

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

19:45, 15th February 2018, Village Hall

Present:-

Chairman - Mr A Wilkinson

Mr A Cartman (from 20:30)

Mr C Cave

Ms G Collins

Ms S Hardingham

Ms L Lansley

Mr N Moorcroft

Mrs J Pullin

Mr M Semple

Miss M Uppington

Absent:-

Mr A Batt

Mr M E Harris

Ms S Hughes

Dr P Jackson

Mr A Johnson

Mr D Johnson

Mrs B Mackwood

Mr S McQuillan

Mr I Scoones

Mr R Sterland

Mr J Thomas

In attendance - The Clerk, Dr JE Turp and 3 members of the public.

C.18.33 - Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jackson, McQuillan, Sterland and Harris. Cllr Cartman apologised that he would be late.

C.18.34 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

Interests to be declared during the meeting and no dispensations had been requested.

C.18.35 - To discuss and agree the Parish Council response to the announcement that North Somerset Council (NSC) intends to close Long Ashton Library.

The draft budget approved by NSC's executive on Tuesday included closure of Long Ashton Library and also a reconfiguration of the Children's Centre. The Clerk had received details of the cost of the Library Service in Long Ashton and the plans for the Children's Centre from Mandy Bishop, Assistant Director (Operations), Development & Environment and these had been circulated to Councillors together with a briefing note from ALCA describing how PCs can be involved in the running of a Library Service. The information from NSC confirmed that the library is well used but the costs of operating from the present location very high. Closure of the library would not be immediate and consultation would be undertaken about the plans. The present proposal from NSC is that the mobile library would visit twice a week. However, Cllrs made the point that Long Ashton is a large village and that this would be unlikely to be sufficient to meet the village's needs. The decision on the Budget is due to be taken by NSC on the 20th February. It was thought that it would be useful to have a PC representative address the meeting about the library closure and it was agreed that Cllr Mrs Pullin was best qualified to do this.

Although Cllr Cave had alerted the PC to the possibility of the library closing Cllrs expressed their dismay at not being informed or consulted about the planned closure of the library. It was noted that if the PC had been informed earlier it could have made financial provision within its 2018/19 budget to support the service in some way. The history of library provision in Long Ashton and the action taken when the library was previously threatened with closure was described.

It was agreed that the main objective would be to prevent the closure of the Library at its present site, however, if that was not possible it was agreed that the PC should look at finding another space, probably on the LACA site from where library services could operate. It was noted that NSC would still have to provide some support, hopefully in

the form of staff and continuing access to the Libraries West service, including stock and stock rotation and provision of the self-service facility they were planning for the library. In an ideal world the NSC would delay the closing of the existing facility so the transition would be seamless. It was noted that Congresbury Library, with an annual budget of £5000, is run by volunteers, but that these are not always easy to find in Long Ashton. If staff were needed to be made redundant then NSC would have to do that. It was agreed that if a new building was to be provided it should be a joint project with LACA, the PC and the community and any plans should be consulted on.

Given the costs Councillors agreed that it was unlikely that the PC could support the library in its current location.

If and when the Library closed an immediate priority would have to be to provide continued access to computers for those without the facility at home.

The PC was also concerned about changes to the Children's Centre and it was agreed that Cllr Mrs Pullin would ask about its present usage at the next Partnership Group meeting.

It was agreed that the following actions would be taken

A strongly worded letter would be sent to the CEO of NSC expressing the PC views on the suggested closure.

Cllr Mrs Pullin to attend the NSC budget meeting if she could.

Cllr Mrs Pullin to investigate the cost of a modular building.

The issue to be discussed again at the next meeting of full Council.

Date of next meeting: Monday 19th March 2018

Meeting closed: 20:50