

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.00PM AT REMOTE LOCATIONS USING VIDEO AND AUDIO LINKS (Occasional interruptions may have occurred during this meeting)

PRESENT Councillor Mrs G Johnson, Deputy Chairman (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor H Bisnauthsing
Councillor M Exton
Councillor B Sandall
Councillor Mrs S J Sandall
Councillor J Dawson
Councillor Miss B Griffin
Councillor Mrs S Sismore
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor A Croft
Councillor S Carroll
Councillor D Dorson
Councillor Mrs M Pitt
Councillor Mrs A Wheeler
Councillor Mrs A Carter-Begbie
Councillor Mrs J Clarke
Councillor Mrs E Hooper
Councillor S Fenn
Councillor S Ford

ALSO PRESENT Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
Rev. Peter Stephenson
Maisie McMahon, Safer Together Coordinator, Lincs. Police and Crime Commissioner Office
10 Members of public
1 Member of Press

The Deputy Mayor requested a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of the former Mayor, Councillor Bill Turner.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Chairman Councillor Mrs G Johnson welcomed Ms Maisie McMahon to the meeting. Ms McMahon advised she was the newly appointed Coordinator for the South Kesteven Safer Together Team, operating with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and in partnership with Lincolnshire Police. The aim of the Safer Together Team is to empower communities to work with Lincolnshire Police partners to ensure the Council is able to participate fully in the decision processes which directly impact the lives of the community. Once Covid restrictions allow, Ms McMahon will be actively engaging and visiting the district, as well as attending local events. In addition to the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Ms McMahon would herself be an additional local contact. She would be able to identify funding which could benefit local projects or groups and circulate a quarterly Newsletter informing the Community of the various initiatives being developed to tackle the crime and violence which local communities experience.

Following discussion, a request for the Police to supervise the movement of vehicles in Stamford High Street during the restricted hours period would be appreciated. Ms McMahon would feed this request to the Neighbourhood Policing Team and would also provide her contact details to the Town Clerk for circulation.

Formal meeting commenced 7.15pm

456. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 2) - None

457. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 3)

Councillors M Exton and H Bisnauthsing declared a Personal Interest in respect of any discussions related to planning as they are on the SKDC Development Management Committee.

Councillor D Dorson declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in respect of any discussion relating to personnel as his wife is Deputy Town Clerk.

Councillor S Ford declared a Personal Interest in respect of any discussion relating to the St. George's Residents Association as he is a member.

458. MINUTES (Agenda Point 4)

The notes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 together with the Pink Paper had been circulated to all members of the Council.

The Chairman Councillor Mrs Johnson confirmed the probity of the email from the Town Clerk, circulated to all Councillors, dated 05 February 2021, relating to Closed Session protocol. Closed Sessions are convened when personnel matters, or subjects of a commercially sensitive nature, are discussed by the Council or by a Committee. These matters fall within the scope of the Data Protection Act. Town Council procedure is clear. A Councillor who is not a member of a Committee has the same right to attend a Committee meeting as any member of the public. A Councillor may participate in any Committee meeting, subject to Standing Orders in respect of public participation. Therefore, when a Councillor is not a member of an appointed Committee, they only enjoy the same rights as any member of the public and consequently are excluded from any Closed Session elements of a Committee meeting. All Councillors enjoy the opportunity to offer comment on any issue related to any Committee minutes at the subsequent Town Council meeting.

The Chairman implored Councillors to refrain from further disruptive behaviour in respect of this issue and to refrain from publishing personal, often uninformed, opinions on Social Media which potentially harm the reputation of Stamford Town Council and bring it into disrepute.

It was noted that there were two Pink Papers relating to the Personnel Matters under discussion which had been circulated electronically to Councillors.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs J Clarke, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Carter-Begbie and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council discuss the two Pink Papers in the Amenities Committee and the Finance Committee respectively in Closed Session.

Councillor Carroll stated the wish to discuss why Councillors were being excluded from Closed Session during Committee meetings in open session. The Chairman advised that this matter would be discussed in Closed Session to allow full and frank debate.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs J Clarke, seconded by Councillor S Carroll that Councillors should not be treated as members of the public but should be treated as Councillors and be able to fully participate during Committee meetings. There were four votes in Favour, eleven votes Against and four Abstentions. **The Motion fell.**

Councillor Dorson observed NALC Legal Note 5, which outlines Council meeting procedure, is mandatory not optional. This was confirmed by the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor D Dorson seconded by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes together with the Pink Paper is an accurate reflection of the Town Council Meeting held on 26 January 2021 and be signed by the Chairman.

459. REPORTS ON OUTSIDE BODIES / ORGANISATIONS (Agenda Point 5)

- a. *Town Councillors on Outside Bodies:* No reports received.
- b. *Stamford Ward Councillors:*
 - i. **St. John's Ward Polling Station** – Councillor Mrs S J Sandall reported that SKDC is considering altering the Polling Station in St. John's Ward, for the Elections scheduled this May and for one year only, from Malcolm Sargent School to the Danish Invader.
 - ii. **SKDC Community Grant Fund** – Councillors M Exton and Miss B Griffin had donated £250 each of their SKDC Community Grant Funds to Stamford in Bloom. Councillor H Bisnauthsing also confirmed that his allocated fund had been donated towards the assisting local charities which support the homeless.
 - iii. **Footpaths & Road repairs** – Councillor D Dorson observed in St. George's Ward a considerable number of footpaths and roads require urgent remedial attention. It was also disappointing to note that the Government had cut the funding to LCC Highways. All other Ward Councillors were encouraged to report the poor condition of the roads and footpaths in their areas.
 - iv. **Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)** – Councillor S Ford reported that the St. George's Residential Association (SGRA) had held its first meeting which had been well attended by residents who voted in favour of requesting Lincolnshire County Council to investigate the potential of introducing an LTN in that vicinity. A draft letter from the Town Council in support of the residents' request had been included in the Agenda Pack for consideration. Councillor H Bisnauthsing supported the LTN scheme and expressed a wish that the stretch of road from St. Leonard Street to St. Paul's Street also be pedestrianised, as the very large HGVs are causing significant damage to the buildings.
- c. *South Kesteven District Council:*
 - i. **SKDC Company's Committee meeting** – Councillor J Dawson reported that at the SKDC Company's Committee meeting, Councillor Exton had voiced concern over the disparity of Stamford's *pro-rata* in respect of charges relating to markets and swimming pools. During the Confidential element of these discussions, all District Councillors were excluded - except those appointed to the Committee. This is exactly the same procedure as adopted by Stamford Town Council.
 - ii. **Rutland & Stamford Sound Community Radio** – Councillor Mrs Wheeler reported that at the recent meeting it was announced that a new digital radio station is to commence led by Rob Persani.
 - iii. **Amenity Green Space in Haddon Road** – Councillor Mrs Wheeler reported that in respect of the case to use this amenity space for a static caravan, the SKDC Enforcement Officer had advised that, following a Court injunction, the final hearing is due shortly. It is anticipated that a retrospective planning application will be submitted. Councillor D Taylor reaffirmed the space has Open Space protection as part of the Neighbourhood and Local Plan which prevents development of such sites.
- d. *Lincolnshire County Council* – There was no representation.

460. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT (Agenda Point 6)

- a. *Correspondence* – A schedule of correspondence had been e-mailed to all Members to examine. Any queries relating to any element of such correspondence should be directed to the Officer dealing with that subject.
- b. *Action Points* – Update and feedback on action points:
- i. **Councillor Bill Turner's Funeral** – The funeral service will be on Monday 01 March – Deputy Mayor Councillor Gloria Johnson will attend the service and represent the Town and Council. Councillors wishing to pay their respects may stand on the terrace outside the Town Hall, where the flags will be flown at half-mast. The cortege will pass the Town Hall and then proceed to the War Memorial prior to the funeral.
 - ii. **Notice of Town Council Vacancy (St. George's Ward)** – The Government has confirmed that local Elections will be held in May. A By-Election has been called in respect of the existing vacancy resulting from the death of Cllr Maxine Couch. This will be held on 6th May 2021. The vacancy, which is a consequence of Cllr Bill Turner's death, will be advised as soon as practicable. The Notice will be displayed on the 1st March. Should a further election be called within the 14 days of the above Notification, the election for the second vacancy may also be held on 6th May 2021.
 - iii. **Covid signs** – These have been received and reinstalled.
 - iv. **Qtr 3 Report** – Circulated to all members of the Council. Please contact the Town Clerk in respect of any questions or queries
 - v. **Sec. 106 Applications** – Details of the applications to be considered for Sec. 106 funding have been sent to SKDC for consideration by the appointed Panel.
 - vi. **LGA Code of Conduct consultation analysis** – The link to the analysis of the LGA Code of Conduct has been circulated to all Councillors.
 - vii. **Town Meeting** – Holding a Town Meeting is a statutory requirement. This virtual meeting is scheduled on Monday 22 March at 7pm and will be advertised via the Council website, Newsletter, local press and social media networks.
 - viii. **Councillors Behaviour** – The Town Clerk placed on record her unequivocal support of the Chairman's statement regarding behaviour and mutual respect. A Town Clerk's role is to advise and to support the Council in respect of the delivery of its statutory functions and operations. Regrettably, the wholly unnecessary recent discord evident at meetings, by certain Councillors, undeniably questions the very professionalism of the Town Council as represented by its elected and co-opted members. To ensure complete transparency, Town Clerk confirmed she had consulted both the Monitoring Officer at SKDC and the CEO of LALC to reaffirm the protocols relevant to Closed Sessions. As a result, her recent advice to the Town Council on this important issue was fully corroborated. This reassurance has been circulated to all members of the Council.
 - ix. **Local Council Gold Award Scheme** - The ratified Minutes of the 26 January 2021 Council meeting include the Proposal to move forward with the Local Council Gold Award Scheme. This proposal was unanimously resolved by the Council. This will mean that certain procedures will inevitably require fine-tuning to reflect the appropriate standards required to achieve the prestigious Gold Award.

Councillor B Sandall wished to express concern that for some time now both he and other members of the Council had been subjected to Councillor Carroll's unacceptable standards of behaviour both at Council, during virtual meetings and through his

Facebook book page Protect Stamford. All Councillors are bound by a Code of Conduct and governed by Standing Orders approved by the National Association of Local Councils. However, it was Cllr Sandall's considered opinion that the time had come when Councillor Carroll's behaviour needed to be scrutinised by the appropriate Officers at SKDC who are responsible for maintaining Standards of Behaviour in public office. Councillor B Sandall requested that a recorded vote be taken.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor B Sandall, seconded by Councillor John Dawson and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that Stamford Town Council refers Councillor Carroll's behaviour to the Monitoring Officer at South Kesteven District Council in order that it can be determined what sanctions may be invoked against the named Councillor citing the following issues:

- 1) An unwillingness to abide by the Council's Standing Orders
- 2) A disregard for the Council's Code of Conduct at Council meetings.
- 3) Making unsubstantiated accusations about other Councillors.
- 4) Deliberately causing disruption at Council meetings.
- 5) Showing no respect for his fellow Councillors
- 6) Having disregard for the well-being of the Town Clerk by making spurious demands upon her time with unnecessary requests
- 7) Posting misleading and inaccurate information on the Protect Stamford Facebook page thereby bringing this Council into disrepute
- 8) Posting misleading and inaccurate information on the Protect Stamford Facebook page which discredits other Councillors and the work of the Council

In Favour – Councillors B. Sandall, Mrs S J Sandall, J Dawson, Mrs S Sismore, D Taylor, A Croft, D Dorson, Mrs A Carter-Begbie, Mrs E Hooper, Mrs G Johnson (10)

Against – Councillors H Bisnauthsing, M Exton, S Carroll, Mrs J Clarke (4)

Abstentions – Councillors Miss B Griffin, Mrs M Pitt, Mrs A Wheeler, S Fenn, S Ford (5)

The Chairman Councillor Mrs G Johnson confirmed that all members of the Council had had adequate time to read the minutes of the meetings and asked that any questions or queries should in the first instance be directed to the Chairman of that Committee and to the Town Clerk. In addition, it is a requirement that the Town Clerk has sight of all draft notes prepared by Officers before general circulation.

461. EVENTS (Agenda Point 7)

- a. Councillor A Croft confirmed on behalf of the Committee that the notes are a true and accurate reflection of the Events meeting held on Monday, 01 February 2021.
- b. Matter for discussion: None raised
- c. It was proposed by Councillor A Croft, seconded by Councillor D Dorson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on Tuesday 01 February 2021 with the acts, proceedings and recommendations are approved by the Council.

462. AMENITIES (Agenda Point 8)

- a. Councillor D Dorson confirmed on behalf of the Committee that the notes are a true and accurate reflection of the Amenities meeting held on Tuesday, 02 February 2021.
- b. Matter for discussion:
 - i. *Fly-tipping of asbestos at allotment site* – The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there has been significant fly-tipping of asbestos at the Uffington Road (new) site. The SKDC Environmental Health Officer has been notified.

- ii. *Poplar Tree* – The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Grey Poplar memorial tree to be planted on the Meadows, which had been ratified by Council in January, will be replaced by a Black Poplar as it is an indigenous species. It was reconfirmed that this would be at no cost to the Council.
- c. It was proposed by Councillor D Dorson, seconded by Councillor Mrs E Hooper and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on Tuesday 02 February 2021 with the acts, proceedings and recommendations are approved by the Council, with the exclusion of the Pink Paper.

463. CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP (Agenda Point 9)

- a. Councillor Mrs A Wheeler confirmed on behalf of the Committee that the notes are a true and accurate reflection of the Climate Action Working Group meeting held on Wednesday, 03 February 2021.
- b. Matter for discussion:
 - i. *Wildflower verge planting* – Councillor Mrs A Wheeler informed the Council that at the February Climate Action Working Group meeting a very informative presentation was given on the wildflower planting of highway verges. She encouraged all Councillors to view the recording of the meeting.
 - ii. *Next meeting* – Councillor Mrs Wheeler advised that the next meeting date had been altered to 12 March to accommodate the next guest speaker.
 - iii. Councillor H Bisnauthsing observed that his attendance at the meeting was not recorded. This was noted
- c. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs A Wheeler, seconded by Councillor D Taylor and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the minutes of the Climate Action Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 03 February 2021, subject to the amendment above, are approved by the Council.

464. PLANNING COMMITTEE (Agenda Point 10)

- a. Councillor S Carroll confirmed on behalf of the Committee that the notes are a true and accurate reflection of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 09 February 2021.
- b. Matter for discussion:
 - i. *St. George's Residents Association* – Councillor D Taylor enquired as to whether the Town Council is supporting the LTN scheme. Councillor S Ford informed the Council that a letter had been drafted and would be sent to Lincolnshire County Council Highways in respect of the volume of traffic rat-running in a widely pedestrianised location; unsuitable HGVs using the narrow streets causing damage to Listed Buildings, pavements and posing risk to cyclists and pedestrians and consequently causing high levels of noise and air pollution thus damaging the environment. It is requested that LCC investigates the feasibility of introducing an LTN scheme in Stamford. It was noted that the letter had been circulated with the draft Planning notes for consideration. Consequently, on ratification of the minutes the letter would be approved.
 - ii. *Draft Design Guide for Rutland & South Kesteven Consultation* – Councillor D Taylor drew attention to this important consultation. It was hoped that the Council's response to the consultation would include the standards identified in the studies carried out during the emergence of the Stamford Neighbourhood Plan and would reinforce those principles. Councillor S Carroll advised that the response is being drafted and any additional assistance would be welcome. The draft will be circulated to the Council before submission.
 - iii. *Extension in the area and license life of the East Northants Resource Management Facility (ENRMF)* - Councillor D Dorson expressed a concern over the response statement: 'members objected to the processing and dumping of dangerous radioactive

waste', which is not a material objection. The language which is used is inappropriate for the low-level waste of this facility. The material objection is in the NPPF para 18 which supports ecological sites of importance. This application is requesting expansion into areas of Wakerly Woods and Fineshade Woods which are listed as a priority habitat sites. Planning Policy Framework para 17 supports the promotion, protection, and recreation of ecological habitats of importance where there are protected species. Councillor S Carroll welcomed the additional information which would be included in the objections submitted.

- c. It was proposed by Councillor S Carroll seconded by Councillor S Ford and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 09 February 2021 subject to the above additional comments, with the acts, proceedings and recommendations are approved by the Council. There were two abstentions.

465. FINANCE COMMITTEE (Agenda Point 9)

- a. Councillor Mrs S J Sandall confirmed on behalf of the Committee that the notes are a true and accurate reflection of the Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday 16 February 2021.
- b. Matter for discussion:
 - i. *Welland Rivers Trust* – Councillor Mrs A Wheeler informed the Council that the organisation had requested a letter of support in respect of their project to create safe access points to the woodland at the footpath entrance point to the East Meadows. A letter has been drafted and is with the Town Clerk. Would the Council approve that letter being sent? This was supported by the Council.
- c. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall seconded by Councillor J Dawson and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held Tuesday 16 February 2021, excluding the Pink Paper, are approved by the Council.

466. Committees and Working Groups Terms of Reference (Agenda Point 11)

The Chairman Councillor Mrs G Johnson stated that the Terms of Reference have been reviewed by each Committee. In addition, all Chairmen met to review these Terms of Reference. They have since been circulated to all members of the Council to examine so they may be ratified at the March meeting. It was observed that the Terms of Reference should embrace diversity and they reflected this approach. There was discussion as to the level of membership of each Committee. It was recognised that in June 2020 a proposal had been made by Councillor B Sandall that each Committee should reflect a quorum of the Council; that is seven members which should be identified in Standing Orders. The Town Clerk confirmed that Standing Order 4d relates to the Terms of Reference as approved by the Council and states Committee membership at present comprises seven members. The Chairman Councillor Mrs G Johnson stated that this would be on the next agenda for discussion.

467. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT (Agenda Point 11)

Schedule no. 11 (transactions 15335 to 15483) had been circulated for consideration. Councillor Mrs J Clarke queried the payment for legal services. It was noted that this was for matters relating to the transfer of gifted land and a non-compliance cemetery issue.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Schedule No. 11 is agreed and approved for payment.

468. TO RESOLVE TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

The Chairman Councillor Mrs G confirmed that the Council had resolved to go into Closed Session to discuss the two Pink Papers circulated to all Councillors. In accordance with Sec.1(2) of the Public Bodies Act 1960 (Admissions to Meetings Act 1960) that as publicity would be prejudicial by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted relating to Personnel the public and media will be excluded from this part of the meeting. At the end of the Closed Session any resolutions taken will be made public.

It was confirmed that all Pink Papers had been circulated electronically to all members of the Council with the Agenda Pack on the 19th February 2021.

20.45 pm Meeting continues in Closed Session

21.40 pm Meeting resumed in Open Session

During the discussion in Closed Session, the Council was satisfied and confident in respect of the advice and guidance received by Personnel Advice and Solutions relating to the procedure being followed in respect of its personnel. It was noted that both Amenities Operatives have live warning letters on their files relating to their performance.

There was discussion relating to the forthcoming burial related to Grant P1334 (Plot X85). The Council considered the situation and the Council resolved to meet all costs associated with this interment.

469. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Point 12)

- i. *Fly-tipping* – Councillor Mrs J Clarke requested that this is discussed at the next Amenities Committee meeting.

470. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 23 March 2021

Chairman
(The meeting closed at 21.45p.m.)