

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 JUNE 2018 AT 6.30PM
IN THE TOWN HALL, STAMFORD**

PRESENT Councillor M Sawyer, Chairman
Councillor H Bisnauthsing
Councillor M Exton
Councillor B Sandall
Councillor B C Sumner
Councillor Mrs S J Sandall
Councillor J Dawson
Councillor T Story
Councillor Mrs B A Sumner
Councillor B Griffin
Councillor Ms M Couch
Councillor Mrs S Sismore
Councillor B Turner
Councillor Mrs G Johnson
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor A Croft
Councillor A Swan
Councillor A Billington
Councillor D Dorson
Councillor Mrs M Pitt

ALSO PRESENT Town Clerk
2 members of public

The Chairman Councillor Sawyer confirmed the legality of this Extra Ordinary meeting was called in line with the Town Council's Standing Order having been requested by three councillors.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: A member of the public made representation on the deplorable condition of the verges in Stamford. The grass had been left uncut for an extensive period and following the recent cut all the cuttings were left to block the highway gullies. It was hoped that this situation could be addressed and rectified.

The Chairman Councillor Sawyer advised that this was precisely the reason for the meeting having been called and it was hoped the Town Council could reach a final decision. Comments from the public are valued and appreciated.

84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(Agenda Point 1)

Councillor S Carroll submitted his reasons for absence. The reasons were noted and accepted.

85. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 2)

None declared.

86. TO REVIEW THE DECISION AND SUBJECT OF STAMFORD TOWN GRASS CUTTING (Agenda Point 3)

The Chairman Councillor Sawyer stated that there was a simple decision to be made on the subject of cutting the grass verges in Stamford on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council. The Chairman of Finance Councillor Mrs S J Sandall was asked to present the case to clarify

any matters members of the Council required clarification. Councillor Mrs S J Sandall advised that a report prepared by the Town Clerk which had been circulated for consideration. She confirmed that the situation had not changed and following consultation with Lincolnshire County Council, they were only required to ensure the urban verges were safe and would only implement two safety cuts to the verges in Stamford. Unfortunately, due to recent weather conditions the first cut which should have been in April was not carried out until May. A meeting was held with Glendale, the contractors appointed by District Council and County Council separately to undertake their grass cutting contracts. It was believed that this would provide a cost-effective means of operation and delivering a reasonable service. Glendale offered a quote of £2526.33 for each cut during this season. It was negotiated that three cuts would be allowed for a reasonable appearance so the verges would look tidy. These cuts could be carried out in June, July and August with the last cut of the season being the safety cut undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council. The total cost for this task would cost Stamford Town Council £7578.99. As it was appreciated that this activity had not been precepted by Stamford Town Council, Lincolnshire County Council has offered to contribute of £4,350.00 to support the Town Council. For this year alone, the actual cost of cutting the urban verges in Stamford would be £3,228.99. Councillor Mrs S J Sandall recognised that there was a fear that this might result in a permanent arrangement. But following further discussion with Lincoln County Council it was confirmed that any arrangement would be reviewable each year and in addition should the Town Council wish to withdraw mid-way through such an agreement two months notification was required. If the Town Council wished to take this on next year, based on the quote received from Glendale the estimated cost for six cuts would be £15,157.98. This would work out to £2.08 per annum on a Band D property which is 4p per week. She considered if the residents of Stamford were canvassed on this subject it would be clear as to their response. As we all wish Stamford to look at its best. As we are all aware funding in many areas has been cut and Lincolnshire County Council has a contracted budget to work with, but they have confirmed that they will provide the funds that they have allocated for their two cuts to the Town Council. It would be prudent to precept for six cuts and Lincolnshire County Council's contribution could be utilised for any additional cuts required. The Town Clerk added that the cuts undertaken by the County Council were purely for safety and not aesthetic purposes. In addition, it has been confirmed that maintenance of all other LCC Assets such as hedges, trees and street lighting will remain their responsibility. Following discussion, it was noted by councillors that the arrangements are cut and drop and asked whether this would continue? Councillor S J Sandall stated that this point had been raised with Glendale and they advised that due to the height of the grass on the first cut, it is usually trimmed but subsequent cuts are undertaken with mowers to deliver a better finish. There was concern that the increase on the local rates continues to increase and the Town Council is being forced to increase their Precept to support Lincolnshire County Council. It was considered by some that this could be seen as double taxation and the concern is where will such allocation end. It was a concern that the Town Council should not accept this situation but hold out and keep negotiating for a better outcome. Although it was appreciated that the agreement could be for just one year, provision seems to be already being made for the forthcoming year which may encumber the newly elected Council in 2019. It was observed that the Town Council has no duty to support the County Council. The Town Council has only just recently debated this subject with a recorded vote supporting not to take on this activity. The counter argument was that the level of the increase on the Precept was minimal and the residents of Stamford do not care who cuts their grass but does expect this to be done. It was recognised that the Town Council has earmarked reserves towards this activity so to do nothing could be interpreted as a neglect duty. It was recognised that only three residents attended the Annual Town Meeting and that 100% of those residents that attended voted against cutting the grass. It is important that the Town Council increases its engagement with its residents to inform them of these situations. Nevertheless, many

residents who do not attend the meeting are concerned about the situation and want to know when the grass will be cut. Councillors who abstained at the previous meeting did so as it was felt they did not have sufficient information but recognised that some action needed to be taken for the benefit of Stamford.

The matter of the former Jelson sites is a completely different subject as they are privately owned and not open public urban areas.

The Town Clerk informed the Council that it may have a legal duty in respect of supporting the County Council but under Highways Act 1980 and Public Health Act 1875 the Town Council has the Power to engage with the principal authorities for the benefit of the town. This matter will need to be addressed by this Town Council as they will set the precept for the newly elected Council in May 2019. But that Council will still have the opportunity to withdraw from any such agreement subject to two months' notice. Stamford Town Council has invested in Stamford in Bloom and not cutting the verges could impact on the outcome. Further the Council was reminded that it holds Silver status of a Quality Council and has expressed a wish to focus on attaining Gold Level. This would enable Stamford Town Council to be a leading council in the District. Not supporting or collaborating with the principal authorities will detract from rather than enhance this process.

Councillor Mrs Sandall requested a recorded vote to be taken on the proposal.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor B Sandall, seconded Councillor Ms M Couch and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that Stamford Town Council accept to enter into a one-year agreement with Lincolnshire County Council to cut LCC's urban grass verges during this financial year 2018/19 on three occasions in June, July and August, with LCC continuing to undertake their two safety cuts and to establish a contract with Glendale to cut and trim the identified 98,871m² at a cost of £2,526.33 per cut. The Town Council will accept the support contribution from LCC of £4,350 towards this activity this financial year.

In Favour 17: Councillors M Sawyer, Miss B Griffin, M Exton, B Sandall, B C Sumner, Mrs S J Sandall, J Dawson, Mrs B A Sumner, Ms M Couch, Mrs S Sismore, B Turner, Mrs G Johnson, D Taylor, A Croft, Mrs A Billington, D Dorson, Mrs M Pitt

Against 3: Councillor H Bisnauthsing, T Story, A Swan

87. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE THE PRESS RELEASE ON THE SUBJECT DEBATED

The prepared drafted press statement had been circulated and was discussed. There was opinion that it the statement should be shorter but the Council wished the statement to be circulated to the press unedited.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Ms M Couch, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the press release is agreed and issued unedited. There were 3 votes against and 1 Abstention.

88. TO CONFIRM RESPONSE TO LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

It was the consensus that the Town Clerk confirm the decision to Lincolnshire County Council subject to a one-year contract.

The meeting closed at 7.15p.m.
Chairman