

Minutes of the Meeting of North Petherton Town Council held on Monday 9th November 2020 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 L Parchment, Cllr P Spencer, Cllr Mrs L Spelman-Ives, Cllr Ms C Woodford, Cllr Mrs D Bunce and Cllr B Sellick

In Attendance. Mr Nigel Taylor (Chairman of the Friends of North Petherton Library) and Mr R T Latham, Town Clerk.

152/2020. Apologies

There were no apologies

153/2020. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interests.

154/2020. Community time.

Mr Taylor spoke about the impact of the pandemic on the library and associated matters. He felt that the library should remain closed during the lockdown. The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor and the Friends Group for their help and support. He agreed to bring forward the discussion on item 9 Lockdown arrangements. Cllr Pickersgill thanked Mr Taylor and his wife for their daily litter picking activities.

155/2020. Lockdown arrangements.

Members discussed the action to be taken regarding council facilities during the lockdown period, following the emergency actions agreed by the Mayor, Chairman of the Trust and Town Clerk. As part of the discussion they had regard to information provided by the County Council's library liaison officer.

Resolved: that the library, public toilets, tennis court and BMX track be kept closed for the period of lockdown, with a further review at the next meeting.

156/2020. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

157/2020. Matters arising.

Cllr Revans reported that the Youth Club had decided to meet on line rather than at the Community Centre, due to the lockdown. He also said that the regulations had now changed to the effect that older children had to wear masks on school buses. However the County Council had yet to implement the new arrangements. Cllr Pickersgill reported that the lights in Angus Way were now working after many

months of waiting. They were now much brighter than others in the vicinity. The Clerk reported that the Council's wreaths had been laid as part of the covid restricted Remembrance services. He also said that he had spoken to the daughter of the late Mrs Diane Hooper and she would very much appreciate a bench being provided by the library, next door to the pharmacy in memory of her mother. It was agreed that he should proceed to arrange for this to happen.

158/2020. Mayor's report.

Cllr Bradford outlined the various events and meetings that he had attended in the last few weeks. He was disappointed that there had still been little progress on the affordable housing scheme in North Newton, but felt that staff in many organisations were finding it increasingly difficult to operate effectively as the pandemic continued. He reminded Members that the benches and trees marking the 75th anniversary of VE day were being dedicated on 11th November in the four villages.

159/2020. Finance report.

The Clerk presented the monthly finance monitoring report.

160/2020. Items for payment.

The following items were approved for payment:

A Sutton	£92.00	Grass cutting Community Centre
Sedgemoor DC	£56.34	Litter bin emptying Maunsel Lock
Greenslades	£1,002.50	Cemetery maintenance
HAGs	£48,000.00	Developer contributions to Mem Park
NPPFCT		
HAGs	£23,275.10	Mem Park stage payment (£71,275.10 - £48,000)

161/2020. Budget 2021-22.

Cllr Spencer presented the latest draft of the budget for 2021-22 and financial forecast for future years, following the Finance & GP meeting the previous week. He explained how it was proposed to finance the various significant capital projects from earmarked reserves (CIL receipts), general reserves and loan. He predicted that reserves would fall in future years as a result of this and an increase in revenue commitments, but that it should be possible to limit the increase in precept to 2% pa. He also expected the tax base to be unchanged, with the increase in house numbers being offset by higher benefit payments due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

Members went through the draft in detail and raised a number of questions.

Resolved: that the Finance & GP Committee develop a final budget for consideration by Council and an application to the PWLB be prepared for a loan of £200,000 to finance the Council's contribution to the Wilstock Hub project.

162/2020. Bridgwater Town Fund

Cllr Bradford had attended a virtual meeting to discuss how the money from the fund would be used where he had recommended that a substantial sum should go towards the Wilstock Hub. Cllr Spelman-Ives said that she had been told that Wilstock and Stockmoor were not covered by the initiative, however Cllr Revans thought that was not the case. It was agreed that the matter should be pursued with officers at Sedgemoor DC who were administering the fund.

163/2020 Christmas lights

Members gave further consideration to the provision of area trophies for the Christmas lights competition and the siting of a large festive tree in the centre of North Petherton.

Resolved: that the Council purchase five trophies for the individual communities to be offset by contributions from Councillors, and that efforts be made to site a Christmas tree by the Community Centre in North Petherton.

164/2020. Cllr Helen Warren.

The Clerk reported that Mrs Warren had resigned from the Council as she felt she could no longer give it the time it required.

Resolved: that Mrs Warren be thanked for all her hard work for the Council and the community and that the Clerk notify Sedgemoor Council of the vacancy.

165/2020. Correspondence.

The Clerk reported that he had received letters of thanks from North Petherton and North Newton PCC's.

166/2020. Climate crisis.

Cllr Revans reported that he had obtained a cost for installing solar panels on the village halls and centres in the area to support a bid under the County Council's climate change initiative. It was likely to be around £55,000. It was agreed that he submit the bid to comply with the relevant deadlines, and also include the provision of electric car charging points, if possible.

167/2020. Wilstock and Stockmoor Forum.

Members discussed the possibility of holding forum meetings via Zoom.

Resolved: that no action be taken at present, but that the matter be revisited in the new year.

168/2020. Playing Fields Trust.

Cllr Mrs Hyde gave an update on progress with the Memorial park project. The main contract was expected to be completed in the next few weeks, after which it was hoped that the emphasis would switch to landscaping and the volunteer art and

drama elements. Cllr Ms Woodford offered to help with any lockdown signs that would need to be put in the playing fields.

169/2020. Matters of report.

Cllr Spencer reported that he and Cllr Revans had been involved with the awarding of grants from the local educational charities.

Cllr Bradford reported that there were problems in Brook Street in North Newton which needed urgent attention. He also said that he had received concerns about speeding traffic around the Huntworth Roundabout and Willstock way. The Clerk had passed these on to County Highways.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm