

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of COUNCIL
7th March 2022 at 7.30pm
St Laurence Church Hall, The Shambles, Stroud

Present

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Tony Davey, Sue Fenton, Mark Graham, Camilla Hale, Steven Naumann, Adrian Oldman, Stella Parkes, Lucas Schoemaker, Megan Sheer and Rachel Smith

In attendance

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

Absent

Cllrs Kate Crews, Laurie Davies and Mick Fealty

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Liz Child, Rob Green and Naomi Seffar (all personal).

2. Declarations of interest or requests for dispensations

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

3. Consultations and Highways Committee vacancies

Cllr Smith was **elected** to join the Consultations and Highways Committee, leaving one vacancy to fill.

4. Finance and Policy Committee vacancy

There were no nominations leaving one vacancy to fill.

5. Minutes of the meeting of 17th January 2021

The minutes of the council meeting on 17th January 2021 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed by the Chair.

6. Mayor's remarks

The Mayor reported that he had attended several meetings linked to the preparation of a bid to the Levelling Up Fund in partnership with Stroud District Council, including a tour of town centre sites with Siobhan Baillie MP and Cllr Parkes.

He had also spoken at a rally in the High Street in support of Ukraine following the Russian invasion and attended the Mayor of Gloucester's Annual Civic Service at Gloucester Cathedral.

The Mayor announced that he would be hosting a civic reception to thank people and organisations who support residents in Stroud. The event would be held at the Subscription Rooms on 8th May 2022 and councillors were requested to review the invitation list and make suggestions for any additions.

Action: Clerk to share invitation list for Thank You event with Councillors.

7. Questions from members of the public

Chas Townley provided an update for members on the project to ensure that public rights of way in Stroud are recorded on the definitive map, including the welcome news that the government had agreed to withdraw the deadline for applications. It was noted that 21 applications were currently in progress.

Mr Townley raised a concern about how access to the Leazes would be addressed in the transfer of the freehold of the site from Stroud District Council to the Town Council.

8. Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr Drew had submitted a written report, which was read out by the Clerk. Concern was expressed about the standard of the consultation on the proposal to relocate Stroud library. It was noted that further drop-in events would be taking place.

Cllr Schoemaker reported that Stroud District Council's budget and 5-year plan had been approved. He noted concerns about Planning department resourcing issues, for example in enforcement and trees. An increase in car parking fees was reported and concern raised about the impact on residents of Gloucestershire County Council's on-street parking review.

Cllr Schoemaker also reported that Stroud District Council would be starting a review of their play areas.

9. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was noted. The Clerk additionally reported that she had given some feedback to Stroud District Council about the presentation of their draft Canal Strategy. It was noted that the Consultations and Highways Working Group would be asked to approve a response to the consultation on the strategy in due course.

10. Presentation on designs for the Subscription Rooms square and community engagement plan

The Green Spaces Manager gave a presentation on preliminary concept designs for landscaping the square and improvements to access at the Subscription Rooms. He also outlined proposals for a public consultation, including an event at the Subscription Rooms on 2nd April, a website and an opportunity for the public to help choose suitable new trees. It was noted that Stroud District Council planning officers, (conservation and trees) were supportive of the proposals and a formal pre-application consultation was being prepared.

The Green Spaces Manager responded to questions from members, confirming that there would still be space for public events and demonstrations and accessibility was being assessed. Expert advice had been sought on replacement of the existing tree to inform communications, including potential reuse of the timber for public benefit.

Members were supportive of the concept designs, noting that the new space would be more welcoming and safer for children. It was **agreed** to progress community engagement on the proposals.

Actions: Green Spaces Manager to: consider provision of guidance on how to navigate the space for people with accessibility needs; check whether a 5-year management plan can be

included in the Levelling Up Fund bid and provide more information on the provision of handrails on the steps.

11. To approve a statement on the war in Ukraine

In response to a motion proposed by Cllr Cranston it was **resolved** to issue the following statement and to write to the MP for Stroud.

Stroud Town Council stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and condemns the Russian invasion of their country. We call on the UK government to put in place stringent and effective sanctions against the Russian state.

We call on the UK government to open our borders and waive visa requirements for Ukrainian refugees seeking sanctuary, making it safe and legal for them to travel to this country. Stroud has a strong history of welcoming refugees and we believe that Ukrainians fleeing the war in their country would find a warm welcome in our town.

This crisis has highlighted serious issues with UK policy on refugees, so we call for an urgent review of the Nationality and Borders Bill and current Home Office policy, which prohibit the protection of those forced to flee for their lives.

12. Approval of payments from January 2022

Payments from January 2022, recommended by the Finance and Policy Working Group were **approved**.

13. Risk assessment

An updated risk assessment, recommended by the Finance and Policy Working Group was **approved**.

14. Complaints policy

An updated Complaints policy, recommended by the Finance and Policy Working Group was **approved**.

15. Publication Scheme

An updated Publication Scheme, recommended by the Finance and Policy Working Group was **approved**.

16. Review of the Council's Direct Debits and Standing Orders

A list of the Council's Direct Debits and Standing Orders was reviewed as required by Financial Regulations and **approved**.

Action: Clerk to investigate and report on the value of a direct debit to Ecotricity.

17. Civic calendar for 2022-23

A calendar of meeting dates for the civic year from May 2022 was approved.

18. Staff Handbook

An updated Staff Handbook, recommended by the Personnel Working Group, and following consultation with Council staff, was **approved**.

19. Proposal by Cotswold Canals Trust to develop a scheme for transferring excess water through the canal system to the south-eastern part of England

Cllr Cranston explained that the report circulated with the agenda had referred to a similar but different consultation, and should have referred to the Water Resources South East (WSRE) consultation.

He explained the rationale for supporting the call by Cotswold Canals Trust to respond to the consultation. It was noted that various proposals had been suggested to resolve the problem of supplying water for the south-east of England, including a proposal by Cotswolds Canals Trust to use the canal system, which is currently in the WSRE plan for consideration for the period 2040–2060. Cotswold Canals Trust believe that it should be in the earlier period 2025–2040. As well delivering water the potential benefits of using the restored canal were stated to include: job creation for tourism, biodiversity enhancements, and it would be more effective than a pipeline going over the top of the Cotswolds.

It was **agreed** to submit the following response to the consultation:

Stroud Town Council (STC) is a long-term supporter of the Cotswold Canals Trust and the important restoration projects that it has led. The restoration of the Cotswold Canals is both nationally and locally important. STC supports the proposal to transfer water from the Severn to the Thames via a restored Cotswold Canal. This scheme relies on known technology and could be implemented in the first period of WRSE to give a reliable and quick boost to water supply in the Southeast. It should be given a higher priority and brought into the first period of 2025 – 2040. When being compared with other schemes, job creation, environmental enhancements and other social benefits should also be considered as well as cost.

20. Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant

The proposal to sign the covenant was with withdrawn as it was not felt to be relevant to Stroud Town Council.

21. Public Path Creation Agreement for land at the Long Ground

It was **resolved** to sign a Public Path Creation Agreement for land at the Long Ground.

22. Working Group reports

The following reports, previously circulated, were received.

Environment:	25 th January 2022
Consultations & Highways:	7 th February 2022
Finance and Policy:	14 th February 2022
Regeneration:	17 th February 2022

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

Chair.....

Date.....

Appendix 1 January 2022

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
04/01/2022	SDC	DD	374.00	Rates 58a and 58b
04/01/2022	Facebook Ireland Ltd	FCR2	9.92	Job advert CDO
07/01/2022	Allstar Business Solutions Ltd	9373	253.83	Fuel charges
10/01/2022	Dale Camps	BACS	17.63	Travel expenses
10/01/2022	A&P Facilities Ltd	1553	360.00	Key holding Libbys Drive
10/01/2022	Alan Price	1098	2010.00	Grave diggings fees Nov
10/01/2022	Cotswold Vale Refrigeration Lt	5992	78.00	Testing air conditioning
10/01/2022	Cotswold Vale Refrigeration Lt	6060	78.00	Air conditioning check
10/01/2022	Damselfly Communications Ltd	1221	2245.00	Media consultancy
10/01/2022	DENIS BROWN & SON (Nailsworth)	2083	42.19	Site materials
10/01/2022	EDF Energy	644B	0.11	Final electricity 58b
10/01/2022	E.ON	8990	194.02	Final electricity 58a
10/01/2022	ERMIN PLANT LTD	2932	61.56	Manual post puller
10/01/2022	HHGL Limited	9999	21.50	Compact socket set
10/01/2022	JAMES & OWEN LTD	7998	111.84	Stationery
10/01/2022	MIW Water Cooler Experts	5911	150.00	Sanitisation water dispenser
10/01/2022	Nadja Gajadharsingh	127	280.00	Fundraising services Dec
10/01/2022	Play Gloucestershire	212	3745.44	After school play sessions
10/01/2022	Somerset County	2696	63.60	Nox tubes Nov

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
	Council			
10/01/2022	Thirsty Work Ltd.	3140	4.80	Water cooler rental charges
10/01/2022	Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd.	Z051	12.66	Site materials
10/01/2022	Top of Town Toddlers	1	1000.00	Transfer of funds held
12/01/2022	NALC	3039	38.93	Levelling up the Environment
14/01/2022	Payroll	DD	17719.60	Payroll Jan
17/01/2022	Ecotricity	6887	206.91	Gas Thanet House
17/01/2022	SDC	DD	1068.00	Rates cemetery and libbys
17/01/2022	Amazon EU	7884	29.99	Pavement display A-board
18/01/2022	Value Products Ltd	6053	15.12	No dogs in playground sign
18/01/2022	Value Products Ltd	8239	35.28	No dogs in playground signs
19/01/2022	Renault Finance	5252JAN	30.00	Battery hire for Renault
20/01/2022	Haymarket Media Group Limited	6404	315.00	Horticulture Week 1 year sub
20/01/2022	HHGL Limited	15	31.80	Gardening gloves
20/01/2022	ITEC Support Ltd	3644	524.41	IT services
20/01/2022	LeopardPress.com	8629	155.56	Purchase order books x5
20/01/2022	Lister Wilder	4440	228.90	Starting fault on Kubota
20/01/2022	National Federation of Cemeter	2082	10.00	Subscription 2022
20/01/2022	Smiths (Gloucester) Ltd	1425	18.60	Recycling rental Libbys

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
20/01/2022	Stroud Alarms Fire and Securit	7270	102.00	Out of hours call out Libbys D
20/01/2022	Stroud Parish Churches	637	85.00	Church hall hire Jan
20/01/2022	Stroud Parish Churches	641	315.00	Church hall hire meetings 2021
20/01/2022	LGPS	BACS	5659.56	Pensions Jan
20/01/2022	HMRC	BACS	5054.72	PAYE/NIC Jan
24/01/2022	SGW Payroll Ltd.	1665	65.28	Payroll month 10
24/01/2022	SDC	DD	624.00	Rates Thanet House
25/01/2022	Ecotricity	5366	390.90	Electricity Libbys Drive
25/01/2022	Ecotricity	5386	128.44	Electricity Thanet House
25/01/2022	Ecotricity	5907	73.62	Electricity Thanet LLS
25/01/2022	Lister Unified Communications	8958	97.18	Mobile phone charges
25/01/2022	Ecotricity	5375	74.92	Electricity Thanet House
25/01/2022	Ecotricity	5911	200.49	Electricity LLS Thanet House
26/01/2022	EE Ltd	6687	35.80	Mobile phone charges
26/01/2022	Fully Europe BVBA	728	752.99	Standing desk
28/01/2022	Konica Minolta Business Soluti	9933	89.14	Photocopier

Appendix 2 Footpath at the Long Ground

