

Minutes of the Meeting of North Petherton Town Council held on Monday 17th
August 2020 via Zoom commencing at 7:15 pm

Present. Cllr Alan Bradford Chairman
Councillors. Cllr W Revans, Cllr P Spencer, Cllr J Barham, Cllr Mrs H
Warren, Cllr J Taylor, Cllr Mrs L Hyde, Cllr L Pickersgill, Cllr Mrs
L Spelman-Ives, Cllr R Ives, Cllr L Parchment and Cllr B Sellick

In Attendance. Mr R T Latham, Town Clerk.

- 096/2020 **Apologies for absence.**
Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs D Bunce and Cllr Ms C Woodford
- 097/2020 **Declarations of interests**
Cllr Barham declared an interest in item 9b and Cllr Ives and Cllr Mrs Spelman-Ives
declared an interest in item 9c. They were not present when the items were discussed.
- 098/2020 **Minutes**
Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2020
Resolved: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.
- 099/2020 **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising
- 100/2020 **Mayor's report**
Cllr Bradford reported that he had attended a service in Wells Cathedral conducted in
accordance with covid rules, which he had found rather strange. He had continued to
deal with daily queries as they arose including issues resulting from the Clerk's
absence on annual leave.
- 101/2020 **V E Day**
Cllr Bradford reported that arrangements were in hand to provide trees and benches in
each of the communities to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War 2. It was
likely that the dedication in the North Petherton would take place on 8th November, with
Rev Haslam.
be discussed in full at a future meeting.
- 102/2020 **Members' reports**
Cllr Ives reported that he had been contacted by a resident who was planning to
produce a newsletter, initially for Wilstock and Stockmoor, and he felt that this was
something the Council should support. The Clerk said that he had also been emailed
about the plans. He was in the process of compiling a register of responsibilities for the
area and thought that the newsletter could be useful to put this in the public domain.
Cllr Revans was concerned about any possible impact on the parish magazine. Cllr
Pickersgill questioned whether such communications were relevant in an age of social
media. It was agreed that the Council would support the newsletter with contributions,
press releases etc.
Cllr Pickersgill reported that fibre optic cables were being installed in Stockmoor so that
people could subscribe for high speed broadband. North Petherton was likely to be the
area next in line. He was also concerned that outstanding problems in Stockmoor, that
had been reported to Persimmon repeatedly in the past, had still not been addressed.
Cllr Mrs Hyde reminded Members that the Community Centre was now reopening, and
it might be wise to reserve the Council's Monday night meeting slots.
- 103/2020 **Budget Statement.**
The Clerk presented the monthly budget report.

104/2020 **Resolved:** that this be received.

Items for payment

Resolved: that the following items be approved:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Greenslades | £1,942.91 | Cemetery maintenance June & July |
| British Gas | £90.88 | Library electricity June & July |
| Water2business | £637.68 | Allotments water charges Feb to Aug |
| A Sutton | £92.00 | Community centre mowing |
| | | |
| NPPFCT | | |
| Tracy Shutler | £37.00 | Materials for playground signs |
| WG Barham | £1,440.00 | Parkersfield grass cutting etc. |

105/2020 **Capital Funding**

Members discussed a request from the Trustees of Wilstock Hub for an advance payment of £60,000 from the agreed grant of £120,000 due to be paid when the project was ready to proceed. This was to pay for fees to produce detailed plans so that further funding applications could be made. After a full discussion it was

Resolved: that the Council re-affirmed its commitment to the success of this important project for the people of Wilstock and Stockmoor and that the Mayor and the Clerk meet with the Trustees to agree a way in which the necessary funds could be paid over, whilst protecting the interests of all parties.

106/2020 **Community Centre car park.**

The Clerk reported that he had received a quote from the LBA to prepare detailed plans for the improvements to the Community Centre car park and provision of new toilets. Members discussed the pros and cons of proceeding with this project at this time. Cllr Spencer advised that he had included funding for the scheme in the Council's medium term financial plan.

Resolved: that the Community Centre Committee be asked to fund half the cost of preparing the plans.

107/2020 **Public Toilets**

The public toilets in North Petherton had been closed since the introduction of "lockdown" in March. The Clerk reported that it was now permissible for them to be reopened.

Resolved: That the Community Centre Committee be asked to arrange for the toilets to be opened again from the beginning of September.

108/2020 **Library**

Somerset County Council had begun opening the principal libraries in the County and were now looking for the partnership libraries to provide a similar level of service. Members of the Library Sub Committee had attended a number of meetings with the County Council, work on a risk assessment was in progress and steps and been taken to make the North Petherton Library covid safe.

Resolved: that the library should reopen at the beginning of September.

109/2020 **Country Park**

Members had previously discussed a suggestion from Cllr Pickersgill that a wildlife viewing hide should be built by the lake in the Country Park. However a number of obstacles had since been identified, not least the need to obtain planning permission.

- Resolved:** that the project be put on hold for the present.
- 110/2020 **North Newton Housing Project.**
Cllr Bradford updated Members on progress on this scheme to provide a mixture of affordable and market houses in North Newton. He was concerned that little progress had, in fact, been made, but was hopeful that this would be rectified in the next month or so.
- 111/2020 **Local Government Reform**
Members briefly discussed the issue of local government reform in Somerset.
Resolved: that a special meeting be held to discuss this at a suitable time in the future, and that a representative from Sedgemoor DC be invited to present the alternative two authority proposal.
- 112/2020 **Planning reform**
Members discussed a previously circulated consultation document on the Government's proposed reform of the planning system. There was general concern that the plans would put more power in the hands of developers, but it was recognised that the Council's primary aim would have to be ensuring that the local communities' interests were promoted, whatever system was put in place.
Resolved: that the Clerk write to NALC, who were compiling a sector based response, expressing the Council's concern that the proposals did not deal adequately with the problem of developers holding excessive levels of land banks.
- 113/2020 **Trust matters**
Cllr Mrs Hyde updated Members on progress on current playing field matters. New gates were being installed at the Memorial Field at the beginning of September, and the Memorial Park project was planned to begin on site in Mid September. The tennis courts at Parkersfield had been improved and the planned Youth project based at the playing field was operating successfully.
- 114/2020 **Matters of report**
Cllr Revans reported that he had been approached about putting a market stall on the area of ground by the former hairdressers in North Petherton. It was agreed that he should find out more details.
Cllr Taylor reported that residents in Moorland were still having problems with BT and Openreach. It was agreed that a letter be sent to County Councillor David Hall.
Cllr Sellick reported that there was still a problem with parked cars in Old Road. He was also concerned about continuing difficulties at the Junction 24 roundabout where cars were constantly going into the wrong lanes. It was agreed that the County Council be asked to look into installing overhead signs.

The meeting closed at 9:45 pm

