

MINUTES
of the Full Council
held online on Monday 22nd March 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)	*
Cllr Keeble (Broadway)	*		

Key: * Present A Apologies AB Absent

In attendance:

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

Police: PC Victoria Howick

Online Meeting Attendees: 3

FC/20/121 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Doyle.

FC/20/122 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received under the Warminster Town Council's Code of Conduct, issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

FC/20/123 Minutes

FC/20/123.1 The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 18th January 2021; and the extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on Monday 22nd February 2021; were approved as a true record and signed by the chairman.

FC/20/123.2 There were no matters arising.

FC/20/124 Chairman's Announcements

FC/20/124.1 Cllr Robbins advised members that the fund raising for his charities was going well. He thanked everyone for their donations.

FC/20/124.2 Mayoral Engagements: It was **Noted** that due to the Covid pandemic there had been no engagements.

FC/20/125 **Correspondence Circulated**
Correspondence circulated - **Noted**

FC/20/126 **Questions submitted in advance to the Clerk**
Cllr Davis had asked several questions in advance of the meeting. These were answered by the Assistant Town Clerk. The questions and answers are set out below.

At the last Full Council meeting Cllr Davis made a statement that was minuted, He believed that the policy and procedure of the Town Council was flawed, to that end he would like to have discussed and addressed in public the answers to 3 questions.

Q1. At the time of Cllr Batchelor's resignation did Warminster Town Council have a co-option policy and procedure which had been agreed by all councillors?

Answer: Yes.

Q2. Where did the policy that Warminster Town Council followed come from? (and how did it address posting of notice, and the form the applicants applied on?)

Answer: The Policy is derived from legislation that sets out the process Councils must follow. The posting of notice is a Wiltshire Council function, so that was done by them, and the form the applicants fill in was from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Q3. In the policy procedure provided by the clerk, it states that the Full Council should decide whether to co-opt. Please can you show the minute where this discussion took place with Full Council?

Answer: The Minute is FC/20/107 from January 2021, Full Council meeting, Monday 18th January 2021

Q4. Also may I make a request that this co-option policy and procedure be discussed by the full council in the very near future? (as we may need it again after the May Elections), possibly at an HR meeting or Full Council.

Answer: Yes, it makes sense to look at the policy as there has not been a co-option for many years and to consider if there are any improvements that might be made to the process.

Cllr Davis asked a further question relating to an HR Committee Minute. HR/20/054.2: Code of Conduct: the clerk flagged to members that the Code of Conduct for England was under review at a national and local level and that the code impacts on staff wellbeing.

Warminster Town Council had two documents; The Elected Members Code of Conduct and the Member-Officer Protocol, which had been sent to members prior to the meeting. The clerk strongly suggested to members that parts of these documents should be synergized to provide a comprehensive new code for Warminster Town Council. Members agreed that the code served to remind them of the professionalism and integrity required by elected councillors and of the need to be respectful, courteous, and grateful to officers as well as to each other. It was agreed that the draft code should include that elected members attending a council event would be there as members, and therefore covered by the code.

Members were pleased that this had been brought before them and would receive the draft code at their April meeting.

Q5. Why was this item discussed as a part 2 item ?

Answer: Town Councils do not have part 2 items. On the general point, of why the item was in confidential session, that was because it contained data protection and privacy issues.

FC/20/127 To Authorise the Sealing of Documents and Agreements

FC/20/127.1 S106 Side Agreement – Fairview House, Gipsy Lane, Warminster, relating to indoor recreation facilities in Warminster, Wiltshire. This agreement was between Wiltshire Council and Warminster Town Council IKEN:130185. The contribution amount £9,659. Members were advised that this contribution had to be purposed to upgrade the existing boat house, and/or replace the existing kiosk for use as a base from which to offer tennis coaching, hire of tennis rackets and booking tennis courts at the Lake Pleasure Grounds.

Members unanimously resolved that the S106 Side Agreement be duly executed as a deed and authorised, Cllrs Fraser and Nicklin to sign.

FC/20/127.2 Defibrillator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In March 2017, Warminster Town Council entered into a four-year MOU with the South Western Ambulance Service (SWAS) NHS Foundation for the supply, servicing and user training of the defibrillator installed outside the Civic Centre. Members were advised that the device was well placed within the town and it had been used over the past four years, including by officers at the Civic Centre when it was required as a precautionary measure. The MOU was now due for renewal at a cost of £1800+VAT. It was reported that the service, expertise and training provided by the SWAS had been excellent.

Members unanimously resolved that Warminster Town Council enter into another four-year MOU for the defibrillator at cost of £1.800+VAT.

Standing orders were suspended at 7.24pm

FC/20/128 Public Participation

Len Turner sent in the following statement which Cllr Robbins read out during public participation.

“At this the last scheduled meeting in the current Town Council cycle, I want to record my thanks to Councillors and Officers for your efforts on behalf of Warminster and its people over the last 4 years.

Serving the community can be very challenging. As elected members you have given freely of your time, receiving little thanks and increasingly having to face hostility. Several of you have put in so much more than should reasonably be expected of a councillor.

Some of you will not be returning in May either by choice or by the will of the electorate – thank you for what you have given to the town, and I am sure you will continue to be actively involved in the community. To those who are seeking re-election thank you for being prepared to give yet more of your time, in what I hope will be contested elections that provide voters with a wide choice of credible candidates.

You will all be aware that I do not share your party-political affiliation, far from it, but I appreciate and respect the way in which you have all been willing to meet with and work alongside those who share your ambition to achieve the best for our town.

No-one can point the finger at Warminster Town Council members or officers and say that you have only been serving your own self-interests. Right or wrong in the decisions you have made, you have only acted with the best of intentions. If only that could be said of other areas of political power and influence. You end your term having accepted from Wiltshire Council increased responsibilities for service delivery, added new facilities such as the Skate Park, and maintained the responsible management of the finances.

None of this could have been achieved without the day-to-day administration of the Council and the delivery of services. For this I want to thank Council officers particularly those whose roles are public facing, for your patience, forbearance and courtesy.”

Standing orders were reinstated at 7.24pm

FC/20/129 Reports from Unitary Authority Members and Police

Acting Sergeant PC Victoria Howick advised members that Sergeant Kevin Harmsworth was on annual leave, so she had stepped into the breach.

Updates included Operation Adamo, which addressed all Covid related issues and patrols were continuing. Details could be accessed on the Wiltshire Police website and Facebook page. During the Covid pandemic, people were isolated

and lonely and spending more time online. This is something extremist organisations were trying to take advantage of. In response to this a safeguarding website has been established by counter terrorist policing teams to offer advice and guidance. Members were advised that a “I report it prevent” app for IOS and Android devices was coming out soon, and that it could be used for reporting terrorist related concerns. “Act Early” is a new campaign where the public can report concerns as they emerge, not wait until the problem escalates. The Wiltshire Police website now has an improved process for reporting issues. There have been a few teething problems with this change, but these are being addressed.

Cllr Robbins thanked Acting Sergeant PC Victoria Howick for her report and as there were no further question, she left the meeting.

There were no reports from Unitary members, Cllrs Davis and Ridout.

FC/20/130 Proceedings of Committee

Minutes of the following meetings were adopted:

Finance and Audit Committee meeting held on 4th January 2021

Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on 11th January 2021, and 15th February 2021 respectively,

Parks and Recreation Committee meeting held on 23rd November 2020

Town Development Committee meeting held on 7th December 2020

HR Committee meeting held on 21st December 2020

FC/20/131 Referrals from Finance and Audit Committee

The following recommendations have been referred from the Finance and Audit Committee for members approval:

FC/20/131.1 *FA/20/079 refers: Community Hub Building*

Members had received a background report covering this item. Cllr Nicklin informed councillors that the lease for the hub, which was built in 1992 by the West Wilts District Council and was now owned by Wiltshire Council, came to the Warminster and Villages Development Trust (WVDT), in 2005. Since then, the building had been used as an information centre and shared with Cornerstones. However, it had now become less active, and the directors of the WVDT were looking to release the 25 year lease and were interested in joining with Warminster Town Council in registering the building as a community asset, via the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process and request a transfer of the freehold to the town council. A member added that the building was well built, but noted that it required updating, including improved access. Cllr Nicklin confirmed that if the CAT did not happen the WVDT would continue with the lease, however, its life may be limited.

Members unanimously approved the recommendation from Finance and Audit that Warminster Town Council approach Wiltshire Council with a view to taking over the Community Hub Building and to merge our business.

FC/20/131.2 FA/20/080 refers: Police Station

A background report had been received by members with their agenda. The police station on Station Road, was currently for sale, an offer had been received 'subject to contract'. It was noted that if Warminster Town Council were to register the police station under the Asset of Community Value (ACV) process, it would give the council time to consider the finances in relation to a purchase. Members noted their disappointment that despite meetings with the police over the past four years regarding the regeneration programme, at which the future of the police station was discussed, the council had not been given a timely opportunity to respond to the sale. In addition, a member noted that Warminster Town Council had followed the correct committee procedures, and in doing so, had been thwarted. Members added that Town Development, the referring committee, had been concerned over the cost of such a purchase and that if Warminster Town Council were serious purchasers, how would this be funded. It was explained that if a property is registered under ACV, it cannot be sold, by law, for six months, thus giving interest community groups time to ascertain the value of the site and then to explore the financial implications. Registering an ACV would be the first step.

Members unanimously approved the recommendation from Finance and Audit that Warminster Town Council approach Wiltshire Council with an Asset of Community Value request.

FC/20/132 Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026

The vision and strategic plan had already been adopted by the council: **FC/20/108** and **FC/20/070** respectively. The vision had been unanimously resolved as follows:

“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”.

**The three options for the strap line were discussed and members unanimously agreed to:
Warminster Town Council delivering a brighter, greener future for all /
Delivering a brighter, greener future for Warminster.**

The Strategic Plan document 2021 – 2026 is now completed and officers can begin work on the tactical delivery plans for the same period.

FC/20/133 Committee Structure and Calendar of meetings for the Municipal Year 2021–22

FC/20/133.1 The Environmental Services Committee was established last year to oversee service devolution from Wiltshire Council. Delays in this process has resulted in the committee not meeting for most of the council year. In addition, it had become apparent that budget overlap, and the committee having an interest in areas already under the remit of the Parks and Recreation Committee had resulted in confusion and double workload.

Members unanimously approved that with effect from the new municipal year, the Environmental Services Committee would be disbanded, and its areas of responsibility transferred to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

FC/20/133.2 Committee names should describe the work that they do and their areas of responsibility. Members were advised that the Parks and Recreation Committee now oversaw more than the park and recreation areas, it included, for example, the public conveniences and areas of open space other than those used for recreation.

Members unanimously approved that with effect from the new municipal year, the Parks and Recreation Committee would be re-named the Parks and Estates Committee.

FC/20/133.3 Cllr Nicklin proposed approval of the meetings calendar for municipal year 2021 – 2022, seconded Cllr Brett, Voting in favour 11, Against Nil, Abstention 1. Motion carried.

FC/20/134 **Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

The chairman had asked members to confirm if they had any changes or recommendations for the Terms of Reference and Delegation of Powers to Committee, or to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, that would be put to the 17 May 2021 Annual Meeting of the Council, prior to the reprinting of the documents.

Members were reminded that some Standing Orders are compulsory as they are laid down in Acts of Parliament.

Members had a lengthy debate regarding the Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Members requested that the amendments to Standing Orders be deferred and for a working group be established to go through all the documents and report back to the Full Council at the meeting due to be held Monday 17th May 2021.

The members for the working group would be Cllrs Davis, Fraser, Fryer and Macfarlane.

FC/20/135 **Annual Risk Assessments 2020-2021**

Throughout the year the officers produced regular risk assessments using the Local Council Risk System (LCRS), from which the reports were presented to members of the HR Committee under its Terms of Reference. To comply with the Warminster Town Council annual governance statement, the council must receive an annual risk assessment summary report, which demonstrates that it has carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and that, where necessary, it took appropriate steps to manage these via an action plan.

Members unanimously approved the annual risk report and resolved to adopt the action plan.

**FC/20/136 Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA):
Consultation of draft Community Safety Plan 2021-24**

As a stakeholder Warminster Town Council received details of the DWFRA consultation which runs until 9.00am on the 13 May 2021.

Cllr Jeffries proposed that members view the consultation and resolved the council respond appropriately, seconded Cllr Robbins, Voting in favour 11, Against Nil, Abstention 1. Motion carried.

FC/20/137 Communications.

Members requested for press releases to be issued on the following:
The new strap line for Warminster Town Council, the Community Asset Transfer application for the Community Hub, and the Asset of Community Value application for the Police Station. Cllr Nicklin would be the spokesperson if required.

Confidential session pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; the Council, by resolution, may exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

FC/20/138 Civic Award 2020

Cllr Davis proposed that the Civic Award would not be awarded for 2020 owing to the impact of Covid. The Civic Award process should be reviewed before recommencing later in the year, seconded Cllr Spender, Voting in favour 11, Against Nil, Abstention 1. Motion carried.

Meeting Ended 9.07pm