

## CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL meeting held remotely on Monday 29 March 2021 at 6.45 p.m.

### PRESENT

Cllrs. K. Head (Chairman), C. Aslett, M. Best, B. Hodgson, R. Pailthorpe, J. Roberts, J. Roundell Greene and D. Wakeman.

#### In Attendance

The Clerk P. Davidson, Deputy Clerk L. Gowers and approximately 13 members of the public (via Zoom and YouTube).

### 200 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

20/21

Apologies were received from Cllrs. R. Cottle (personal) and A. Stuart (personal).

### 201 OPEN FORUM

20/21

- The Chair of Trustees of A Better Crewkerne and District (ABCD) spoke about the letter that ABCD had sent to the Council regarding the proposed pathway and benches at Henhayes. She pointed out that the group had initially proposed a perimeter path, but now put forward the proposal for segments of pathway and associated benches, as detailed in the ABCD letter. She emphasised that such a pathway would benefit both able-bodied and disabled users, and she was sure that the path would be well used and bring huge benefits to the community.

The Chairman proceeded to read out three emails from members of the public who had written to the Council with points which they wished to be raised in Open Forum.

- Email 1: request for an update on the progress of the application to SSDC to take ownership of the paved area of land in front of the Town Hall. The Chairman added that this question would be covered in the Clerk's report.
- Email 2: why are the pathways and cycleways on the CLR southern phase only "single shared" and not "segregated"? The Clerk added that he had forwarded this question to the Planning and Highways Chairman and Deputy Clerk, so that it could be considered at the next Planning and Highways Committee meeting.
- Email 3: A question regarding the agreement from SSDC that they would supply two extra dog bins for Crewkerne, and the Town Council's position regarding their location. It was agreed that this matter would be brought to a Planning and Highways meeting for consideration.

### 202 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

20/21

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 22 February 2021 be **APPROVED**.

203     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

20/21     on items on the agenda

Cllr. Head declared a personal interest in agenda item 7e (donation to Crewkerne Community Church).

204     **TO RECEIVE VERBAL REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT**  
20/21     **COUNCILLORS**

County

County Cllr. Best reported on the following:

Schools reform: the County Council Cabinet had voted through the changes to the schools system in the Crewkerne and Ilminster area.

East Street gullies: Highways had assessed the gullies on East Street and confirmed that there was a blockage, which would be addressed by the Highways CCTV and jetting teams. Highways had also agreed that the gullies on East Street would be assessed on an annual basis rather than 4 yearly as currently.

Covid: in South Somerset, the covid hotspots were Yeovil and Chard. There was also concern regarding the local schools, with a number of classes having been sent home due to pupils and/or teachers testing positive for covid. Cllr. Best was, however, able to report that Somerset was top of the league in terms of administering the covid vaccinations.

District

Cllr. Hodgson noted that the Reserved Matters application had been approved for the southern phase of CLR, and it was hoped that construction would be commencing in the near future.

Cllr. Pailthorpe noted that SSSDC had given the go-ahead to a major improvement programme for the Octagon theatre in Yeovil. Cllr. Best added that this project had attracted £10m of Government funding through the Arts Council.

205     **CLERKS PROGRESS REPORT**

20/21     To receive a report

Climate Emergency fund: the Clerk reported that the Town Council had submitted bids for funding from the County Council's Climate Emergency fund relating to a car sharing scheme and to the introduction of air quality measuring devices in the town centre. Regrettably, the Town Council had not be successful in either of these funding bids.

Ongoing actions: the Clerk summarised the status of the open actions from previous Full Council meetings:

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
Feb 2021	Cllr. Stuart had pointed out that one of the units on the Cropmead industrial estate contained large amounts of unsightly litter and had asked that this be followed up.	Cllr. Pailthorpe had visited the site but had been unable to ascertain ownership. He had asked that Land Registry records be checked.
Feb 2021	Cllr. Aslett had reported that he had received correspondence from a resident regarding the	As the land in question was not registered, it had been difficult to

	land at Westover View which was in a very unsightly state. He had asked whether the Council could send a polite letter to the owner, requesting that the land be tidied up.	ascertain ownership. The Deputy Clerk reported that, despite this, she had now successfully established who owned the land and a letter had been written.
Jan 2021	The Council had agreed that the Annual Town Meeting of Electors should be rescheduled for September, but also agreed that public opinion should be sought through the newsletter on this.	Newsletter had been issued, asking for comments on the proposed rescheduling of the Annual Town Meeting of Electors to September. No feedback received to date.
Jan 2021	Councillor surgeries: Cllr. Aslett had noted that, since the onset of the covid pandemic, Councillor surgeries and the “coffee with your Councillor” events had been cancelled. He suggested that there might be merit in re-introducing Councillor surgery sessions as zoom meetings. Councillors agreed that this idea had merit and the Clerk was asked to add an article in the forthcoming newsletter, to elicit public opinion on this suggestion.	Newsletter issued, asking for feedback on the suggestion of holding Councillor surgery sessions as zoom meetings. No feedback received to date.
Sept 2020	Waiting list for Council allotments: Councillors had discussed the piece of land behind De Combe House which had formerly been allotment land. Agreed that enquiries should be made with the landowner, regarding the feasibility of resurrecting this land for use as allotments.	Enquiries made to The Education Foundation via Wadham School Governors. The Deputy Clerk reported that the Governors were not against the idea in principle but asked that further discussions be put on hold whilst the pandemic was ongoing.
July 2020	Cllr. Aslett had reported that the current “no dogs” signage at the entrances to the Barn Street recreation ground was totally ineffective. He had suggested that the Council investigate the option of instigating a Public Space Protection Order, in order to make the “no dogs” restriction more effective. Agreed that PSPO option should be investigated further and Cllr. Aslett kindly agreed to seek more detail.	No progress to date.
June 2020	AGREED that the Council should proceed with a CAT application to SSSDC, to take ownership of the paved area of land in front of the Town Hall and that the application should also include the parking bays.	CAT application submitted to SSSDC in Sept 2020. Response still awaited. Deputy Clerk to chase SSSDC.

206  
20/21

## **FINANCE**

- a) To approve the accounts for payment for March 2021 as listed

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Pailthorpe had verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulations and Risk Management.

**Accounts for payment for March 2021, in the sum of £43,095.69 + VAT were APPROVED.**

- b) To report the bank reconciliation for February 2021 has been completed

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Pailthorpe had verified the bank reconciliation for February 2021. It was noted that cash in hand as of 28 February was £245,000.14.

- c) Asset Register: to note the status of the Town Council Asset Register

Noted.

- d) Youth Service: to agree the proposed cost for provision of the Youth Service for 2021/22

Cllr. Best expressed concern about the youth service starting again at the GRC and the potential for spreading of coronavirus, and asked for reassurance about the covid secure measures that were being put in place. In response, Cllr. Pailthorpe noted that ALS took very seriously their responsibilities regarding establishing appropriate procedures and staff training to ensure that the youth service was covid secure.

After further discussion, it was **AGREED to approve the charges for provision of the youth service through ALS for 2021/22, of £16,367.**

- e) Donation to Crewkerne Community Church: to consider granting a donation to Crewkerne Community Church in support of the "Be a Good Neighbour" scheme

Cllr. Head reported that, since March 2020, the Crewkerne Community Church had carried out:

- 3,800 welfare weekly phone calls
- 840 prescription collections/deliveries
- 3,115 shopping trips for residents
- 4,240 cooked meals prepared
- 60 plus weekly visits to the food bank

and had incurred a total expenditure of £15,420. Income was from grants and donations.

After discussion, it was **AGREED to provide Crewkerne Community Church with a donation of £2,000, subject to funds being available within the budget.**

- f) Grant application: to consider the grant application received from Crewkerne Ranger Football Club and, by association, their request to site a second storage container on Henhayes

After discussion, it was **AGREED to approve grant funding of £530 to Crewkerne Rangers football club in support of their purchase of a storage container.** It was also **AGREED that this container could be positioned on Henhayes alongside the existing storage containers.**

- g) Victoria Hall hire charges: to agree hire charges for Victoria Hall for 2021

After discussion, it was **AGREED that the charges for use of Victoria Hall would remain unchanged for the time being, with a review to be held in 6 months' time.**

207 **FACE-TO-FACE COUNCIL MEETINGS**

20/21 To note that the regulation allowing remote council meetings is due to lapse on 7 May and to consider the proposals to mitigate against this eventuality

After discussion it was **AGREED** that the Council would mitigate against the fact that the legislation allowing remote Council meetings was due to lapse on 7 May, by taking the following steps:

- **Pull forward the Annual Town Council meeting to Tuesday 4 May.**
- **At that meeting, adopt Clerk's delegated authority for decision making, to enable Council business to continue.**
- **Informal Council meetings to continue as scheduled beyond 7 May on zoom and broadcast on YouTube for as long as necessary, using the Clerk's delegated authority to enable Council business to be enacted.**

Councillors agreed that, even when covid restrictions were eased to the point where face-to-face Council meetings could re-commence, the Council should look to continue streaming the meetings.

208 **OWNERSHIP OF SEVERALLS WAR MEMORIAL**

20/21 To further consider the South Somerset District Council's proposal for change of ownership of the Several War Memorial

Cllr. Aslett argued that SSDC's proposal that only the war memorial be transferred to Town Council ownership was unacceptable. In response, Cllr. Best suggested that the Town Council should take ownership of the war memorial now and renegotiate with SSDC for ownership of the oval piece of land. Cllr. Hodgson pointed out that taking ownership of all of the elements of land at Severalls currently owned by SSDC would have cost implications for the Town Council going forwards

After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that a meeting should be arranged with SSDC to establish a mutually agreeable way forwards.

209 **ABCD PROPOSAL FOR A PATHWAY ON HENHAYES**

20/21 To consider a proposal from ABCD for the construction of a pathway on a section of the perimeter of the Henhayes recreation ground

Cllr. Best pointed out that he and Cllr. Wakeman had held a site meeting recently, which had focussed on constructing a section of pathway by the Aqua Centre, and costs were being sought for this. This therefore represented a part of the ABCD proposal, so all that should be necessary was to cost up a section of pathway running alongside the playground.

Cllr. Wakeman reported that he had held a site meeting with representatives from ABCD and from SSDC, where a plan for a wheelchair-accessible section of pathway was proposed.

Councillors were in full agreement that the ABCD proposal for a section of pathway was a good way to move this project forwards, and it was **AGREED** that detailed costings should be sought.

210 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

20/21 To note that the two proposals for reform of local government in Somerset are now with the Secretary of State, who is holding a consultation on these proposals, and to consider whether the Council should provide a response to this consultation

It was noted that the Town Council had previously endorsed the Stronger Somerset proposal for Local Government reform and it was **AGREED that the Town Council should submit a response to the Secretary of State’s consultation, echoing the Town Council’s position that it supported the Stronger Somerset proposal.**

211 **TO RECEIVE DRAFT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

20/21

a) Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021

Noted.

b) Amenities Committee meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021

Noted.

212 **TO RECEIVE ANY MATTERS OF REPORT**

20/21

- Cllr. Aslett reported that there was a parking issue at the rear of James’s Hardware shop in relation to one of the flats. He understood that Cllr. Pailthorpe had already reported this matter to SSDC.
- Cllr. Pailthorpe reported that the Zwings e-scooters were now operational in the town. Cllr. Best added that over 150 people had signed up to the Zwings app. He reiterated that a driving license was required to hire a scooter. On this point, Cllrs. Wakeman and Aslett reported that they had witnessed someone riding a scooter who appeared to be underage. Cllr. Best asked that Councillors report such instances to Zwing.
- Cllr. Head reported that Crewkerne in Bloom volunteers had met with a member of the grounds staff at the cemetery, as the group were keen to take on the tending of some of the flower beds at the cemetery. Several beds had been identified that could be maintained by the group, and a request would be submitted to the Burial Committee.

213 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

20/21

With the decision to re-schedule the Annual Town Council meeting to early May, it was **AGREED that the Full Council meeting scheduled for 26 April would be cancelled, making the date of the next meeting of the Full Council as 4 May 2021.**

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:** .....

**It was AGREED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it was advisable that the public and press be excluded and were instructed to withdraw.**

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION – STAFFING MATTERS**

214 STAFFING COMMITTEE

20/21 To receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 22 February 2021

Noted.

The meeting closed at 7.56 p.m.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

DRAFT