

4th March, 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 pm on Tuesday, 4th March, 2014.

Action Summary:

9133.2	Kingshill Play Park Wall	9135.6	Littlecombe Development
9133.3	Union Street Green Space	9136.3	Youth Centre Re-tender
9135.4	Traffic Study - NDP	9137.3	Staffing arrangements
9135.5	Land off Ganzell Lane		

PRESENT

Cllr J Ball, Town Mayor
Cllr C Nelmes, Deputy Mayor

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

Also present: District Councillor D Cornell, Mrs H Bojaniwska and Mrs S Ginn, Clerk's Assistant. Ten members of the public were also present during discussions relating to agenda items 7 and 12.5 below (paragraphs 9130 and 9135 respectively).

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 9124

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors F Firth (personal) and B Marsh (SDC meeting).

An apology for non-attendance was received from District Councillor G Wheeler.

The Mayor moved that agenda items 12.2 and 12.5 be taken after agenda item 7 below (Minute 9130), and that item 14.3 (Minute 9137.3 below) be considered in private. Councillor Stennett seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED.

MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 9125

The Mayor declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda items 9.1(i) (Minute 9132.1(i)), 12.2 (Minute 9135.2) and 12.5 below (Minute 9135.5) and would withdraw during consideration of those items.

Prior to discussion taking place, Councillor Harding declared a personal interest in agenda item 13.3 (Minute 9136.3 below).

TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS 9126

No requests for dispensations were received.

VACANCIES IN THE OFFICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR CENTRAL AND HIGHFIELDS WARDS 9127

No applications had been received to fill the one vacancy for Central Ward and the two vacancies for Highfields Ward.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS 9128

None were received.

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS 9129

County Councillor's Report

In the absence of Councillor Lydon, no report was received.

District Councillors' Reports

Due to absence from the meeting, Councillor Wheeler had provided a written report which was presented to Council by the Town Clerk and covered inter alia, planning applications in Dursley and the setting up of a taskforce to look at stimulating local employment.

Councillor Cornell reported on Council rates, the boundary review, application for the Variation of Condition 21 in respect of the Littlecombe development and imminent publication of the revised Master Plan for the site.

The Mayor withdrew from the meeting at this point and the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC 9130

Following the Public Meeting held on 4th February and the Public Consultation on 28th February relating to the proposed development of 100 homes on land off Ganzell Lane, members of the public raised the following concerns: major water/flooding issues on the site which would aggravate an existing problem for properties on the neighbouring Mawdsley's development; the impact of increased traffic volume particularly on roads such as Silver Street; inadequacies of the ecology report produced for the site; sustainability of any future development for schooling, employment, etc; potential loss of a much-

valued green space; existing sewerage and drainage problems on the neighbouring estate would be exacerbated.

Comment was made that the recent exhibition lacked up-to-date information, accurate maps and a general lack of local knowledge of the area by those presenting the public exhibition. Criticism was directed at the Town Council for writing to the developer setting out all the concerns raised by residents at the public meeting as it was felt that it allowed the developer an opportunity to rectify those concerns prior to the public consultation. However, the Clerk explained the pre-consultation process, the whole purpose of which is to resolve the community's issues in order for any future development to meet the needs of the community, and although it is unfortunate that by so doing the developer is able to counter any arguments against a proposed development, having signed up to the pre-planning protocol, the Town Council is obliged to communicate with the developer.

Councillor Cornell supported the Council's action, advising that as and when a planning application is submitted, all those issues which have been raised and recorded are passed on to the members of the Development Control Committee, so that they are well versed in the issues and feelings of residents and enables them to make an informed decision when considering the application.

The Clerk pointed out that Highfields playing field is currently owned by Stroud District Council and although the Town Council is negotiating with the District Council for the leasing of the site, this is in abeyance until such time as the flooding issues have been resolved.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the public for their input; thereafter the meeting was reconvened and agenda items 12.2 and 12.5 were taken at this juncture.

MINUTES

9131

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 4th February 2014 were signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings at that meeting.

BUSINESS RELATING TO COUNCIL FINANCE

9132

9132.1 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.

The Mayor re-joined the meeting.

9132.2 Council's budget 2014/15

It was noted that no changes were required to the agreed budget and the precept request has been submitted to Stroud District Council.

GREEN SPACES

9133

9133.1 Report of the Chairman of the Green Spaces Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9133.2 Update on Projects

- (i) War Memorial Recreation Ground play equipment upgrade – the Committee Chairman had nothing new to report since the last Council meeting.
- (ii) Lease for Highfields Playing Field – the Clerk reported that no agreement will be signed until the District Council has looked at the flooding issues; a request has been received for a contribution towards the footbridge and Council's solicitor has been paid for work undertaken to date.
- (iii) Repairs to Kingshill Play Park wall – Further to the February 2014 Council meeting, the Clerk reported that it is proving extremely difficult to contact the Conservation Officer for approval to go ahead with the additional work required to the wall. A complaint had been made to the officer's manager, but there had been no response. IT WAS RESOLVED to issue a complaint to District Council's Head of Planning.

9133.3 Union Street Green Space

Further to the February 2014 Council meeting, the Clerk advised that a land agent had been commissioned to undertake a survey of the area. Copies of the report had been circulated to members. It was noted that responsibility for the boundary needed to be established; the trees on the Slade were not thought to be included with the site area; services, wayleaves and easements would be investigated by the Solicitor and the legal process would include searches. As the report had not highlighted any significant issues and it was considered within Council's means to manage and look after the site, the Committee Chairman moved, the Deputy Mayor seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to proceed with plans to take over the maintenance of the green space and provide play areas on the site, whilst working closely with Council's groundstaff.

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TOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES

9134

9134.1 Report of the Chairman of the Town Improvements and Amenities Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chairman, the Vice-Chairman had no matters to report.

9134.2 Annual Dursley Pancake Race, 4th March 2014

The Mayor reported that it was disappointing that there were only three entrants for the race; the winner being a young lady from York visiting family in Dursley. Thanks were recorded to those who had helped with the event. As previously agreed, any money raised would go to Dursley in Bloom.

PLANNING

9135

9135.1 Report of the Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9135.2 To receive the Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 4th February, 2014

This item was considered after paragraph 9130 above. Copies of the above-mentioned Minutes had been circulated to members and the contents noted.

9135.3 To receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 18th February, 2014

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

9135.4 Neighbourhood Development Plan project

The Clerk reported that the project is moving forward swiftly with the steering group and members taking on different topics and there is scope for each sub-group to attract more people to help in the project. Council has budgeted £3,000 for the project and the Group can apply for a grant of £7,000. Some of the money will be spent on a transport study and some on the support given by GRCC and supporting a Project Officer. The Clerk stated that she had been impressed by the enthusiasm of the Steering Group.

The Deputy Mayor offered to be part of the group which will concentrate on undertaking a housing needs study.

With regard to the project and following discussions relating to the proposed development off Ganzell Lane under paragraph 9135.5 below, the Deputy Mayor moved, Councillor Creswick seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to commission the traffic study to look at mapping traffic through the town.

9135.5 Proposed Development of Land off Ganzell Lane

This item was taken after paragraph 9130 above.

Following the public meeting held on 4th February, Council had written to Bell Cornwell, listing the views and concerns of those residents present at the meeting and those of the Town Council. A response had been received from Bell Cornwell, copies of which had been circulated to members.

For the benefit of the members of the public present, the Clerk advised that many developers are currently submitting planning applications as Stroud District Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing development plan. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), if one wishes to oppose an application one needs to look for grounds of unsustainability. She recommended that Council considers whether there are any areas where more information is required or should consider gathering more information independently. The ecology report provided to Council by a local resident during discussions under paragraph 9130 above, would be circulated to Councillors and might be an area for further investigation. The Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Development Plan will take more than a year before its adoption, but part of the process will be to commission studies of the effects of development on the town. The steering group is putting together various studies such a traffic study and is looking at a potential map of sites around the town which Council might consider supporting.

Councillor Patrick stated that there is more badger activity close to the proposed development area than the developer's ecology report claims and a more accurate report is required.

With regard to traffic related issues, Councillor Nicholson, who is currently leading the Dursley Community Speedwatch campaign and working with the local police in gathering data, stated that traffic and speeding is an issue and the information which has been gathered is insufficient and does not reflect the current traffic issues at Highfields, on Uley Road or at Whiteway. With regard to accident data, it was noted that if no personal injury occurs, no report is necessarily made and consequently the incident is not recorded. Councillor Nicholson offered to contact the PCSOs to gather data on traffic volume not only travelling through Third Avenue, but in a wider area including Whiteway.

Other items raised included: the safety of the Byron Road junction with Whiteway Hill; school place provision; the safety of children going to and from school and access to the new development.

The Deputy Mayor moved, Councillor Stennett seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to respond to Bell Cornwell's letter by requesting clarification of the issues raised in the preceding paragraphs and a review of their flooding information based on the current state of the land.

9135.6 Variation of Condition 21, Application S13.0458/VAR, Lister Petter

The Clerk advised that at the time of issue of the Agenda the Planning Officer's report had not been published. Approval is recommended on the basis that there would be no severe impact from another 29 dwellings occupied before the spine road is completed. Council had originally objected to this on the grounds that the works at the bottom of Kingshill Lane should be completed with those at the junction of Kingshill Lane with Kingshill Road.

Much discussion ensued on the implications of objecting or agreeing to the Variation. It was noted that development of the Littlecombe site had stalled and is the reason behind Stroud District Council's inability to provide a five-year housing supply which in turn could be the reasoning behind the Planning Officer's recommendation for approval in order for work to progress and also put a halt to the flood of planning applications currently being submitted. However, it was pointed out that Lister Petter has not yet moved off the site and this will in turn hold up completion of the spine road; also it is difficult to estimate how quickly houses are going to sell.

After further discussion Councillor Frankau moved, Councillor Harding seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk attends the Development Control Committee meeting on 11th March to reiterate Council's original objection to the above variation of Condition 21 in respect of planning permission S.05/04988/OUT.

POLICY AND FINANCE

9136

9136.1 Report by the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9136.2 To receive the Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting held on 18th February 2014

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the meeting.

The Deputy Mayor moved, Councillor Nicholson seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to consider matters relating to the Youth Centre under paragraph 9136.3 below in Committee, whereupon visitors at the meeting withdrew.

9136.3 Youth Centre

A confidential update on the retender exercise in respect of the Youth Centre project was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Councillor Harding declared a personal interest at this juncture.

Members considered the recommendations put forward by the Clerk and subject to the clarification of several issues, the Mayor moved, Councillor Creswick seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to accept those recommendations.

9136.4 Civic Calendar 2014/15

Copies of the draft civic calendar for 2014/15 had been circulated to members and was approved.

9136.5 Councillors' Reports

- (i) Towns Team, 7th February – Councillor Creswick had been unable to attend.
- (ii) Dursley in Bloom, 24th February – Councillor Harding reported that the £100 entrance fee to this year's event has been submitted and the Group is looking at redesigning the Garden of Remembrance in Dursley Cemetery.
- (iii) South of Stroud Youth Partnership (SOSYP), 24th February – The Clerk reported that GRCC has advised the Partnership to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO); a draft constitution has been drawn up and will be checked by a solicitor and thereafter will come to Council for approval. A further grant has been agreed by Stroud District Council of £5,000 and the next meeting will consider using the funding for extra activities such as school holiday activities.

BUSINESS RELATING TO STAFF

9137

9137.1 Report by the Chairman of the Staff Committee

The Committee Chairman had no matters to report.

9137.2 To receive the Minutes of the Staff Committee Meeting held on 25th February 2014

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the above-mentioned Minutes.

Councillor Frankau moved, Councillor Nicholson seconded and IT WAS RESOLVED to consider matters relating to staff in paragraph 9137.3 below in Committee.

9137.3 Office Staffing Arrangements

Arising from the recommendations of the Staff Committee adopted under paragraph 9137.2 above, a confidential paper on staff costs for the forthcoming financial year had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk reported that it is proving difficult to recruit an apprentice; two potential candidates will be interviewed on 7th March but neither will be available to take up post until the summer. The Staff Committee recommendations are for a temporary staff member to start when the Clerk's

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Assistant retires, and for a Project Officer to be employed on a fixed short term contract to assist with ongoing projects.

IT WAS RESOLVED to confirm the recommendations of the Staff Committee subsequently adopted under paragraph 9137.2 above.

HIGHWAYS

9138

9138.1 To receive a report from Council's Highways Representative

Councillor Frankau, Council's Highways Representative, had no matters to report

BUSINESS RELATING TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

9139

9139.1 To receive a report from Council's Police Representative

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

CLERK'S REPORT

9140

9140.1 Clerk's Report

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

9140.2 Monthly Area Inspections and Audit Checks

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

2014 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE DURSLEY TOWN MEETING

9141

Council considered who to invite as Guest Speaker to address the Annual Assembly on 29th April at the Community Centre and IT WAS AGREED to invite the Headteachers of Dursley Primary Academy and Rednock School.

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Town Mayor

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Date