



Glastonbury Town Council

Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 8th September 2020 at 7pm

PRESENT: Councillors S Barnet, L Browne, J Coles, N Cottle, J Cousins, S Henderson, J Keery, P Lund, L MacDougall, I Mutch, C Prior, S Roney-Dougal M Smyth and I Tucker

APOLOGIES: Cllr Outten

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor Simon Pickering, County Councillors Leyshon and Napper, Town Clerk and ten members of the public

This meeting was held through electronic means due to the Covid-19 lockdown

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING

Subjects raised included:

- The safety of the High Street with regards to social distancing, traffic fumes and density with a suggestion that Sunday's become a 'traffic free' day.
- Pedestrianisation of the High Street.

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declared interests: Cllrs Barnet and Cousins declared an interest in item 15c as they have both had previous involvement with ACE Energy.

93. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM CLLR SIMON CARSWELL REGARDING TOR LEISURE FIELD

Cllr Carswell is the Portfolio with Mendip District Council with responsibilities for Assets and Leisure facilities. Numerous organisations who use the Tor Leisure facilities were invited to submit questions to Cllr Carswell prior to the meeting which were addressed. They included:

1. There has been much talk of a significant investment by Fusion in the Tor Leisure facilities. Now that the Fields in Trust Deed of Dedication has completed, when might we expect to see this investment taking place and what is planned to be delivered?

Fusion have made a significant investment of £3.8m in leisure facilities in Mendip. Further investments outside of the terms of their lease are unlikely, particularly in the short-term. The Town Deal Fund should be considered an opportunity to address the large investments required to enhance the Tor Leisure facilities.

2. The appearance of the site is an embarrassment. Please can Mendip DC encourage Fusion Lifestyle can carry out a few simple maintenance tasks eg fence repairs and clearing rubbish?

Fusion have been working with a skeleton staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many staff have either been made redundant or furloughed, creating a shortfall in available staff to maintain the

site. Cllr Carswell offered to engage with Fusion and share with them the concerns raised in anticipation of a site clearance programme being implemented.

3. The 4th Glastonbury Scouts were discussing a new lease with Fusion, but this has all gone quiet. There were differences about the ownership of the scout hall (build and paid for by the Scout group). How best do we progress? Who at Mendip should we engage with?

In the first instance, the Scouts are encouraged to contact Rob Taylor from Fusion. In the event that he cannot be contacted, Cllr Carswell offered to engage with him and encourage a conversation with the Scouts over the lease of their premises.

4. Fusion Lifestyle's lease with MDC is "full repairing and insuring". Are MDC comfortable that Fusion Lifestyle has complied with this contractual obligation?

Cllr Carswell informed that as far as Mendip District Council are concerned, Fusion have met all of the obligations required of them within the current lease.

5. Naturally there are also some Health and Safety concerns. In MDC's November 2017 SWAP audit of Fusion Lifestyle it was identified that "there is risk of reputational damage to the Council by association, should a serious incident occur". Has MDC assured itself, through site visits or otherwise, that Fusion is complying with Health and Safety legislation?

Ultimately, as the leaseholder, responsibilities for Health and Safety are with Fusion. Mendip DC are comfortable that Fusion have the necessary risk assessments and insurance policies in place and are managing the site in accordance with the requirements of the lease agreement.

6. The Fields In Trust organisation provides guidance on how dual sites (cricket and football) should be managed. Please can you confirm that MDC expects Fusion to run Wirral Park along these guidelines?

There is an expectation that the Tor Leisure facilities will provide for numerous sports, including both football and cricket.

7. It is a requirement for a Council to have a 'Playing Pitch Strategy'. Does MDC have such a document? If not, when will this be put in place?

Mendip DC recognise the need to produce an evidence based analysis of playing pitch requirements across the district. This strategy is to be commissioned once the tender document has been prepared.

8. Should Fusion's not conform with the District Councils requirements, would MDC consider the lead shown by Lewisham Borough Council last month when they terminated their Fusion contract early?

Fusion have a lease with Mendip DC, not a contract which is different than the Lewisham example. It is most unlikely that Mendip will look to revoke the agreement with Fusion, particularly as at this time, there is not a queue of organisations looking to manage leisure facilities of the sort at Tor Leisure.

Subsequently, Cllr Carswell answered questions on the lack of investment in the three tennis courts, the absence of a detailed business plan for Tor Leisure facilities, the need for an audit of all users of the facilities provided. A supplementary statement was made regarding the cost of using Strode swimming pool.

94. TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSE FROM SOMERSET COUNTY HIGHWAYS REGARDING TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT ISSUES PREVIOUSLY RAISED.

The clerk was asked at the previous meeting of the council to summon Beverly Norman to respond to traffic and transport related issues. The invitation to attend was declined. When extended to SCC Cllr Woodman the portfolio for Traffic and Transport, this was also declined. However, he did respond to the numerous questions which had been previously sent which are detailed as:

- *Why the installation of 20mph signage throughout Glastonbury has not been delivered three years after the necessary approval was obtained?*
The 20mph limit was received as an SiS request in 2017/8 and there was every intention to deliver the scheme by the end of 2019. Unfortunately, this was delayed due to resource issues and then again due to the COVID situation. The scheme is quite advanced and officers now need to work out terminal sign post positions on-site after which we can progress the TRO. I understand that Jeff Bunting has contacted you to arrange a site meeting to agree these locations.
- *Why the safe crossing point at the junction of Bere Lane and Chilkwell Street has not been delivered, despite the Town Council pledging £10,000 towards the cost of the scheme and the road having been closed twice for major works.*
The task order for the Chilkwell Street scheme has been issued to our contractor and they are mobilising for autumn construction. Whilst the pledge of funding shows commitment from the Town Council it doesn't accelerate the programme. The SIS team still had to go through the optioneering, consultation, design, safety audit process to get the scheme ready.
- *Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council requested the installation of a one-way system to assist with social distancing measures following the partial lifting of coronavirus restrictions. This request was ignored with the Highways Authority choosing to install a total road closure (with the exception of deliveries and buses). Why was the request ignored?*
As you are aware these Active Travel schemes were delivered at significant pace however this is not our understanding; we believe that the Town council were divided on whether to have a road closure or a one way system in place on High Street and support was given by yourselves for the road closure option. I understand the Town Council were in regular dialogue with both Mendip DC and SCC officers.
- *Through subsequent discussions and fund raising challenges, the Town Council identified a source of funding to pay for the alterations to the road closure programme to allow for the installation of a one-way system. The decision was still taken to lift the road closure in its entirety. Why was the Town ignored with this request?*
Again this is not our understanding. SCC made it clear that we did not have the funding to deliver an alternative one-way scheme and therefore funding would

need to be sought from elsewhere. As far as we were aware no additional funding was found and therefore the discussions ceased. Officers were not aware of a Town Council commitment to fund a new scheme, but are more than happy to further consider the options if this is the case.

- *How is it feasible during the coronavirus pandemic that there are now no measures in place in Glastonbury as directed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the safety of residents, visitors and retailers?*
This is not unique to Glastonbury, SCC funded measures with the budget we have available to us which was extremely limited. There are many locations across the County and indeed Country where no such measures were implemented.
- *Why was it allowed for a large gathering of unauthorised encampments to be parked on double yellow lines at Stonedown, near the base of the Tor without being ticketed by NSL for parking infringements?*
NSL staff were present at the Tor on a daily basis during the Solstice period but their powers are limited and it was deemed unsafe to issue penalties to such a large gathering without Police support. There were at least 40 vehicles, 100 plus people (including an impromptu camp site on National Trust land at the base of the Tor), many of whom were intoxicated. NSL continue to patrol this area on a regular basis moving vehicles on and issuing PCNs (as was the case today), but with smaller numbers present this is manageable.
- *Why, when closing Bere Lane and Chilkwell Street was traffic – including HGV's directed down the High Street and Benedict Street causing enormous problems for residents and pedestrians, rather than being directed down Wells Road to the Glastonbury by-pass?*
Local traffic was diverted along High Street and Magdelene Street because there was no access to the town centre from the Fishers Hill end of Magdelene Street due to the closure on Street Road and Fishers Hill. However it is possible that larger vehicles used this route and of course delivery vehicles to the town centre would have had no choice but to do so. With hindsight officers do believe that better signage could have been deployed to try and reduce the number of vehicles seeking access. It is also worth noting that High Street, Magdelene Street and Benedict Street would have been an attractive rat run to avoid the longer diversion in place and there is very little we could do to manage this.

Additional dialogue:

- Your response to my question: *Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council requested the installation of a one-way system to assist with social distancing measures following the partial lifting of coronavirus restrictions. This*

request was ignored with the Highways Authority choosing to install a total road closure (with the exception of deliveries and buses). Why was the request ignored?

As you are aware these Active Travel schemes were delivered at significant pace however this is not our understanding; we believe that the Town council were divided on whether to have a road closure or a one way system in place on High Street and support was given by yourselves for the road closure option. I understand the Town Council were in regular dialogue with both Mendip DC and SCC officers.

Sadly your Officers have misinformed you. There was united support from all Councillors and the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce for the introduction of a one way system. Indeed, from the outset we were to understand that a one way system was to have been installed, yet on arrival to the town on the first day of the closure, shocked to see a total closure. On that day, we frantically had to negotiate with NSL, your staff and First to allow the buses access. Without doubt, our request for a one way system was ignored by the Highways Authority.

- *There is another question which the town councils request has been misunderstood - Through subsequent discussions and fund raising challenges, the Town Council identified a source of funding to pay for the alterations to the road closure programme to allow for the installation of a one-way system. The decision was still taken to lift the road closure in its entirety. Why was the Town ignored with this request?*

Again this is not our understanding. SCC made it clear that we did not have the funding to deliver an alternative one-way scheme and therefore funding would need to be sought from elsewhere. As far as we were aware no additional funding was found and therefore the discussions ceased. Officers were not aware of a Town Council commitment to fund a new scheme, but are more than happy to further consider the options if this is the case.

The Carnival Club quoted £9,000 to change the signage from a total closure to a one way system. This was debated on the Tuesday evening at Full Council and clarification that Mendip DC would make a significant contribution towards this cost. The town council agreed to fund the shortfall after I had explored all avenues of financial assistance. On the Thursday, I was informed that the road closure was being lifted. The only option I was able to consider, was the provision of appropriately trained town council staff to man the barriers, which at a moments notice I was unable to commit to. The funding to change to a one way system was found and the carnival club were working towards making the required changes. Locally, we consider that Highways identified a pending issue with the closure of Bere Lane, Fishers Hill and Street Road and decided to lift the High Street closure to enable the movement of vehicles.

For the record, Glastonbury Town Council continues to feel that the Highways Authority have ignored their requests for the introduction of a one way system and are particularly frustrated that no one from County Highways is willing to be accountable for the actions taken.

95. TO RECEIVE A WRITTEN POLICE REPORT

A written report has been received from PC Karen Moyse and has been distributed to all councillors and placed on the councils website. A question on the number of unauthorised encampments recorded met a response that these have risen from 82 in February to 112 in

August. A concern was expressed that Pomparles Bridge is now exposed as only one vehicle remains with plenty of access to park additional vans between the rocks. The Neighbourhood Portfolio Cllr Nick Cottle is to share this concern with Officers. A debate on the issue of unauthorised encampments on Bretenoux Road identified a number of concerns, with restrictions of solutions equally aired. A request for additional attendance by councillors to the monthly discussion with the beat team was discussed and the clerk is to liaise with the police.

Action - Town Clerk

96. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20th AUGUST 2020

The minutes of the August 20th meeting of the Town Council were approved as a correct record.

97. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATION 2020/1289/PIP RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF BETWEEN 4 AND 8 DWELLINGS ON LAND AT THE ROMAN WAY, GLASTONBURY BA6 8AD

Glastonbury Town Council deferred a decision on this application as it is considered there is insufficient information available to the Town Council allowing for a meaningful debate. With the exception of a location plan, no further information is available and it is understood that neighbours have not been consulted. This was **RESOLVED** 7-5-2

Response from the Planning Officer: *Due to the fact that this is a planning in principle application, not a normal planning application, there is no further information besides the site plan and the amount of development, and legally, I cannot ask for anymore. The application has been submitted correctly under the Planning in Principle Regulations 2017. The direct neighbours were consulted. The only consultation requirement under the Regulations is a 14 day site notice, so we have gone over and above that.*

98. TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF:

- a. The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18th August were presented by the Chair, Cllr Browne and approved by the Council
- b. The minutes of the Property and Assets Committee meeting held on 24th August were presented by the Chair, Cllr Keery and approved by the council. *Cllr Keery informed that it is intended to research opportunities for the provision of affordable housing on land owned by the council and suggested that the next meeting of Property and Assets would include this item.* **Action – Town Clerk**

99. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A CARBON AUDIT REPORT FROM CLS CONSULTANCY WITH A RECOMMENDATION TO COMMIT FUNDS TO ENABLE AND AUDIT TO BE CONDUCTED

The clerk informed that a motion was agreed in February 2019 that *'In light of the Intergovernmental Panel on Global Warming's 2018 special report on Climate Change - warning of dire consequences of a 1.5 degree rise in global temperatures and highlighting the need for rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society – this council declares a Climate Emergency and will : **Pledge to make the operation of Glastonbury Town Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions..***

Due to the pandemic, the employment of a Climate Resilience Officer has been delayed and the opportunity to employ a consultant to undertake the study and produce the carbon footprint analysis, together with an action plan for the Town Council to consider has been explored. CLS Consultancy have a track record of working with councils and have suggested a fee of £1,700 plus VAT to undertake this work.

In response Councillors felt that the assessment of the Town Councils carbon footprint was best conducted 'in house' on the employment of a Climate Resilience Officer. Proposed by Cllr Roney-Dougal, seconded by Cllr Henderson and unanimously **AGREED** not to pursue this approach and to decline the services of CLS Consultancy. 14-0-0.

100. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Napper raised a number of issues which included the continuance of fly-tipping and unauthorised encampments. The County Council continues to have lower than average incidences of coronavirus, yet should not be complacent. The One Somerset debate continues with the business case document having been approved and now submitted to the Secretary of State and is awaiting a response.

Cllr Leyshon reported that Jonathon Smith the district Councils Housing Officer will be encouraged to liaise with Cllr Outten to ensure the opportunities that are being considered from both parties are fully understood. She added that the cost of building social housing is no cheaper than conventional open market properties and that the added value comes in the affordability of the land.

101. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr MacDougal has presented a written report which was previously circulated and placed on the Town Council website. Of particular note is a £1m fund available through Somerset County Council to support projects which address climate change. A community weeding programme has been created where residents are encouraged to keep clear weeds in the vicinity of their own properties. A tree planting programme is also being promoted.

Cllr Henderson informed that he has not attended any meetings and has nothing to report.

Cllr Cottle informed that he was unable to attend the last Living Spaces meeting. He informed that the Tor Fair had been discussed at Cabinet and had been permitted to proceed on the understanding that the required risk assessments and safety measures had met with the approval of District Council Officers. It was confirmed that Tor Fair will be in Glastonbury this year commencing on Monday 14th September.

Cllr Cousins has submitted a written report which had been previously circulated. The availability of Section 106 funds for the provision of play equipment is to be pursued..

102. TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The clerk was asked to acknowledge the input of the Responsible Financial Officer in the preparation of the budget monitoring report. On having answered a few questions the report was accepted and approved.

103. TO RECEIVE THE SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Payments raised no questions and was approved

104. GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Grants – general

Glastonbury Brass held a conversation with the Town Clerk and indicated that a shortfall in income was causing an issue with their cash-flow. The clerk encouraged the submission of a grant application which has not been received. This item was therefore deferred with an expectation that the application will be consider by the Finance and General Purposes committee in October.

105. REPORTS FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

a. Housing and Homelessness

The next meeting of this committee will be this Thursday where only Councillors have been invited to attend. The clerk was asked to try and obtain a copy of the Rural Community Councils report commissioned by the Living Spaces panel for wider circulation

b. Glastonbury in Bloom

This committee has recently met and is seeking tenders for the supply of winter/spring plants. In addition the Terms of Reference had been reviewed and now reflects better the requirements of this committee.

c. Climate Emergency

Having recently met, this committee and are considering the introduction of a zero carbon concept. The introduction of solar panels on industrial buildings is considered a project worthy of consideration as a Towns Fund project and will be further explored.

d. World Heritage

Consultation with the National Trust and Glastonbury Abbey will explore the level of interest in pursuing an application for Glastonbury to be considered as a World Heritage location.

106. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

a. Citizens Advice

Cllr Smyth informed that the provision of funds to support the Citizens Advice service needs to be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Action – Town Clerk

b. Town Deal Fund

Cllr Tucker informed that the Town Deal Board has met and the support of various projects is currently being considered by the Secretary of State. Meanwhile a call for projects that could be considered as part of the £24.5m funding are encouraged. Postcard size information will be ready for distribution from later this week. Projects of £1m or more are encouraged and smaller projects will be assessed to determine if they can be clustered together.

107. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A paper previously circulated was referred to. The main items are the opening of the Community Fridge at the Town Hall and the contribution made towards the work of the Bridging the Gap food banks.

108. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr MacDougall informed that the Community Speedwatch was looking for volunteers to assist with the delivery of their service.

The clerk informed that the base for the defibrillator is to be installed at the Tor this week.

109. CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk read an acknowledgement card from Zoe Price, daughter of Denny Michell thanking councillors for their kind wishes and attendance at her funeral.

110. NEWS RELEASES

It was noted that news releases would be prepared for the speedwatch volunteers, Bridging the Gap food bank contribution, the encouragement of people to involve with local weeding www.mendip.gov.uk/communityweeding and the second wave of Town Fund applications.

111. ACTIONS

All the required actions have been identified and noted throughout these minutes.

The meeting close at 10.30pm.

Signed _____

Worshipful Mayor
13th October 2020