



MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL 17 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT

Councillor: R Williams (In the Chair)

Councillor: (Mrs) K Barber
A Bishop
(Mrs) J Bishop
G Evans
N Gardiner
(Miss) J Murphy
P Newton-Smith
G Olley
(Mrs) M Penny
K Saunders
K Smith
(Mrs) L Vardy
S Weisinger
S Wolfensohn

IN ATTENDANCE

Seven Members of the Public and one Member of the Press

APOLOGIES

34. None.



PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (10 Minutes Limit)

35. A letter was received from a resident asking the following questions:-
- a. When will the matter of the audit raised by Councillor S Weisinger be debated at a Public Meeting of the Council?
 - b. When will a formal public statement be made by Highworth Town Council regarding the Town Clerk's impending departure?
 - c. Has the vacancy been advertised and if not, when will it be advertised?

In response to the above the Chairman reported that it has not so far been requested that an audit be an Agenda item. A formal announcement was made earlier this evening, prior to the General Purpose & Finance Meeting, and that the advertisement is a staffing matter and is in hand with the Staffing Committee and will be reported as appropriate.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

36. None.

CORRESPONDENCE

37. Christmas Trail – an email has been received from the sister of the owner of a business called Team Kotecha Dance Fitness, which supports people with mental health problems. Inspired by the Poppies, she asks for agreement for a Children's Christmas trail as it is not possible to have the usual gatherings in the Town. They are both qualified teachers and would create the materials themselves. They intend to create a map and dot images (Santa, snowman etc.) around Highworth so that on daily exercise parents would be able to take their children to have a look. In order to adhere to social distancing, they would ensure the images would be a distance apart and would be laminated to make them weatherproof. It would be fully funded by Team Kotecha.

This Council does not have the power to give permission for the project, as it has no powers over the Highways. It recommends that the suggestion be directed to the Event Safety Advisory Group at Swindon Borough Council (SBC). Councillors requested that should it go ahead, that, the organisers take down the trail once the Festive Period is over. When permission is received from SBC, the Council is happy to assist by promoting it on Social Media.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

38. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2020 BE ADOPTED** (The Minutes were duly adopted).

MATTERS ARISING

39. None.

AMENDMENT TO THE TEMPORARY STANDING ORDERS

40. Councillors considered a temporary notification to be added to the Agenda document 'To maintain an inclusive attitude Members of the Public are invited to turn their cameras off, to make it easier for the Chairman of the Meeting' voting was 8 in favour and 7 against and the amendment was duly agreed.

HGV TRAFFIC ON SHRIVENHAM ROAD

41. Councillors agreed that letters are to be written to Companies requesting that their large lorries avoid Shrivenham Road following the pulling down of an overhead electricity cable.

Councillor (Mrs) M Penny advised Councillors that SBC has previously written letters to Companies in the North Swindon area requesting that large lorries do not use unsuitable routes, however these were only request, as there is no enforcement. She offered to request a copy of the letter and a list of recipients, to prevent the Office having to spend time researching.

Councillor Penny has also been in talks with the Police in her capacity of Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services. An initiative called 'Lorry Watch', similar to 'Speed Watch', is available but Swindon Borough Council must adopt this initiative before it can be rolled out.

TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AS REVIEWED BY THE POLICIES WORKING GROUP

42. The Policies are to be brought back to the Council in January 2021 in smaller batches.

The Deputy Clerk is to review the Deed between Highworth Town Council (HTC) and with SBC in relation to Grounds Services and ensure the Tree Policy reflects the same information.

REPORTS BY BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

43. a. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny. She reported that she now has Housing Repairs added to her portfolio of responsibilities and has received many calls regarding:-
- Blocked drains: all of which have been cleared either by SBC or Thames Water
 - Flooding: this was sometimes due to the blocked drains but also due to the sudden heavy downpours we have been experiencing.

She and her Borough Officers are in communication with Thames Water about the fitness of purpose for the drains in Highworth.

- Trees etc: Due to heavy winds she has had some complaints about unsafe tree's and these have been dealt with.

She has also been working with Borough Officers to tidy up resident's gardens that are blocking the highway, letters have been written and most residents have complied.

- Housing: She has received quite a lot of reports about damp and condensation in the Swindon Borough housing stock, these have either had works completed or are in the process of being completed. Also included are works to garden paths, central heating complaints, roof repairs, new doors and windows, etc.

She has supported the Office in getting the Contracts for the Skateboard Park and the Grant to support HALO finalised when there were problems with SBC Officers non-response. She has also worked with the Clerk to get fly tipping removed when its removal falls outside the terms of the deed between SBC and HTC, she is conscious that if the Town Council strays from it, it can become undermined.

In addition, she has also been working with Parking Enforcement to try to alleviate some of the Parking issues in Highworth. Many tickets have been issued.

Councillor Penny also reported that she has been working with Officers at SBC and The Cycling Group in helping to create a Swindonwide document for consultation and this has also included Highworth's cycling and walking needs. They are in the middle of producing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and she has answered many questions on the need for better Cycling/Walking provision in Highworth, including questions from Luke Tremblin who she has invited to the consultation on the LCWIP. This in its turn has informed the Sustainable Highworth Working Party.

- b. Councillor S Weisinger reported he has attended the following Meetings and dealt with the following issues:
- Audit Committee
 - Scrutiny Committee x2
 - Borough Councillor Surgery
 - Avenues Task Group
 - Waste collection - fly tipping issues
 - Licensing enquiry due to COVID
 - Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council
 - Standards Committee
- c. Councillor A Bishop reported a smaller report than normal due to a family bereavement and holiday.
- Flooding issues
 - Overhanging trees
 - Attended Adult Health Meeting

REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES

44. a. Highworth Twinning Association (HTA) – Councillor R Williams - Nothing to report.
- b. Highworth Community Partnership Group (HCPG) – Councillor N Gardiner - Nothing to report.
- c. Highworth Action for Fair Trade (HAFFT) - Councillor K Smith - Nothing to report.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

45. a. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny. She told Councillors that she was distressed to read an email from a member of the public who felt she had been interrogated by the Chairman of Highworth Town Council.
- b. Councillor S Weisinger. He requested that the subject of a Full External Audit be an Agenda item for the next Full Council Meeting. He acknowledges that this would have to be paid for, but does not believe that the Town Councillors have the expertise to undertake one.

The Meeting closed at 9.12pm.

Action Points: -

- To respond to the request of the Christmas Trail
- To include the following statement within all future Agendas 'To maintain an inclusive attitude Members of the Public are invited to turn their cameras off, to make it easier for the Chairman of the Meeting'
- To bring the Policies back to the Council in January 2021 in smaller batches.
- The Deputy Clerk is to examine the Deed held between HTC and SBC in relation to Grounds Services and ensure the proposed Tree Policy reflects the agreement.
- The request for an Internal Audit is to be an Agenda item on the next Full Council Meeting.