

## MINUTES

### At a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee on MS TEAMS on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Present: Councillors: Bates, Brice (Vice-Chair), Bryant (substitute for Bridges), Cavill, Fuller, Halik, Hoar, Palmen (Chair) & Whiffen.

In attendance: Cllr Beaver, Cllr Clark, Cllr King, Cllr Kirk, Cllr Piazza, Cllr Trigg.

Officers: Mr L Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Miss H Bell (Head of Leisure & Information Services), Mrs A Quick (Minutes), Mrs J Weimar (Head of Resources & Venues).

Public: 3

Press: 2

#### 3173 **APOLOGIES**

RESOLVED to approve apologies from Cllr Drewett and Cllr Bridges (Cllr Bryant substituted).

#### 3174 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

b) **There were no questions.**

c) **RESOLVED to note the Minutes of the Civic Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020.**

#### 3175 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest not already included on the Register.

#### 3176 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Cllr Palmen commended the TTC staff during the Covid period and acknowledged his pride in the excellent team we have.

#### 3177 **OPEN FORUM**

a) To receive questions from the public.

P. Jubbie stated he didn't receive minutes or policies stated in the agenda and they are not present on the TTC website. Why are these not made available to the public before the meeting as voted for at the July meeting? Cllr Palmen stated that the Toilets Working Group is included in the agenda and the Minutes will be linked to the website which will be done following their approval at tonight's meeting. The Town Clerk clarified that Civic Board is not a decision making body so agendas will not be available to the public. It was stated that the policies will be added to the website and this will be highlighted to the team.

#### 3178 **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Cllr Palmen ran through points in the P&R Report.

**1.1 CGR** - The Town Clerk clarified that the proposal for consideration by Wiltshire Council was made by Wiltshire Council, not Trowbridge Town Council. TTC has always opposed the inclusion within the Town Boundary of those areas adjacent to North Bradley village. Whilst TTC did support an extension it was only to expand the town boundary to areas which were within & immediately adjacent to Ashton Park & Elm Grove/Drynam Lane developments. There will be further discussion at Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**2.1.4 National Pay Review** – Town Clerk confirmed this has been approved by unions & employers at 2.75% which has been backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. Annual leave for new starters has been increased from 21 to 22 days. Cllr Whiffen asked the impact of the reduction of the Furlough Scheme? Juliet confirmed she has details which can be provided after the meeting. In September it is reducing to 70% from HMRC so we are contributing an additional 10%. In October it will reduce to 60% HMRC with 20% from TTC. We have a number of Active Trowbridge returning from Furlough working a certain number of hours. There is no NI or Pension contribution in September or October. Cllr Halik asked what % increase we actually budgeted for? Town Clerk confirmed it was 2% but the award is 2.75%

**3.1.2 Neighbourhoods** – Cllr Fuller asked how we will cover activities? Town Clerk explained managers are actively considering options e.g. Replacement with 1 FT staff or 2 PT staff, apprentice etc. It is a service which must be replaced despite budgeting restrictions, agreed by Councillors.

**3.2.2 Civic Centre** – Cllr Palmen mentioned he is excited about the potential for weddings in future.

**3.3.2 Information Services** – Cllr Cavill asked how complex the Freedom Of Information requests are for Information Services? Town Clerk advised that it is not always easy to find the information as sometimes a request is not clear. It can be difficult to achieve within the time limit but generally we are able to do this. Cllr Cavill asked if we keep a record of the costs? Town Clerk answered yes, we try to keep track of the time spent and the costs involved. Cllr Kirk suggested that we should be in a position to answer these correctly as it is a legal requirement. Town Clerk highlighted that the level of requests has increased significantly, going from 1 request per year to 60 in 2 years so it can be difficult with the level of resources available. Cllr Kirk highlighted that we get penalties if we don't achieve these requests within the time frame. Town Clerk advised that we haven't been fined but if the TTC wants to invest more for officers to address FOI more efficiently and it can be put to the Council for next year if required.

**4.3 Park Storage Unit Project** – Town Clerk stated the handover is taking place on Friday. Cllr Kirk asked about the retaining wall costs which weren't budgeted for. He highlighted that Cllrs should be made aware of escalating costs during a project before we proceed. Town Clerk stated that these matters are delegated to officers within the contingency budget. We receive penalties for delaying projects which would incur cost if we held meetings to delay such decisions. Cllr Cavill stated that when the invoices came through for signing, questions were asked and answered regarding costs. Cllr Kirk asked when all Councillors would be made aware of this and assumes this hasn't gone over the contingency budget? Town Clerk has costs from Karl which he can go through before Full Council to make all Cllrs aware.

**5.2 Weavers Market** will be back in 2021.

**6.1 Commercial/Mixed Use Sites** - Cllr Palmen stated the Innox Mill Market has gone well and the open air cinema was a success but not profitable. This shows a willingness for the owners of the site to get involved with the community.

**6.2 Housing Sites** – There have been a series of applications on the White Horse Business Park for conversion of offices. On the plan it's the 3 quadrangles which have been converted. McDonogh Court application was permitted for 15 houses (20 was refused). There is likely to be a new application at the Elm Grove site following some highway issues. On the land S of the A363, shown on the map, we have applications for the blue and red areas but no applications for the green area. In total those 3 areas will probably total 250 houses. Town Clerk confirmed that he made an error on the Hilperton plan so apologised to Cllr Clark and the Hilperton plan steering group for asserting that they hadn't considered other sites. Church Lane is subject to an application, Spring Meadows application is imminent and Southwick Court is subject to an application, where there are significant issues with this site which the applicant will be seeking to address. The Town Clerk believes that the Government's change in the planning system is most likely to result in a delay but Wiltshire Council are continuing with a revision of the Wiltshire Local Plan.

**6.4 FHSF** – Cllr Kirk asked about the multi-storey, whether or not there is there a 99 year covenant. Cllr Brice said the new covenant was to protect the free parking for the owner of Castle Place at that time, not for the public. Town Clerk stated to build the shopping centre the developer needed some land but they were then required to build a multi storey car park at minimal cost to the council. As they had paid for it to be built they benefited from the lack of charges. P. Jubbie spoke about the land being bought for the people of Trowbridge and cannot be sold for private use. Town Clerk clarified this conveyance covers the upper part of the park, such as tennis courts etc. There was a triangular piece of land with all the necessary legal documentation allowing development of Castle Place to take place in 1970's. Cllr Palmen would like to see all the possible enhancements for the town with it being a huge opportunity for Trowbridge. Cllr Palmen stated that the artistic impressions indicates it's possible that the multi storey might come down but at this stage it is just speculation. Cllr Cavill mentioned it is only a bid at this stage and we don't know if the Government will accept it.

Cllr King doesn't understand the obsession with keeping the multi storey with it doing nothing for the area which could be so much better with some imagination. Cllr Hoar is concerned about the amount of negativity put out in the press based on pure speculation. It is the biggest investment in the town centre and the negativity is tactical and misleading. Town Clerk presented the map with the area shown in red which is covered by the 1875 act which imposes legislative restrictions on the Park only. The green triangle was disposed of in a 1966 ministry consent to allow Castle Place to be built therefore is not covered by any restrictions as the park is. The lower park was acquired in 1919 under a deed for use and recreation for the public. Cllr Brice got this investigated by our solicitor when he was leader and this is a result of the investigations in 2009.

**8.4.1 Rough Sleeping** – Cllr Kirk asked what happened with this task group? Cllr Palmen stated we can ask through the area board to understand what has happened. Cllr Kirk is keen to get this group started again.

## **3179 ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP (Report Item 1.2)**

**The committee received a report from the Chair of the Working Group.**

The next meeting is on Thursday. Cllr Cavill has put forward a really good recommendation regarding Bramble Town which we will be discussing. We are looking at filling station to be put around the town. We are also looking to some possible grants for tree planting in the autumn. The Environment Group has been very well supported and there are some great ideas. Cllr Kirk asked for Cllr Hoar's advice regarding grass cutting. There is pressure from some residents to cut the grass but he wants to support the blue scheme for wild areas. Is this something this group can look at? Cllr Hoar said this is being looked at. It needs to be cut where it is for recreational safety. Signs are vital to inform and educate the public. We will come out with some proper advice on how to approach this, incorporating it into the strategy. Cllr Palmen stated this will be easier once the asset transfer has been completed. Cllr Cavill mentioned that in the recommendation it states these areas will be managed. Cllr Hoar suggested it would be good to get the Environment Policy in place so Town Clerk stated he would add it to the Full Council Agenda.

**RESOLVED: That the committee notes the report.**

## **3180 PUBLIC TOILETS WORKING GROUP (Report Item 1.4)**

**The committee received a report and RECOMMENDATION from the Chair of the Working Group.**

Cllr Bryant explained that the decision to set up a working party was to look at options, not necessarily to bring them all back. Thank you to the working party including Cllrs King and Drewett. We undertook consultation through survey monkey to which we received a good response. Cllr King mentioned that the response to the survey demonstrated that many were keen on having toilets near the childrens' play area which would be accommodated by Option A. Cllr Bryant stated that Option B, building a pavillion is an exciting option. He hopes that we could tap into some funding from the FHSF.

Cllr Whiffen appreciates the hard work from this group. He understands that the previous toilets were taken down due to vandalism and drug taking. Cllr Fuller stated that we don't know the implications of Covid going forward and for the coming financial year we don't know the demands which will be imposed on us. We need to be careful with money. Cllr Halik requested a diagram of the proposed changes at Full Council.

**RESOLVED: That the council adopts the following:**

- A. In the short term, during 2021 a public toilet facility is developed within the Civic Centre Building adjacent to the Avenue Entrance, with a new external door and conversion of the existing disabled toilet on the ground floor, with the option, subject to funding, of including a Changing Places facility. The existing cleaner's cupboard would be converted to be used as the internal disabled toilet.**
- B. In the medium term the council works with Wiltshire Council to secure funding from the Future High Streets Fund and other partnership funding to provide a new public toilet facility in the Park as part of a multi-use Pavilion in the vicinity of the tennis courts, MUGA, bowling green and crazy-golf, incorporating a replacement bowls club, changing rooms and refreshment kiosk. (This is preferable to the**

provision of a new and better facility provided within the redeveloped Castle Place, but this would be a minimum within such a redevelopment if the Pavilion was not progressed).

- C. **A Community Toilet Scheme involving those commercial establishments which are willing to offer their own facilities to the public without a fee, to promote such a scheme through social media, signage and publicity.**
- D. **A comprehensive signage system for the town centre, potentially as part of the Future High Streets Fund, so that the public can more easily identify the locations of a range of facilities, including public toilets, across the town.**

A recorded vote was taken, results as follow;  
FOR: Cllrs Bates, Brice, Bryant, Cavill, Fuller, Halik, Hoar, Palmen.  
AGAINST: Cllr Whiffen

### 3181 **WILTSHIRE ARMED FORCES**

**To consider a verbal report from Councillor Whiffen on the proposed winding up and asset disposal of WAF&VE:**

“The WAF & V Event commenced as a 1 day event in Trowbridge Park in 2004 and progressed to a 2 day event in 2005. This event has been supported by TTC every year and in my opinion is the primary show in the town. Given that members of this extremely hard working committee have decided unanimously to resign, it is now up to the council to decide whether to maintain and excess of £20,000 and a huge amount of work in the previous 52 weeks. The next year’s event is being organised before the current year. I have spoken to the Chair and Vice Chair, both would be supportive but only in as much as providing contacts, insurance and forwarding messages and mails as required because of FOI restrictions. The biggest problem is lack of volunteers and TTC do not have sufficient available staff to run the show. With 1000’s of ex-service personnel in Wiltshire, would it be worth exploring drumming up support. Wiltshire Council has a military civilian integration officer and a vacancy for an army outreach officer, could these people be involved or is it time to let go? Disposal of assets will be discussed at the final meeting on Thursday which I will attend. A decision needs to be made whether the council wants to put in a bid for these assets at this final meeting.”

Cllr Palmen asked for any constructive ideas how this could be helped moving forwards. Cllr Piazza put himself forward to volunteer for this cause and suggested we should use social media to recruit volunteers. Cllr Palmen stated that Nub News has already advertised this need for volunteers. Cllr King asked if a list of assets could be provided if the council makes the decision to finalise this event. Cllr Fuller felt it would be worthwhile if the council can assist in keeping this event going. Cllr Whiffen offered costings, we had already committed just under £12,000 by Feb 2020, waste management £3,000, signage £719, static spitfire £1500 etc. The majority of attendees would not attend if it was reduced to a 1 day show. Town Clerk stated that the officers’ view if that wasn’t a success there might be an opportunity for the council to arrange an alternative event with an armed forces element to it. Cllr Cavill would be interested to see the officers’ proposal as there a huge number of organisations run by others which might be willing to help. Cllr Whiffen suggested we don’t have the facilities or manpower to run this type of event in Trowbridge. He asked the Town Clerk if it is worth finding out items to be disposed of if the council would like to purchase any? Town Clerk replied yes it would be useful to look at the list.

**RESOLVED: To consider how Trowbridge Town Council may be able to assist in saving this event and to take a recommendation to full council at its next meeting.**

### 3182 **GRANTS POLICY (Report Item 2.1.1)**

**The committee considered the adoption of the 2021/2022 Grants Policy in order to inform the budget.**

Cllr Fuller highlighted that we should retain the Armed Forces Grant in case of an alternative event.

**RESOLVED: That the committee adopts the Grants Policy 2021/2022.**

**3183 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (Report Item 2.1.2)**

Town Clerk stated that we are getting back on track now, including Active Trowbridge services starting in schools today. Cllr Kirk is concerned that we are furloughing staff for services to other parishes, therefore subsidising them from the Trowbridge Council Tax payer. Town Clerk replied that village schools are attended by Trowbridge residents which is not necessarily their choice, it is allocated by Wiltshire Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the committee notes the report.

**3184 RISK & AUDIT PANEL (Report Item 2.1.3)**

**RESOLVED:** The Committee considered the notes from the Risk & Audit Panel held on 18<sup>th</sup> August and any recommendations contained in those notes.

**3185 FREE PARKING DAYS (Report Item 8.1.5)**

**RESOLVED:** That the Council allocates free parking in Wiltshire Council Car Parks on the five Saturdays before Christmas as follows:

		Sat 21 Nov	Sat 28 Nov	Sat 5 Dec	Sat 12 Dec	Sat 19 Dec	TOTAL
Bradford Road	24	24	24	24	24	24	
Broad Street	33	0	0	0	0	0	
Church Street	36	36	36	36	36	36	
Court Street	78	78	78	78	78	78	
Lovemead	165	165	165	165	165	165	
St Stephen's Place	438	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total (x 2 = allowance)</b>	<b>1548</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>1515</b>

**3186 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**RESOLVED** to approve the payments and receipts since the last meeting:

	Payments	Receipts
June	£153675.23	£ 85660.98
July	£505028.95	£172665.69

**3187 POLICIES**

**RESOLVED** to approve Data Breach Policies previously circulated.

**RESOLVED** to approve Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour Policy previously circulated.

A recorded vote was taken, results as follows;

For: Bates, Brice, Bryant, Cavill, Hoar, Palmen, Whiffen

Abstain: Fuller, Halik

**3188 MEDIA RELEASES**

- a) Free Parking Days
- b) Call for volunteers for Armed Forces Day
- c) Notification of the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy to go onto TTC Website.

**3189 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 on Microsoft MS TEAMS. Cllr Fuller requested a review of Standing Orders.

The Meeting closed at 21.43

Signature.....Dated.....