

North Petherton Town Council

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Minutes of General-Purpose Committee 22nd November at 7.55pm

Councillors present: Chairman J. Taylor, A. Bradford, L.Dennys-Smith, L. Hyde, R. Ives. L. Parchment and B. Sellick

Also present Assistant Town Clerk: Sally Ferguson, Town Clerk Rod Latham, Cllr. B Revans and two members of the Public.

GP21/12 No apologies received for Members of the Committee.

GP21/13 There were no declarations of Interest.

GP21/14 The Minutes of the last meeting on 27th September were approved with no matters arising.

GP21/15 The two Members of the Public spoke on matters concerning the Cemetery and left a file to be shared with the Committee.

GP21/16– Website and General Administration. The website had been tweaked slightly to make access to certain documents easier. Correspondence from the Caretaker of Moorland Fordgate Village Hall regarding updating details and photograph has been actioned. Thanks was given to Cllr. Denny Smith for her assistance with gathering pupil numbers for the Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Mugs. The Assistant Clerk provided an option of a suitable mug and the total figures of pupils, including nursery children. It was resolved to take a proposal to Full Council to purchase 1400 mugs. The Assistant Clerk would find out the best price for this amount and report back. A request for funding for new pads for the defibrillator in Stockmoor was proposed and it was resolved to offer the full amount. A Christmas window display competition for local shops and businesses was to be run by the Manager of the Tesco Express. The Assistant Clerk had been asked to launch a Christmas Lights Competition for all houses in the Community.

GP21/17 SID- Cllr Hyde spoke briefly on this matter, the Police had reported there were concerns on speed from residents, the Clerk was asked to invite PCSO Pidgeon to address the next Full Council meeting.

GP21/18 Allotments - Wessex Water had initially investigated the suspected leak that was reported on plot 25a but could find no evidence of damage to the system. It was thought that the issue was resolved until recently when the flow had increased. The allotment holder has accepted a reduction in cost, and a new request has been logged with Wessex Water who will investigate further. The Assistant Clerk has written as requested to all plot holders and spoken to GWB requesting there to be no further dumping of any rubbish anywhere at the allotments site and asking the plot holders to only compost on the edge of their own plots going forward. The Asst. Clerk passed on an item of correspondence from a plot holder.

GP21/19 Cemetery- The new Cemetery charges have taken effect. The Assistant Clerk has been asked to review the contract for gravedigging, and an invitation to tender will go out in the new Year for a three-year contract from 1st April 2022. The NALC questionnaire on Cemeteries needs completion in the next week. Cllr Parchment would liaise with Chairman Taylor and feedback to the Asst. Clerk.

GP21/20 -Library. The library is now opening on Thursdays manned by volunteers. There was a decision taken by Full Council to increase the numbers to 8 people at any one time in the library, as Covid cases locally were still an issue, and the space is so limited. A review meeting took place on 18th November and the latest footfall and borrowing figures are showing a steady increase which is encouraging. Various ways of increasing footfall were discussed. The Assistant Clerk met with the Volunteer coordinator of the Friends last week and it was asked if DBS checks should/could be provided. This is in line with current procedures in other libraries run by volunteers and recommended to the GPC by the Assistant Clerk as a prudent measure. Advice will need to be sought from DBS Services on the type of check as it is not immediately obvious online. Volunteer application forms are currently being reviewed by the Asst Clerk, with a view to making the North Petherton ones less complicated than the ones from County. A simple GDPR consent form will also be produced.

A Constitution for the proposed Library Trust has been written and is now with the solicitor at SDC. The Assistant Clerk is waiting for a telephone consultation. If this does not happen in the next week, she will follow up. The aim is be set up and functional in time for the end of the financial year, to save further rates expenditure.

GP21/21- Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning. Nothing reported thus far as an issue. The Assistant Clerk would send a further email to the Forestry Commission and the Ranger about the litter situation at Kingscliffe as requested. A dog waste bin is now in place on the new path between Stockmoor and Wills Road.

There had been further antisocial behaviour and noise nuisance at the Community Centre and parents were informed and asked to speak to their teenagers about this. There had also been broken glass left at Memorial Park, which the Contractor had cleared.

GP21/22 -Climate Change. Chairman J. Taylor attended a one-day conference and updated the Committee on energy saving ideas in the Community including solar roof tiles and retro fitting for older properties, different diets for livestock to ensure less methane production and the production of the North Petherton Green Charter which was adopted at the last Full Council meeting.

GP21/23 Chairman Taylor asked for it to be noted that the allotment fields currently on a limited term agricultural tenancy would be readvertised at the end of the tenancy period .

GP21/24 -Canal Boats in North Newton. There was a discussion on the rules on mooring of boats around the area, and a concern that as some had taken advantage and become permanent residences, there could potentially be an issue with raw sewerage contaminating the water if these boats did not use the designated pumping out stations. A proposal was made to approach Sedgemoor District Council and Bridgewater Town Council to format a plan to improve and develop the standards of moorings and docks to encourage further tourism in the area. The Clerk was asked to explore this.

GP21/25-A meeting for Council to discuss how the Town Council would proceed with Local Government Reorganisation had been arranged for Thursday 2nd December.

The next meeting of the General Purposes Committee would be on 10th January 2022:

The meeting closed at 9.09pm