



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the General Management Committee held on **Tuesday 19th November 2013** at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber.

Present:

Cllr Harvey (Chair)

Cllr Pestell (Vice Chair)

Cllr Lewer

Cllr Proctor

Cllr Cook

Cllr Hicks

In attendance:

Ms Nicola Duke (Town Clerk)

Mrs Barbara Carter (Project Officer)

Cllrs Tippins, Pritchard, Dibben and Clinch

DCllrs Beer and Jeffery

14 members of the public

01. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

02. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations to participate

a) Cllr Cook declared a pecuniary interest in any matter relating to the Shaftesbury Children's Centre as his wife was employed by that organisation.

b) No dispensation requests not previously considered had been received by the Town Clerk.

03. Open Forum

Mr Dominic Goddard – spoke to the Committee regarding the Shaftesbury Children's Centre, outlining the plans for the creation of a Community Interest Company to take the facility forward and seeking the Council's support.

Christina Oates – stated that it was not clear who the members of the Committee were and it was **AGREED** to provide name cards for future meetings of the Council and its Committees.

ACTION: Acting Committee Services Officer

Cllr Steve – asked why Cllr Tippins was present at the Council table. The Chairman confirmed that it was because he was due to speak to a number of agenda items and stated any Councillor in attendance was welcome to join the table.

Christina Oates – asked for an update on the grit bins requested at St James. The Chairman confirmed that they had been ordered and the grounds team had identified a location for one of them. Ms Oates queried how she could obtain such updates more readily and the Chairman recommended that direct contact was made with the office.

DCllr Beer – stated he was in attendance in support of the agenda item relating to the Football Club. The Chairman confirmed he would be invited to join the table at the appropriate point in the meeting.

Mr Skevington – spoke regarding the agenda item relating to the Football Club stating that the Tennis Club were interested in taking the clubhouse over to provide table tennis facilities.

Mr Nigel Cook – stated his alarm at the agenda item for the NDDC Cabinet on 25 November 2013 relating to the transfer of land at the eastern development to the Town Council. He stated that the Town Council had been working on this for ten years and that NDDC had taken a firm decision some years ago to transfer the land to the Town Council. He sought assurance that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be attending the meeting and this was assurance was given.

Cllr Pritchard – spoke in relation to the Children’s Centre highlighting the work being done by residents to save the facility and reporting that Blandford Town Council had stated its support for the work being done in Blandford.

Mrs Clare McCarthy – spoke to the Committee in relation to the Children’s Centre, highlighting the cut in funding was to be £134,000 across three facilities and expressing doubt at the report from DCC that the Shaftesbury centre made a loss of £80,000 per annum. She highlighted the difficulties being experienced in obtaining financial data from DCC and it was **AGREED** that the Town Council would request this data.

ACTION: Project Officer

Cllr Dibben – asked what work the Committee had done in relation to possible asset transfers from DCC. The Chairman reported that this had not been progressed. Cllr Dibben expressed concern over recent developments with the community website, noting that it had been agreed by SDTF that the website would focus purely on the community with other sections not being included. He stated this was in contravention of an agreement made in May 2012 and expressed concern that STC had not been involved in this discussion. Cllr Dibben expressed grave concern at the agenda item for NDDC Cabinet on 25 November relating to the eastern development, highlighting the work which had been done at the Town Council over many years in order to secure the transfer of land and noting dismay at negative comments relating to financial governance at the Town Council, reminding members that the Town Council’s internal and external audits had always returned exemplary reports. Cllr Dibben queried the status of the grounds unit project, asking for it to be noted that the original plans for a new build at Coppice St came at no cost to the ratepayer whilst the alternatives being considered would involve the public purse. Cllr Hicks asked for the build figures to be clarified and the Project Officer confirmed that the quotes for the build had been returned at £150,000 to £160,000 but noted that this was only for the shell and that kitting out costs had been estimated at a further £40,000 to £50,000.

Mr Wareham – raised concerns at the abuse of the pedestrian crossing in Butts Knapp reporting that cars frequently failed to stop for pedestrians and that residents were now averse to using the crossing. The Chairman undertook to raise this at the next PACT meeting and it was also noted that the matter could be referred to the PCC meeting due to take place in Gillingham shortly.

Cllr Hicks – tabled the latest s106 spreadsheet from NDDC and expressed concern that the current status of Town Council projects was not reflected in it. The Town Clerk confirmed that officers had been meeting regularly with Stephen Hill and it was **AGREED** that officers would ensure NDDC information was updated.

ACTION: Project Officer

04. Updates

- a) To report any significant information on matters not included on this agenda or delegated to the Council, a Committee or a working group, such information to be received but not debated
- i. Town Clerk – nothing to report
 - ii. Councillors – Cllr Tippins reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Group had been awarded £7,000 from Locality and a direct support grant to provide consultants in training and project management. He reported that the target was to complete the Neighbourhood Plan within one year. Cllr Tippins further reported on a meeting which had been held with NDDC to discuss the provision of leisure facilities in the town and reported that NDDC was content to consider transferring the swimming pool and the Barton Hill car park to the Town Council. It was **AGREED** to refer this to the Full Council meeting on 26 November 2013 for debate.
- b) To agree any attendances required at meetings additional to those scheduled in the Council's calendar – there were no such attendances required.

05. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

06. Shaftesbury Leisure Facilities – Football and Tennis Clubs

DCllr Beer, Mr Heggie, Mr Coffin, Mr Welch and Mr Nicholson joined the table for the debate. Cllr Pestell gave an update on the meetings which had taken place thus far. He reported that the preferred option was to provide a lease for the Football Club to include the club building and that the Town Council and the Club work together to appoint an operator for the social side of the facilities. It was noted that the building was not in a good state of repair and that considerable investment would be required. The discussion focussed on the length of the lease to be offered with it being noted that the Town Council needed to mitigate any future risk given past failures in the operation of the social club and that the strategic plans for the provision of leisure may require adjustments to any lease arrangements in the future. It was also noted that any investor would require a longer lease in order to ensure they could recoup any investment made. Following debate it was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Harvey and **SECONDED** by Cllr Cook and:

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: That the Town Council offer Shaftesbury Sports Club Ltd a fifteen year lease for the football, training and clubhouse facilities with appropriate five year break clauses and that an operator for the clubhouse be jointly appointed.

07 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Project Officer had submitted advice on the process for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor to the Town Council and members were asked to consider which councillors to appoint to the selection panel. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Lewer, **SECONDED** by Cllr Cook and:

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: That Cllrs Harvey, Pestell and Madgwick are appointed to the selection panel for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor to the Town Council.

08 Local Councils Annual Return for the year to end 31 March 2014

The Town Clerk submitted advice regarding the completion of the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/2014 and members were asked to consider recommending an order for an external audit of the Town Council's governance controls relating to the Park Walk monument in order to develop improvement measures for any weaknesses identified. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Cook, **SECONDED** by Cllr Lewer and:

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL: That the Town Council refer the financial and governance processes undertaken in relation to the erection of the Park Walk monument for external audit.

It was **AGREED** that officers would liaise with the external auditors prior to the Full Council meeting of 26 November 2013 in order to ascertain likely cost and endeavour to obtain any interim advice available.

ACTION: Town Clerk

09 Shaftesbury Community Speedwatch Group

Cllr Tippins submitted a request for the release of £300 to purchase kit for a speed watch at Longcross. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Lewer, **SECONDED** by Cllr Cook and:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council order a speed watch kit for the Shaftesbury Community Speedwatch Group at a cost of £300.
(Policy no 1113/GEM/09) (Statutory provision – Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s 30) (Financial provision – Contingency Fund)

ACTION: Project Officer

10 Grounds Team - capital purchase request

Members had been advised of a request from the Grounds Team for the capital purchase of equipment totalling £12,400. It was noted that this expenditure had been allocated from the commuted sum relating to the eastern development. Members' attention was drawn to the recent correspondence from NDDC advising the Town Council that the transfer of land at the eastern development to the Town Council was to be a Cabinet agenda item on 25 November 2013 and it was therefore **AGREED** to defer this agenda item.

11. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

Information from NDDC in respect of the above scheme had been circulated to members and a debate took place following which it was **AGREED** to write to NDDC stating the Town Council's dismay at the decision to not pass on the Transitional Relief Grant for 2014/2015 to town and parish councils. It was further **AGREED** to refer the Council's concerns to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

ACTION: Town Clerk

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.50 pm.