

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP**

**Tuesday, 30th November 2021, at 7.30pm**

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

**Present**

Cllrs Rob Green (Chair), Liz Chid, Sue Fenton, Steven Naumann and Naomi Seffar.

**Absent**

Cllr Megan Sheer

**In attendance**

Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk), Chris Woolner (Green Spaces Manager), Martin Jakes (Sladebank Woods CIC)

**1. Apologies**

Cllr Mark Graham (work)

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

None

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

None

**4. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the council meeting on 21st September 2021 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

The agenda was re-ordered by the Chair

**7. Funds available in the Carbon Reduction Fund**

The Deputy Clerk confirmed the amount remaining in the fund as £8,310

**8. Grant applications received for the Carbon Reduction Fund**

The Chair introduced the item as it had previously been through the Community Committee and deemed more appropriate for the Carbon Reduction Fund.

Mr Jakes was invited to talk about the application. Sladebank Woods CIC operate a sustainable woodland management system which includes both people and the environment. The Town Council has supported the CIC with other measures such as permission to cross their land to install an accessible entrance to the woodland site. The purchase of a battery-operated chainsaw would promote an important move towards sustainable power tools at the site as well as reduce noise nuisance for neighbours around the site.

The committee working group thanked Mr Jakes for his information.

Mr Jakes left the meeting.

Members discussed the merits of the application as well as the risk associated with funding the chainsaw. It was **agreed** that the grant be awarded with the following caveat; Use of the chainsaw funded by the Town Council in the presence of community groups or the public must be by those who are suitably certified to do so.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

#### **5. Green Spaces Manager's report**

The Green Spaces Manager presented the report and answered questions relating to its content.

#### **6. Budget Monitoring**

The report was received by the working group.

Items 7 and 8 were discussed earlier in the meeting

#### **9. DEFRA consultation response**

The proposed consultation response was **approved** and recommended to the clerk for submission.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

#### **10. Interpretation and Signage Project**

The report was introduced by the Green Spaces Manager. Members discussed the costs and process for the project. The Green Spaces Manager confirmed that the project would be delivered over two years with the most well-used sites being prioritised.

Cllr Green requested that the scope of the project be widened to include accessible entrances to the parks. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that there was an allocation of £10,000 in the 22-23 budget for accessibility improvements in the parks and that this could be delivered in line with the signage and interpretation boards.

Cllr Green also cautioned the over-use of interpretation. The Green Spaces Manager confirmed that he was aware of the pitfalls of this and all plans would be brought before the committee for approval prior to installation.

It was suggested that this project could be supported by a task and finish group of Stroud Town Councillors and volunteers who had expressed an interest. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that non-councillors could be co-opted for this purpose.

The committee working group **agreed** to approve the project to the Clerk for delivery by the Green Spaces Manager.

**Action: Green Spaces Manager**

### **11. Carbon Reduction Measures – Tools and Vehicles**

The proposal was outlined by the Green Spaces Manager. Committee working group members discussed the way the proposed changes may impact the way the team currently works.

Cllr Green offered to introduce the Green Spaces Manager to an employee of the Bike Drop delivery company who could discuss his experiences and demonstrate his own vehicle to inform the Green Spaces Manager prior to the purchase of a new bike and trailer.

The committee working group **approved** the recommendations to the Clerk.

#### **Action: Green Spaces Manager**

### **12. StroudCo Container in Trinity Pocket Park**

Members discussed the benefits and pitfalls of various locations inside and outside the pocket park.

Cllr Green moved to approve the following motion; *Although the committee working group are supportive in principle of the storage unit, the location within Trinity Pocket Park is not deemed suitable due to the visual impact at the site.*

The motion was not seconded.

Members continued to discuss the locations and how this would impact the operational capacity of the Trinity Rooms as a hub as well as for the StroudCo business model.

The motion was amended to; Approve the proposed location in Trinity Pocket Park with the following caveats;

- 1) A licence agreement is signed with StroudCo as outlined below. GSM/Clerk to arrange.
- 2) The cost of the licence is covered by StroudCo
- 3) There is a break clause after 1 year that either STC or StroudCo can give reasonable notice to end the licence.
- 4) That any contractors involved in installation and removal adhere to our usual requests for contractors working on our sites; Evidence of insurances, Risk Assessments, Method statement etc.
- 5) That any planning consents required are met.
- 6) Written consent is given from the landlord
- 7) The container must be screened and obscured from view

It was noted that the recommendation will be referred to the Consultations and Highways Committee Working Group when they discuss the proposal as a planning application and that a different view may be formed by them.

### **13. Draft 22-23 Budget**

The draft budget for 2022-23 was **approved** to the Clerk to be approved by the Finance and Policy Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

**14. Exclusion of Press and Public**

No press or public were present at the meeting.

**15. Trespass on Council Land**

The committee working group **approved** further expenditure by the Clerk on legal advice and additional correspondence.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Chair .....

Date .....