

4th February, 2014

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the PROCEEDINGS at the MEETING of the COUNCIL held in the Methodist Church Rooms, Castle Street, Dursley at 7.15 pm on Tuesday, 4th February, 2014.

Action Summary:

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|------------|------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 9114.2 | Council's budget 2014/15 | 9117.5 | Land off Ganzell Lane |
| 9115.3(ii) | Highfields Playing Field | 9118.2 | Electrical and plumbing works |
| 9115.4 | Union Street Green | 9118.3 | Consultation with DTC re Littlecombe |
| 9117.4 | National Planning Policy Framework | | |

PRESENT

Cllr C Nelmes, Deputy Mayor, in the Chair

Councillors: J Bird, S Creswick, F Firth, T Frankau, N Grecian, V Harding, M Laybourne, B Marsh, L Patrick, A Stennett and R Blackwell-Whitehead.

Also present: Christine Sweet, Village Agent (para. 9112 below), County Councillor S Lydon, District Councillors D Cornell and G Wheeler, Mrs H Bojaniwska, Town Clerk and Mrs S Ginn, Clerk's Assistant.

Also present under paragraph 9111 below were several members of the public.

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 9105

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors J Ball (personal) and M Nicholson (work).

MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 9106

Councillor Blackwell-Whitehead declared a personal interest in agenda item 11.4 (Minute 9115.4) as the owner of an adjacent property.

TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS 9107

No requests for dispensations were received.

VACANCIES IN THE OFFICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR CENTRAL AND HIGHFIELDS WARDS 9108

No applications had been received to fill the above vacancies.

It was noted that since the issue of the Agenda, a further vacancy had arisen in the office of Town Councillor for Highfields Ward following a letter of resignation received from Councillor S Owen.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS 9109

None were received.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS 9110

County Councillor's Report

Councillor Lydon's written report was circulated to members and covered the Council budget which has been frozen, Free Schools, flood management and health services, in particular the inadequacy in delivery of a number of services such as rural ambulance times. Councillor Lydon invited anyone to provide him with details to support examples of poor ambulance services.

District Councillors' Reports

Councillor Wheeler provided an update on the new Local Plan, he referred to job losses announced recently in Dursley and reported that an action task group will be set up to look at employment and training within the area.

Councillor Cornell reported that the Council budget has been agreed; the go-ahead has been given for improvements at Dursley Pool; money has been allocated to help those in difficulty in the present economic recession and work has started on the refurbishment of the May Lane public toilets.

Councillor Marsh provided an update on the sheltered housing scheme and advised that the turnaround for filling empty Council properties has been reduced from 12 weeks to 8/9.

At this point the Deputy Mayor proposed to change the order of business and to take agenda items in the order: 8, 7 and 13.5. Councillor Frankau seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED.

REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC 9111

Several members of the public were present and Standing Orders were suspended to allow them to raise any issues relating to the pre-planning consultation on the proposed development of some 100 homes on land off Ganzell Lane, Dursley which had taken place prior to the Council meeting.

Concerns expressed included: the lack of advance notice of the public meeting; developers attempting to pre-empt the new Local Plan; the proposed development appears to be outside the settlement boundary and that the District Council is hesitant in opposing such developments.

The Town Clerk confirmed that a press release advising of the public meeting had been issued but that it had not been picked up by the local press; posters advertising the meeting had been put up in the town. The issues and concerns raised by members of the public at the meeting were listed. Councillor Wheeler advised that a final decision on the revised Local Plan can be expected by the end of the summer/autumn 2014 and conceded that some developers will attempt to get ahead of that process. He confirmed that once a planning application is submitted, the District Council has 13 weeks in which to respond.

The meeting was reconvened.

Agenda item 13.5 (Minute 9117.5 below) was considered at this point in the meeting.

TO MEET WITH CHRISTINE SWEET, VILLAGE AGENT FOR DURSLEY

9112

The Deputy Mayor welcomed Ms Christine Sweet to the meeting. Ms Sweet briefly outlined the role of the Village Agent, a service provided by GRCC, jointly funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group and Gloucestershire County Council. She is employed 10 hours per week to provide help and advice to older people living in isolated, rural areas and visits day centres, library groups and other locations where elderly people meet, providing them with information on how and where to get the help and advice they need. There are now 39 Village Agents throughout the county.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Ms Sweet for attending, whereupon she withdrew from the meeting, having left Council information leaflets on Village Agents in the area.

MINUTES

9113

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 7th and 14th January 2014 were signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings at those meetings.

BUSINESS RELATING TO COUNCIL FINANCE

9114

9114.1 Council's Accounts 2013/14

- (i) IT WAS RESOLVED that the schedule of orders for payment made since the last meeting (Appendix A), prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer and circulated to members, be authorised and signed by the Deputy Mayor.
- (ii) Income received since the last Council meeting (Appendix B) had been circulated to members and was noted.

- (iii) The monthly management/budget report had been circulated to members and was noted.

9114.2 Council's budget 2014/15

Further to the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 14th January 2014 to set Council's budget for the forthcoming year, a draft budget summary and email from GAPTC regarding the impact any Government action may have on Council's precept setting, had been circulated to members.

The Deputy Mayor advised, that more will be known when government addresses the question of a referendum on 17th February, and moved that in the interim Council confirms the provisional budget and precept requirement agreed at the aforementioned meeting on the basis that should any Government announcement after the 17th February affect Council's budget, a further Extraordinary Council meeting be held to reconsider its budget and precept requirement for 2014/15. Councillor Frankau seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED.

GREEN SPACES

9115

9115.1 Report of the Chairman of the Green Spaces Committee

Further to the 7th January Council meeting, the Committee Chairman confirmed that the Football Club's mains electricity supply on the War Memorial Recreation Ground has now been disconnected.

9115.2 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21ST JANUARY, 2014

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the above-mentioned Meeting.

9115.3 Update on Projects

(i) War Memorial Recreation Ground play equipment upgrade – the Committee Chairman advised that a tender document will be drawn up by the Clerk.

(ii) Lease for Highfields Playing Field – the Committee Chairman reported that Council's solicitor has expressed concern regarding flooding from a neighbouring field into the bottom of the playing field, across a public footpath and garden of an adjacent property and into the stream. The Committee Chairman warned that the Town Council would be responsible for rectifying this issue as the District Council has indicated that it does not intend to do so. In addition, it had been indicated at the public pre-planning consultation held earlier that evening that a proposed access road for planned further development to the north of the site will cut across Highfields playing field. Council's solicitor has asked the District Council to confirm whether or not it has an agreement with the developer to develop this land in

the future as the Town Council is loathe to take on a lease for the site if it is earmarked for future development. It was noted that there are other minor issues to be resolved.

The general consensus was that the Town Council should not proceed with taking the lease until these issues had been resolved.

At this point in the meeting IT WAS RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders in order for District Councillor Cornell to request the Town Council to keep District Councillors informed so that they may give some input where required and the matter was noted by Council.

The meeting was reconvened and after further discussion, the Committee Chairman moved, Councillor Patrick seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED not to proceed with taking on a lease for the playing field until such time as the District Council confirms that it will resolve the flooding issue and clarify its position with regard to the proposed access road across the playing field and possible future development of the site.

(iii) Repairs to the boundary wall in Kingshill House Play Park – the Clerk reported that the planned repairs have been completed; however as some movement remains at the base of the wall, additional work is required on the play park side of the sub-station. To resolve the problem it is proposed to build another layer of bricks half way up a short section of wall and permission of the Conservation Officer has been requested. The additional work will cost an estimated £1,600.

9115.4 Union Street Green

A request had been received from Stroud District Council to transfer ownership of the Union Street green space to the Town Council.

A report and photos of the existing site had been circulated to members with their agendas. An outline plan of the site with play equipment, an adult trim trail and orchard had been drawn up by the Deputy Mayor's work colleague who had also undertaken a similar exercise for the refurbishment of the play area on the Recreation Ground. Copies of the plan were circulated to Councillors for consideration.

There was general agreement that in the light of the Highfields playing field scenario, Council needed to err on the side of caution in entering into negotiation with the District Council to take on another green space and to investigate what the legal transfer costs might be. The Clerk advised that she had toured the site with Council's senior Groundsman, Council's tree surgeon has inspected the site and has quoted £385 for tree works the majority of which can be undertaken by the ground staff. No major tree works have been highlighted. Council's grass cutting contractor has been asked to quote for the grass cutting.

After further discussion the Deputy Mayor moved, the Committee Chairman seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to express an interest in taking over responsibility for the green open space, to advise the District Council that Council needs time to deliberate and undertake a detailed investigation. IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED to authorise the Clerk to spend up to a value of £400 for a suitably qualified land surveyor to provide a report on the site, highlighting any current or potential maintenance issues. The Clerk would ascertain from the District Council whether the latter had undertaken any investigations of the site.

Councillors Grecian and Creswick abstained from voting.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES

9116

9116.1 Report of the Chairman of the Town Improvements and Amenities Committee

The Committee Chairman reported on the recent vandalism to the planters located in front of the Courtyard Clinic and advised that the miniature fir trees will be replaced by prickly miniature shrubs.

9116.2 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14TH JANUARY 2014

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the above-mentioned Meeting.

9116.3 The Broadwell

The Clerk reported that she had had initial discussions with a local artist who is interested in painting a mural on the end wall of 37 Silver Street at the entrance to Water Street. Suggestions for the mural had been discussed. The agreement of the owner of the wall has been obtained; scaffolding would be required due to the height of the wall; sponsorship could be obtained locally; an anti-graffiti coating would be applied to the mural. IT WAS AGREED to investigate the idea further, seek permission from the Conservation Officer as the building is within a Conservation Area and obtain a quotation from the artist.

PLANNING

9117

9117.1 Report of the Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9117.2 To receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 21st January, 2013

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the above-mentioned meeting.

9117.3 Neighbourhood Development Plan project

The Clerk reported that a joint meeting with Cam Parish with a presentation by Elin Tattersall of GRCC, had been held on 28th January 2014. A number of people were interested in being involved in the project and a steering group has been set up to take the project forward for Dursley; the next meeting will be held on 12th February. A small group has met to work through the draft Cam & Dursley Community Plan to take forward any issues into the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). An application for funding is also underway.

9117.4 National Planning Policy Framework

A letter had been received from Councillor Geoff Wheeler, Leader of Stroud District Council, regarding the above and copies had been circulated to members. Councillor Wheeler urged all parish and town councils to support the District Council's view to call upon the Government to amend the National Planning Policy Framework by writing to Secretary of State, Eric Pickles.

IT WAS RESOLVED to concur with the District Council's view to amend the NPPF and to make Council's own views known to the Government by writing to Mr Eric Pickles with a copy to Neil Carmichael, MP.

9117.5 Land off Ganzell Lane, Dursley – Pre-Planning Consultation

This agenda item was considered after paragraph 9111 above.

Details of the proposed development had been circulated to members. A public meeting with the developer had been held prior to the Council meeting.

Council considered its response to the developer. The Clerk listed all the issues and concerns raised by members of the public at the meeting. In addition Councillors expressed concern that: the proposed development will impact on the neighbouring AONB; Highfields playing field which was mentioned for future development within the site is a designated play area, the leasing of which the Town Council is currently negotiating with the District Council, and problems caused by local buses negotiating the narrow roads within the Whiteway estate will be exacerbated by heavy lorries to access the development site.

After further discussion, Councillor Frankau moved, Councillor Grecian seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED that all the points raised at the pre-planning consultation meeting in addition to those mentioned above would form the basis of Council's feedback to Hunter Page.

POLICY AND FINANCE

9118

9118.1 Report by the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9118.2 Works required at Council Properties

Arising from paragraph 9092.7 of the Minutes of the 7th January 2014 Council meeting, the Chairman of the Green Spaces Committee reported that he had sought clarification from S P Electrical on several electrical aspects and the difference in some prices quoted by them and other suppliers and had been reassured by their explanations for more robust, heavier duty systems. He therefore moved Council accepts their quotation for electrical works to be undertaken at Council properties as soon as possible. Councillor Frankau seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED. With regard to the Town Trust's reluctance as the landlord of Jacob's House, to contribute towards the cost of items there, IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk the task of negotiating with the Town Trust, on their contribution towards the cost of the work.

With regard to the required plumbing works, it was noted that the Clerk is seeking clarification on a few issues. The Committee Chairman moved that the Clerk is delegated to accept the cheapest quote subject to clarification of those issues. Councillor Stennett seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED.

9118.3 To consider an application for Our Place funding

Details of the scheme had been circulated to members and it was noted that the aim of submitting an application would be to use any funding obtained to allow the new Youth Centre premises to be used as an employment base, skills and job centre during daytime hours.

It was noted that a meeting will be arranged with various interested parties and IT WAS AGREED.

9118.4 Youth Centre

Further to the January 2014 Council meeting, it was noted that a long meeting had been held with the architect to ensure that the changes made to the specification keep the project within budget; revised quotations are awaited from the three contractors. The application submitted to the Summerfield Foundation is through to the final stage and the outcome should be known in March.

Updates on budget/funding and risk assessment had been circulated to members with their agendas and the contents noted.

9118.5 Councillors' Reports

(i) Parishes Forum, 7th January – Councillor Creswick stated that the meeting had been well attended, but had nothing to report which affected Dursley.

(ii) CCTV User Group, 16th January – Councillor Harding reported that the camera on the Old Post Office building cannot be moved due to cost and the District Council will be asked to trim the trees obscuring the camera's view of the Castle Street planters which are subjected to frequent vandalism. The mobile camera at Kingshill will remain in situ. Stroud Town Council is once again contributing towards the CCTV scheme and Sainsbury's are to install measures to combat anti-social behaviour in its car park.

(iii) GL11 Stakeholders' Group, 27th January – The Deputy Mayor reported that work will start over the February half term to improve the junction off Kingshill Lane onto Littlecombe; plans are being drawn up for the Kingshill Road/Kingshill Lane junction and with regard to the Long Street Village Green application, agreement of a revised road layout has almost been reached.

Concern was expressed that important issues relating to the Littlecombe site are being referred to the Stakeholders' Group, which is not a statutory body, prior to consultation with the Town Council. Although Council sends representatives to meetings, it is difficult for them to raise issues that have not previously been discussed at Council meetings. The Deputy Mayor therefore moved, Councillor Frankau seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to formally request St Modwen to liaise or consult with the Town Council in the first instance on matters relating to Littlecombe.

(iv) Dursley in Bloom, 27th January – Councillor Harding reported that the planters in front of the Courtyard Clinic have been vandalised; the Town Council will provide a new planter adjacent to the Pet Shop at the top of Parsonage Street; approval has been given by Stroud District Council to plant up one of the tree stumps at Woodmancote, which will be looked after by the WI; the Group's thanks were recorded to the Town Council for donating the money raised from this year's Pancake Race to Dursley in Bloom; this year's competition will either be on 23rd or 30th July and Dursley's judge will be attending the next meeting on the 24th February in the Town Hall to give advice on how Dursley in Bloom can achieve the extra points necessary to achieve a Gold award; the Group is looking at ways to improve the appearance of the Garden of Remembrance in Dursley Cemetery and where to plant poppies to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

(v) Dursley Town Trust, 28th January – Councillor Firth reported that matters discussed included funding for the new disabled lift, electrical issues, water ingress and damage to the rendering at Jacob's house and advised that she has since resigned as one of the Town Council's appointed trustee representatives.

(vi) LPGS Employers' Pension Forum, 29th January – The Town Clerk reported that the meeting centred on changes to the Scheme which come into effect on 1st April 2014.

9118.6 To sign and seal Council's updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Arising from paragraph 9092.3 of the Minutes of the 7th January 2014 Council Meeting, Council's updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were signed and sealed before Council by the Deputy Mayor.

BUSINESS RELATING TO STAFF

9119

9119.1 Report by the Chairman of the Staff Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9119.2 Recruitment of an Apprentice

Further to the January 2014 Council meeting, the Committee Chairman reported that the Town Council is continuing its search for an apprentice; a candidate had been interviewed but was found to be unsuitable. The Clerk suggested approaching South Gloucestershire and Stroud College for assistance in finding a suitable candidate. It was also suggested that Rednock School should be advised of the vacancy. It was noted that youth workers in the area are also aware.

9119.3 Notice of Retirement

A letter had been received from Mrs Ginn, Clerk's Assistant, formally notifying the Town Council of her retirement at the end of April 2014. Copies had been circulated to members and the contents noted.

HIGHWAYS

9120

9120.1 To receive a report from Council's Highways Representative

Councillor Frankau, Council's Highways Representative, reported that a trench had been dug for some time in Long Street and the Clerk was requested to alert Gloucestershire County Council to the fact.

9120.2 Pavement in Silver Street

Further to the January 2014 Council meeting, the Clerk confirmed that Gloucestershire Highways are unable to rectify the problem, however previous schemes which were once considered are being revisited and it may be possible to urge for some research to be done to establish whether or not it will be feasible to make improvements once the spine road is in place. The Clerk considered that any future developer should be asked to demonstrate what impact the additional volume of traffic will have on this narrow road.

9120.3 Gas Works, Parsonage Street

Following the gas works undertaken in Parsonage Street in 2013, a letter had been received from Wales & West Utilities concerning reinstatement of pavements in Parsonage Street. Copies of the letter had been circulated to members and it was noted that the company has been unsuccessful in sourcing brickwork more compatible with the existing, Gloucestershire Highways are satisfied with the brickwork in situ and that the bricks are weathering and will continue to do so, thus blending in with the surrounding pavements.

IT WAS AGREED to write to Gloucestershire Highways expressing disappointment that it had signed off the work, despite being aware that the Town Council had issues with the compatibility of the replacement pavements with the existing ones.

BUSINESS RELATING TO COMMUNITY SAFETY 9121

9121.1 To receive a report from Council's Police Representative

Councillor Harding as Council's Police representative had no matters to report.

CLERK'S REPORT 9122

9122.1 Clerk's Report

Copies of the Clerk's Report had been circulated to members.

9122.2 Monthly Area Inspections and Audit Checks

Details of Councillors scheduled to undertake area inspections and audit checks in February/March 2014 had been included on the Agenda and were noted.

2014 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE DURSLEY TOWN MEETING 9123

Arising from the January 2014 Council meeting, the Clerk advised that as Kingshill House is unavailable as the preferred venue for the above meeting on 29th April, the Community Centre has subsequently been booked. It was noted that the Meeting will commence at 7 pm.

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Town Mayor

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Date