

Minutes of the Meeting of North Petherton Town Council held on Monday 14th September 2020 via Zoom commencing at 7:15 pm

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

In Attendance. Mr R T Latham, Town Clerk.

- 115/2020 **Apologies for absence.**
Apologies were received from Cllr P Spencer, Cllr Mrs L Spelman-Ives and Cllr Ms C Woodford
- 116/2020 **Declarations of interests**
Cllr Ives declared an interest in item 8c and left the room whilst this was being considered..
- 117/2020 **Minutes**
Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on 17th August 2020
Resolved: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.
- 118/2020 **Matters arising**
Cllr Bradford updated the meeting on the proposals to commemorate VE and VJ Day. Cllr Mrs Hyde reported that the public toilets had reopened as had the library. Cllr Taylor stated that Moorland residents were still having difficulties with telecommunications.
- 119/2020 **Mayor's report**
Cllr Bradford reported that had attended a meeting about the North Newton Affordable Housing Project. Progress had been slow, but hopefully would improve. He had also had discussions with Trustees of the Wilstock Hub project, the results of which would be considered at item 8c. He thanked Cllr Barham and Cllr Mrs Hyde for their work on the Memorial Park project
- 120/2020 **Members' reports**
Cllr Taylor reported back from his attendance at the District Council's scrutiny meeting on infrastructure delivery. He had not been allowed to be "present" at the zoom meeting, only to attend by phone. He had made the committee aware of the Town Council's views, but was sceptical that much would be achieved. The next action was to work with the County Council to try and make progress. Cllr Revans agreed that, although some progress had been made, it was not enough. He felt that more community engagement was needed, as well as increased resources for the Planning Department.
Cllr Mrs Bunce had attended the last EDF Forum. Information had been given about the impact of Covid on the scheme. Staff on site had been reduced from 5,000 to 2,000. 87% of people working on site now travelled by bus.
Cllr Taylor had visited the Cemetery and had produced a list of issues which he had sent to the Clerk. These would be looked at in detail, together with any budget implications. Overall, however, he felt that the grounds were being well maintained. He also pointed out that 10 war graves were located in the cemetery.
Cllr Mrs Warren reported that Larkfleet, the developers at Stafflands Farm, had made significant efforts to address local concerns, such as the attenuation pond and wall locations, and keep residents informed. She also raised concerns that pupils using the school bus from North Newton and North Petherton were not being required to wear

face masks and that Berrys, the operators, had said that it was not a requirement. The Clerk was asked to write to the School Transport section at Somerset and to the Director of Public Health to make them aware of the issue. Cllr Revans also agreed to take the matter up with Berrys.

121/2020 **Local Government Reform**

Following the presentation from the Leader of Somerset CC on their proposals for a single unitary authority for Somerset at a previous meeting, Members had also considered the alternative Stronger Somerset plans from the district councils for two authorities. Whilst they doubted the efficacy of pursuing any kind of reorganisation at the present time, Members were strongly of the opinion that the two authority approach represented the best chance of retaining some level of effective local government in the county. Cllr Mrs Hyde reminded the meeting that SALC were working with both parties and they should be made aware of the Council's views and its willingness to be involved in developing the role of local councils.

Resolved: that the Council supports the Stronger Somerset proposal and the Clerk write to the Secretary of State, Sedgemoor DC and SALC to make them aware of its views.

122/2020 **Budget Statement.**

The Clerk presented the monthly budget report.

Resolved: that this be received.

123/2020 **Items for payment**

Resolved: that the following items be approved:

British Gas	£48.65	Library electricity August
Greenslades	£991.69	Cemetery maintenance
Somerset CC	£2,267.52	Library staffing charge April to June
Viking	£301.08	Postage and stationery
A Sutton	£92.00	Grass cutting Community Centre
NPPFCT		
Zurich Ins	£464.52	Annual insurance premium
Abacus Construction Ltd	£6,522.00	New gates Memorial Field work to date

124/2020 **Capital Funding.**

Community Centre car park – The Clerk reported that the Community Centre Committee had agreed to pay £1,000 towards the consultancy costs of preparing detailed plans, following a request from the Council that they pay 50%, likely to be in excess of £2,000.

Resolved: that the project be put on hold for the time being.

Wilstock Hub – The Mayor and Clerk had met with some of the Hub trustees to see how the Council could make £60,000 available to meet the costs of preparing all the plans and procedures necessary for the project to be put out to tender and thus enable further funding applications to be submitted, whilst, at the same time, ensuring that if, for some reason, the Trustees could not deliver the project, the Council could take it forward. Cllr Bradford reported that the Trustees would be prepared to hand over the land and the rights to all the plans etc. in the event of their not being able to go ahead and provide the Hub. On this basis he and the Clerk were prepared to recommend that

an additional sum of £60,000 be made available to pay for the required professional fees.

Resolved: that the recommendation be agreed in principle and that the matter be considered formally as an agenda item at the next Planning meeting

125/2020 **Grants**

Members considered requests for grant aid towards the church community rooms in North Petherton and North Newton and towards the Church running costs in Moorland, all of which had suffered financial difficulties as a result of the covid crisis.

Resolved: that grants of £3,000 be given towards the costs of the community rooms at North Petherton and North Newton, and that Moorland be made aware that the Council was not in a position to support the operations of the church.

126/2020 **Governance arrangements**

Members reviewed the arrangements that had been operating since March in response to the covid crisis.

Resolved: that the arrangements continue for the remainder of the municipal year, with meetings taking place via Zoom until normal conditions returned.

127/2020 **Climate Crisis**

Cllr Mrs Warren suggested that a fund should be established to support local climate change initiatives.

Resolved: that this be agreed in principle and that Cllr Revans coordinate a group of councillors consisting of Cllr Mrs Warren, Cllr Mrs Bunce, Cllr Mrs Hyde, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Ives to take this forward.

128/2020 **Playing Fields Trust**

Cllr Mrs Hyde updated the meeting on Trust matters. The Memorial park project was underway and comments had been overwhelmingly positive. The issue of parking had, however, been raised by some people. She and Cllr Bradford had visited the Football Clubhouse at Parkersfield and things were now running more smoothly. The issues around the Broadlands access were being resolved.

129/2020 **Leven's Farm development.**

Cllr Bradford reported that there was some local concern about this development which he was working to resolve.

130/2020 **North Petherton Doctors' surgery**

Cllr Bradford reported that from now on the surgery would be manned entirely by locums. Members agreed that this was unsatisfactory and that the situation needed to be monitored.

131/2020 **Matters of report.**

Cllr Mrs Warren asked what the situation was regarding the appointment of an Asst. Clerk. It was agreed that Cllr Parchment would convene a Personnel Committee to deal with this.

Cllr Ives said that the Christmas lights competition should continue this year to brighten up the community at this difficult time. This was agreed. Cllr Mrs Hyde hoped that there could be a prominently placed large Christmas Tree in North Petherton this year.

Cllr Ives also reported that the first edition of a new free news sheet had been published, initially for Wilstock and Stockmoor.

The meeting closed at 9:20 pm

