

# LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL COUNCIL MEETING



19:30 – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Held remotely via video conferencing

Present: Mr D Johnson (Chairman)

Ms L Anderson

Ms S Barnes

Mr A Cartman

Mr C Cave

Ms C Fagg

Ms S Hardingham

Mr P Jackson

Mr C James

Ms L Lansley

Mr S McQuillan

Ms R McAllister Kemp

Ms C Sellars

Mr T Weir

Mr A Wilkinson

Absent:

Mr M Harris

Mr A Johnson

Mr O Lloyd-Jones

In attendance - The Clerk, Dr Janet Turp, Assistant Clerk, Tracy Warren (minutes) and one member of the public (from 20:00)

Public Participation – there were no representations.

C20.042 - Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Harris and Lloyd-Jones.

C20.043 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

Interests to be declared during the meeting and no dispensations were requested. It was noted that those Cllrs who were volunteers for the Coronavirus Support Network required no dispensation, there being no pecuniary interest.

C20.044 - Exclusion of the press and public

There were no matters necessitating the exclusion of the press and public.

C20.045 - Chairman's remarks

The Chairman thanked Cllrs for attending the first virtual meeting and the Clerk for keeping the PC running during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the Chairman, Cllrs Jackson and Hardingham and the Clerk have met by videoconferencing and all Cllrs had been consulted by email on matters requiring a decision (as required by the delegation to the clerk). The Chairman praised all those involved in the Coronavirus Support Network for their time and commitment to the community.

C20.046 - Parish Council Minutes

Following amendment to paragraph C20.038(b) - to read "Cllr Anderson attended the Nailsea Dementia Group and noted that whilst the speakers were of merit, the meeting was appropriately attended given the circumstances. A future health event is proposed", it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting of 16th March 2020 (previously

circulated), were a correct record and should be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity. Proposed by Cllr Cave and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

#### C20.047 - The PC and the COVID-19 pandemic

- a) Parish Plan for the 2020's – It was agreed that, given the present circumstances, the timescales in the 'Long Ashton Parish Council Plan 2020 – 2023' should be reviewed by Cllr D. Johnson, following discussion with relevant members of the working groups.
- b) Changes made to legislation relevant to PCs because of the pandemic – it was noted that these include the removal of the requirement for the PC to hold an annual meeting in May 2020, allowing the continuation of the current appointment of Chairman until May 2021, the extension of 'place' to include holding PC meetings remotely with virtual attendance by the press and public, and the extension of the accounting and audit deadlines with the unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return to be published by 31st August 2020. The Clerk will liaise with the internal auditors as to how they wish to proceed.
- c) Standing Orders – These will be reviewed by the Clerk and any necessary changes brought to the next Council meeting for agreement.
- d) To agree how the Parish Council will operate, including meetings, during the current restrictions – The PC agreed to the following:
  - Council and Planning committee meetings are to be held monthly with urgent F&GP and Environment committee matters being discussed at Full Council.
  - Cllrs on the planning committee should look at planning applications prior to the meeting; Cllrs will be allocated to review any applications of significance.
  - Whilst PC meetings are being held remotely, comments during public participation are to be limited to 5 minutes per person and to those items that are on the agenda.
  - Membership of outside bodies and descriptions will be added to the agenda, as necessary.
  - Expenditure by the Clerk to purchase a 'Zoom Pro' licence on behalf of the PC if this is necessary to enable meetings to be held remotely.

It was noted that whilst the PC's priority projects should continue, timescales may need to be adjusted to take account of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was suggested that the cancelled Annual Parish Meeting could be replaced with an on line meeting for residents with a Q&A session.

- e) Staffing arrangements during the current restrictions  
It was RESOLVED to agree to continue to pay the Village Orderlies and the Gardener in full, whilst not carrying out duties during social distancing measures. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and seconded by Cllr Cave. All in favour. It was noted the Clerk will be reimbursed for any expenses incurred working from home and that she has extended delegated authority to make decisions in conjunction with as many other Cllrs as possible.

#### C20.048 - Finance matters

- a) Payment of accounts and Payments to Council – A list of payments and receipts was previously circulated to Cllrs. It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £23,464.70 during February and March and to note receipts at £955.00 over the same period. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr McQuillan. All in favour.
- b) Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation - The bank reconciliation at 31<sup>st</sup> March and summary were previously circulated to all Cllrs. The total amount in all accounts is £573,115.24 including £41,600 in a long-term investment. It was RESOLVED to approve the bimonthly statement and bank reconciliation. Proposed by Cllr Cave and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.
- c) Review of Expenditure against Budget – noted. Cllr Hardingham thanked the Clerk for her work on the budget.

- d) Earmarked Reserves – a draft had been circulated listing suggested Earmarked Reserve levels for the 19/20 year end. This was considered and it was noted that unspent money included in the 19/20 budget for the council projects would be included in earmarked reserves for the projects. It was agreed that the amount in the bund study reserve should be increased to £1500 as per the 19/20 budget. Following discussion it was RESOLVED to agree a total for the EMR at £468,925. Proposed by Cllr Cave and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All in favour. *(Please note that following the meeting a further £250 has been identified that should have been included in the Silver Award reserve bringing that total to £1800 and the EMR total to £469,175)*

It was noted that there are several ongoing maintenance issues in Dawson Walk; Cllr McQuillan agreed he will write to Greenbelt Services on behalf of NSC to follow these up.

- e) Reinvestment of proceeds from maturing Triodos Bond – It was noted that whilst there are accounts with higher interest rates available, it will currently be difficult to set up any new account and therefore it was RESOLVED to agree the Clerk's recommendation that the balance of the Triodos bond maturing on 6th May at just over £75,000, be reinvested in a 6 month bond and reviewed at that date. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Cave. All in favour.
- f) To agree to continue the additional emptying of dog bins during May; it was noted that with increased numbers of walkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the dog bins have required more frequent emptying. It was RESOLVED to continue to ask the contractor to empty all bins twice weekly at an additional cost of approx. £120 per week with a review at the next meeting. Proposed by Cllr Fagg and seconded by Cllr Cave. All in favour.
- g) Interest rate reductions on Nationwide and Triodos accounts and the suspension of the Local Authorities' Property Fund (LAPF) – It was noted that following the Bank of England base rate reductions, interest rates have reduced to 0.6% from 4th April on the 0.45% from 22nd April on Nationwide account and to 0.2% on the Triodos account. It was noted that whilst dividends are still being paid on the LAPF, transactions have been suspended during the current volatile market.

#### C20.049 - Coronavirus Support Network

- a) Update on the LA Coronavirus Support Network - Following the report previously circulated to all Cllrs, it was confirmed the network now has over 150 volunteers including LAPC Cllrs. ID checks are being undertaken, safeguarding and GDPR processes have been agreed and a risk register is being prepared and reviewed. The network is working closely with LAPC and Nailsea Town Council. Following the network's initial community engagement, a robust infrastructure of working and steering groups working with the community and other organisations is now being put into place. The network is in the process of establishing itself as a CIC which will be reviewed for future amendment to a CIO. A booklet is shortly to be produced for distribution to each home and a website is now in place alongside the Facebook page. Following an ID check on volunteers a letter of authorisation from the PC/network will be issued. It was noted that Cllrs Cartman, James and McQuillan are taking part in the 'NS Together' forum sharing best practice weekly with other North Somerset PCs. Cllr D. Johnson has been co-opted onto the ALCA North Somerset committee.
- b) To discuss the operation and membership of the steering group, to agree its terms of reference and to agree that the PC should lead it and to appoint members and a chair to the group - these items were discussed. It was agreed that the steering group would be there to oversee the governance of the network and should include representatives from the network, PC and NS Cllrs and possibly representatives from the two churches. Other stakeholder groups (for example the police or doctors surgery) could be invited but the governance role might not be seen as the best use of their expertise. It was recognised that if a PC Cllr chaired the group the chairperson should not be an active

member of the network. The draft terms of reference were discussed and a modification suggested making it clear that members will be providing rigorous scrutiny.

It was RESOLVED:

- That the PC will join the steering group as a major stakeholder. Proposed by Cllr James and seconded by Cllr Barnes. All in favour.
  - To agree to the modified terms of reference (previously circulated). Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Cartman. All in favour.
  - To appoint Cllrs Anderson, D. Johnson, Weir and Wilkinson to the group. Proposed by Cllr James and seconded by Cllr Hardingham. All in favour.
  - That the PC representative should chair the steering group and that Cllr Wilkinson should be appointed as Chairman of the Long Ashton CoVID-19 steering group. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour. The Chairman thanked Cllr Wilkinson for his agreement to chair this group.
- c) Expenditure to date in support of the network - It was noted that £1968 has been committed to date by the PC including the £1000 float to Nailsea Town Council for the shopping service at Waitrose provided by the network, the pamphlet and hi-vis waistcoats and hand sanitiser for volunteers.
- d) To agree a maximum sum that could be used to support the network and to resolve that expenditure up to this amount to be delegated to the clerk in consultation with the Chairmen of Council and F&GP - It was agreed that the PC wished to support those in difficulty because of the virus and it was noted that it is unable to provide financial support to individuals but can make a grant to the support network. It was noted that PC's could apply for a grant up to £10,000 from Western Power Distribution's (WPD) fund of £500,000 for Coronavirus support and therefore this money would refund the PC's expenditure to the Coronavirus Support Network. It was RESOLVED to
- Give a grant of £7,000 to the Coronavirus Support Network (noting that if the WPD bid was successful this wouldn't be required) with any unspent monies to be returned to the PC. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour.
  - Delegate authority to the Clerk to apply to the WPD fund in consultation with Cllrs Hardingham, Jackson, James, and Weir. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour.
- e) To consider the ALCA email on Parish Councils' response to COVID 19 (previously circulated) and to confirm all aspects are covered particularly whether the PC is aware of any vulnerable group that might not be reached by the support network? – Cllr Jackson reviewed the email and thought that all items raised by ALCA were covered.

#### C20.050 - North Somerset Council response to the COVID -19 restrictions; update

Cllr Cartman gave an update on NSC's initial response and its contingency plans which include:

- NSC Together – coordination of the voluntary groups around NS to support those the government has identified as being at high risk.
- Play areas and recycling centres to remain closed in line with Government advice.
- Care Homes receiving additional financial support and £200,000 of PPE ordered.
- Business grants related to business rate registered companies.
- Council Tax; two months delay in payments for those in financial need
- Precept payment: this has been paid early to PC's.

It was noted that services are operating on a reduced workforce. The Chairman thanked Cllrs Cartman and McQuillan for their support of Long Ashton in their role as NS ward Cllrs.

#### C20.051 - PC priority projects

- a) VES update; the works around Piccolos could soon be agreed and progressed once NS schedule of works allows. A Cllr expressed concern that the recent lowering of the speed humps in Yanley Lane has made them ineffective and money may need to be allocated to the area.
- b) Library update: Cllr Barnes will circulate minutes from the March working group meeting to all Cllrs. Actions to be followed up are currently pending.
- c) Skatepark update – some paperwork can be prepared in advance of getting the soil survey done and tenders prepared.

#### C20.052 - Environment Committee

- a) It was proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Hardingham, that Cllr Fagg be appointed Chairman of the Environment Committee. There were no other nominations. This was unanimously agreed, and Cllr Fagg duly accepted the Office of Chairman.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Cartman, that Cllr James be appointed Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee. There were no other nominations. This was unanimously agreed, and Cllr James duly accepted the Office of Vice Chairman.

#### C20.053 - Any items for information

- a) The deadline for responding to the NALC/Plymouth university questionnaire on Dementia friendly communities has been extended. It was agreed to delegate the response to the Clerk in discussion with Cllr Anderson.
- b) NSC Your Neighbourhood Consultation; the Clerk reminded Cllrs that she was meant to be collating the response to the consultation but that she has had no responses to date. It was agreed that Cllr D. Johnson would draft a response to be circulated to all Cllrs for comment which the clerk would then use to make the PC's response to NSC.

Meeting closed at: 22:00

Date of next meeting; it was agreed to hold the following meetings remotely:

- Planning Committee – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- Council – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020