

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of COUNCIL**

**Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, at 7.30pm**

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**Present**

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Laurie Davies (from item 6), Kevin Cranston (Chair), Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Vanessa Price, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

**Absent**

Cllrs Steve Dechan and Alan Sage

**In attendance**

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk).

**1. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

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

None

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

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

None.

**5. Exclusion of press and public**

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.

**6. Office relocation**

The Clerk presented a report on the potential to purchase a building in Stroud to replace the current offices on London Road as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee.

Advice had been sought from a planning consultant and from Stroud District Council planning officers on the need to change the use of the property.

Concern was expressed the location of the property would make it less accessible to the public. It was felt that it would be necessary to also provide an information point in the town centre. The Clerk reported on some potential locations for this.

Members recognised the need to relocate to a larger building to provide healthier accommodation for staff and more space for the public to attend council meetings.

Larger premises would also provide scope for further expansion should the role of the Council grow in future, especially if Gloucestershire became a unitary authority or the Council took on more town centre management work.

Enquiries had also been made about the potential to improve the carbon footprint of the building, which it was felt had good potential to be highly energy efficient, but it had not been possible to obtain costings within the time available.

Cllr Davies joined the meeting.

Discussion then turned to a property previously considered and for which an unsuccessful offer had been made. It was noted that this property was now back on the market.

A debate on the relative merits of each property was held, including the following issues: price, value for money, location, potential income generation, building improvements required, accessibility, and availability of car parking.

It was generally felt that both properties were affordable, but there was no clear view on whether or not to retain Thanet House to generate rental income in either the short or long term. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the economy was acknowledged to be an important factor in making this decision.

It was **agreed** that the Council had outgrown Thanet House and needed to relocate to larger premises to provide space for staff and meetings.

**Action:** The Clerk was asked to carry out further research on both properties and report back to Council for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chair .....

Date .....