

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of COUNCIL
20th July 2020 at 7.30pm**

Online meeting via Zoom

Present

Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Vanessa Price, Alan Sage, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

Cllr Jess McQuail was in attendance from Item 5.

In attendance

Kate Montgomery (Deputy Town Clerk), Marianne Sweet (Communications Officer), Cllr Simon Pickering (SDC)

Nominees for Valley Ward Councillor Vacancy: Joseph Aldridge, Oliver Jelf, Jess McQuail and Adrian Oldman

Absent

Cllrs Davies and Dechan

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Margaret Poulton, County Councillor Eva Ward and Helen Bojaniwska the Clerk.

2. Declarations of Interest or Requests for dispensations

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

3. Co-option of a Councillor to fill the Valley ward vacancy

The candidates were invited to speak for up to five minutes by the Mayor. Following this, councillors were able to ask up to three questions.

The Mayor explained the rules for voting.

The Council voted for the candidate they wished to elect to the Valley ward vacancy. After two rounds of voting, Jess McQuail was elected as Councillor for the Valley ward.

4. Timescale for the elected councillor to sign their declaration of acceptance of office

The Council **approved** a timescale of two weeks.

Cllr McQuail left the meeting for the following two items.

The Agenda was reordered as follows:

7. Minutes of meeting of 23rd June 2020

The minutes of the council meeting on 23rd June 2020 were **approved** by the members present and will be signed as a correct record by the Chair at the next possible opportunity.

8. Mayor's remarks

Mayor Kevin Cranston reported on his engagements over the last month or so. These included opening a fruit and vegetable stall at the new Five Valleys Market and working with officers and councillors at SDC and GCC Highways to implement new safety measures in the town. The safety measures, including the temporary closure of a section of London Road and the suspension of on-street parking in the town, were largely very well received with only a handful of complaints compared but many compliments. To combat dis-information regarding the safety measures, the Mayor wrote to all traders in the town centre with an explanation of the system and why it was introduced. The Mayor encouraged councillors to ask those with positive comments to write into the Clerk.

Cllr Hale remarked that loading bays have been used to park in illegally since the suspension of on-street parking. The Clerk was asked to write to Cllr Eva Ward to ask if parking enforcement officers could target those areas.

Action: Clerk

Councillor McQuail re-joined the meeting.

5. Environment Committee Vacancy

New Cllr Jess McQuail was nominated and elected onto the committee.

6. Consultations and Highways Committee Vacancy

Cllr Haydn Sutton was nominated and elected onto the committee.

9. Questions from members of the public

None.

10. Verbal reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Simon Pickering reported on news from SDC. At the Full Council meeting last week, the District Council approved a Covid-19 recovery strategy and a hardship fund for those in need. Cllr Pickering noted that Gloucestershire County Council have put forward a city region board which was given support. The District Council also voted to an amendment of their Code of Conduct which will have implications for parish and town councils who use this as a template for their own Code of Conduct policies. Cllr Pickering commended officers and councillors on their response during the Covid-19 crisis.

District Councillor Sutton reported that the system at Horsley recycling centre is working well.

District Councillor Townley reported that although there had been no official meetings of the Housing Committee of which he is Chair. There is a backlog of empty properties which require repairs and checks were being addressed as a matter of urgency. Councillor Townley also reported that the newly adopted Code of Conduct had been updated to include more provision for equality.

The Clerk was asked to review the Code of Conduct in light of the changes.

Action: Clerk

11. Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was noted.

12. Internal auditor report

The internal auditor report was noted.

Cllr Hale asked if the Council's assets could be listed accessibly on the Council's website.

Action: Clerk

13. Review of internal controls

The report was noted.

14. Earmarked reserves movements

The movements were noted. Councillors noted the delay of some projects due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr Pickering and Marianne Sweet left the meeting (8.25pm).

15. Annual governance statement

The Annual Governance Statement was **approved** by unanimous resolution.

16. Approval of 2019-20 accounts

The Council's accounts for 2019-20 were **approved**.

17. Accounting statements and end of year bank reconciliation

The Council unanimously **approved** the Accounting Statements by resolution and the Mayor signed the end of year bank reconciliation.

18. General Power of Competence

The Council **resolved** that it meets the eligibility criteria for the use of the General Power of Competence.

19. Receive committee reports

The reports were received.

Cllr Hale asked that the draft minutes for the Regeneration Committee on 2nd July were put on the Councillors Access drive.

Action: Clerk

20. Resolution to exclude press and public from the following confidential report regarding a potential office relocation

The Council **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the following item due to the commercially sensitive confidential nature of the report.

21. Office relocation

The Council considered the report and discussed the advantages and limitations on two buildings as well as the risks involved with purchasing property during the current pandemic.

The Deputy Clerk reported that the agent for both properties had asked for full and final offers on one of the properties by 12noon on Friday 24th July.

An offer was **approved** subject to the normal searches and surveys in line with the Clerk's recommendation.

Cllr Marjoram left the meeting during this item.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm.

Chair..... Date.....