

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the**

**MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Monday, 2nd September 2019, at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Laurie Davies, Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram (to item 14), Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Vanessa Price, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley

**Absent:** Cllr Sarah Lunnon

**In attendance:** Gloucestershire County Councillor Eva Ward, Marianne Sweet (STC Communications), Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk), two representatives from Earth Protectors, one press representative and 38 members of the public.

**Action**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Dechan (work). Also received from Stroud District Councillor Pickering.

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

None

**3. Gifts and hospitality**

None

**4. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July were **approved** by the members present and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

**5. Mayor's remarks**

Events attended by the Mayor included: a Stand Up Against Hate event, marking the Srebrenica day of remembrance; the launch of the 2019 Stroud Book Festival; a presentation day at Ruskin Mill College and the SEED Festival at Hawkwood College.

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

Several questions were raised about 5G, including concerns about the impact on health, the carbon footprint of the infrastructure and whether or not the council could provide peer reviewed scientific evidence on these issues. The Mayor advised that she had sought independent advice from Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace who had both reported that they have no official view on 5G and currently have higher

priorities. Both had said there was a lack of reliable peer reviewed reports.

The Clerk advised that parish and town councils have no legal powers to halt the rollout of 5G and recommended that any concerns should be raised at government level.

The agenda was reordered as follows.

#### **14. Motion from Cllrs Marjoram and Schoemaker on 5G**

The following motion had been proposed in advance of the meeting:

Until there is conclusive evidence from independent scientific research, that 5G wireless radiation is safe for people and the environment, we move for Stroud Town Council to adopt the precautionary principle and not consent to the rollout of 5G in the town.

Cllrs Marjoram and Schoemaker agreed to amend their motion, on the advice of the Clerk to:

To resolve that until there is a consensus that 5G wireless radiation is harmless to humans and the environment and the issues concerning tree felling, carbon footprint, security and weather satellites have been resolved, Stroud Town Council will adopt the precautionary principle and not support the roll out of 5G in the town or permit the installation of 5G infrastructure on council owned land and property.

Cllr Schoemaker introduced the motion and recommended adopting a precautionary principle with regard to new technology. He referred to a petition and letters sent to Stroud's MP and County Councillor, concerns about the health impacts of 5G, the power requirements of the new infrastructure and the concerns of local residents.

Each of the other councillors were then invited to speak on the motion and a wide range of opinions were expressed. Several members spoke of their concern at a lack of understanding and misrepresentation of the scientific evidence.

Some members reiterated that local councils have no jurisdiction over 5G and urged concerned residents to address their protests to the relevant authorities. It was noted that local councils do not have the resources to commission or process research on this scale, which is a government responsibility.

Some members were concerned about the carbon footprint of installing and operating the infrastructure required for 5G, but felt that addressing the wider issues about climate change is a higher priority for the Council.

Several members expressed concern about the bullying nature of local anti-5G protests and reported that attempts had been made to intimidate them into supporting the motion.

The motion was put to a vote and **defeated** by 10 votes to 6.

A proposal to write to David Drew MP to ask for government research on the carbon footprint of 5G was **approved** unanimously.

The meeting was suspended temporarily to allow members of the public to leave the room.

Cllr Marjoram left the meeting.

### **13. Earth Protector Towns**

The Deputy Clerk presented a report on the drafting of an Earth Protector Town declaration, which had been requested at the meeting of the Finance, Community and Policy Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

The declaration had been designed to make it relevant to towns across the globe and with measurable outcomes. A minor change to the text relating to the ICC was noted. It was reported that the actions within the declaration are all within the gift of town councils and that this should form an important part of communications regarding the Earth Protector Towns declaration.

It was **resolved** unanimously to adopt the Earth Protector Town declaration. It was noted that a formal declaration would be made on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

It was **agreed** to commit officer time to help develop a framework to underpin the declaration.

Cllr Green was **appointed** to represent the Council on the Earth Protector Town steering group.

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

County Councillor Ward reported that Gloucestershire County Council are consulting on their youth strategy and encouraged councillors to respond. It was noted that a review of on-street parking in Stroud is planned.

Councillor Ward reported that the call in of the decision to close two Stroud care homes, Wyatt House and Southfields had been unsuccessful and residents are now being moved to alternative accommodation. It was noted that any funds realised from the sale of the sites would be ring-fenced for services for older people.

Clerk

Deputy Clerk

Deputy Clerk

Cllr Green

It was further reported that a motion to Gloucestershire County Council on road safety is being prepared and the lengthsman scheme has been cancelled.

Cllr Ward agreed to look into whether more disabled parking spaces would be needed following the widening of the eligibility criteria of blue badges.

Cllr Ward

District Cllr Townley reflected on the implications of the reported care home closures and provided an update on plans to provide homeless accommodation in Stroud town.

District Cllr Sutton expressed concern on the impact of the care home closures on availability of care home places in Stroud.

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

The Clerk's report was noted.

### **9. Draft Strategy for public consultation**

A draft strategy was reviewed and some suggestions for improvements we suggested. It was **agreed** that any further comments should be submitted to the Clerk by the end of the week.

It was **agreed** to run a consultation on the draft document by way of a survey, including a question on how residents might get involved in delivering the strategy, and to invite key stakeholders to a meeting.

Clerk

### **10. Governance working group report**

The Mayor presented a report on new committee structures and explained how they had been designed. It was **agreed** to adopt the revised committee structure and implementation timetable, but with a proviso that the membership and quorum could be kept under review.

Clerk

The working group would prepare updated terms of reference for committees and working groups, updates to Standing Orders and a scheme of delegation for approval at the next Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October.

Clerk

### **11. Feasibility study on tourism website**

It was **agreed** to commission a feasibility study on the potential to create a tourism website for Stroud in partnership with the emerging tourism forum at a total cost of £1,000; with a council contribution of £800 to be met from the NDP budget.

Clerk

### **12. Update on office accommodation**

A progress report on the actions agreed at the Finance, Community and Policy Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 was noted. It was further noted that Stroud District Council had offered to meet to discuss the Old Town Hall and public toilets.

Clerk

**15. Committee reports**

Report of the following meetings, having been previously been circulated were received:

Consultations:	8 <sup>th</sup> July, 12 <sup>th</sup> August
Finance, Community & Policy:	15 <sup>th</sup> July
Green Spaces:	16 <sup>th</sup> July
Concordat	29 <sup>th</sup> July

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Chair .....

Date .....