

Minutes of the Meeting of North Petherton Town Council held on Monday 8th March 2021 via Zoom commencing at 7:15 pm

Present. Cllr Alan Bradford Chairman
Councillors. Cllr W Revans, Cllr J Barham, Cllr J Taylor, Cllr Mrs L Hyde, Cllr L Pickersgill, Cllr R Ives, Cllr P Spencer, Cllr Mrs L Dennis Smith, Cllr Mrs D Bunce and Cllr B Sellick

In Attendance. Mr E Ryan and Mr R T Latham, Town Clerk.

040/2021. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs L Spelman-Ives, Cllr L Parchment and Cllr Ms C Woodford.

041/2021. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations

042/2021. Minutes.

The Clerk presented an amended set of minutes to the ones sent out with the agenda.

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

043/2021. Matters arising.

Cllr Taylor felt that council appointees to outside bodies should be allowed to take part in decisions relating to those bodies. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact SALC for advice. He also asked if there had been any response from DHCLG regarding the Council's concerns about the Towns Fund Initiative. The Clerk reported that he had not received a reply to his letter on the subject. Cllr Taylor also updated Members on his research into the roll out of improved broadband coverage. Cllr Revans expressed his worry that preventing HGV's using Watery Lane could lead to them using other, equally unsuitable routes.

Cllr Mrs Hyde asked that the Council should revisit installing SIDs in its area to discourage speeding.

044/2021 Mayor's report

Cllr Bradford told Members that he had received a large number of complaints about dog mess and muddy footpaths. He believed that this could be partly the result of the lockdown. He felt that many people were feeling the effects of the continuing crisis, but hopefully things were improving and he was pleased that the Council was continuing to respond positively.

045/2021. Members' reports.

Cllr Mrs Hyde reported that the Friends of the Library had started to look at getting charitable status.

Cllr Revans reported that progress was being made on the County Council scheme to address HGV issues along High Street and Dancing Hill in North Petherton. He had been asked to confirm that the problems were still there. Members agreed that they were. There were also ongoing consultations about yellow lines at a range of locations.

Cllr Taylor reported that a litter pick in Moorland and Fordgate had yielded around 30 bin bags of rubbish. It was agreed that a letter of appreciation be sent to Jane Scott, the organiser.

Cllr Barham gave a brief update on allotment matters. He and Cllr Bradford had visited the site and removed the rubbish using Cllr Bradford's equipment, although there was still a sizable amount of garden waste to sort out. Members thanked them for their efforts.

046/2021. Budget statement.

The Clerk presented the monthly budget statement. Cllr Spencer recommended that the Council's investments in the Public Sector Deposit Fund should be withdrawn, as it was likely to be needed in the near future and there was a possibility of negative interest rates causing a reduction in the principal sums.

Resolved: that the report be received and that the £100,000 be withdrawn.

047/2021. Items for payment

Resolved: that the following payments be approved:

Juliet Middleton	£14,000.00	Architect's fees Wilstock Hub
Greenslades	£1,210.74	Cemetery Contractor
Blake Joinery	£110.40	Notice board repairs
Water2business	£180.79	Water Allotments (half yeay to Feb 21
Moorland Village Hall	£100.00	Grant

048/2021 Maunsel lock car park

The Clerk reported that there was a recurring problem of people getting locked in the car park at Maunsel lock, calling him and then having to disturb Mr and Mrs Whitcombe to let them out. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Hyde would liaise with the person who had helped with the playing field signs to design a suitably eye catching notice.

049/2021 Lockdown issues.

Members discussed reopening facilities in the light of the government's road map.

Rssolved: that

The public toilets open as soon as practicable

The library open for click and collect and for jigsaws, if the volunteers wanted to.

The playing fields open fully on 29th March .

050/2021 Bus shelters

The Clerk gave a progress report on phase 1 of the bus shelter programme, which, after some issues about obtaining County Council consents, was proceeding well.

051/2021 Litter bins

Members discussed putting new bins at Kingscliffe and along the canal. It was agreed that the owner's permission was needed at Kingscliffe and that the views of the Canals and Waterways Trust should be consulted about the canal towpath.

052/2021 Local government reorganisation.

It was now clear that some form of unitary model would be introduced by the Secretary of State. **Resolved:** that the Clerk respond to the consultation saying that the Council favoured the two authority proposal, although it had misgivings about the whole process.

053/2021 Broadlands Avenue Footpath.

Cllr Bradford reported that he was expecting to receive a quote shortly for resurfacing the footpath using scalplings. This would be brought to Council in due course.

054/2021 Playing fields

Cllr Mrs Hyde updated the meeting on playing field matters. Improvements to the Portman Road gate at the Memorial Park would be completed before the end of the month at a cost of £1,660. Signs were due to be installed, as were bike racks. Poppy seeds were due to be sown on the mound by Cllr Bradford. A full meeting of the Trust was scheduled for the end of the month.

055/2021 Climate Crisis.

It was agreed that the group of councillors dealing with this should meet again as soon as it was convenient.

056/2021 Medium term plan

It was hoped to hold an informal meeting of the Council in the near future to discuss strategic issues facing the community. Cllr Mrs Hyde referred to the long held objective of providing a relief road for North Petherton, and Cllr Taylor expressed his concern that the officer at Sedgemoor responsible for development control was also in charge of inward investment, which could represent a conflict of interest.

057/2021 North Newton Housing Project.

Cllr Bradford was concerned that little progress was being made and agreed to pursue the matter..

059/2021 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Ros Hodge about planting trees. It was agreed that this should form part of the plans for the playing fields. He also said that he had been in contact with Tom Barham regarding his help over several years with the Council's website, and that Mr Barham felt that he was no longer able to give it the time it needed. Members expressed their gratitude for all the work that he had done and it was agreed that the Clerk and Cllrs Bradford and Spencer should decide on a suitable honorarium.

060/2021 Matters of report.

Cllr Sellick reported that a hazardous pool of water had begun collecting on the highway at Copse Corner in North Newton. It was agreed that Highways would be notified.

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm