

Minutes of the proceedings of the Siston Parish Council meeting held remotely via Zoom on Thursday 16th April 2020 commencing at 7.30pm

Present – Parish Councillors Andrew Stacey (Chair), James Hackett, Alan Bryant, Pippa Maytham and Jonathan Maytham.

181. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllr. John Hunt.

Members were informed that Cllr. Paul Jermy had, with immediate effect, sadly resigned.

Members will arrange to advertise the vacancy created when the coronavirus lockdown has been lifted (currently three councillor vacancies).

182. Declarations of Interests under the Code of Conduct adopted 19th July, 2012

None declared.

183. Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 20th February 2020

Resolved: the minutes were passed and will be signed as a correct record when Covid 19 lockdown restrictions have been lifted and meetings in person can be arranged.

184. Public Participation

A member of the press from the Week In with an interest in members views on the complaints received that young people were congregating at the skate park. It was acknowledged that the skate park had been locked by South Glos Council along with all other play equipment/sites due to restrictions as a result of the coronavirus and that the Police had been informed and were patrolling the area to act as a deterrent. The skate park group had also been asked to include on the groups Facebook page instructions not to use the skate park at this time. Members were disappointed that these young people were not observing UK Government guidelines to stay at home and observe the 2 metre social distancing rule. It was generally felt there was little more that could be done but it was hoped the family of these young people may be able to play a part in educating these young people.

185. Future meetings and arrangements for audit

a. Members received updates from NALC regarding new legislation and guidance on holding meetings. Parish councils only need to hold 4 meetings a year and as remote meetings may not be reasonable/achievable NALC states only holding meetings when absolutely necessary and for as short a time as possible to only

cover what is absolutely essential is an acceptable strategy. Legislation had been passed which means parish council annual meetings and re-election of Chair could be deferred until May 2021. Regarding making decisions remotely, that is by email, this practise has never been lawful and remains unlawful but urgent decisions taken between 16th March and 4th April (which covers the remote decision taken by members to approve the Scheme of Delegation) could be defended as reasonable. To compound the problem of holding regular meetings, the current website provider is no longer responding to requests to update the website which means council cannot meet its obligation to publicise meetings which electors have a right to attend.

It was acknowledged that there are likely to be few, if any, decisions to be taken by members during the lockdown apart from the completion of the AGAR to meet audit requirements.

Members were advised Covid 19 Legislation amends the timetable for completion of the AGAR and notification of Electors Rights. The AGAR now needs to be with the external auditor by end August 2020 and Electors Rights publicised during September with completion of the audit by end November 2020.

Resolved: monthly meetings to be postponed and future meetings only to be convened when urgent business/decisions needed to be addressed/taken or when lockdown restrictions are lifted. Clerk to provide adequate notice of the need to convene a meeting.

186. Finance

a. Members were provided with the 2019/20 year end account summary. To be checked and signed together with HSBC account statements when lockdown restrictions lifted.

b. Members received the In Year Assurance report following the internal audit conducted by South Glos Council in February 2020 and noted the opinion of the accounts had been rated as high standard. It was noted that a Finance Committee meeting had not complied with Standing Orders in that a quorum had not been observed and that amending the Asset Rota to include more detail had been recommended. The Clerk confirmed alterations to the asset inspection document had been arranged and would be in use when assets were able to be checked again.

c. Members were advised that the HSBC mandate amendments had not been fully completed as Cllrs. Pippa and Jonathan Maytham had not arranged to provide ID documents and that the NS&I had issued a form for signing by all members – both matters to be addressed when lockdown restrictions are lifted.

187. Planning

a. Planning Applications – see attached.

b. Planning Decisions – see attached.

c. Members were advised that the Project Leader of the Mangotsfield Sort It Centre expansion plans had stated the planning application to divert footpath PSN/7/40 had been withdrawn as whilst the planning application to create a slip road into the site would continue the council's Senior Public Rights of Way Officer had advised the slip road proposal did not significantly affect the existing path and therefore would not meet the legal test to require the diversion. The Project Leader when on to say that If acquisition of the field next door to the site could be completed and proposals to relocate the waste collection fleet from Cowhorn to Mangotsfield could go ahead, South Glos Council may look to revisit the footpath diversion at a later date if deemed necessary to the development of the site. It is intended that once Covid 19 restrictions are lifted that public engagement will restart.

d. Whilst it was not now necessary for members to receive and approve the suggested comments provided by Cllr. Hunt in relation to the Sort It Centre footpath diversion planning application, the letter from Cllr. Hunt to express how extremely disappointed he felt was read to members. Recently, all members had been asked by the Chair to be involved in the Statutory Consultee planning process by providing comments/observations on applications received and Cllr. Hunt said a number of members had failed this first test by failing to provide any comment or indeed to respond at all to this significant planning application. Members expressed their sincere apologies and committed to be more vigilant in checking and responding to emails in the future.

188. Correspondence

a. South Glos Council – Brunel play area – to say funding had been secured to update the play equipment and when works take place the litter/dog waste bin currently located inside the play area would be moved to an area away from the play area.
NOTED.

189. Accounts for Payment

a. Members received the monthly payment approval spreadsheet and authorised the on-line payment of the following items:

1. NEST pension provider – auto enrolment – Direct Debit - £115.13
2. C R Belcher – installation of information panel Felicity Park - £582.00
3. E. Kenny – salary & expenses - £1,336.94
4. Mr A Stacey – Chair’s allowance - £50.00
5. Mr I Adams – re-imburement of TEN’s fee VE Day - £21.00
6. CPRE – membership - £36.00

(NB Accounts for payment spreadsheet to be checked and signed following lifting of Covid 19 restrictions).

190. Any Other Business – for information purposes only

a. Clerk informed members, given the position with current website provider and accessibility legislation due to come in to force in September, that research to find an alternative website provider had been stepped up and it is hoped a new provider would be sourced within the next few days.

Date of next meeting: TO BE ADVISED

Meeting closed at 20.00

Confirmed and signed Chairman.....

Date.....