

## STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting of COUNCIL**

**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, at 7.30pm**

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

#### **Present**

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Vanessa Price, Alan Sage, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

#### **Absent**

Cllrs Laurie Davies and Steve Dechan

#### **In attendance**

Marianne Sweet (STC Communications), Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk) and one member of the public.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Campbell.

#### **2. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations**

None

#### **3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

#### **4. Minutes of extraordinary meeting**

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

#### **5. Mayor's remarks**

Unsurprisingly the Mayor's calendar had been empty since the last meeting. The Mayor did however, report that he had recorded videos for social media, including two for VE day.

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

None.

#### **7. District and County Councillors' reports**

District Councillor Townley reported that there had not been any formal meetings, but lots of work was being undertaken by the Council, with staff responding well working flexibly at home. The District Council had paid out millions in government grants to local small businesses and the contact centre had been working efficiently.

District Councillor Sutton passed on his congratulations to staff at both the District and Town Councils on their responses to the coronavirus pandemic. Cllr Sutton also highlighted the work of the Paganhill Community Group, which had been recognised as a good example of the community response.

## **8. Clerk's report**

The Clerk's report was noted.

The Clerk additionally reported that officers are planning for the easing of lockdown measures to support staff to work safely. The Clerk also reported that the new Financial Administrator had started work and was currently receiving a handover and training from the interim Administrator.

In response to a question from Cllr Bloxsom regarding the distribution of council newsletters the Clerk confirmed that these will be delivered to residents by the Council's normal delivery agents, who will be supplied additional PPE. The office staff will be sending newsletters by post to residents who live in flats or other areas that are difficult to access.

Cllr Marjoram thanked staff for all their hard work.

## **9. Remote meetings**

Procedures for holding Council and Committee meetings remotely were **approved**, subject to a minor amendment relating to the procedure for excluding the press and public for confidential items.

Action: Clerk

## **10. Financial Regulations**

The Council considered draft updated Regulations. The Clerk was asked to amend sections 4.5 and 6.24 as the difference between the two was not clear.

The updated Financial Regulations were **approved**, including the rewording of the sections indicated above.

Action: Clerk

## **11. Equality policy**

A new Equality policy was **approved**.

Action: Clerk

## **12. Co-option Policy and Procedure**

The Council discussed a draft Co-option Policy and Procedure. It was noted that a co-option policy provides structure to the way co-options are managed. It was also noted that canvassing in this context is very different from political campaigning.

The Clerk was asked to check the legality of confidential voting in a co-option ballot and report back to the next meeting.

The Clerk was asked to increase the time allotted for candidates to address the Council to five minutes and to add a provision for councillors to ask questions.

Subject to the above amendments, the Co-option Policy and Procedure was **approved**.

Action: Clerk

### **13. Temporary changes to delegations**

Temporary changes to reflect restrictions necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic were **approved**.

### **14. Decisions made by the Town Clerk under delegated authority**

The Clerk's report was received.

Cllr Marjoram asked about the mechanism for planning applications. The Clerk and Cllr Arundel as Chair of the Consultations and Highways Committee explained that under its Terms of Reference the Committee may delegate decisions to the Clerk when it is unable to meet, and had been using this delegation since meetings were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Clerk confirmed that the Committee would be now meeting virtually for the foreseeable future.

### **15. Access to public footpath 83 at Swifts Hill Triangle**

A representative of the landowner made a short statement on their behalf. The Council thanked him for his time.

In view of the confidential nature of the remaining business, it was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

The Council received a report on issues concerning access from Council owned land at Swifts Hill Triangle onto public footpath 83. It was **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to progress creation of a permissive right of way, including installation of an accessible kissing gate and signage.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Chair .....

Date .....