

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Newent Town Council Meeting held on 24th February 2020 at the Market House, Newent at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors Mrs J Davies (Mayor), Mrs C Howley, E Heathfield, Mrs M Duncan, Mrs G Moseley, Mrs S Marcovecchio, Mrs K Draper, R Beard, Mrs R Wadley, Mrs J Gooch, Mrs Odhiambo

Also present – The Clerk, 4 members of the public and County Councillor Windsor-Clive

Public Participation Session: A member of public asked where the gateway would be installed and the location was confirmed.

19.1 Apologies – Cllrs Ms Birkan and Ralph

19.2 Declaration of Interests

Cllrs Beard and Mrs Duncan declared a pecuniary interest in the accounts to be paid.

Cllr Mrs Gooch declared an interest in the confidential minutes.

19.3 Newent Community School report

The Principal had sent his apologies due to unforeseen circumstances.

19.4 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th February 2020

Resolved: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10th February 2020 were approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Beard, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley. Cllr Mrs Gooch requested a recorded vote.

Cllrs in favour – Beard, Mrs Howley, Heathfield, Mrs Duncan, Mrs Moseley, Mrs Marcovecchio, Mrs Draper, Mrs Wadley. Cllrs against – Mrs Gooch, Cllr abstentions – Mrs Davies and Mrs Odhiambo

19.5 Clerk's Update and Matters Arising

Three Shires Stages Funding – Once the permit to run the event has been received and the road closures have been applied for, the fund will be moved forward and the necessary application form and closing date will be supplied to the Council. The panel of judges will comprise of 3 District Councillors from outside the area, who will review all the applications and make a decision on what portion of the funding will be allocated to each applicant.

Public meeting with the Police – The meeting will take place at 7 pm tomorrow at the Community School.

Co-op – An invitation to attend a future council meeting has been sent to the Manager.

All correspondence has been sent.

Cllr Heathfield asked for details of the format for the Police meeting, which was explained. Notes from the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Cllr Mrs Davies had received a letter regarding item 18.11, thanking the Council for welcoming the young residents to the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Howley referred to item 18.14. A resident had seen the Council's advert in the Welcome to Gloucestershire brochure in a hotel in South Gloucestershire and had expressed her delight at seeing it.

19.6 Finance

19.6.1 To approve accounts to be paid

(Cllrs Beard and Mrs Duncan left whilst the accounts were considered)

Barclaycard transactions		£
Fasthost Internet		6.00
Fasthost Internet		13.19
Brunel Engraving		39.02
Reach Publishing		1332.00
VFS (Southampton) Ltd		420.00
Wessex Garage		243.29
Direct Debit/Standing Order/BACS payments January:		
	Payment method	£
Lex Autolease	DD	226.43
Lloyds Bank	DD	5.00
Allstar	DD	81.78
Allstar	DD	111.07
Newent Association for the Disabled	BACS	35.00
GCC	BACS	2789.29
HMRC	BACS	1929.21
British Gas	DD	78.64
British Gas	DD	17.35
Allstar	DD	7.28
Payments to be considered	Chq No.	£
B & B Services Ltd	15344	78.00
Glos Rural Community Council	15345	1050.00
Tony Shaw Driving	15346	270.00
Mainstream Digital	15347	51.25

Glos Assoc Parish & Town Councils	15348	75.00
Redhand	15349	3810.00
Grundon	15350	159.76
Green Farm Seeds	15351	55.00
Siemens Financial Services Ltd	15352	168.00
Signs Express	15353	270.00
Auto Accessories	15354	396.00
Ellis Dawe & Son Ltd	15355	493.18
Ermin Plant	15356	690.31
North & West Glos Citizens Advice	15357	650.00
M Duncan	15358	16.90
R Beard	15359	29.90
K Noble	15360	19.50
MKM B.S. (Newent) Ltd	14777	994.67

Resolved: The above expenditure is approved, to a value of £16,612.02. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

19.6.2 To review budget update

The Clerk explained the reasons for budget overspends.

A query was raised regarding the underspend at the Lake, it was confirmed the majority of the monies will be spent by the end of the financial year. **Resolved:** The budget update was approved.

Record of Voting: Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, All in favour.

19.7 To consider response required to correspondence/consultations received

19.7.1 Gloucestershire County Council – Update on diversion proposal for footpaths GNE96 and GNE208 at The Moat, Newent

It was noted that the current route was through a busy yard with heavy lorry use. Some concerns were raised regarding the diversion crossing a ditch and being difficult to use at certain times of the year.

Resolved: The Council will request the footbridge has railings installed for safety reasons. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Odhiambo, Seconded Cllrs Mrs Moseley, 10 in favour, 1 abstention.

19.8 To receive District Councillor reports

The following report from District Councillor Mrs Gooch had been circulated;

I have dealt with and followed up on residents' behalf

- PROW's
- Highways and flooding issues
- Co-op car park

I have;

- Attended the Meek Road handover from the contractor to FODDC Management for the Recreation land is now with Ubico. The Heras fencing will remain in place to allow the grass time to establish, the native daffodils will be replanted, and wildflower seed will be sown as soon as the weather improves.
- Raised and resolved issues with the recreation facility with Officers at FODDC
- Addressed a meeting organised by Forest Voluntary Action Forum 'Know your Patch' to speak about the Towns Youth and recreation facilities
- Attended Newent Community School's Drama production of 'Oliver' This was another wonderful production which not only showcases the talent of the Schools amazing Students, but also the very hard work put in by Teaching Staff & Volunteers

District Councillors Moseley and Vesma's report was read out by District Councillor Moseley;

1. FODDC Budget. With an ever-reducing Rate Support Grant and New Housing Bonus from central government, the District Council looked ready to set a budget which would need to draw on general reserves, leaving a precariously small amount for emergencies. Not wishing to vote for a budget which was not balanced, Cllr Vesma set about analysing a spreadsheet of the council finances which was provided to him by the CFO. Between the two of us, we investigated possible savings under four identified headings. One, for forward planning, proved to be unsustainable. The other three were taken forward as proposed amendments to the Cabinet and circulated later to all members well in advance of the Full Council meeting on Thursday 20th.

Negotiations took place with leading members of the cabinet and we agreed that in return for the Cabinet accepting part of our proposals regarding the reduction of funds set aside for business rates for the Five Acres Site for a whole year, on the basis that the buildings would be demolished within a short time of the council acquiring the site, we would retract our proposals to reduce the policy support budget. We had targeted areas of the budget which would have minimal impact on the lives of residents of the Forest of Dean, and the third proposal was to freeze the tourism budget for one year. It is not entirely clear where this money is spent and no business case could be offered to protect it.

In the event, this amendment and all questions and debate were stopped by what we regard as a failing of the Chair to follow accepted procedure.

However, the Leader of the Council has since apologised and indicated that he would look to invite us to take the matters proposed and any other suggestions, to further scrutiny in the coming months in order to find the much needed savings.

2. **The Co-op car park.** Notices have now gone up to indicate that the two hour parking limit is being adhered to as agreed in the original planning conditions. The District Council's Legal Department wrote to inform the agent for the Co-op of the breach of conditions and they have now complied.
3. **Tear-down Sessions.** Cllr Vesma ran a pilot meeting last Saturday in conjunction with Tania Shuttleworth and members of the Aston Project. Unwanted, broken electrical items were disassembled and investigated. The young people who attended are keen to continue the project.

19.9 Planning

19.9.1 Planning applications to be considered

P0150/20/FUL – 5 May Hill View, Newent

Erection of single storey rear extension with associated works.
Queries to be raised – Is there a covenant to stop building in gardens? Was the property sold as freehold by the developer?

Resolved: No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Duncan, Seconded Cllr Beard, All in favour.

19.9.2 To note planning decisions

PERMITTED/CONSENT

P1709/19/LDI – Roses Country Fayre, 52 Ledbury Rd, Newent
Use of land for a mixed use being the siting of a caravan for residential occupation by temporary horticultural workers at Roses Country Fayre and the storage of that same caravan – Lawful development certificate issued

P1919/19/TPO – Newent Lake and Park area, Newent
Fell x 1 Alder (T470 of the application) and remove epicormic growth from the base of x 1 Alder (T252 of the application). Trees covered by W3 of G41 TPO54

P1799/19/FUL – Land at Rymes Farm, Malswick
Variation of condition 02 (operational lifetime) and removal of condition 13 (drainage) relating to planning permission
P0806/16/FUL

P1618/19/FUL – Strawberry Hill Poultry Farm, Strawberry Hill,
Newent
Erection of 4 replacement poultry buildings following demolition of 4
no. existing poultry buildings

19.10 Estate Management

19.10.1 To receive the Estate Supervisor's report and agree any actions

The repairs to the allotment footpaths were suspended due to the ground conditions.

A query was raised if the harrowing and rolling of the Recreation Ground can still take place with the safety railings in place. The Clerk will check and confirm.

A report from the Council's appointed Arboriculturist was considered in relation to a Mulberry tree at the Lake. The tree had been damaged several years ago when branches were torn down.

Resolved: Due to the poor condition of the tree, the tree is felled and replaced with 3 suitable trees, including 1 Mulberry, as agreed by the Lead Councillors. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, All in favour.

Quotations were considered for year 2 works, which cannot be carried out inhouse. **Resolved:** Quotation A is accepted at a cost of £800.00 + VAT. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, All in favour.

19.10.2 To consider report from Arboriculturist relating to complaints and agree any actions

An inspection of two trees had been undertaken following complaints from residents. A report from the Council's Arboriculturist was considered. **Resolved:** The recommendations were approved. No works to be undertaken on the Sycamore tree (T92) on the Recreation Ground. Apply for planning permission for a minor crown raise to the northern part of the Thuja (T371) at the Lake. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, All in favour.

19.10.3 To consider quotations for new mower

A report had been circulated with quotations for purchasing or options for a 3 year or 4 year hire contract. A discussion took place regarding using an electric/hybrid mower. **Resolved:** The quotation from Company 1 for purchasing a Kubota F3890 mower is accepted at a cost of £19,950.00 and to part exchange the current mower to reduce the net cost to £15,200.00. Future purchases should consider electric/hybrid options and costs to be considered in future

budgeting processes. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Beard, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, 10 in favour, 1 abstention.

19.11 To appoint a member to fill the vacant position on the Youth Advisory Group

Resolved: Cllr Mrs Odhiambo is appointed. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Heathfield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, All in favour.

19.12 Lake Gateway competition update

Cllr Mrs Howley gave an update on behalf of the group who reviewed all the entries. Some excellent ideas had been put forward and the Councillors were very impressed with the quality and amount of entries. Five designs were shortlisted and some ideas from each of those shortlisted will be incorporated into a final gateway design. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the way forward.

Cllr Mrs Moseley gave some background information on the process for the benefit of new Councillors.

19.13 Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum – Market towns report

Cllr Beard gave some background information regarding the report which was produced by the University of Gloucester. The report was fairly positive for Newent although there were comments regarding broadband speeds not being available in all of the parish. Some of the information will be used for the NDP. Council representatives would be happy to forward any queries to GMTF. The full version of the report is available on-line.

19.14 Council website

The Clerk informed the Council that the current provider is no longer in a position to provide support for the Council's website and has given 3 months' notice. The Clerk will be looking into support options for the current site or setting up a new site, for consideration by Council.

19.15 To review Privacy Notices

Resolved: The two Privacy notices are re-adopted and will be reviewed again as required. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Moseley, All in favour.

19.16 To adopt the Bring Your Own Device Policy

Cllr Heathfield raised concerns regarding security and had sent a late email to Councillors. **Resolved:** It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting to give all Councillors the opportunity to read the email. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

19.17 To receive committee and representative reports

Cllr Mrs Howley	Update on VE Day activities, which will include a service at St Marys, music and refreshments at the Memorial Hall and the Community Choir singing in the Red Lion
Cllr Mrs Wadley	NDP meeting – A Planning Officer had attended
Cllr Beard	GAPTC Board meeting
Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio	NIT meeting – Trustees are needed and the Trust is struggling financially
Cllr Heathfield	YAG meeting – ready to move forward with more informal meetings
Cllr Mrs Gooch	Youth Facilities Working Group – A meeting had taken place

19.18 Notices and information

Cllr Mrs Wadley stated that the District Council had withdrawn free council tax facilities for village halls and this was being investigated by District Councillor Vesma.

Cllr Mrs Gooch informed the Council that tickets are on sale for the String Fever Concert at the Community School on 9th May.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed 8.40 pm.