



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Northleach With Eastington Town Council held remotely on 16 September 2020 at 7pm

Members Present: Cllr Rob Platts (Chairman), Cllrs Steve Abbots (from item 3), Brian Hulcup (from item 4), Terry Morley-Blackwell, Andrew Wellman and Mark Ogden.

In Attendance: County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, District Councillor Tony Dale and Ms Pauline Rigby (Clerk/RFO).

1. **Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Caroline Brady.

Absent without apologies, Connor Williamson and Alan Wellman.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr Platts declared an interest in item 19, the Men in Sheds lease, because he is an employee of Cotswold Friends.

3. **County and District Council Reports**

Councillor Tony Dale reported that he had attended a busy cabinet meeting last week. A key item of business was the Medium-Term Financial Plan, which has been adversely affected by lost income due to covid pandemic, primarily from parking but also business rates and leisure centres. Officers have done an amazing job to minimise the impact, resulting in a net variation across the term of the plan of less than £0.5M. New car parking is coming on stream at Cirencester Rugby Club shortly. Also central to the recovery is the investment strategy, which could be used to support affordable social home investment. The Cotswolds has won Visit England funding to enhance the visibility of the area to visitors.

The Government is expected to issue a White Paper about unitary authorities. Cllr Dale expressed his personal view that devolution is not going to be optional, the question is what kind of unitary authority we will end up with. Devolution promises more cohesive services and it would benefit everyone to keep abreast of the proposals and take part in the consultation. He will be holding a surgery on 1st October if anyone has questions.

Councillor Paul Hodgkinson reported that coronavirus cases are still low in Gloucestershire compared to the rest of England. Of local interest, repairs to the Old A40 are nearly complete and the road is on track to be opened in the autumn. There are repeated complaints about footpath towards the A40 from East End and they are intending to go back and clear it. The Local Highways Manager been in touch with residents about Cooks Court where some work was proposed. Cllr Hodgkinson has launched a campaign around road signage and is asking residents

to send photos of signage that is obscured by vegetation, dirty or otherwise needs attention. In Bourton on the Water a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to change the parking arrangements has come to fruition after 3 years. If there are road issues around Northleach that need to be fixed, then it could be done. The key is to group all the changes together because TROs take time and money to implement.

4. Public Question Time.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Cllrs Abbots and Hulcup had been admitted to the meeting by this time.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings

It was RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on 19th August 2020 as a true and accurate record, subject to an amendment to remove duplication in reporting the vacancies. The minutes will be signed as soon as practicable.

6. Action Point Update

Council received the Action Point Update from 19th August 2020 (taken as read).

7. Planning Matters

There were no planning application consultations to consider. Cllr Dale reported that the district council is looking to provide training between now and Christmas on how to respond to planning applications. Cllrs Abbots and Hulcup expressed an interest in attending.

Councillors have received information on proposed changes to the planning system, which are being consulted upon nationally by NALC (National Association of Local Councils). Cllr Dale explained that the proposals do not directly impact Northleach, which is likely to retain the same planning controls as today, but it could force high numbers of new homes to be built on areas outside the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8. Finance

8.1 Council received details of bank balances of £116,451.36 in total on 30 August 2020.

8.2 It was RESOLVED to approve bills paid and instruct payments totalling £4,887.81, according to the schedule appended.

8.3 Council received an update from the Town Clerk on the Council's banking arrangements. The mandate has been refreshed and two new full power signatories created, bringing the total to four, but only one councillor is able to approve online payments. It was RESOLVED to authorise Cllrs Abbots, Platts and Andrew Wellman to apply for internet banking access.

8.4 It was RESOLVED to authorise the Town Clerk to apply for a Lloyds bank debit card.

9. Governance

9.1 Members received an update on councillor vacancies. There are still two vacancies and we expect to hear soon whether the council can co-opt to fill the second.

- 9.2 It was RESOLVED to approve training for recently co-opted councillors at a cost of £50 per person for two webinars, 'Being a Better Councillor' delivered by GAPTC.
- 9.3 Members discussed the committee structure and rationale for change. Questions were raised about delegated authority for expenditure and non-councillor members of committees. Discussions are ongoing and proposals will be brought to the next meeting.
- 9.4 It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Abbots and Ogden to the Finance, Funding and Grants Committee, which is due to meet on 6 October 2020.
- 9.5 It was RESOLVED to adopt an addendum to Standing Orders in respect of remote meetings.

10. Policy and Administration

The Internal Auditor recommended that the Town Council provide email addresses for members rather than conducting business via personal accounts. It was RESOLVED to provide council email addresses on the northleach.gov.uk domain with Microsoft Office 365 at a cost of £3 per email address per month.

It was RESOLVED to adopt a councillor privacy notice to outline how councillors are expected to process personal data. The Town Clerk explained that the notice would be published online so that councillors could link it to in their council email signatures.

There is a new legal requirement to make council websites easier to use. The deadline for compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 is 23 September 2020. The Town Clerk has carried out a self-assessment audit of the Town Council's website and drafted an accessibility statement as detailed in the report. It was RESOLVED to approve and publish the accessibility statement on the website.

It was agreed to defer the consideration of HR software and advice services in order to research the topic more thoroughly and allow more quotes to be obtained.

11. Westwoods Community Centre

Members reviewed the plan to re-open the Westwoods Community Centre. A Covid Risk Assessment has been carried out and the control measures implemented allowing the building to reopen as a workplace. The next step is to assess activities in the context of Government coronavirus regulations and guidance to understand which bookings can be taken and how the venue can be managed safely. The Town Clerk has met with a local health and safety professional and identified various costs arising including hand sanitiser dispensers and additional cleaning. The community centre will be able to re-open when the risk assessment has been completed and the control measures implemented. Councillors expressed concerns about the potential cost of cleaning and said costs must be monitored closely. It was RESOLVED to authorise the Town Clerk to spend up to £1,000 on control measures such as signage, hand sanitiser and cleaning, as per the list presented.

12. Projects and Events

- 13.1 Playground: A quotation to mend playground wetpour surface was reviewed. The sunken area is not considered dangerous, but the defect is likely to get worse over time. Members felt that the playground installer should repair the defect free of charge as the playground is less than two years old. If the installer is not willing to undertake the repair at a significant discount, then it was agreed that the council will approach alternative suppliers to carry out the work.
- 13.2 Carbon Neutral Northleach (CNN): Council received a report from Cllr Ogden on behalf of the group. CNN has negotiated a deal with consumer energy supplier Bulb Energy, which provides 100% renewable energy. When a Northleach resident signs up to the service, £20 is donated to CNN.
- 13.3 Bobby Wills Meadow: Members discussed the approach to the management of Wills Meadow. Two residents have disputed ownership of one small area and the Council's riparian rights. Some members would prefer not to move forward until there is a full understanding of the ownership, rights and responsibilities. Other members considered the matter had already been settled and propose to move ahead with putting together a management plan for the meadow, starting with consultation process based on current state of knowledge rather than legal route which could be costly. The councillors in the Meadow Working Group and those who are working on the survey will need to coordinate. After lengthy debate it was RESOLVED to progress the management plan for Bobby Wills Meadow on the assumption that the Town Council is correct in its understanding of the land ownership. Further, members also agreed to hold an informal meeting on Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7pm to discuss the next steps.

Action: Cllr Platts and the Clerk to compile the background information.

13. Correspondence (for information only)

- 14.1 Proposals to create new unitary authorities in Gloucestershire.
- 14.2 Changes to Local Policing in Gloucestershire.
- 14.3 Cotswold District Council is holding a Climate Emergency Action Planning Conference on 10th October 2020. Cllr Ogden and Peter Mills have agreed to attend on behalf of the Town Council.
- 14.4 Cotswold Fosseway Lions is organising a community litter pick on Saturday 17th October 2020. They will meet at the Westwoods at 9:45 for 10am start.

14. Items for Future Meetings

No new agenda items were requested.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday 21st October 2020 at 7pm.

16. Closed session

It was RESOLVED to exclude the press and public pursuant to s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the business.

17. Men in Sheds

Cllr Platts left the meeting for the next item and Cllr Hulcup took the chair.

Council discussed the heads of terms for the lease with Cotswold Friends for the 'Men in Sheds' modular buildings at the Westwoods Community Centre and agreed to offer:

- A two-year term, contracted out of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.
- Utility costs recovered as a service charge annually rather than through the rent. Cotswold Friends has indicated that they could install an electricity meter if usage is thought to be excessive.
- Access to the toilets at mutual, pre-agreed times so that the access does not impact on the safeguarding requirements of other users in the centre, such as children's clubs.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Surrey Hills Solicitors to draft the lease at an estimated cost of £1,500 ex VAT and authorise the Town Clerk to progress the lease in accordance with the agreed terms above.

Cllr Platts was invited back into the meeting.

18. Staff Matters

- 18.1 The draft volunteer agreement was detailed in the agenda pack. It was RESOLVED to adopt the volunteer agreement with the Town Clerk.
- 18.2 Council acknowledged the 2.75% salary increase in the National Pay Agreement for staff employed on Local Government pay scales, effective from April 2020. Back pay has been processed with September's payroll. It was RESOLVED to approve the extra day of annual leave entitlement for staff with less than five years' service.
- 18.3 It was RESOLVED to approve the Town Clerk's attendance at the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) National Conference at a cost of £25 ex VAT.
- 18.4 The Town Clerk provided an update on staff working arrangements during the pandemic and steps being taken to make the workplace Covid Secure

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:55 pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____

Payments schedule for 16 September 2020

Regular payments

Date	Supplier	Service	Method	Amount	Authority
31-Jul	Google Ireland	Gsuite and domain	DD	£ 12.60	LGA 1972 s111
31-Jul	Mainstream Digital	Line rental	DD	£ 43.90	LGA 1972 s111
31-Jul	Grundon	Commercial Waste	DD	£ 56.77	LGA 1972 s133
21-Aug	Zen Internet	Broadband	DD	£ 32.40	LGA 1972 s111
31-Aug	Mainstream Digital	Call charges	DD	£ 1.03	LGA 1972 s111
31-Aug	Grundon	Commercial Waste	DD	£ 43.72	LGA 1972 s133
31-Aug	Google Ireland	Gsuite	DD	£ 4.60	LGA 1972 s111
09-Sep	Thames Water	Water @ Westwoods	DD	£ 23.00	LGA 1972 s133
28-Sep	Staff costs	September salaries	SO	£ 2,489.18	LGA 1972 s112
	Subtotal			£ 2,707.20	

Pending payments

Date	Supplier	Service	Method	Amount	Authority
12-Aug	ICO	Data protection fee	DD	£ 35.00	DPA 2018
26-Aug	Viking	Stationery etc.		£ 36.64	LGA 1972 s111
31-Aug	McCracken & Son	Grounds maintenance		£ 1,345.20	OSA 1906 s10
01-Sep	CIA Fire & Security	Security alarm annual charge		£ 84.74	LGA 1972 s133
03-Sep	Brian Brazington	Meadow clearance		£ 300.00	OSA 1906 s10
04-Sep	Fenland Leisure	Cableway cover		£ 52.32	LG(MP)A 1976 s19
04-Sep	Central Tree Services	Branches in Cemetery		£ 144.00	OSA 1906 s10
04-Sep	Post Office	Stamps	Cash	£ 12.36	LGA 1972 s111
04-Sep	Rob Platts	Zoom subscription		£ 14.39	LGA 1972 s111
	Subtotal			£ 2,024.65	

TOTAL PAYMENTS

£ 4,731.85