



Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of COUNCIL

30th May 2022 at 7.30pm

Old Town Hall, The Shambles, Stroud

Present

Cllrs Kate Crews, Tony Davey, Laurie Davies, Mick Fealty, Susan Fenton, Rob Green, Adrian Oldman, Megan Sheer, Stella Parkes (Chair) and Lucas Schoemaker

In attendance

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Chris Woolner (Green Spaces Manager), Marianne Sweet (STC Communications)

Absent

Cllrs Liz Child, Naomi Seffar

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews (personal), Kevin Cranston (work), Mark Graham (personal), Camilla Hale (personal) and Rachel Smith (personal). Apologies were also received from County Councillor David Drew.

2. To receive declarations of interest or requests for dispensations

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

3. Minutes of the meeting of 25th April 2022

The minutes of the Council meeting on 25th April 2022 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed by the Chair at the next opportunity.

4. Town Square Project

The Green Spaces Manager presented a progress report on the project to develop designs for a new Town Square at the Subscription Rooms and explained the public consultation results. A preliminary cost estimate had been circulated to members.

Community engagement had included an online consultation portal through which people were able to rank design priorities, select potential tree species and comment on preliminary designs. A public event had also been held at the Subscription Rooms where people were able to discuss the proposals with the design team.

The overall response to the consultation had been positive, with the highest priorities being “more trees and plants”, “a nicer looking space” and “a better space for public gatherings”. The most frequently mentioned alternative priority was “less traffic”.

Of the 6 potential tree species presented there was no clear preference. The Green Spaces Manager was asked do further research on the trees to be included covering their potential full heights and tolerance to tree surgery.

The Council discussed an objection to the design received from the Civic Society. It was felt that their alternative proposal was not in keeping with the design brief in terms of cost, accessibility, sustainability, or the public responses to the consultation.

It was noted that the draft designs included an illuminated display board for advertising events at the Subscription Rooms. The Green Spaces Manager was asked to investigate: how it would be protected from vandalism, the power source, impact on biodiversity, hours of operation and whether it would need Advertising Consent. It was noted that Stroud District Council had advised that the wider scheme would not need planning or listed building consent. It was noted the Highways were developing designs for the surrounding roads to support walking and cycling, but George Street would remain open to traffic.

It was **agreed** to sign off on the concept design and budget for inclusion in the Stroud District Council Levelling Up Fund bid, proceeding with the existing concept with additional minor changes to improve accessibility, which would be incorporated in a technical design post submission. It was further **agreed** to commit match funding for the project to support the bid.

Action: Town Clerk to report to Stroud District Council

5. Stroud District Council Levelling Up Fund bid

The Town Clerk provided an illustrated presentation on the proposed projects for inclusion in the Levelling Up Fund bid, which were due to be approved by Stroud District Council's Strategy and Resources Committee at their meeting on 10th June 2022.

Members **agreed** some areas that they would like the District Council to consider as projects are developed further, particularly the use of sustainable materials and local contractors for construction projects. It was also **agreed** to request that consideration be given to exploring opportunities to make walking and cycling routes safer at night, for example lighting in underpasses and CCTV, to support the night time economy.

The Town Clerk explained that proposed match funding for the bid would either come from the Council's approved 2022-23 budget or from earmarked reserves specifically allocated to projects included in the bid.

It was **agreed** to note progress on bid preparation work and confirm support for Stroud District Council's levelling Up Fund bid and to **approve** a commitment of £150,000 in match funding for the bid.

Action: Town Clerk to report to Stroud District Council

6. Masonry Repairs at the Subscription Rooms

The Town Clerk presented a progress report on masonry repairs. It was noted that additional repointing works recommended as an urgent safety issue, had been signed off by the Town Clerk under delegation in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee as approved at Finance and Policy meeting on 14/2/2022. It was noted that the total cost of the whole project, including scaffolding, stonemasons and project management was now estimated at £57,206, funded from an earmarked reserve set up for this project (£50,000), with the balance coming from the General Reserve.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....