

## **STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ASSETS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 2020 AT 6.00PM AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

**PRESENT** Councillor Bill Turner (Town Mayor)  
Councillor Mrs Susan J Sandall (Chairman)  
Councillor Bob Sandall (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor John Dawson  
Councillor Mrs Sheila Sismore  
Councillor Mrs Gloria Johnson  
Councillor David Taylor  
Councillor Andrew Croft

**ALSO PRESENT** Town Clerk, Patricia Stuart-Mogg  
Councillor Elaine Hooper  
Councillor Dave Dorson  
Councillor Mrs Julie Clarke  
Councillor Steve Carroll  
Councillor Amanda Wheeler  
Councillor Shaun Ford  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Ms Sam Rodden  
Mr Darren Rawnsley  
Mr Richard Cleaver

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** –

Ms Sam Roddan presented the two grant funding applications submitted by Art-Popup for consideration. It was noted that the first application related to In-person Cultural related activities. During the current pandemic and the lockdown of the Arts Centre, it is considered that support of individual in deprived sectors is essential for good mental health. Research indicate that this segment of society is often digitally disadvantaged. This programme will provide a Door-step Festival which is targeted to those who are in most need in Stamford. The operation will involve a small troop of entertainers visiting specific locations, performing where there are open communal green spaces to specific bubbles on their doorstep, like the ‘Clap for the NHS’. The locations will be identified by associated partner groups so the programme will target as wider range as possible. In this way local support bonds and friendships may grow. Other grant source funding is being obtained to cover the major part of the budget for this initiative.

The second application is for a schools’ programme in response to the Coronavirus crisis and will support all six Stamford Primary schools and the Welland Academy. The programme will be delivered in conjunction with MindSpace professionals to put in place coping strategies, using journaling and creative expression as methods for young people to manage any anxiety they may experience during the current situation. This will be rolled out to 2000 children in Stamford during October, November and December. Again, the major portion of the budget for this programme has been covered by grant funds from other sources.

For both applications the request a contribution of up to £1,000 towards each initiative from the Town Council. Art-Popup is a not for profit Community organisation and any unspent grant will be returned.

Mr Darren Rawnsley presented his application on behalf of Ink Contemporary Theatre for a grant funding towards the production of a theatrical piece for vulnerable young people. This production hope to provide individuals with the confidence to act out the issues they have experienced such as

substance abuse, self-harming and domestic violence. It is considered that a film piece rather than a play may be the preferred method to reach more people. The project will be screened at schools, youth groups and private homes to reassure individuals that there is local assistance available to help and support them, so they don't suffer in silence. The cost of the production is in the region of £4,000 but what is being requested is a contribution of £1,500 towards the cost. Unfortunately, no other match funding has been able to be secured and Ink Contemporary Theatre will fund the remainder of the cost of the project.

Mr Richard Cleaver presented his grant application which is supporting the public consultation for a wildlife survey to be carried out along Stamford East Meadow land embracing Hudd's Mill, Cherryholt Road and St. Leonards Priory. In addition, it is hoped the Town Council will support the campaign to formally have this area designate as a wildlife site and public amenity area. This grant application is for support funding to cover the cost of the wildlife survey which will be undertaken by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Mr Cleaver appreciated that the Campaign Group on whose behalf the application is being presented had not yet been formed. He further appreciated that permission to conduct the survey would need to be obtained from the landowners. What he hoped is that the Committee would agree to earmark a grant up to a maximum of £1000 conditional on the two former points.

The Chairman Councillor Mrs Susan Sandall thanked all the representatives for their presentation which the Committee will take into consideration when making a decision on each separate application.

Formal meeting commenced at 6.20pm and the Grant representatives left the meeting.

**136. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 1)**

None.

**137. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 2)**

Councillor B Turner declared a Personal Interest in respect of the Grant Application submitted by Darren Rawnsley as he is a close personal friend.

Councillor A Croft declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest as he is involved in the management group of the event for Art-Popup events.

Councillor J Dawson declared a Personal Interest in respect of the discussion related to the grant application being submitted by Richard Cleaver, as Councillor Dawson's son is acting for one of the landowners.

Councillor Mrs G Johnson declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in respect of any discussion relating to personnel as her daughter-in-law is employed as Administration Officer.

**138. MINUTES (Agenda Point 3)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman.

**139. UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS (Agenda Point 4)**

- a. *Red Lion Square furniture refurbishment & planter relocation* – The Committee were reminded that quotes were being obtained to refurbish the eight seats in Red Lion Square as they were in very poor condition. At the same time one of the planters would be

relocated to Castle Dyke to make more space for pedestrians. The Town Clerk confirmed that two quotes had been obtained from preferred contractors.

Quote A	Working on two benches at time £1423.76 x4	Relocating planter £684.63	Total £6378.47 nett
Quote B	Working on each bench £375 x 8 + vat	Relocating planter £225 + vat	Total £3,225 + vat

Following discussion, it was noted that the benches were in need of refurbishment and would be worked two at a time away from site. The planter nearest the pedestrian crossing would be moved down to Castle Dyke with one of the other planters in the square moved in its place. This would allow more space between the benches for pedestrians. People in wheelchairs should keep to the main pathway around the seats. It had been observed that when the Saturday Market is on one of the traders uses a bench to store stock. It was noted that this matter should be taken forward by the District Councillors with the SKDC Market supervisor. Considering the cost there was a view whether the benches should be replaced rather than refurbished.

**Proposal 1** – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs G Johnson, seconded by Councillor B Sandall and unanimously **RESOLVED** that quote B is accepted at a total of £3,225 + vat to refurbish the eight seats in Red Lion Square and relocated one planter to Castle Dyke.

b. *Local Authority Support Enforcement (LAS)* – The Committee had been circulated with details of the quote for support enforcement services. Following discussion, it was considered that Enforcement is a service provided by the District Council through the Precept. Pressure should be placed on the District to improve the delivery of enforcement in Stamford as it is well beyond the resources of the Town Council to resource this service.

**Proposal 2** – It was proposed by Councillor B Sandall, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the quote from LAS is not accepted and all District Councillors should strongly lobby the District Council to increase the Enforcement Service in Stamford.

c. *SAGE Accountancy system upgrade* – The upgrading of the Council's accountancy package with SAGE. Currently there is only one licence, so it does not permit three users to simultaneously use the system, nor does it allow for remote working. The current fee is £544.50 per annum and would increase to £900 per annum.

**Proposal 3** – It was proposed by Councillor J Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the SAGE Accountancy system is upgraded to acquiring more user licences and enabling remote working at £900 per annum.

d. *External Audit Year 2019/2020* – The Town Clerk reminded the Committee the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) requires approval of the Council as a Corporate Body at the August meeting as the External Audit has been moved to 30 September 2020.

e. *Solar Power Project* – It was noted that quotes are still being gathered, the delay is due to the Covid lockdown, but as soon as they have been received the report will be

presented to the Committee for consideration. Councillor B Sandall suggested that solar panels on the Cemetery Lodge may also be a consideration together with an electrical charging point.

- f. *Transfer of Open Space* – The Town Clerk reported that Buckles solicitors had confirmed that the land being gifted by a resident to the Town Council had been transferred and is being registered with Land Registry. The total cost of the legal transaction was £750.00 which was covered by the resident.

**140. ASSETS (Agenda Point 5)**

- a. *Town Hall bookings* – The Town Clerk informed the meeting that at present due to the Covid restrictions the Town Hall isn't fully operational. The Risk Assessments have been undertaken by the Covid-Response Panel which has been circulated to all Town Councillors for approval at the August Town Council meeting. There are three potential Civil Ceremony bookings in the pipeline for which booking forms are awaited.
- b. *Stamford War Memorial Repairs* – Councillor B Turner advised the Committee that a meeting had been held with Browne's Hospital and it was agreed that the condition of the wall is the responsibility of the Browne's Hospital Trust. Any cleaning, pointing and dressing of the stonework would need to be carried out by the Trust. As to the War Memorial the lower plates (1939 – 1945) were working loose and the floral tray on the ledge above these plates had come adrift. It is recommended that the lower plates are removed, and remedial work is carried out to the wall directly behind the plates before they are reattached. There are grant funds available for such remedial work to the War Memorial. The Town Clerk was to work with Councillor Turner to obtain the quotes to repair the plates and the floral tray.

**141. FINANCE (Agenda Point 6)**

- a. *Upgrading Council Administration Hardware* – The Town Clerk informed the Committee that she was no further forward with trying to obtain feedback from the District Council and this matter is now becoming urgent. Following discussion there was concern that with the continuing delay may be the Town Council should proceed to reexamine one of the other quotes. Councillors Mrs G Johnson and J Dawson offered to investigate the reasons for the delay with District but considered that it may prove best the Town Council procure the equipment themselves. Councillor D Dorson advised that the quote that he provided procuring the equipment through Total Computers, did not include support services but this could be obtained on a need basis. He also confirmed that Total Computers would be able to offer discounted rates for Local Authorities, so the prices would be on parity with those obtained by SKDC. There were mixed opinions as to whether to delay the ordering of any equipment until the Town Council meeting providing Councillor Dawson a chance to refer this matter to the Leader of SKDC.

**Proposal 4** – It was proposed by Councillor G Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that if no response has been received by SKDC by 25 August 2020, the Town Council agrees to proceed with obtaining the equipment through the second preferred supplier. There was one Against and one Abstention.

- b. *Rewilding Report from Climate Change Working Group* – Councillor Mrs A Wheeler reported that as part of the Council’s commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of the Town the Climate Change working Group is investigating rewilding verges. This was also supported by residents’ response to the survey conducted. As a trial a section of verge has been identified opposite Morrison’s Supermarket. There is no residential housing; it is a main access point into Town; it is a compact location which can be easily managed. The area will need to be specially planted to provide colour. It is estimated that the cost of £1,200. Permission is being sought from Stamford Town Council and the County Council. Grant funding is being investigated so not all the cost would be required from the Town Council. The Chairman Councillor Mrs S J Sandall informed the Committee that she had spoken the County Councillor and the feedback is that the County Council would support the initiative subject to location. The Town Clerk asked whether a provision of a bin could also be considered at the end nearest to the Priory where a new footpath access is located. The initiative was supported in principle by the Committee.

**Proposal 5** – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall, seconded by Councillor D Taylor and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Climate Change Working Group proceed in investigating the phase 1 of their rewilding scheme.

- c. *LCC Verges Service Agreement for 2021/2022* - The Town Clerk reported that this service agreement will need to be examined more closely next year. This year there are a number of additional areas, which are now having to be absorbed within the Town’s cut as other organisations and voluntary bodies are now not cutting them. This was noted.
- d. *Schedule for Payment No. 5* – The schedule had been circulated for consideration. It was noted that the item 14007 was for the final piece of work on ‘View Assessment’ relating to Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk stated that there were other expected invoices due which would be added to the schedule for presentation to the Town Council.
- e. *Update on Mayoral Charity* – Councillor A Croft advised that donations to the Lions Association had been received following the funeral of the former Mayor Maxine Couch and details of the receipts will be forwarded to the Civic Officer. Councillor B Turner stated that his nominated Mayor’s charity will continue to be the Lions Association.
- f. *St George’s Ward By-Election* – The Town Clerk confirmed that a by-election had been called and would be held in May 2021.
- g. *To consider the cost comparison of Franking and Stamps* – The Town Clerk circulated the report on the current postal expenditure. It was noted that the Council had benefitted by B J Print having agreed to frank the Council’s post when there were large quantities. There were three options to continue to purchase stamps or rent a franking machine. The costs comparisons were studied, together with the ancillary costs.

**Proposal 6** – It was proposed by Councillor D Taylor, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the Town Council supports the procurement of a Pitney Bowes franking machine for 1 – 5 years rental at a cost of £183.20 + VAT. There was one Abstention.

- h. *SKDC Ward Grant* - The Town Clerk informed the Committee that SKDC had awarded a Ward Grant of £290 to the Pride of Stamford Litter Pickers and has requested the Town Council to facilitate the grant with the use of their account as the applicant does not have the appropriate account for the funds to be transferred.

**Proposal 7** – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council’s payment account could be used to facilitate the Ward Grant to the Pride of Stamford Litter Pickers.

**142. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS (Agenda Point 7)**

- i. *Art-Popup application for Stamford’s Doorstep Festival & Creativity School Programme* – The Chairman invited comments in respect of the presentation. The initiative was supported by the Committee and other members of the Council present as it would support the wellbeing of many during this pandemic crisis. Although, it was recognised that this is a private business which is not registered as a not for profit organisation. It does deliver some excellent community initiatives. It was noted that any grant fund would be paid on invoice and any unspent funds would not be required. It was noted that a project management fee charged for organising of each event by Art-Popup. This was noted.

**Proposal 8** - It was proposed by Councillor B Sandall, seconded by Councillor Bill Turner and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that two £1,000.00 grants are award (*under LGA 2000 s2 amended by the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 s77*) to support each of the initiatives proposed – Doorstep Festival and Creativity School Programme, subject to the confirmation of the project management fee charged for the organising of the events. The grant would be released on receipt of invoice. There were two Abstentions

- ii. *Ink Contemporary Theatre application for grant funding towards a theatrical piece of filming to support vulnerable young people* - The Chairman invited comments in respect of the presentation. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Ink Contemporary Theatre is a Community Youth Theatre whose Director is Darren Rawnsley who receives any payment. It was noted that this production hope to provide young individuals with the confidence to speak out on the difficult issues they are experiencing. The Chairman and Vice Chairman considered that this was also a very worthy cause and should also be supported by a grant award of £1,000.

**Proposal 9** - It was proposed by Councillor B Sandall, seconded by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that a £1,000.00 grant is award (*under LGA 1972 s145*) to support the initiative to produce a theatrical piece of filming to support vulnerable young people. There were three Abstentions

- iii. *Richard Cleaver application for a grant to support a wildlife survey* – Members of the Committee supported the initiative in principle but had no firm budget outlining expenditure. There was also concern that the land was privately owned, and any survey would require the permission of landowners. It was understood that under the Stamford Neighbourhood Plan the area of land being discussed is already protected as a Designated Open Green Space and the Town Council should support the objective of the land being designated as a Wildlife area. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that there were many unknown elements which were dependent on the landowners’

permission being granted. In addition, the required paperwork remains outstanding. However, the Committee may wish to support the request in principle (*under Countryside Act 1968, s1*) pending receipt of the necessary documentation and permissions.

**Proposal 10** - It was proposed by Councillor D Taylor, seconded by Councillor A Croft and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that a £1,000.00 grant is set aside (*under Countryside Act 1968, s1*) in principle to support the initiative subject permission from the landowners is obtained, a full budget together with the necessary documentation is submitted to the Town Council. There was one Abstention.

The Chairman advised that the following aspect relating to Personnel matters would be discussed in Closed Session.

The Chairman confirmed in pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, the meeting would continue in closed session during consideration of the next item which relates to personnel matters.

It was resolved to exclude the public and press. Councillor Mrs G Johnson left the meeting

The meeting proceeded in Closed Session 8.00pm

The meeting resumed in Open Session 8.15pm.

**143. PERSONNEL MATTERS (Agenda Point 8)**

Following discussion, it was resolved to implement the staff reviews and have staff operating from the Town Hall five days a week.

**144. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. Councillor B Sandall asked why it was not possible for the Council to commence in-person Council meetings. The Town Clerk advised that the National Association of Local Councils strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely. If the Council should wish to return to face-to-face meetings there are a range of issues that will need to be addressed to ensure the decision is made in accordance with the relevant regulations and requirements.

**145. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: (Agenda Point 9) – Tuesday 22 September 2020**

Chairman  
(The meeting closed at 8.20pm)