

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the online Newent Town Council Meeting held on 11th January 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

Also present – Town Clerk, District Cllr Vesma, County Cllr Windsor-Clive and 4 members of the public

Public Participation Session: District Cllr Vesma spoke in regard to setting of the budget and precept. District Cllr Vesma was pleased to see monies for youth support and town enhancements and reminded the Council that town and parish councils precept request limits are not capped and therefore the Council does not need to be constrained. Due to issues with sound, District Cllr Vesma did not continue further.

(District Cllr Vesma left the meeting at this juncture)

36.1 Apologies – Apologies were received from Cllrs Beard and Heathfield.

36.2 Declaration of Interests – None.

36.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2020

Cllr Mrs Gooch asked for the tree report request on p 862 be removed, as it was stated on p 861.

Resolved: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14th December 2020 were approved, subject to the above amendment. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

36.4 Clerk's update and matters arising from previous minutes

Items are being actioned.

36.5 Finance

36.5.1 To approve accounts to be paid

Payments made since last meeting

| | | |
|-------|------|---------|
| Wages | BACS | 8481.84 |
|-------|------|---------|

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|---|
| Payments to be considered | Chq No. | £ |
|----------------------------------|---------|---|

| | | |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| Safpro | 15538 | 507.56 |
| Chris Hyett | 15539 | 105.00 |
| Severn Signs | BACS | 330.00 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------|
| Viking | BACS | 191.30 |
| Ermin Plant | 15540 | 453.40 |
| City Fire Protection | BACS | 60.00 |
| SLCC | BACS | 317.00 |
| Edward Wood | 15541 | 85.00 |

Resolved: The above expenditure is approved, to a value of £10,531.10. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, All in favour.

36.6 To consider the draft budget for 2021/2022 and setting of Precept for 2021/2022

A detailed draft budget proposal had been circulated, which had been prepared by the working group. The working group was thanked for all their work and for setting out the documents which were easy to understand.

Whilst the budgets were being considered several comments were made including; the term earmarked should be replaced with carried forward, the precept should not be raised on humanitarian grounds, historically the Council has not kept pace with increases, flood measures should be included, the Council need to remember this is only one part of the council tax as the District Council, County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and adult social care may also have increases. A query was raised regarding council tax benefit relief and how this works. Unfortunately, this information was not available.

Resolved: The budget for 2021/22 of £321,872.00 is approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour.

Resolved: The precept request 2021/22 of £302,429 is approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Moseley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 8 in favour, 1 against.

36.7 To consider response required to correspondence/consultations received

36.7.1 A resident from Rudford – Requesting the Council consider allocating a fishing permit

Cllr Mrs Gooch proposed that a thank you letter be sent and the item is referred to the working group; this was not seconded therefore the proposal did not go to a vote. A lengthy discussion pursued. Councillors were reminded that the lake has stayed disease free due to the strict rules.

Cllr Mrs Birkan proposed that the working group considers making new regulations and in the case of particular needs and possible increase in fees, that persons not far outside of the parish could

have a fishing permit. **Record of Voting:** Cllr Ms Birkan, Seconded Cllr Mrs Moseley, 2 in favour, 5 against, 2 abstentions.

Resolved: A small working group, consisting of Cllrs Ralph, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Wadley, Mrs Marcovecchio and staff, to look at updating the rules and fishing and to take on board to see if the request can be incorporated and allow the person concerned to use the facility.

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

36.7.2 Gloucestershire County Council – Consultation on draft budget for 2021/22

Several comments were made including; Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Cotswolds were being prioritised and nothing was mentioned about the Forest of Dean or Newent. There are major transport link problems, which was shown during the recent flooding event where all roads to/from Newent were blocked. No key investments are within the Forest District, although the Forest is not left out as services include public health, fire rescue, vulnerable people, climate change etc. One member was pleased to see the road investment had been changed to improvements, although there is not enough money for roads.

County Cllr Windsor-Clive was invited to say a few words and stated that he had contacted the Leader of the Council regarding the early years funding. County Cllr Windsor-Clive took on board comments regarding the transport plan, but was supportive of the budget proposal.

Resolved: The consultation details are put on the Council's website and Facebook page and councillors individually complete responses.

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

36.7.3 Gloucestershire County Council Highways – Ash dieback project

A discussion took place regarding possible areas for planting. Suggestions included, the Arboretum, orchard area by the vets, on verges such as Croft Road. The trees at the allotment creche could be planted in gaps at the Lake. A concern was raised regarding maintenance costs. **Resolved:** Areas above are put forward for consideration for planting of trees. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

36.8 Planning

36.8.1 Planning applications to be considered

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

Resolved: No objection, but concerns of loss of garage and parking.

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

P2098/20/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.

Resolved: No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour.

P1798/20/FUL – Horsley Grove (also known as Plot 3) Cliffords Mesne Newent

Change of use with new building works, of the existing buildings within the curtilage of Horsley Grove

Resolved: No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Moseley, 7 in favour, 2 abstentions.

P2077//20/LBC – Tan House, 33 Culver Street, Newent
Listed Building Consent for internal and external structural repairs

Resolved: No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Duffield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, All in favour.

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.

Resolved: No objection, subject to a suitable condition regarding protective species. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

P2004/20/FUL – Medland, Orchard Road, The Scarr, Newent
Relocation of solar panels with associated works. **Resolved:** No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

(Cllr Ralph left the meeting at this juncture)

Planning application received from Gloucestershire County Council

20/0063/FDMAJW Newent Sewage Treatment Works, Cleeve Mill Lane, Newent

Variation to remove condition 4 (Landscaping and Aftercare Scheme) relating to planning consent 19/0021/FDMAJW dated 23.5.2019.

(Cllr Ralph re-joined the meeting)

Resolved: No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

P2043/20/TCA 17 – Lakeside, Newent. Crown reduction lift to x 1 Lime tree at Lakeside. **Resolved:** No objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Ms Birkan, All in favour.

For information only

P1970/20/TPO Newent Lake, Lakeside, Newent

Crown lift mixture of trees at Newent Lake

36.8.2 To note planning decisions

CONSENT

P1805/20/FUL – 4 the Tythings, Newent

Erection of a single storey extension with associated alterations and works

P1774/20/FUL – Glengarth, Cliffords Mesne

Erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey extension with conversion of roof space to additional living space. Erection of a detached double garage and new partial front boundary wall and access gates. Demolition of existing single storey extension.

P1757/20/FUL – Commonfields Farm, Bouldson, Newent

Erection of a single polytunnel to be used for sheep and calf housing

P1716/20/FUL – 35 Ford House Road, The Scarr, Newent

Erection of an agricultural/horticultural storage building

P1548/20/FUL – Land North of Southend Lane, Newent

Variation of condition 1 (approved plans) of reserved matters permission reference P0041/20/APP to amend the boundary treatment along the western site boundary and partial associated level changes.

36.9 To receive feedback from the Community Response Group in relation to flooding in December 2020

A number of issues need to be addressed and a further item will be added to the next agenda. Anyone affected by properties being internally flooded should register it with the Forest of Dean District Council.

The Community Action Group are reviewing the Emergency Plan. Having liaised with the Forest of Dean District Council, it has been identified that the Civil Protection Team did not notify the District Council of any issues in Newent and this is being investigated.

A concern was raised that the bund at Scraggs Bank had failed, however, it was confirmed that was not the case, although the bund had been damaged by PROW when undertaking footpath repairs. The surge of water was not from the bund, but likely caused by a release of a blockage near to Peacock Gardens.

As a District Councillor, Mrs Moseley has written to Gloucestershire County Council, as lead flood authority, to request a multi-agency stakeholders flood forum be set up. Cllr Mrs Moseley had met with Mr King and discussed the incident in detail. Some suggestions which will be discussed further include; purchasing a sensor to activate an alert to residents when the water levels reach a certain height, look at further protection measures and the setting up of a multi-agency forum.

It was suggested that District Councillors support and participate in the Community Action Group.

A lengthy discussion continued, and comments included thanking those who supported the community during the flooding incident. The Council was not in a position to respond and sandbags need to be provided. There should be a cascade of information. Drains in Watery Lane could not be cleaned by GCC due to parked cars, residents should be notified when drains are being cleared so cars can be moved. No information had been passed to the Clerk regarding the extent of the flooding so how could the plan be activated?

The Chair confirmed this matter would be discussed further at the next meeting and therefore moved to next business.

(County Cllr Windsor-Clive and 2 members of the public left the meeting at this juncture)

36.10 To review and adopt updated Standing Orders

Section 18, items f & g had been updated to show the 2020 EU procurement threshold figures. **Resolved:** The updated Standing Orders are approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, 8 in favour 1 abstention.

Cllr Ms Birkan was advised to submit any further suggested amendments to the Clerk for consideration at a future meeting.

36.11 To consider appointing a working group to review the current condition of the chapel building, the historical use and future use proposals including costings and other storage options and to agree the working group's terms of reference.

Cllr Mrs Gooch gave a short overview of the circulated report.

Cllr Mrs Gooch made a proposal to consider appointing a working group to review the current condition of the chapel building, the historical use and future use proposals including costings and other storage options, which was seconded by Cllr Ms Birkan.

Cllr Mrs Duffield put forward an amendment to the proposal to include a 6 week deadline for the findings to be submitted to Council. **Resolved:** A working group is appointed to review the current condition of the chapel building, the historical use and future use proposals including costings and other storage options and to report back to the Council within 6 weeks.

Record of Voting: Proposed Cllr Mrs Duffield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Draper, 5 in favour, 4 against.

Resolved: The working group members appointed are Cllrs Mrs Gooch, Mrs Moseley, Ms Birkan and Mrs Howley. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllrs Mrs Draper, All in favour.

Resolved: The following terms of reference of the working group are agreed;

- To review the current state of the fabric of the building and to provide a list of contents stored within.
- To review the historical information for fact finding on what work was carried out and why the change of use to office was not implemented.
- To review current and any future potential use of the Chapel in the interest of preserving a heritage asset.
- To look at other storage options based on need and to include costings. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

36.12 To consider Newent Town Council email addresses for all members

Cllr Mrs Gooch proposed that Newent Town Council email addresses are issued to all members. On being advised of the costs involved, Cllr Mrs Gooch withdrew her proposal.

36.13 To receive committee/representative reports and Mayor's report

Town Promotion and Tourism Group - update

The group worked with the traders and shopkeepers in the town on an initiative called Fiver Deals. 22 shopkeepers came on board and the event was advertised with posters and leaflets, plus social media and took place during December. FODDC helped by offering extra free parking.

Due to the current Covid restrictions, we have been unable to evaluate the success (or not) of the event. It was quite hard work to get off the ground, but, if it was successful for the traders, then it could become an annual event?

Mayors Update – Cllr Mrs Howley

I am pleased to inform you of some positive success regarding the street cleaning. A meeting took place between the Biffa's Interim Business Manager, the Recycling & Waste Officer from FODDC and myself. This followed an inspection made of the town previously, with Councillors Duffield, Moseley, Gooch, Vesma.

It was noticed how much detritus/weeds were growing around the town (amongst other things).

At the meeting with the Biffa & FODDC Officers, we walked through our town, all of the offending areas were pointed out. Although the contract issued by Forest of Dean District Council, does not allow for any extra attention, I am pleased to say we were able to come to an agreement which allows for the District and Town to work together. Biffa allowed one of his operatives to meet with one of our operatives to pull up weeds and clear through the town from Church Street to the bottom of the High Street (Naylor Powell) this was carried out early December.

For the future, it is agreed that an operative from the District will meet with our operative, the District operative will clear and pull weeds, our operative will follow him spraying weed killer on the areas. This will hopefully maintain our Town in a tidier position than before, we weed spray through the town every year anyway, so this will just be done in conjunction with FODDC street cleansing team, we may carry this out more regularly to start with, in order to maintain the standard required.

Just prior to Christmas, Monday the 21st December I was invited to a Christmas zoom meeting by the Mayor of Ross-on-Wye. I was very pleased to meet the Mayor of Hereford, Kath Hey, and the Mayor of Bromyard, Suzette Brunsdon, together with our host Daniel Lister. It was interesting and informative.

Councillor Duffield and I visited Highfields Care Home and Daffodil Court. We were pleased to deliver biscuits and chocolates for the residents on behalf of the Council. This was very well received, the cost for the items were very kindly met by a private donation.

We were unable to hold a Mayor's civic event this year, (carol service) usually part of this service involves meeting members of our community and inviting them to partake in a drink and mince pies, after the service.

In order to reach out to the community by some other means, and offer some cheer during these unprecedented times, we have been able to support Rev Simon Mason in the purchase of some booklets produced by the Bible Society for the younger children. These were delivered to the school and the children from Glebe/Picklenash each received a booklet.

Resolved: The Mayors update is published on Facebook. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllrs Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllrs Mrs Wadley, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

Cllr Mrs Draper informed the Council that traders had given the Estates Team some biscuits as a thank you for their work with regards to the Christmas lights.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed 8.48 pm.