

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the online Newent Town Council Meeting held on 25th 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 K Draper, E Heathfield, Mrs S Marcovecchio

Also present – Town Clerk, Assistant to the Clerk, District Cllr Vesma, and 10 members of the public

Public Participation Session

Two members of the public had given advance notice of their wish to speak.

The first speaker advised he was speaking on behalf of his family, two of his neighbours and a number of businesses who had all been affected by the recent flooding incident in the town on 23rd December 2020. He advised he had submitted reports and questions he had put to the Town Council and the Chief Executives of Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire County Council – the Lead Flood Authority. Investigations had commenced by the principal officer for flood mismanagement at Gloucestershire County Council. The speaker advised, whilst already in unprecedented times, this incident had caused anxiety, stress, disruption and financial damage to affected residents and businesses. He called upon the Town Council to support in principle to his reports to assist with investigations and to consider the four questions he had submitted to the Council on 22nd January 2021 for discussion at the next Council meeting on 8th February.

The second speaker advised she was speaking on behalf of herself and another to thank Members of the Town Council for its support on the evening/early hours of 23rd/24th December due to the flooding issues in the town. She advised that she was a Safeguarding Officer in the local primary school and was quickly able to open up the building and had kept in close contact with the George Hotel who did so too. With the support of We will Help Newent group and the local Church they were able to provide in a Covid safe way, accommodation, warmth, and hot food for 26 families. The Emergency Services continued to bring people to them at 5 am. The speaker advised she wished to thank the genuine support that was given to the incident by members of the Town Council and to the continuing support at a subsequent meeting with them. She believed that one needed to learn from this event and to evaluate in preparation for a next time and that this incident had shown that there were many kind and genuine people in the town who had responded to it.

37.1 Apologies – Apologies were received from Cllr R Beard

37.2 Declaration of Interests – A declaration of interest was received from Cllr Mrs Howley in agenda item 7.1 Planning applications – app.no. 3

37.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th January 2021

Resolved: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th January 2021 were approved. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

37.4 Clerk's update and matters arising from previous minutes

The Clerk advised Members all matters arising from previous minutes had been actioned.

37.5 Finance

37.5.1 To approve accounts to be paid

Payments made since last meeting

	Payment type	Total £
A Plan Insurance	BACS	1140.46

Monthly Direct Debit/Standing Order/BACS payments December:

	Payment type	Total £
Lex Autolease	DD	169.82
Lex Autolease	DD	378.98
Lex Autolease	DD	42.00
Lloyds Bank	DD	75.03
Allstar	DD	91.27
Allstar	DD	73.39
Allstar	DD	7.18
Newent Association for the Disabled	BACS	35.00
GCC	BACS	3185.20
HMRC	BACS	2368.93
Itseeze (Spoton)	DD	54.00
EE (Tmobile)	BACS	111.56
Allstar	DD	1.80

Barclaycard Transactions December:

	Total £
Fasthost Internet	6.00
Fasthost Internet	13.85
Zoom	14.39
Fasthost Internet	11.99
Shaws & Sons	48.47
Fasthost Internet	65.87
Fasthost Internet	5.99
Fasthost Internet	65.87

Fizzco	311.85
Amazon	13.98
Bible Society	122.60
Event Bright	38.93

Payments to be considered

	Payment Type BACS/Cheque	Total £
MKM	BACS	411.78
Peninsula	BACS	217.98
EE	BACS	87.05
Network Connections	BACS	525.00
GD Parker	BACS	45.36
Water Plus	BACS	22.70
Mainstream Digital	15542	12.41
GMT Solutions	BACS	165.12
Siemens	BACS	168.00
Glebe Chapel	BACS	500.00
Perpetua Press	BACS	165.60
Lite	BACS	2547.00
Luke Blandford	BACS	240.00
Shaw & Sons	BACS	85.20
ICCM	BACS	96.00
Royal Images	BACS	374.40

Resolved: The above expenditure is approved, to a value of £14,118.01. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Marcovecchio, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

37.5.2 To receive Budget update (December)

The Budget update (December) was received. One Member suggested more payments could be paid by BACS to avoid charges. It was noted that the majority of payments were paid by BACS but the bank still charged for cheques going into the account.

37.6 To consider response required to correspondence/consultations received

37.6.1 Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership – Travel needs survey

Cllr Mrs Moseley proposed that the survey be passed to the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group to respond. Cllr Mrs Gooch asked that the individual survey be put on the Council's website and Facebook and that the Council responds that it is doing this. **Resolved:** The organisation level survey is passed to the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group to respond.

Record of Voting: Proposed by Cllr Mrs Moseley, Seconded Cllr Ms Birkan, 9 in favour, 1 against.

37.7 Planning

37.7.1 Planning applications to be considered

P2126/20/TCA - Larksmead, Graces Pitch Newent. Removal of 1 Silver Birch tree at Larksmead. **Resolved:** No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Draper, 6 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

P2069/20/FUL - Great Bouldson Farm, Great Bouldson, Newent Change of use of agricultural building (cow shed) to dependants' accommodation. **Resolved:** No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Wadley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour.

Cllr Mrs Howley left the meeting whilst the following application was under consideration.

P0003/21/Discon – Plot 3/3A Glebe Chapel, Glebe Close, Newent Discharge of condition 03 (surface water drainage details) of planning permission P1219/19/FUL. **Resolved:** No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Moseley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Duffield, 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

Cllr Mrs Howley returned to the meeting.

P0004/21/Discon – Newent Community Centre, Ross Road, Newent Discharge of condition 03 (surface water drainage details) of planning permission P1219/19/FUL. **Resolved:** No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Howley, All in favour.

P2149/20/FUL – Spring Bank, Malswick, Newent Change of use of land for the stationing of 9 log cabins for tourism/holiday occupational use (existing mixed uses; part residential/part commercial/part base use to otherwise continue) **Resolved:** No Objection, provided close board fencing erected to create separation from adjacent land owner to prevent feeding of their horses and providing adequate water supply and drainage. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Ms Birkan, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

P2122/20/TPO – Land between Court Road and Peacocks Brook, south of Newent Lake, Lakeside, Newent **Resolved:** No Objection. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Ms Birkan, Seconded Cllr Mrs Gooch, All in favour.

37.7.2 To note planning decisions

CONSENT

P0121/20/Discon Land North of Southend Lane, Newent

Discharge of Condition 05 (waste management plan) of reserved matters permission P0041/20/APP

P1599/20/TPO 42 Meek Road, Newent

Crown reduction/lift on x 10 trees adjacent to 42 Meek Road

APPEAL DECISION

Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/W/20/3258541

Hope Cottage, Great Bouldson, Newent

The appeal is made against a refusal to grant planning permission under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the development of land without complying with conditions subject to which a previous planning permission was granted. The Appeal is made by Mrs H Baker against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council. The application Ref P0124/20/FUL dated 30 January 2020 was refused by notice dated 24 March 2020. The application sought planning permission for the conversion of existing garage and games room above to a holiday cottage without complying with conditions attached to planning permission Ref P0409/08/COU, dated 26 June 2008. Conditions in dispute are Nos. 3 & 6.

DECISION: The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of existing garage and games room above to a holiday cottage at Hope Cottage, Great Bouldson, Newent, Glos GL18 1JJ in accordance with the application Ref: P0124/20/FUL dated 30 January 2020 without compliance with condition no. 6 previously imposed on planning permission Ref P0409/08/COU dated 26 June 2008 but subject to conditions.

Members noted the planning application decisions and the decision of the Appeal.

37.9 To receive County Councillor's report

The County Councillor's report was considered. It was concluded that if anyone had any questions regarding it, to contact him direct.

37.10 To consider working group's response to the Forest of Dean District Council's local plan preferred options consultation

Cllr Mrs Gooch stated that she would not be participating in the discussion concerning this matter, nor voting on any decision taken, so that her District Councillor voting right was not affected.

Members discussed the preferred options in depth and how they would affect Newent and its infrastructure. It was considered that the town had sufficient housing but that it was inevitable more housing would be built in the future.

Cllr Mrs Moseley proposed Option 3 as the favoured option. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Howley and a vote taken resulting in 3 in favour 4 against, 2 abstentions. The motion failed.

Resolved: Option 1 is preferred. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Heathfield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 3 in favour, 1 against, 5 abstentions.

- 37.11 To receive report on the Town Council's response to the flooding incident on 23rd December 2020 and consider options for future response.

Members considered the report on the Town Council's response to the flooding incident including the activation of the Emergency Plan and options surrounding the supply of sandbags as well as further flood elimination possibilities.

Resolved: To defer making a decision and to hold a public meeting with those residents and businesses who were affected by the flooding in order that they may be involved and to then decide a way forward. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Moseley, 5 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions.

- 37.12 To receive report on flooding in Newent on 23rd December 2020 and consider proposals for a multi-agency stakeholders flood forum, sending letters to known flood properties and assistance from the Forest of Dean District Council's Flood Officer – Cllr Mrs Moseley

Cllr Mrs Moseley submitted a report on the flooding incident in Newent on 23rd December 2020 outlining the problems surrounding this and in so doing identifying a number of proposals to mitigate them in the future.

Resolved: The proposals be deferred until such time as a public meeting can be held as discussed under minute 37.11 when more information will be available and an assessment of the situation can be made at that time. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 8 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

- 37.13 To consider the recommendations from the Staff Committee to re-adopt the following policies

37.13.1 Equality Policy

Resolved: The Equality Policy be re-adopted. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

37.13.2 Health and Safety General Policy Statement

Resolved: The Health and Safety General Policy Statement be re-adopted. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Draper, Seconded Cllr Mrs Duffield, All in favour.

37.14 To Review the Model Publication Scheme list

Resolved: The Model Publication Scheme list be readopted subject to a minor word change and that once the Emergency Plan is updated, the redacted version is published on the Council's website. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Mrs Gooch, Seconded Mrs Wadley, All in favour.

37.15 To consider using the Tythings telephone box as an information point

Cllr Heathfield spoke in favour of utilising the former telephone box at the Tythings as a point to promote events and Town Council activities which would benefit residents in this area of the town. The young Youth Action Group members would like to help getting other young volunteers to keep it updated.

Resolved: The Tythings telephone box be approved in principle for an information point subject to a further report. **Record of Voting:** Proposed Cllr Heathfield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley, 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

37.16 To appoint an independent internal auditor for 2020/21

The Clerk advised that in recent years the internal audit had been undertaken by Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils who carried out an in-depth internal audit. There were no recommendations from other sources. **Resolved:** Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils be appointed as Newent Town Council's independent internal Auditor for 2020/21 at a cost of £390 plus expenses. **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Mrs Howley, Seconded Cllr Mrs Draper, All in favour

37.17 To consider the use of work tests for all councillors and staff to determine the need for team building exercises and to decide which would be of most benefit

Cllr Heathfield put forward a short report outlining a proposal to use work tests for councillors and staff to determine the need for team building exercises and to decide which would be of most benefit.

Members were divided on the matter – one member spoke in favour of supporting this, stating the Members could do it in their own time with nothing to lose, whilst other Members felt that it was of little value and that it did not benefit the electorate. Cllr Heathfield's proposition was put to the

vote **Record of Voting:** Proposed by Cllr Heathfield, Seconded Cllr Mrs Wadley 5 in favour, 5 against. The Mayor used her casting vote against the proposition. **Resolved:** Team building tests for Councillors and staff not be progressed.

37.18 Team building update

The Clerk reminded Members that this matter had been discussed at Council in March 2020. Having contacted Gloucestershire Association Parish & Town Councils, it had been established they do not provide this, however, if the Town Council can put forward objectives of what they want to achieve they may be able to recommend companies who could help.

Councillors to advise the Clerk individually initially.

37.19 To consider if the Council's monthly newsletter should continue to be published

Members discussed at length the continuation of the monthly newsletter and ways by which this could be achieved. The Clerk advised that the Council's new website facilitated newsletters in a prominent page position and in addition the Council needed to produce newsletters to ensure its Quality status.

Cllr Mrs Wadley proposed that Councillors take turns to produce a monthly newsletter. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs Howley. **Record of Voting:** 4 in favour, 6 against. Cllr Mrs Howley requested the matter be brought back to the next meeting.

37.20 To receive committee/representative reports

Committee and Representative reports were received:-

Cemetery Rules & Regulation Review Working Group update
Assets Working Group – the Lodge update
Newent Youth Action Group Representative report

The Mayor declared the meeting closed 21.03 pm.