

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of COUNCIL  
2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 at 7.30pm  
Online meeting via Zoom**

**Present**

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, John Bloxsom (from item 15), Kevin Cranston (Chair), Susan Fenton (from item 3), Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram, Jess McQuail, Steven Naumann, Stella Parkes (from item 3), Margaret Poulton, Vanessa Price, Alan Sage, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley (to item 14).

**In attendance**

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Town Clerk), Marianne Sweet (Communications Officer), one other co-option candidate

**Absent**

None

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Simon Arundel and Laurie Davies (personal), and from Gloucestershire County Councillor Eva Ward.

**2. Declarations of Interest or Requests for dispensations**

No interests were declared. There were no requests for dispensations.

**3. Co-option of councillors to fill casual vacancies in Central and Trinity wards**

There was one candidate for the vacancy in Central ward. Stella Parkes was **co-opted**.

There were two candidates for the vacancy in Trinity Ward. Susan Fenton was **co-opted** by majority vote.

**4. Timescale and process for the co-opted members to sign their declaration of acceptance of office**

It was **agreed** to give the new members two weeks to sign their declarations of acceptance of office.

**Action: Clerk**

**5. Election to fill a vacancy on the Finance and Policy Committee**

Cllr Parkes was **elected** to join the Finance and Policy Committee.

**6. Election to fill a vacancy on the Community Committee**

Cllr Fenton was **elected** to join the Community Committee.

**7. Election to fill a vacancy on the Consultations and Highways Committee**

Cllr Fenton was **elected** to join the Consultations and Highways Committee.

**8. Election to fill a vacancy on the Regeneration Committee**

Cllr Parkes was **elected** to join the Regeneration Committee.

## **9. Election to fill a vacancy on the Lansdown Hall Working Group**

Cllr Marjoram was **elected** to join the Lansdown Hall Working Group.

## **10. Minutes of meeting of 7th September 2020**

The minutes of the council meeting on 7th September 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

## **11. Mayor's remarks**

The Mayor reported that he had not attended any civic or community events due to Covid19 restrictions. He was pleased to note that many Stroud businesses were adapting to cope with new lockdown rules, including offering click and collect services, and that the local community support groups were still active.

## **12. Questions from members of the public**

Cllr Sutton asked the Council to promote the new Freezer of Love at Paganhill Village Hall, which would be providing frozen meals on a pay as you feel basis.

## **13. Verbal reports from District and County Councillors**

Stroud District Cllr Townley reported that he had moved to the Environment Committee. He noted that the new Local Plan consultation provided an opportunity to explore potential development sites identified in the Shaping the Heart of Stroud Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Cllr Townley confirmed that the Museum in the Park and Stratford Park Leisure Centre would both be closed from 5<sup>th</sup> November in line with new lockdown rules. Planning site visits would be continuing and the household recycling centre would remain open for booked visits. The District Council had approved a Development Strategy for new council housing and their draft budget had been approved.

Stroud District Cllr Sutton reported that the Local Plan would now need to allocate a more sites for housing to meet government annual targets.

Stroud District Cllr Marjoram commented on the rollout of 5G.

## **14. Clerk's report**

The Clerk's report was noted. The Clerk additionally reported on the Council's ongoing support for the community, staff and councillors during the lockdown, including access to mental health support and advice. Although planned projects were progressing, councillors were asked to note that community support would take priority, so some existing projects and any new proposals would be delayed.

Councillor Townley left the meeting.

## **15. Changes to Financial Regulations and setting up a Lloyds Bank Corporate Multipay Account**

Cllr Cranston introduced a report on changes requested by the Clerk to support electronic and emergency payments.

Councillor Bloxsom joined the meeting.

The Council **resolved** to amend Financial Regulations 6.20 and 6.22 as shown in **Appendix A**.

**Action: Clerk**

It was further **resolved** to cancel the existing debit card on the Clerk's Account and authorise the Town Clerk to set up a Lloyds Bank Corporate Multipay Account, with cards issued to the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Green Spaces Manager and Assistant Clerk, with spending limits as shown in **Appendix B**.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **16. Bank mandate for all Council bank and investment accounts**

It was **agreed** to authorise Councillors Andrews and Schoemaker as signatories on the council's accounts.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **17. Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct**

An update to the arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct about town and parish councillors received from the Monitoring Officer at Stroud District Council was noted.

#### **18. To receive a report from the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust**

A report from the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust was noted.

#### **19. Building works at the Subscription Rooms**

It was **resolved** to authorise building works at the Subscription Rooms in accordance with the terms of the lease to the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **20. Committee reports**

The following reports, previously circulated, were received.

Regeneration:	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
Consultations & Highways:	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Environment:	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Community:	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
Finance and Policy:	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020

#### **21. Exclusion of press and public**

It was **resolved** in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting

#### **22. Office refurbishment**

It was unanimously **resolved** to:

- Give 6 months' notice to OpenHouse to take back possession of the flats at Thanet House.
- Defer a decision on whether or not to retain Thanet House or relocate, until more information and costs are available.
- Delegate to the Finance and Policy Committee, with a view to presenting a report to the Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021:
  - A review of the potential for refurbishment of Thanet House
  - An assessment of alternative properties
  - An analysis of the budget implications for 2021–22 and beyond

**Action: Clerk**

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Chair..... Date.....

## Appendix A

(Approved changes in **bold**.)

6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Finance, Community and Policy Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Finance, Community and Policy Committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Finance, Community and Policy Committee].

6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk, **Deputy Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Green Spaces Manager** and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

~~6.22. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk are authorised to sign a cheque to the value of £500 in an emergency to provide petty cash.~~

6.23. In cases of an emergency or extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Town Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Town Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £10,000. The Town Clerk shall report such action to the Finance, Community and Policy Committee and/or Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

## Appendix B.

Officer	Cardholder spend limit	Transaction value limit
Town Clerk	£10,000*	£10,000*
Deputy Clerk	£10,000*	£10,000*
Green Spaces Manager	£1,000	£500
Assistant Clerk	£1,000	£500