrott reported on St Mary's Church ECO Group's involvement with the 'Sustainable Dorset' project.

2528 CLIMATE & LONG TERM RESILIENCE PLAN

Members **RESOLVED** the recommendation, as outlined in the report, to establish a Climate and Long-term Resilience Committee, the Committee would be tasked with overseeing the preparation of the Plan and the pursuit of the main Action programme. **AGREED** the Committee to consist of representatives from the Town Council together with representatives from a number of the key organisations within the town.

Members **RESOLVED** the further recommendation to establish a Beaminster Resilience Forum to engage with citizens and particularly young people who may wish to have an input, develop ideas and pursue actions within the framework of the Plan and Action programme agreed by the Committee.

On behalf of the Town Council the Chairman expressed his gratitude to Mr Dower for his hard work in putting together such a comprehensive report.

2529 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS MINUTES

(a) Min No. 2514 Health & Safety Policy

The Town Clerk advised, having spoken with the Council's Building Consultant, a full Audit in respect of the Public Hall would be undertaken on completion of the current works; in respect of the children's play area there were quarterly safety inspections in place and safety tests on memorials in the Cemetery would be scheduled in the coming months. First Aid training would take place at such time it was safe to do.

(b) Min No. 2515 – Free Parking Policy

The Town Clerk advised members request for clarity had been submitted to Dorset Council however no response had been received to date. Members **NOTED** the Chairman and Town Clerk would represent Beaminster on Dorset Council's Car Parking Stakeholders Working Group the first meeting yet to be arranged by Dorset Council.

The Chairman advised he had made enquiries with regard to parking in the Square and had been assured that specific requests from the Town Council would be considered.

(c) Min No. 2520 – Road Safety Scheme – Clay Lane

The Town Clerk advised that given the current Covid situation Dorset Council were not in a position to actively monitor the scheme, she had been assured enquiries would be made with the Audit team on the current position however it could be the case that Dorset Council would only carry out Stage 4 Audits if there had been any recorded collisions resulting in injury and none had been recorded since the scheme had been completed. Dorset Council were to check the warranty on the coloured surfacing but currently there were no plans or available funds to redo.

(d) Min No. 2520 – replacement Fleet Street sign

The Town Clerk advised the enquiry for a replacement Fleet Street sign had been placed on Dorset Council's waiting list however there were a number of requests ahead of it, the Council would endeavour to install a new sign prior to the end of financial year but it was more likely to be in April.

The Town Clerk reported that Dorset Council, having considered the request for a No Through Road sign at the entrance to Fleet Street, would not be erecting a sign at the junction of Fore Place with Fleet Street as it was likely to cause confusion at the junction for goods vehicles that needed to access the navigable sections of the road.

2530 PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS

Members had previously been circulated with details of the payments made in February 2021 including cheque numbers 105290 – 105302, including CB3 cheque number 100011, direct debits and bank payments totalling £42,974.39; also receipts totalling £6,080.91 (copy attached). Members **RESOLVED** adoption as presented.

2531 PUBLIC HALL WORKING PARTY

Members had previously been circulated with the Minutes of the Public Hall Working Party meeting held on 29th January 2021. **NOTED.**

There being no items raised for discussion **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT.**

2532 RESORT DORSET MAGAZINE

Members had previously been circulated with information and the link to the online edition of 'Resort Dorset' magazine published quarterly and were asked to consider an eighth page advertisement in both the Spring and Summer editions at a total cost of £697.50 + VAT. Funds for advertising had previously been set aside as part of the Restart Beaminster grant received from Dorset Council. With lockdown restrictions easing in the coming months members **RESOLVED** to utilise the available funds for the advertisement as suggested.

2533 REVIEW OF POLICY DOCUMENTS

The Town Clerk advised the annual review of the Town Councils Policy Documents had not been undertaken in May 2020 due to the circumstances relating to the pandemic, however with the introduction of virtual meetings members had previously been circulated with the following Policy documents for review:

- **Financial Regulations**

Members had previously been circulated with a copy of the revised Model Financial Regulations and were asked to consider a number of highlighted sections.

Reviewing the document page by page members **RESOLVED** the following amendments:

2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, *any one of the account signatories* (other than the Chairman) shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO.

4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is determined by:

- The Council for all items over £5,000
- The Finance & General Purposes Committee for items over £500
- The clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500

4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1000.

4.8 These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. *For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 15% of the budget.*

5.5 c fund transfers within the council banking arrangement up to the *sum of £20,000*, providing that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

6.20 Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff *should not be used without prior approval.*

11.1 h The clerk shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the *value is below £10,000 and above £1,000* the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates.

14.2 Save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property *does not exceed £250.*

- **Equal Opportunities Policy**

No amendments were discussed; members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as circulated.

- **Child Protection Policy**

No amendments were discussed; members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as circulated.

- **Code of Practice for Handling Complaints**

No amendments were discussed; members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as circulated.

- **Community Engagement Strategy**

No amendments were discussed; members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the policy as circulated.

2534 CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

No consultation documents had been received.

2535 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) **Beaminster & District Twinning Association** – members **NOTED** a letter expressing the Associations delight at the new 'Welcome to Beaminster' signs which incorporating a reference to St. James.

2536 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In the absence of Cllr Mrs Page no report was received. Councillors (via Cllr Turner) sent their best wishes to Cllr Page during her spell in hospital.

2537 PROGRESS REPORT

Members had previously been circulated with a progress report to date **NOTED**.

In response to a question regarding the damaged handrail outside Hogshill Stores the Town Clerk advised no further information had been received.

Cllr Dawkins advised of a complaint he had received with regard to the temporary 24 hour closure of North Street and enquired whether it might be possible to open the road at evenings and weekends, the Town Clerk to pursue.

2538 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

No items were raised.

Under this heading attention was drawn to the 'for sale' sign at the Post Office and the suggestion that the current Post Office would close in April 2021. **AGREED** to contact the proprietor.

2539 MEETING

The meeting which commenced at 7.00pm, closed at 9.05pm.

2540 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council meeting would take place on Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 7.00pm.

CHAIRMAN
23rd March 2021