

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the online Newent Town Council Meeting held on 8th February 2021 at 7pm

Present: Councillors Mrs C Howley (Mayor), Mrs M Duffield, Mrs G Moseley, A Ralph, Mrs R Wadley, Mrs J Gooch, Ms C Birkan, Mrs S Marcovecchio, Mrs K Draper, E Heathfield, Cllr R Beard

Also present – Town Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and 4 members of the public

Public Participation Session

38.1 Apologies – Cllr Mrs W Odhiambo and District Cllr Vesma.

38.2 Declaration of Interests – None

38.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th January 2021

The Clerk advised that Cllr Mrs Gooch had requested an addition be made to the minutes as a point of clarification – 37.10 Cllr Mrs Gooch stated that she would not be participating in the discussion concerning this matter, nor voting on any decision taken – insert “*so that her District Councillor vote was not affected.*” The Clerk advised the addition to the minute had been amended.

Cllr Heathfield advised that he believed his proposition under minute 35.17 appeared to conflict with the resolution. The resolution was deemed correct but a paragraph be inserted for clarity.

Resolved: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25th January 2021 were approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Duffield , Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, 10 in favour, 1 abstention.

38.4 Clerk’s update and matters arising from previous minutes

The Clerk advised Members all matters arising from previous minutes had been actioned. The survey from Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership – Travel needs survey, had been published on the website and Facebook page and a response sent to confirm this. A public meeting had been arranged for 4th February to discuss flooding issues. An internal auditor had been allocated by Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils.

38.5 Finance

38.5.1 To approve accounts to be paid

Payments made since last meeting

	£
Wages	8459.69

Payments to be considered

	Cheque/ BACS	£ Total
Grundon	BACS	167.96
Safpro	15544	51.42
Archer Signs	15545	16.62
Glebe Chapel	BACS	450.00
NALC	15546	38.93
Ermin Plant	15547	2077.40
SLCC	BACS	54.00
EE	BACS	86.82
Direct Autos	BACS	47.40
Peninsula	BACS	173.42
M J Lawless	BACS	1052.88
MKM	BACS	136.26
Redhand	BACS	6018.38
GMT Solutions	BACS	117.12
Viking	BACS	69.70

Resolved: The above expenditure is approved, to a value of £19,018.00. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, Seconded Cllr Beard, All in favour.

38.6 To consider response required to correspondence/consultations received

38.6.1 Western Power - Invitation to stakeholders' workshops in February

Members considered a number of stakeholders' workshops in February to which they were invited to attend via Zoom. Cllr Mrs Moseley agreed she would attend the first two of them, and Cllr Mrs Gooch advised she was already, in her capacity as a District Councillor, attending the third.

38.6.2 Western Power - Business Plan consultation

Members had been furnished with the Business Plan consultation which contained a considerable number of questions. The Mayor suggested that a response be made by individual Members which needed to be undertaken by 28 February.

38.6.3 Gloucestershire County Council - Consultation on tree works to be undertaken around Newent Fire Station

Members were advised that over the last few years trees around Newent Fire Station have grown such that the alerter's signal to the fire crew has become compromised. The alerter is located at the top of the training tower and has now been raised to its full extent. The proposal is to sensitively thin out around 50% of the trees which have self-seeded over the years and would benefit from more light. The land is owned by the Canal Trust and in principle they have no objection to the tree felling taking place. They would like to have the works carried out in early February in order to complete before the nesting season.

Members spoke at length regarding the value of trees, particularly to insects and birds and possible ways of avoiding felling if at all possible. Some Members suggested that perhaps the tower or antenna could be extended, others thought this was not an option.

Resolved: Given that the nesting season is imminent propose no objection to the felling of the trees, but that it be done with discretion and that they be cut no further than 4ft, preferably 5ft to enable habitat for wildlife. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Ms Birkan, Seconded Cllr Mrs Moseley, 9 in favour, 2 abstentions.

38.6.4 National Association of Local Councils – Right to regenerate consultation

Members were asked to consider responding to the Right to regenerate consultation.

Resolved: A working group be set up to consider this and to reply on behalf of the Council, consisting of Cllrs Ms Birkan, Mrs Gooch and Mrs Howley. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Beard, All in favour.

38.7 Planning

38.7.1 Planning applications to be considered

P0178/21/FUL Atlantic House, Cliffords Mesne, Newent
Alterations to garage to provide first floor home office

Resolved: No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Wadley seconded Cllr Gooch, All in favour

38.7.2 To note planning decisions

CONSENT

P2042/20/FUL 31 Lakeside, Newent
Proposed first floor extension above garage and single storey rear garden room extension

P1431/20/FUL Okle Clifford Farm, Barn 1 Okle Green, Upleadon, Newent

Erection of a stable block and menage

P0298/20/FUL 1 Southall Terrace, Cliffords Mesne, Newent

Erection of a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension with associated works. Demolition of existing canopy

P2050/20/FUL Cherry Tree Cottage, Botloes Green, Newent

Erection of a single storey rear extension, single storey side extension and a single storey front extension with associated works

P2004/20/FUL Medland, Orchard Road, The Scarr, Newent

Relocation of solar panels with associated works

REFUSED

P1892/20/LBC The Porch House, Church Street, Newent
Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to allow for the installation of 2 no. compact home lifts

APPLICATION WITHDRAWN

P1735/20/FUL Land at Malswick adjacent B4215 Newent
Construction of working section of canal, complete with a firm towpath to one side as well as a level mown grass path to the remaining side and two culverts to allow for existing water courses to continue to flow unrestricted below the level of the canal itself.

38.8 Estate Management

38.8.1 To consider revetments report

Members were advised that due to the pandemic revetment works at the Lake had not gone ahead last year, and it was therefore important to continue renewing the revetments this year. Cllr Mrs Howley advised the work had been budgeted for at a cost of £3,439.41 plus vat to complete an area of 14 meters.

Resolved: The work be undertaken at the budgeted cost quoted.

Record of Voting: Proposed Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, seconded Cllr Mrs Duffield, All in favour

38.8.2 Fire Risk Assessment update

Members were furnished with a Fire Risk Assessment undertaken by its Health & Safety advisors setting out a list of actions required and actions taken.

38.8.3 To consider renewing the public space protection orders covering the Lake and Recreation Ground

Members were reminded that a Dogs on Leads Order was implemented at the Lake in 2011 and another at the Recreation Ground in 2012. The Clerk put forward a report detailing the enforcement powers the Orders gave to the District Council and the Police to take action against anyone who does not keep their dogs on leads in these areas. For reasons, based on serious incidents involving dogs in the past, the Lead Councillors in this matter who had met with the Street Warden Team, recommended the Orders be renewed. The report advised that if the Council approved the proposal, Forest of Dean District Council Officers will submit a report to Cabinet for consideration. A public consultation would commence before the Orders are approved.

Resolved: The Town Council request the District Council to renew the Orders in both the Lake and Recreation Ground. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Beard, Seconded Cllr Ms Birkan, All in favour.

38.9 To consider report to install five further grit barrels – Cllr Ralph

Members were advised that residents had contacted the Council requesting further grit barrels in the town, particularly around the Meek Rd estate. After investigation a recommendation is to install them at the following locations: Bullock Way, Meek Road T junction (by play area), Drovers Way, Foley Road (opposite 2 steep roads) and Onslow Road/Foley Road T junction (opposite Sheppard House).

Costs were put forward under the following options:-

Option 1 – Grey recycled food oil barrels, which will be split in 2 and cost £9.80 each plus vat. Supplied in pairs and to acquire 6 would cost £58.80 plus vat plus £15 delivery

Option 2 – 3 x blue 220 litre twin bung drums at £76.50 plus vat plus £54 delivery and would need to be split.

One member suggested such bins had been used in the past and were unsuccessful due to them filling with water. Another member considered this was manageable by drilling holes in the bottom but that in future the Council should try to negotiate with Developers to provide. A further Member considered that it was perhaps not too late to approach the developer of the Picklenash development on Ross Road to enquire if they would provide a yellow grit bin on this site now.

Resolved: Option 1 is agreed and the Developer of the Picklenash development be approached to provide a yellow grit bin on site. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Duffield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour. Cllr Mrs Gooch in her capacity as a District Councillor advised she

was attending a Planning meeting the following day and would enquire about provision of grit bins on estates by Developers.

- 38.10 To consider if the Council's monthly newsletter should continue to be published.

Cllr Mrs Howley reminded Members this had been brought back from the last meeting and stressed the importance of having a newsletter both for the electorate and for the Council in order to retain its Quality status. Two Members volunteered to initially take a turn in undertaking a newsletter.

Resolved: A bi-monthly newsletter be undertaken with Councillors taking turns to do so – Cllr Mrs Wadley undertaking the first, Cllr Heathfield the second. **Record of Voting:** All in favour.

Cllr Mrs Moseley who had undertaken previous Council newsletters offered to format the text of the newsletters once the content was completed.

- 38.11 To consider appointing Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio to the Cemetery Chapel Review Working Group

Resolved: Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio be appointed to the Cemetery Chapel Review Working Group. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, All in favour

- 38.12 To consider appointing Cllr Ms Birkan to the Asset Working Group in regard to the Lodge and Office Accommodation Work Group

Resolved: Cllr Ms Birkan be appointed to the Asset Working Group in regard to the Lodge and Office Accommodation Work Group. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour.

- 38.13 To consider the recommendation from the Staff Committee for all Councillors to attend Employer training

Members were advised of Employer training available from South West Council which provides Members with information on their responsibilities as Employers.

A recommendation was put from the Staffing Committee that all Councillors undertake this training. Costs will be taken from the training budget.

One Member spoke in full support of the training and that Council Members as Employers should be conversant with employment law.

A proposal was put by Cllr Mrs Gooch that Members should undertake Employer training, which was seconded by Cllr Mrs Wadley.

An amendment was put by Cllr Mrs Howley that in addition to this, any Member who becomes part of the Staffing Committee must have first completed this training. This was seconded by Cllr Beard. The amendment was put to the vote.

Resolved: Councillors should undertake Employer training as provided by South West Council and that Members appointed to the Staffing Committee must have firstly completed such training. All in favour.

38.14 To consider Youth Action Group's request to set up and manage a separate Facebook account

Cllr Heathfield spoke in favour of the new Newent Youth Action Group having its own Facebook page, with social media being young people's favourite modern mode of communication. In having a group page it was felt they could reach young people directly and relate more to them. The page would be able to promote activities of the Youth Action Group and could hold polls on issues relating to young people and Cllr Heathfield felt it would help to attract more young people to the group.

Cllr Mrs Wadley advised that there were now two more regular members to the group and considered this was a way of reaching different groups of young people.

Questions were raised with regard to the logo to be used on the proposed Facebook page and whether the standing of the group conflicted with the Council's media policy. Cllr Heathfield explained the Group was a Town Council working group and whilst the page would have its own logo, it would be shown that it was affiliated to the Town Council. Cllr Mrs Wadley advised in response to concerns by some Members, that the page would block all adverse public comments and that it was intended as a platform to be used to give information.

Resolved: A separate Youth Action Group Facebook page be set up.

Record of Voting: Proposed Cllr Heathfield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, 5 in favour, 0 against, 6 abstentions.

38.15 To consider amendment to 12e of the Standing Orders – Cllr Ms Birkan

“Upon a resolution, which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.”

Cllr Ms Birkan put forward an amendment to the standing order 12e – Upon a resolution, which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes of the meeting for which approved minutes exist, shall be destroyed but the electronic record should be kept safely archived with a copy kept off site.

Cllr Mrs Moseley seconded the proposition.

A discussion took place around the method in which the electronic record would be kept. The Clerk advised that the data from the recordings did take up a lot of space on the computer. Cllr Ms Birkan suggested that a copy of the meetings could be kept on memory sticks. A further suggestion put by another Member was to do so on an external hard drive which was relatively cheap to buy and stored considerable data. Other Members spoke against the suggestion of keeping recordings and to do so was duplicating existing records.

Cllr Ms Birkan put forward an amended proposition: Upon a resolution, which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes of the meeting for which approved minutes exist, shall be destroyed but the electronic record should be kept.

Cllr Mrs Moseley seconded the amendment.

Record of Voting: 5 in favour, 6 against. **Resolved:** The amendment to Standing Order 12e not be made

- 38.16 To consider the Staffing Committee's to cancel the Council meeting scheduled for 22 February 2021

The Staffing Committee put forward a report relating to staff leave balances and the difficulty due to the pandemic and additional work responsibilities of being in a position to take their leave before the end of the leave year in March. In an effort to assist the staff in being able to take at least half of the leave due to them, between now and the end of March the Staff Committee propose that the second Council meeting in February be cancelled (22nd). This will ease the work requirements for a period of time to enable staff to make use of their leave available to them. The Staff Committee will review this matter again in March and report back to the Council.

Resolved: The Council accept the proposal providing the following meeting – 8 March, is not missed. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Ms Birkan, All in favour.

- 38.17 To receive Committee/representative reports

Committee/representative reports were received

Pre-Planning meeting re Moat Solar Farm

CCTV Cameras

The three extra CCTV cameras have been installed. One camera has been installed on the T junction of Foley Road and Onslow Road. The two other cameras are positioned, one in the Hillside area, the second replaces the temporary camera in Foley Road.

Traffic Regulation Order proposal

The stakeholders' consultation has been completed and the TRO's public consultation has begun. Details will be published on the Council's website.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.29 pm