

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held by Conference Call on Tuesday 28 July 2020 at 6.19 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A Humphries (Chairman)
Councillor AM Sinton (Vice Chairman)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor WT Moy (Ex officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, G Duffy, Mrs K Fellows, J Grady, AH Laird, DJ Morris, RJ Morris and CM Murray.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor DM Craigie

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

69. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 8 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The meeting was convened by Conference Call.

70. MOTION FOR DIGITAL FORMAT DESPATCH OF PAPERS FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS.

To consider the attached motion from Councillor A Humphries, Chairman of the Resources Committee regarding the proposal to change paper copy despatches for Town Council meetings to digital format with immediate effect. *[motion attached]*

In general discussion it was noted to allow Elected Members the choice to receive paper copy agendas, reports and minutes if they preferred. The Town Clerk was asked what savings would be achieved from the proposed changes to digital format. The Town Clerk explained that there would be monetary savings from not posting the papers, although the actual work load would remain unaffected. To this effect paper printed copies would still need to be formatted and generated for statutory notices, hard copy records, public and press use in the same way as electronic copies for Members and the website.

Councillor WT Moy and Councillor Mrs Fellows (non- member of Committee) both expressed that they preferred to retain paper copies and did not support the motion. The motion was put to the vote and carried with 1 member of the Committee against, 7 in favour and one not present.

RESOLVED That the digital format meeting papers replace printed paper copies for all Elected Members effective from the next scheduled meetings in September 2020. To reserve the option for individual Members to request Paper printed copies should they prefer.

71. CALC – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INVITATION FOR REPRESENTATIVE

To consider an invitation received from the Executive Officer of Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC) for an Elected Member to be nominated as a representative to sit on their Executive Committee. The Committee meets 4 times each year and is currently convened virtually. The main function of the Committee is to set the direction and strategy for the Association.

The Town Clerk noted the protocol whereby the representation would form part of the Town Council appointments on outside bodies and organisations. The existing list is reviewed annually as part of the Agenda for Annual Council in May. Due to Covid 19 interruptions the appointment for CALC will be ratified as part of the next scheduled agenda for Full Council on 28 September 2020.

Councillor RP Hopkins made an incorrect reference to the appointment being an opportunity for an alternative means of advice than that of the Town Clerk, as part of his seconding of the proposal, which has been noted. The brief for the Calc Executive Committee is defined from the agenda- “to set the direction and strategy for the Association”, not to criticise or undermine the professional advice and integrity of Council Officers.

RESOLVED That the invitation was noted and Councillor A Humphries nominated as the Town Council representative for membership of the Worcestershire CALC Executive Committee.

72. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL- NEW HOMES BONUS-ST PETERS FIELD PAVILION PROJECT.

Pursuant to Minute reference 260 of the Meeting of Full Council on 27 January 2020, Wychavon District Council approved the application for Droitwich (St Peters Fields) Sports Association Ltd on 5 February 2020. The Management Group have contacted the Town Council on 3 July 2020 to request draw down of the £40K award as soon as possible. Positively despite the Covid 19 lockdown the work has progressed well. The remittance was received from Wychavon on 7th July 2020 and a cheque payment has been prepared for the Sports Association. An update report has been requested for once the project has been fully completed and to prepare for an overview by the WDC Communities Panel on 7th September 2020. Similarly details for any proposals for an opening ceremony and associated publicity will be requested for both the Town Council as the Statutory Body for the project and WDC who provided the funding. *[for information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

73. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – COMMUNITY LEGACY GRANT-DROITWICH SPA HIGH SCHOOL CABIN PROJECT

Pursuant to Minute reference 260 of the Meeting of Full Council on 27 January 2020, Wychavon District Council approved the application for the Droitwich Spa High School – Cabin Project on 25 March 2020 and the offer was accepted on 2 April 2020. A shortfall in the private sector contribution has been first notified on 29 June 2020 which potentially jeopardises delivery of the project within the original terms of under writing. The Town Council remains the Statutory Body responsible for delivering the project through to completion. A full project status report, updated financial synopsis and suggested options for a way forward to be considered was presented having been circulated with the Agenda for this meeting [*see attached*].

The Town Clerk summarised the report for Members and emphasised the importance of a sound and safe delivery strategy to enable the project to proceed. The main issues to be considered were explained to be financial and escalation in costs, together with potential reputational risk should the project delivery be jeopardised.

Councillor AM Sinton and Councillor RG Brookes acknowledged the recommendations presented by the Town Clerk as a viable solution. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would liaise with the High School to determine the conditions for the Town Council interventions in order to anticipate that the construction phase should commence as planned for the week commencing 3 August 2020. This will be subject to all conditions being agreed, accepted and confirmed in writing.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. That the following 8 interventions be put to the High School for acceptance prior to work commencing in August.

1. The Town Council undertake to guarantee a Contingency Fund from Reserves of 10% of the actual construction costs (not project total). This is a total value of up to £11,498.00 representative of the revised total construction price of £114,980.00 (see PCR) and maintains the industry recommended 10% contingency.
2. The Town Council undertake to pay an additional £2,500.00 capital to the project in consideration for the Private Sector contribution which remains outstanding. A cheque payment will be arranged in due course payable to the High School.
3. The Town Council maintains full control of the contingency fund (£11,498.00) and regular dialogue with the High Schools Staffs appointed Project Manager for the duration of the construction and commissioning phases is essential.
4. Any draw down of contingency money must be pre authorised by the Town Council.
5. Any construction costs (and/or further project costs) arising over the £11,498.00 contingency value are the responsibility of the High School and associated Private Sector stakeholders.
6. The Private Sector contribution element of £5000 WDC business rate relief funds should be in place and available prior to any work beginning. These funds should be lodged in the same bank account maintained by the High School for their confirmed £7500.00 already in place. An evidencing bank statement confirming the accumulated balance of the two elements to total £12,500.00 should be produced for the Town Council before any work begins.

7. Given these financial interests and interventions, Town Council Elected Members should be included as representatives to join the Trustees or Management Committee to be appointed to help maintain the efficient running, governance and business operation of the completed Centre as a going concern for the future. It was resolved that Councillor DM Craigie and Councillor RP Hopkins are both nominated as the Town Council representatives to join.
8. A signed and dated acceptance of these terms is to be provided from the High School and Private Sector Associates for the Town Council prior to any work commencing.

74. WEBSITE ACCESSABILITY REGULATION CHANGES EFFECTIVE 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

Website Accessibility Regulation changes effective 23 September 2020 and compliance standards. Details enclosed with agenda for general information. The Town Council's appointed Web Manager for www.droitwichspa.gov.uk has reviewed the NALC recommendations and will action any necessary enhancements prior to the regulation compliance start date. Provisionally it is thought that any amendments required will be relatively minor to the existing arrangements *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

75. INTERNAL AUDITORS YEAR END REPORT DATED 16 JUNE

Internal Auditors Year End Report dated 16 June 2020. The review was completed remotely on 16 June 2020. Report including responses attached for information. The External Auditors returns including Internal Auditors recommendations and report have been submitted on 2nd July 2020 *[for information]*. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

76. COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS & BUSINESS INTERRUPTION STATUS UPDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS- COMMUNITY HALL & HERITAGE CENTRE.

Covid 19 Restrictions and Business Interruption status updates for Town Council operations at the Community Hall & Heritage Centre *[for information]*.

- Phased resumption of room hire sessions has commenced at the Community Hall although it is anticipated that full reopening will take time. Dialogue and Risk Assessments are continuing with all regular hirers to ascertain their requirements and preferences for a safe return to activities.
- The Heritage Centre will reopen on Tuesday 4 August 2020 at 10.00am with revised hours of operation Final installation of the Perspex counter screening and segregation dividers was completed on 22 July. The diminished number of volunteers available may necessitate temporary reduced opening hours until full service can be resumed later in the year. A socially distanced re-opening ceremony has been arranged to welcome back the public and mark the occasion. Press and social media coverage is also arranged. By coincidence it was noted that the Worcestershire County Council Library building is also reopening the same morning from 9.00am.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

77. COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS & BUSINESS INTERRUPTION STATUS UPDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS COVERING IT PROVISION & ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS TO ENABLE VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Covid 19 Restrictions and Business Interruption status updates for Town Council operations covering IT provision and enhancement options to enable virtual meetings. Arrangements are in hand to fit visual webcam and speaker devices to three office PC's during early August. This will provide the facility for virtual meetings, as well as the existing Conference Call option should Covid 19 restrictions prohibit physical meetings from September onwards. Separately an additional desk top PC has been acquired and fitted for the Tourist Information Centre to enable both Heritage Managers to have their own work station. Options are progressing to ascertain costs for upgrade to fibre to support the IT. The Town Council does not currently benefit from any fibre provision which impacts on the efficiency and speeds for IT *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

78. COPCUT PARK INCIDENT 13 JULY 2020

Copcut Park Incident 13 July 2020 and resultant claim for financial contribution. To consider the written request from a member of the public circulated with agenda. This has arisen following a verbal report whereby the individual has notified that he slipped and fell on silt deposits recently excavated in the course of the periodic dredging operation of the Copcut Park pond. It is understood that the claimant slipped whilst retrieving his dog which was off the lead and had strayed to the perimeter edge of the pond and become stuck in the silt. The excavated silt is left to harden off and for invertebrates & fauna to safely disperse before further landscaping later in the summer. All of the dredging operations and post period work conform to regulation & industry standards for operations, access, safety barriers, signage, ecology and environmental matters. These controls are maintained through RAMS (Risk Assessment and Method Statements) bespoke to the operations and project. To consider whether to make an ex-gratia payment without prejudice or liability. In general discussion the consensus was reached to offer an ex-gratia payment of £100.00 without prejudice and in full and final settlement of the request.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. That the Town Clerk write to the complainant to offer an ex-gratia payment , without prejudice and in full and final settlement - subject to a signed acceptance. That the Town Council admit no liability for the incident on 13 July 2020.

79. COPCUT PARK LAHN DRIVE BOUNDARY

Ownership, responsibility and liability for mature tree in proximity of adjacent properties *[report attached with Agenda for information]*. There were no questions arising at this stage whilst investigations continue for further updates.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

80. COPCUT PARK – OWNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY & LIABILITY FOR UNAUTHORISED CUT THROUGH FOOT PATH

Copcut Park- Ownership, responsibility and liability for unauthorised cut through footpath descending embankment into the park from the A38 and area of Copcut Rise development [*report attached with agenda for information*]. The Town Clerk explained that matters are being progressed in collaboration with Worcestershire County Council Highways to reach a solution. Councillor RJ Morris thanked the Town Clerk for the work being undertaken on this matter. Attention was drawn to the desire to maintain a suitable and safe connectivity route for the Copcut Rise development leading to the Town Centre as part of any proposed solution. In discussion the emerging situation whereby the unauthorised foot path is likely to be closed off could render the Copcut Rise as a satellite location was raised. The Town Clerk explained that the embankment section was unregistered and not within the scope for ownership, costs and liability of the Town Council or WCC Highways at this point. Further liaison and updates will be provided with WCC Highways to consider all aspects.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

81. REGULAR PAYMENTS LIST

Regular Payments List [*list attached with agenda for information*]. This accords with the recommendation of the Internal Auditor that the automated payments are evidenced on an interim basis during the Municipal Year. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

82. REVIEW OF BUDGET PROVISION, INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Review of Budget provision, income & expenditure to target for the Municipal Year 2020/2021. A full review is recommended in September 2020 to ascertain progress and gauge the impact of Covid 19 to date. By this mid - stage of the financial year it is also anticipated that the Community Hall and Heritage Centre income streams will have resumed further. An additional meeting of the Resources Committee is required due to the next scheduled meeting not being until mid - October. Suggested date for consideration is Monday 7th September 2020.

RESOLVED That an additional meeting of the Resources Committee is convened on 7 September 2020 at 6.00pm in order to review the budget & finances for the current Municipal Year 2020/2021.

83. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £55,699.80 were considered for payment. [*lists attached with Agenda*]

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £55,699.80 be authorised and duly passed for payment.

The meeting closed at 7.08pm.

Chairman of Committee

7 September 2020

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Chairman of Council

28 September 2020

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