

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th January 2021

Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7), Councils were unable to meet in person during the COVID emergency. This meeting was therefore held via a Zoom link, with Councillors connecting remotely. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Cllr S Ward (Chairman) Cllr J Roberts (Vice Chairman)
Cllr M Barnes Cllr C Blackmore
Cllr P Godwin Cllr P Mackenzie
Cllr E MacTiernan Cllr G Shelton
Cllr S Terry Cllr T Treacy

In Attendance: County Cllr V Smith, Gloucestershire County Council (until Min Ref: C/10/21)
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

C/01/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Phennah tendered apologies. No further apologies for absence had been received.

C/02/21 Public Participation

- i. **Invitation for Members of the Public to Address the Council** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the meeting should adjourn to allow for any public participation.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Roberts mentioned that he had complained to Great Western Railway (GWR) about litter and overflowing bins at Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Train Station.

Cllr Mackenzie mentioned that he had seen a lot of complaints on Facebook regarding dog fouling in the parish. Other Members agreed that it had been particularly bad over the last few weeks. The Clerk confirmed that this matter would be up for discussion at the next General Purposes Committee meeting, the litter picker had also commented how bad it was, especially along The Spine footpath. It was suggested that, during difficult financial times, people might be struggling to afford dog bags and prioritising food over other such purchases. Additionally, more people were buying dogs because of being in lockdown. Members recalled a young resident had put empty plastic bottles full of dog bags around Northway several years before, Cllr Mackenzie offered to try this and see if it made any difference.

Cllr Terry highlighted the issue of depression and anxiety which was being felt by so many during lockdown. She encouraged Members to consider their friends and neighbours' wellbeing during this time and make the time to phone and check in on them.

- ii. **Reconvening of Meeting** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED re-convening of meeting.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/03/21 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mackenzie declared an interest in item 6. ii. (Road Safety (Vehicle Activated Sign)). No further declarations of interest were made as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 11th July 2012 (Minute Ref C/159/12), including paragraph 12(2).

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/04/21 Previous Minutes

Cllr Shelton PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting that took place on 9th December 2021 should be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR:	Cllr Shelton	Cllr Terry
	Cllr Barnes	Cllr Blackmore
	Cllr Godwin	Cllr MacTiernan
	Cllr Roberts	Cllr Treacy
	Cllr Ward	

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Mackenzie

C/05/21 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes/Clerks Report

C/236/20 Roads & Road Safety – Gloucestershire Constabulary had confirmed that, if there was a specific area in the parish that needed targeting a request could be submitted for attendance and use of the new speed gun (LTI TruCam II). However, this would need to go through the Neighbourhood Policing Team supervisors as there might be a need to 'bid' for staff who were trained to operate the speed gun.

It was noted that there was also the option of re-placement of the SDR box and use of the older style guns for enforcement purposes.

C/236/20 Roads & Road Safety – A further letter had been forwarded to the Porsche dealership and the Clerk read their response, which confirmed they would avoid The Park.

C/239/30 Planning Committee – A copy of the report from Tewkesbury Borough Council Town and Parish Seminar 'Planning for the Future' had been forwarded to all Members.

C/244/20 Garden Town Subgroup with Ashchurch Rural Parish Council and Northway Parish Council – A letter had been forwarded to Mr Davies, Ashchurch Rural Parish Council, as agreed. The Clerk advised that a Garden Town meeting scheduled to take place that day had been postponed.

C/245/20 WaterPlus – Severn Trent would be attending the Community Hub grounds on 8th February 2021 to replace the water meter.

C/248/20 Christmas in Northway – Members received positive feedback from parents whose children had received letters from Santa.

C/251/20 Correspondence for Action (GAPTC) – Cllr Treacy had been booked on to the 'Being A Better Councillor' course scheduled to take place in March 2021.

C/06/21 Roads & Road Safety

- i. **Issues of Concern** – Members had been forwarded details of an upcoming road closure along Northway Lane for carriage resurfacing on the nights of 2nd and 3rd February 2021.

Cllr Terry asked whether there had been any update on the proposed walkabout with Gloucestershire County Council's Local Highways Manager (LHM) and County Cllr Smith (Min Ref: C/212/20 refers). The Clerk did not anticipate this taking place until after restrictions had been lifted.

Cllr Ward mentioned that he had noticed several potholes which he would be reporting. Cllr Mackenzie added that there were some bad potholes along Grange Road.

- ii. **Vehicle Activated Sign** – The Clerk reported that County Cllr Smith and the Local Highways Manager had not been successful in their attempt to get policy changed to allow installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) in the area (Min Ref: C/236/20 refers). However, the Local Highways Manager had suggested that the Parish Council had a walkabout with the local improvements team to look at other options.

C/06/21 **Roads & Road Safety** (continued)

Cllr Ward wondered whether the Council would be permitted to place a VAS on its own land and suggested that the Clerk made enquiries as to this.

Cllr Roberts thanked County Cllr Smith for trying to push this through and PROPOSED that the Council arranged a walkabout with the local improvements team. Cllr Mackenzie SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllrs Ward, Barnes, Shelton and Mackenzie wished to attend the walkabout.

- iii. **Gloucestershire County Council** - Temporary Closure of U48009 Grange Road (Northway and Ashchurch Parishes) 31 January 2021 – 1 February 2021 (overnight).

C/07/21 **County Councillor Report**

County Cllr Smith referred to Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) (Min Ref: C/06/21 (ii.) refers) and how he and the Local Highways Manager had been unable to get the policy changed to allow one to be sited in the parish. He pointed out that Northway Parish Council had £5,000 funding saved over which could be put towards something else and, after lockdown had ended, alternative options could be discussed with the road safety team, as agreed above.

County Cllr Smith had forwarded reports to the Clerk for circulation to Members, these gave updates on the following: - Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)'s COVID-19 response, its emergency response to flooding over the festive period, the budget, the Environment Overview Scrutiny Committee, the Exemplary Work of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue being recognised by the Minister and new electric highways vans that had joined the fleet.

County Cllr Smith announced that LED street lighting was currently being installed at the Ashchurch Train Station car park. Also, as raised under Min Ref: c/06/21 (i), Northway Lane resurfacing works were now in the programme and dates had been confirmed.

County Cllr Smith mentioned that GCC was due to meet with Severn Trent about the problem of drains backing up flooding over in heavy rainfall. The Clerk was asked to forward details of any areas in Northway that had flooded, possibly because of Severn Trent's drains, he would then pass the information on. He also asked the Parish Council to let him know if the Kestrel Way pumping station had shut down in the flooding. Cllr Ward mentioned that a house in Tug Wilson Close had been flooded, he assumed was a result of the drains backing up.

County Cllr Smith wanted the Parish Council to also let him know of any gullies silted up following the floods as these could be added to the programme for clearance. Cllr Ward reported that drains on the approach to Northway Lane motorway bridge were blocked up. County Cllr Smith asked the Clerk to forward details of this to him via email.

In relation to M5 Junction 9 proposals which had been put on hold (Min Ref: C/238/21 refers), GCC and Highways England were due to meet the following week to see if they could resolve the issues and move things on to the consultation stage. County Cllr Smith said that Highways England would need to give assurance that the existing junction could stay open. If they were not able to consult and move forward he felt that plans for a Garden Town were no more than a concept. With regard to the Ashchurch/Northway bridge, County Cllr Smith believed that the Environment Agency had blocked the application but this should now be going to the Planning Committee in February.

As part of the Travel-By-Cycle scheme, a new cycle route had been identified between Tewkesbury and Bishops Cleeve (linking the Newtown cycle track by Tewkesbury school and running through Ashchurch homestead along the bridleway to Bishops Cleeve). County Cllr Smith offered to supply the Parish Council with drawings once he had access to a photocopier.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/07/21 County Councillor Report (continued)

Cllr Roberts commented on how much better it looked at the back of the old railway line in Tewkesbury after overgrowth had been cut back.

County Cllr Smith said and resident had informed him that the footpath from Ashchurch Train Station to the A46 was overgrown and, if this was correct, would the Clerk email him and ask for it to be cut back, along with any other footpaths that needed addressing. Cllr Roberts mentioned that the footpath running from the Junction 9 roundabout onto Ashchurch Business Centre was very overgrown.

C/08/21 Planning Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting that took place on 16th December 2020.

C/09/21 General Purposes Committee

Members received the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 16th December 2020.

C/10/21 Finance Committee

Members received the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 11th January 2021.

7:30 p.m. - County Cllr Smith left the meeting.

C/11/21 Financial Requirements (Budget) for the Year 2021/2022

The Clerk reminded Members that the various Committees had put together their anticipated financial budget requirements for 2021/2022 which was reviewed by the Finance Committee and, once anticipated income had been included, resulted in a figure of £187,700.00 (Min Ref: FIN/07/21 refers) Members received a recommendation from the Finance Committee that they approve this figure. Cllr Ward PROPOSED approval.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/12/21 Precept Requirement for the year 2021 /2022

The Finance Committee had considered two options relating to the precept:

Option 1 – A precept of £196,700 which would equate to an increase of 5.99% (although it would show as 7.50% on a domestic rate bill due to the drop in tax base). This option would allow for £19,000 to be placed in the Rolling Capital Programme rather than the budgeted £10,000.00.

Option 2 – A precept of £187,700, an increase of 1.14% (showing as 2.58% on a domestic rate bill) This option allowed for £10,000.00 to be placed in the Rolling Capital Programme. It was noted that the Accountant had recommended that, if agreeing on this option, the Council should try and place at least £19,000 into the Capital Rolling Programme the following year. Additionally, there could be a year-end surplus of approximately £20,000.00 which he would recommend moving into the Rolling Capital Programme.

Members considered the recommendation from the Finance Committee to agree upon option 2, as well as the Accountant's advice regarding the year-end surplus. Cllr Godwin PROPOSED approval. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/13/21 Borough Councillor Report

Cllr Godwin reported that:

- Tewkesbury Borough Council was still issuing grants to businesses affected by COVID-19.
- Tewkesbury Hospital Minor Injuries had closed.
- Residents could still recycle their Christmas trees up until 24th January 2021.
- It was likely that the planning application relating to the Ashchurch/Northway bridge would be considered by the Planning Committee in February.

Cllr Ward asked if the Borough Council was responsible for Wingmoor Farm Recycling Centre, but it was believed to be the County Council. Cllr Ward commented on how well organised it had been when he went there.

C/14/21 Council Accounts

- i. **Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association (GPFA)** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED that payment of £100 towards annual GPFA Membership was ratified.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Schedule of Bills** – Members received the schedule of bills paid and cheques for payment totalling £10,753.11.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the accounts for payment be approved. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/15/21 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- i. **National Lockdown** – The Clerk had emailed Members regarding ongoing use of the Community Hub for AA meetings (which were still permitted to take place during lockdown). The group had been coming in on a weekly basis, as normal. The responses the Clerk had received agreed that the group should continue to meet at the Hub.
- ii. **COVID Grant** – The Clerk reminded Members that there was still approximately £600 remaining in one of the COVID grants that Tewkesbury Borough Council had awarded the Parish (Min Ref: C/249/20 refers). Members considered the idea of using the funds towards mentoring children/young people in Northway (an organisation called WAM did this in the area, as well as CMAS). Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Clerk should bring more information about this to the next Full Council meeting so that it could be further considered. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/16/21 Young Gloucestershire

The Clerk updated Members on correspondence with Young Gloucestershire regarding their work in the parish – specifically at the Playing Field and Saxon Park Play Area. Initially, they had approached the Council to see if there was a sports hall/safe space it could offer use of and they were put in touch with the Youth Club Trustees. Young Gloucestershire had not received a reply from the Trustees, however, they said that they no longer had the capacity to require a sports hall. Cllr Terry felt that Young Gloucestershire should be liaising with the Parish Council about the work it did in Northway.

Cllr Ward mentioned that he had not seen any advertising of the Northway Youth Club for a long time. Cllr Godwin explained that it had been stopping and starting (as permitted) between lockdowns with some workshops running as well but they were having to follow the rules with numbers. When they were allowed to meet again, they would be re-advertising the sessions.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

C/17/21 Parish Assembly

The Clerk confirmed that many Council's would be having their Parish Assembly meetings via Zoom, she asked if Members were happy to proceed with one for Northway and they confirmed they were.

Members were asked to consider anyone they would like to nominate for a Community Award. Cllr Ward mentioned a local parent who had offered to supply children's worksheets to other families, free of charge. Cllr Terry said that she believed there had been a fee in exchange for the worksheets, Cllr Ward said that he would make enquiries. The Community Hub volunteer gardeners had been very loyal in their roles.

It was AGREED that this matter should be considered again at the next Full Council meeting, by which time Members might have more suggestions.

C/18/21 Crime & Disorder

It was noted that the teenage shelter on The Park had been vandalised with obscene graffiti.

Members reported seeing more Police in Northway recently and even two on horseback. Cllr Roberts said that it had come down from Central Government that an increased presence was necessary due to the pandemic. Cllr Barnes remarked how good it was to see this in Northway and PROPOSED that the Council should write and thank Gloucestershire Constabulary for thinking of Northway and ask that the parish be considered again for patrols in the future. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/19/21 Correspondence for Action

- i. **Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)** – Cllrs Blackmore and Treacy had been booked to attend a Being a Better Councillor course in April 2021. The Clerk mentioned that there was also a Finance for Councillors course taking place on 8th June 2021, if any Members were interested in attending.
- ii. **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner** – Members went through and completed a survey on 'Safe & Social Roads'. Cllr Barnes PROPOSED that the Council's responses were submitted. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

C/20/21 Correspondence for Information

- i. **Gloucestershire County Council** – 'Council launches consultation on budget for the future'.
- ii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council**
 - a. Details of £4m fund being launched in January 2021 'Community groups tackling loneliness'.
 - b. '100th community grant provides festive cheer'.
- iii. **Society of Local Council Clerks** – Agenda for meeting that took place on 17th December 2020.

C/21/21 Correspondence received after 7th January 2021

- i. **Clerks and Councils Direct** – Magazine
- ii. **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council** – Details about community buildings network.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 8:38 p.m.