

MINUTES
of the Full Council
held online on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7pm

Membership:

Cllr Brett (East)	*	Cllr Macfarlane (West)	*
Cllr Davis (East)	*	Cllr Nicklin (West)	*
Cllr Doyle (East)	A	Cllr Pitcher (Broadway)	*
Cllr Fraser (West)	*	Cllr Ridout (West)	*
Cllr Fryer, (Broadway)	*	Cllr Robbins (East) Chairman of Council and Mayor	*
Cllr Jeffries, (Copheap) Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor	*	Cllr Spender (Broadway)	*
Vacancy (Broadway)	*		

Key: * Present A Apologies AB Absent

In attendance:

Officers: Fiona Fox, (Town Clerk and RFO), Tom Dommett, (Assistant Town Clerk), Stuart Legg (Park and Open Spaces Manager), Judith Halls, (Office Manager)

Police: Sgt Kevin Harmsworth

Online Meeting Attendees: 5

FC/20/098 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Doyle

FC/20/099 **Declarations of Interest**
Under the Warminster Town Council's Code of Conduct, issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Cllr Davis declared that as a unitary councillor he would be sitting on the committee which will resolve on the Westbury incinerator. Therefore, to avoid any question of pre-determination, he declared an interest and that he would not take part in the debate on item 15, Westbury incinerator.

FC/20/100 **Minutes**
FC/20/100.1 The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 16th November 2020; and the extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on Monday 14th December 2020; were approved as a true record and signed by the chairman.

FC/20/100.2 There were no matters arising.

FC/20/101 **Chairman's Announcements**

FC/20/101.1 Announcements. The Mayor continues to sell puzzles and games from his shop to raise money for the Mayor's Charity and has raised £200 so far.

FC/20/101.2 The Mayor had been contacted by a young girl who had sold all her Christmas presents over several years, donating the proceeds to the homeless. The Mayor congratulated her.

FC/20/101.3 Mayoral Engagements: It was **Noted** that the Mayor had awarded the winner of the best Christmas Window Competition.

FC/20/102 **Correspondence Circulated**

Correspondence circulated - **Noted**

FC/20/103 **Questions submitted in advance to the Clerk**

Three questions had been submitted by Cllr Pitcher regarding the Budget. It was noted that the Clerk would answer them under item 12, Precept and Budget 2021 – 2022.

FC/20/104 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

FC/20/105 **Reports from Unitary Authority Members and Police**

Sgt Kevin Harmsworth gave an update on police activity in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour issues in Warminster. Of note, the town council and police were working in partnership to address individuals breaking Covid-19 regulations in relation to the skatepark in the Lake Pleasure Grounds. A joint press release had been issued. There is a new police inspector appointed for the area, Inspector Simon Cowdrey. The police ran a successful anti-shop lifting campaign in the run up to Christmas.

Cllr Davis reported back on two planning applications he had been asked to call in:

- The call in for Woodmead still held, although the reason had been changed from the balconies to parking issues. Unless members of Warminster Town Council's Planning Advisory Committee advised him otherwise.
- Cllr Davis would remove the call in on the Old Brewery as revised plans had been submitted that addressed the original concerns.

Cllr Ridout reported that she had 'called in' the planning application for Wren House. She advised she would be attending a draft budget meeting at Wiltshire Council on 19/01/2021

FC/20/106 Proceedings of Committee

Minutes of the following meetings were adopted:

Finance and Audit Committee meeting held on 2nd November

Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on 14th September 2020, 12th October and 14th December 2020 respectively

Parks and Recreation Committee meeting held on 28th September 2020

Town Development Committee meeting held on 19th October 2020

HR Committee meeting held on 5th October and 30th November 2020

FC/20/107 Co-option

Members noted that following the resignation of Mr Paul Batchelor, the clerk had advised Wiltshire Council accordingly, and an official notice of a vacancy which can be filled by co-option had been placed on the council's website and notice board. Enquiries from anyone interested in being co-opted should contact the clerk for further information.

Cllr Davis requested a copy of the council's co-option policy and procedure. The clerk would circulate to all members with the minutes. She advised members that the procedure was a matter of legal process.

FC/20/108 Warminster Town Council: Strategy 2021 – 2026: Vision Statement

Members were given three vision statements to consider and a background report detailing the process which had been followed. The vision statement links with the strategic plan, which had been unanimously agreed by members.

FC/20/070 refers. It was confirmed that a short strapline would be generated from the full vision statement.

Members unanimously agreed the vision statement:

“Warminster Town Council - community and council in partnership, building a vibrant and flourishing town, proud of its heritage, delivering quality services today while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow. Actively embracing a brighter, greener future for all in Warminster”.

FC/20/109 Precept and Budget 2021 – 2022

The Clerk responded to the questions submitted to her by Cllr Pitcher:

If the Full Council accepts the Finance and Audit Committee recommendation, what would be the result if (as expected) Wiltshire Council stops providing some of its current services to Warminster?

The clerk reminded members this had been set out in her presentation to the Finance and Audit Committee on 2nd November 2020, to which all members had been encouraged to attend. The original draft budget had set out a contingency to cover all the services expected to be devolved from Wiltshire Council. If that contingency was reduced, then Warminster Town Council may have to reduce the number of services it can provide.

Does the Full Council have to accept the Finance and Audit Committee's recommendation?

The clerk responded, no, by law only the Full Council can set the budget and precept for the council. This cannot be delegated to a committee.

Please can you remind me/summarise the 3 proposals?

The Clerk shared a slide setting out the three proposals considered by the Finance and Audit Committee.

PRECEPT INCREASE	% INCREASE	BAND D INCREASE	GENERAL RESERVSE SHORTFALL	NEW PRECEPT
£184,833	15.66%	16.18% £31.02/ANNUM 59P/WEEK	£44,395	£1,365,499
£134,933	11.43%	11.92% £22.86/ANNUM 44P/WEEK	£31,895	£1,315,599
£94,933	8.04%	8.52% £16.34/ANNUM 31P/WEEK	£21,895	£1,275,599

Cllr Macfarlane requested a named and recorded vote.

Cllr Davis proposed that members approve the 2021 – 2022 budget; and a precept of £1,275,599, an 8.04% increase on the current year (8.52% band D adjusted). The weekly band D equivalent will therefore increase by 31p per week with an overall increase on the precept of £94,933, in order to maintain a balanced budget. Seconded Cllr Ridout.

Cllr Nicklin proposed an amendment to Cllr Davis proposal: that the proposal before us ignores our statutory financial obligations that we must keep 3 months general reserves and our accountant has told us we would have a shortfall and that there is no forward plan built into the proposal. Seconded Cllr Fraser.

Members held a keen debate and of note:

- COVID-19 and the financial impact this was having on the Warminster community was acknowledged
- Only a few months ago, WTC signed up to take on new services, assets and responsibilities, which included reducing our environmental impact and a commitment to building a stronger and healthy community. The services were being well received and valued by members of the community and moving forward, the budget would be required to take on further services from Wiltshire, for example fly tipping, therefore a higher precept was necessary
- Adhering to statutory requirements was essential to avoid problems in the future. The council had made challenging and inspirational decisions, but we were now looking to apply the brakes which would mean greater increases in the future.

Members then moved to vote on the amendment.

Voting in favour for the amendment: Cllrs Brett, Fraser, Jeffries, Nicklin and Pitcher.

Voting Against the amendment Cllrs Davis, Fryer, Macfarlane, Ridout, Robbins and Spender.

The amendment was defeated (5 votes in favour 6 against). Not carried

Members then moved to vote on Cllr Davis' proposal.

Voting in favour Cllrs Brett, Davis, Fryer, Macfarlane, Pitcher, Ridout, Robbins and Spender

Voting against Cllrs Fraser, Jeffries, Nicklin.

The Motion was carried (8 votes in favour 3 against).

FC/20/110 AGAR: Conclusion of Annual Return 2019 – 2020

Members noted the successful conclusion of the annual return for the year ended 31st March 2020, with no matters of concern raised by the external auditor.

FC/20/111 Interim Internal Audit

Members noted the Internal Audit Report 2020-2021 interim update and instructed officers to implement its recommendation that members need to review the overall risk assessment each year, the next being 22nd March 2021.

FC/20/112 Westbury Incinerator

Members resolved that the Mayor would contact Westbury Town Council to express Warminster Town Council's support for Westbury Town Council as expressed in previous correspondence.

FC/20/113 Appointments to Committees

Following the recent resignation from the council of Mr Paul Batchelor and the resignations from several committees by Cllrs Ridout and Spender respectively, members resolved on the following appointments to committees:

Finance and Audit Committee: Cllrs Brett, Fraser and Jefferies

Parks and Recreation Committee: Cllr Fraser

Environmental Services Committee: Cllr Davis

Town Development Committee: Cllr Nicklin, who already attends the meeting as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

FC/20/114 Communications.

Members asked for press releases on the precept and budget with Cllr Robbins as spokesperson.

Meeting closed at 20.33pm