

Minutes of the Meeting of North Petherton Town Council held on Monday 8th June 2020
via Zoom commencing at 7:15 pm

Present. Cllr Alan Bradford
Councillors. Cllr W Revans, Cllr P Spencer, Cllr J Barham, Cllr J Taylor, Cllr Mrs
L Hyde, Cllr Mrs D Bunce, Cllr L Parchment, Cllr L Pickersgill, and
Cllr B Sellick

In Attendance. Mr R T Latham, Town Clerk.

053/2020 **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs L Spelman-Ives, Cllr R Ives, Cllr Mrs H Warren
and Cllr Ms C Woodford

054/2020 **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interests

055/2020 **Community Time**

No matters were raised

056/2020 **Minutes**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2020.

Resolved: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

057/2020 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising

058/2020 **Mayor's report**

Cllr Bradford reported that the additional grounds maintenance work being undertaken
by Gary Bickers and his team during the lockdown had been much appreciated, as had
the work carried out by Will and James Barham. He said that he and the clerk were in
contact on a daily basis to resolve issues and take matters forward, and, that in general
the emergency arrangements were working well. He thanked other Councillors for their
support.

059/2020 **Members' reports**

Cllr Mrs Hyde reported on Trust matters. It was agreed that the BMX should remain
officially closed, notwithstanding clear breeches of social distancing rules by some
young people. The Memorial Park project was proceeding well, with a high level of
confidence that the grant funding would come through.

Cllr Pickersgill updated Members on matters in Wilstock and Stockmoor. He had
established a contact in Persimmon Homes, Gary Bartlett, which was proving useful in
resolving problems. An "adoption" meeting was scheduled in the near future and he
would be attending on behalf of the Council

Cllr Taylor stated that he hoped to resume progress on the cemetery chapel once the
lockdown was over.

Cllr Revans reported that he had been involved in a lot of health related meetings as
part of the County Council's role in health and social care during the pandemic. He
understood that a request for support might be forthcoming from North Newton School
to help fund outside sinks, and advised Members to be aware that the County Council
were looking to dispose of the Screech Owl nature reserve. He also reported that there
were problems with the carriageway at Kings Cliffe, which he was looking into.

- 060/2020 **Council procedures**
 The Clerk introduced the topic of council procedures during the lockdown, including the delegation arrangements and continuance in office of postholders. Members discussed the various issues and options.
Resolved: that the current arrangements continue until September when they would be reviewed again, but that formal Council and Planning meetings would be held via Zoom in the meantime.
- 061/2020 **Meeting Schedule**
 The Clerk presented a draft schedule of meetings for the year to May 2021.
Resolved: that in view of the previous decision the schedule terminate in September, with Planning meetings now being made formal.
- 062/2020 **Risk Assessment**
 The Clerk presented an updated risk assessment for approval.
Resolved: That the assessment be approved and that the Clerk be thanked for preparing a comprehensive analysis in such difficult circumstances.
- 063/2020 **Data Audit**
 The Clerk presented an updated Data Audit for review.
Resolved: that the audit be approved.
- 064/2020 **Investment Strategy**
 Members reviewed the Council's Investment Strategy.
Resolved: that the strategy remained relevant and fit for purpose.
- 065/2020 **Annual Governance Statement**
 Members considered each of the assertions in the statement in turn, seeking clarification where appropriate.
Resolved: that a positive response could be given to each of the assertions and that the Chairman be authorised to sign the statement. The Clerk agreed to deliver a copy of the statement to Cllr Bradford so that this could happen
- 066/2020 **Finance report**
 The Clerk presented the budget monitoring report for the 2019-20 financial year.
Resolved: that the report be received.
- 067/2020 **Capital programme and financing**
 Cllr Spencer introduced a report on the Council's capital projects and financing plans. He suggested that it would be sensible to consider seeking approval to borrow around £200,000 from the PWLB to help fund the programme, as had been outlined in the Council's budget.
Resolved: that the principle of taking out a loan be agreed and that a group of Councillors, consisting of Cllr Bradford, Cllr Spencer and Cllr Parchment, together with the Clerk be formed to take the matter forward and report back to Council.
- 068/2020 **Items for payment**
Resolved: that the following payments be agreed:
 Sedgemoor DC £111.00 Green waste collection at the cemetery
 GWB Services £3,726.00 Street cleaning and grounds maintenance.
- 069/2020 **Statement of Accounts**
 The Clerk presented the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

Resolved:

That the Statement of Accounts be approved

070/2020

VE Day commemoration.

As the planned celebrations had been cancelled, the Mayor suggested that the Council should provide a series of trees and benches in the different parts of its area to commemorate the events of 75 years ago. He recommended that funding could be transferred from the Civic Service budget, as it was not intended to hold one this year.

Resolved: that the Council provide a tree and a bench in North Petherton, North Newton, Moorland, Wilstock and Stockmoor to commemorate VE Day and that local Members report back to the next meeting on the preferred location and type of trees

071/2020

Youth support

Cllr Revans reported that Youth Club meetings were taking place via the internet at present, but that he had been in discussions with Cllr Hyde about asking the organisers to hold meetings in Parkersfield playing field. Members agreed that this would be an excellent idea.

072/2020

North Petherton Bowling Club

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from the Club to waive its rent for the current year due to the lockdown. Members were sympathetic, but felt that a more transparent and equitable approach would be to consider a grant.

Resolved: that the Councils grant budget be increased by £5,000 so that money would be available to assist local clubs and organisations whose finances had been affected by the lockdown, and that the Bowling Club be made aware of this.

073/2020

Coronavirus

Members considered whether they could take any other action that might help local people and businesses during the crisis.

Resolved: that the matter be kept under review.

074/2020

Public toilets

The public toilets in North Petherton had been closed for health reasons at the outbreak of the pandemic. Councillors discussed whether or not they should be reopened.

Resolved: that the toilets remain closed for the time being.

075/2020

Maunsel Lock car park.

The Clerk reported that it was proving difficult to arrange for the car park gates to be locked and unlocked on a daily basis. Cllr Bradford said that he had sought to find a solution without success.

Resolved: that no further action be taken.

076/2020

Climate change

It was recognised that action in this area had been affected by the pandemic, but that it remained a matter of great importance. Cllr Revans reported that a recent planning application for a gas fuelled power station had been turned down by Sedgemoor DC on environmental grounds.

077/2020

Matters of report

Cllr Taylor referred to the recent survey carried out by Somerset County Council regarding their campaign to create a unitary authority for the county. It was agreed that the Leader of the County Council be invited to attend the Council's next (virtual) meeting.

Cllr Revans reported that he had been asked about the possibility of holding a virtual

meeting of the Wilstock and Stockmoor Forum. It was agreed that he would bring any issues that needed consideration to the next Council meeting.

Cllr Mrs Hyde said that she understood some of the larger libraries might be reopening in the not too distant future. Cllr Bradford reported that he had heard that some of the library volunteers were concerned about resuming their duties, should the local library reopen, given that they were in the high risk group of catching the virus.

The meeting closed at 9:15 pm

