

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

19:30 – 27th July 2020,

Held remotely by video conferencing



Present: Mr D Johnson (Chairman)

Ms L Anderson

Mr A Cartman

Ms S Hardingham

Mr P Jackson

Ms L Lansley

Ms R McAllister Kemp

Mr S McQuillan

Ms C Sellars

Mr A Wilkinson

Absent:

Ms S Barnes

Mr C Cave

Ms C Fagg

Mr M Harris

Mr C James

Mr A Johnson

Mr O Lloyd-Jones

Mr A Johnson

Mr T Weir

In attendance - The Clerk, Dr Janet Turp, the Assistant Clerk, Tracy Warren (minutes) and Mike Riggall, Parish Liaison Officer, NSC (from 20:43) and two members of the public.

Public Participation - Prior to the formal meeting, time was set aside for public engagement. A resident spoke to inform the PC of the response he had received from the Charity Commission re his complaint about the War Memorial and Churchyard Trust.

C20.087 - Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cave, Fagg, Harris, James, Lloyd-Jones, and Weir.

C20.088 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

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

C20.089 - Exclusion of the press and public

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

C20.090 - Chairman's remarks: none

C20.091 - Parish Council Minutes

Re C20.083 – a member of the public has written to ask that this minute be rewritten as they didn't think the content of the letter mentioned, was expressed fully enough in the minutes. It was agreed that the minutes accurately recorded what was discussed in the meeting and therefore it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting of 22nd June 2020 (previously circulated), were a correct record and should be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity. Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

C20.092 - Matters arising from the minutes for information

- a) C20.079a - Hollis Close road layout; A meeting is being arranged with NSC and other interested parties.
- b) C20.079b – Yanley Lane traffic calming; a meeting is being arranged.
- c) C20.082 - Annual play area inspections – ongoing.
- d) P20.055d - North Somerset Consultation on their Local Plan to 2038 – Cllr Cartman advised that responses to the consultation on the Challenges document are due by 2nd September, prior to the next Council Meeting. It was agreed that the Planning Committee

will submit a response on behalf of the PC following the next Planning Committee meeting on 17th August.

It was agreed to bring forward the 'War Memorial' agenda item.

C20.093 - War Memorial

The report from Cllr Cave (previously circulated) was noted as follows:

"Following concerns being expressed that the Trust may be acting outside its powers, the Trust wrote to the Charity Commission on the 18th of June asking them to review the advice that they had provided. A reply was eventually received by email dated the 17th of July, which was superseded by an email dated the 23rd of July from a senior officer in the casework team. This email acknowledges that the advice previously given was not always clear, helpful or entirely accurate, and apologises for this and the confusion and inconvenience that it has caused. It confirms that, as building a War Memorial is a charitable purpose, money can continue to be raised for this purpose by the separate appeal fund and used to build the Memorial in Long Ashton. In addition the Trustees of the appeal fund can apply to register with the Commission, or if they do not meet the income threshold for registration, can still register with HMRC to access Gift Aid. The email continues with possible, and suggested, ways forward to link the two charities, which was originally suggested by the CC and has been the Trustees aim. We shall continue to work with the CC to achieve this. The full script of the email dated the 23rd of July has been provided to the Clerk, in confidence, the purpose being to ensure that the facts are available to the meeting. Trustees are reticent in making documents available to members of the Parish Council following a document, amongst others given in confidence to three Councillors and the Clerk at a meeting dated the 13th of February 2020, being in the possession of and referred to in a submission by, a resident at the last PC meeting. I regret, given the circumstances, that I am unable to attend this meeting."

The resident's comments in public participation and the War Memorial Trust report were noted and discussed. The Charity Commission (CC) has corresponded with both the Trust in response to a question about their objects and with the resident in response to his formal complaint. The Clerk read out the summary of the CC email to the Trust, explaining what they should now do.

The Chairman was concerned that the Trust believed that the PC had passed on information to a third party and confirmed that all Cllrs present at the meeting on the 13th February had been asked and confirmed they did not pass on any information. He expressed his disappointment that the CC letter to the Trust had not been made available to the PC as this made it difficult to understand the advice the CC were giving to the Trust. He also felt that the PC should have been consulted fully when plans to form the extended trust were being made. In the longer term the PC needs to clarify how it interacts with the bodies it nominates members to and the responsibility of these nominated persons. This is in the Councils plan.

Following further discussion of the matter, it was noted that whilst the PC has agreed that it is happy to support the War Memorial project in principle, in consideration of the correspondence from the CC, it needs to be sure that the governance arrangements of the War Memorial and Churchyard Trust are acceptable to the CC and that all the trustees have been appointed properly.

20:15 - Meeting suspended for a member of the public to speak

20:17 – Meeting reconvened.

It was noted that the member of public agreed to the circulation of the correspondence he has received from the CC to all Cllrs.

It was agreed to contact the Trustees to propose a virtual meeting with the PC, open to members of the public, to discuss the Trusts response to the CC and its plans going forward. Cllrs Anderson, Jackson, D. Johnson and McQuillan expressed interest in attending.

C20.094 - Planning Committee reports

The reports of the Planning Committee of the meetings held on 9th March, 11th May and 15th June (previously circulated) were adopted. Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour

C20.095 - The PC and the COVID-19 pandemic

- a) Update on postcards – Six designs have been printed and are shortly to be delivered with the newsletter. The Chairman thanked Cllr McAllister Kemp for her hard work in producing these.
- b) Update on table tennis table – LACA have responded to the PC's suggestion of a portable table by proposing a permanent table, with associated groundwork at a cost of £2-3,000 as they have a lack of storage and staff availability to put out a table each day. It was agreed that this proposal is unlikely to meet the PC's aims of providing a summer thank you to the parish and would be included in forthcoming discussions with LACA re their finances.
- c) A bid to NSC 'Reopening the High Street' fund has been made on behalf of the PC to include planters to create safe walking areas and banners to promote local shopping.
- d) It was confirmed that there are still problems with parking in Leigh Woods and that the police are carrying out extra patrols.

C20.096 - Coronavirus Support Network

- a) LA Coronavirus support network report (previously circulated) was noted as follows:
"Update on the LA Coronavirus support network.
DWP Shielding List - The support network continues to receive weekly updates from NSC and engages with these residents to understand if support is needed.
Volunteers – The support network now has 160 fully signed up volunteers. Whilst we are seeing some volunteers return to work there is plenty of capacity.
Key Service Delivery - All key services – grocery shopping, medication pick-up and delivery, wellbeing support, financial impact support and dog walking – are up and running. With lockdown starting to ease the support network the demand has reduced a little with regular requests for the services.
Interface with NSC and local Councils - The support network is an active member of the North Somerset Together activity and attends regular meetings. This acts as useful bridge on communication and advice into the team. The support network is also calling on the support of the Ward Councillors. Future Activities With the current support services now well understand and on-going, there are two areas of discussions for future activity, first to recognise the potential for a second wave in the winter and secondly to explore how the support networks activities will be re-shaped post pandemic where it is anticipated that wellbeing and financial impact may become more central.

- b) Update on the Steering Group - The third meeting has been arranged for 6th August.

Cllr Jackson confirmed that the group's services will respond to changes in demand. The bank account has been applied for and a meeting date to sign paperwork with the bank is awaited. The Clerk noted that she will need to write reports on the allocation of grant monies shortly.

The Chairman noted the group is working well and the network is flourishing.

C20.097 - Council matters

- a) To note decisions made by the clerk under delegated authority since 22nd June – The Clerk had made decisions to open play areas, to order banners for the play areas and

thank you postcards to be delivered with the newsletter following consultation with Cllrs. Noted.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her work to keep Parish Council functioning.

20:43 – Mike Riggall, Parish Liaison Officer, NSC joined the meeting

20:45 – one resident left the meeting.

- b) Play area reopening – Prior to the opening a risk assessment was carried out and advice taken from the PC insurers. Inspections are being carried out to check that the rules are being complied with. The Clerk reminded those Cllrs carrying these out to complete a monitoring form which will be useful in the event of an insurance claim.
- c) Long Ashton Infrastructure Delivery Plan Review – this is ongoing. Cllrs Fagg, Hardingham, James and D. Johnson and the Clerk will meet and bring suggestions to the next Council meeting.
- d) Recruitment Working Group; to receive report and to agree recruitment packs contents and timelines – The full report (previously circulated) was noted and contained job descriptions and person specifications for both the Community Engagement officer/Library Coordinator and the Clerk, draft job adverts and suggested salary ranges. The report recommends that the new Clerk's hours should be increased from 32 to 37 hours due to the volume of work, the ambition of council and the supervision of additional staff. Cllrs interested in interviewing or shortlisting of candidates should contact the chair. Cllr McQuillan volunteered to assist in interviewing the Community Engagement / Library Coordinator. It was noted that interviews may need to be carried out online depending on the restrictions in place at the time. It is expected that advertising of the roles, including advertising the clerk's in the Bristol Post will cost approx. £1,500, but was thought necessary given the importance of the roles. The Chairman agreed to consider reviewing the person specification for the Community Engagement officer role to match the format of the clerk's.

It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendations contained in the report namely:

- (1) Council approves the job description (Appendix 1), the person specification (Appendix 2), the salary scale (LC3- SCP 33-36) and working hours (37 per week) for the post of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
- (2) Council approves the job description and the person specification (Appendix 3), the salary scale LC1 substantive (SCP 7-12), and working hours (10 per week) for the Community Engagement Officer / Library Co-ordinator's post. 5
- (3) Council approves the timetable for the recruitment process for both posts, as set out in the report.
- (4) Council approves the recruitment process for both posts, as set out in the report, and that the exact composition of both appointment panels can be agreed at the next meeting of the Council on Monday 7th September.
- (5) Council agrees to delegate the appointment of the Community Engagement Officer / Library Co-ordinator's post to the appointment panel. (The appointment of the Clerk will need to be confirmed by a meeting of the full Council).
- (6) Council agrees to delegate to the Clerk to undertake the advertising and publicity for both posts, as set out in the report, up to a maximum cost of £1,500.
- (7) Council agrees that our existing Clerk, Janet Turp, should work on a consultancy basis once she has left the role of Parish Clerk to ensure an effective handover to the new Clerk, the exact terms to come back to a future meeting of the Council

Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr McQuillan. All in favour. The Chairman thanked those involved in the work completed to date.

- e) Meeting dates 2020 and 2021 – it was agreed to hold an additional Environment Committee meeting on 10th August and to resume scheduled meetings from September

with the date of the October F&GP meeting changed from 19th to the 5th October and that of the November Environment meeting changed from 23rd to 30th November.

- f) Consultation on new code of conduct. – The Local Government Association (LGA) has launched a consultation draft of a new model member code of conduct relating to conduct of members of principal authorities and parish and town councils with a response deadline of 17th August. The draft document together with comments from NALC and SLCC was considered. It was agreed that there was benefit in Parish Councils having the same code as their principal authority. It was agreed that the PC wouldn't make a response but that Cllrs can respond individually to the consultation.
- g) To review the PC's Investment Strategy and to agree any changes – Cllr Hardingham gave a brief explanation of the strategy (previously circulated). It was noted that the current economic climate means that returns are reduced. It was RESOLVED that, following correction of a date, to agree and adopt the proposed Investment Strategy for 2020. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr McQuillan. All in favour.

C20.098 - Finance and related matters

- a) To consider the Internal Auditor's Report and to agree any actions required – The Internal Auditors Report for the year end 31st March 2020 (previously circulated) was reviewed. The only significant comment made by the auditor was that amounts held in some accounts exceeded the level of cover provided under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) of £85,000 and that the risk this presented should be considered by the council. It was noted that given the PC's assets are spread across five institutions, the sums over the limit are a reasonably small percentage of the amounts held, capital expenditure is planned this year and that all the institutions are subject to the Bank Of England stress test, it was considered that the risk was at an acceptable level. It was also noted that opening new accounts is not always straightforward. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that the risk presented by the balances is acceptable. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Cartman. All in favour.
- b) To approve and sign the Annual Accounts for 2019/20 - The Annual Accounts for 2019/2020 (previously circulated) were reviewed. Cllr Hardingham noted that, when one off expenditure is excluded the general reserves of £85,000 are at around 6 months expenditure which would allow the PC to continue operations in the event of unexpected expenditure or delays in receiving the precept and meets the PC aim of reserves of 6 months Net Revenue Expenditure. It was RESOLVED to approve the accounts for 2019/2020 to be signed by the chairman and chairman of F&GP when possible. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Sellars. All in favour.
- c) To approve and sign the accounting statements in section 2 of the 2019/20 Annual Return. Following consideration of the statements it was RESOLVED to approve the accounting statements in section 2 of the 2019/20 Annual Return. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour. The accounting statements were signed by the Chairman. Cllr Hardingham and the Chairman thanked the Clerk for her work on the accounts and annual return noting the difficulty in dealing with these online.

C20.099 - Environment matters

- a) Environment Committee workshop - outcomes for agreement. Cllr Anderson summarised the notes from the informal meeting on 13th July along with the Scope and Partnerships bubble diagram. The meeting was noted to have been positive. It was agreed that an additional meeting of the Environment Committee will be held remotely on 10th August at 19:30. The poor state of the boardwalks along Dawson Walk was highlighted together with concerns about Greenbelt's maintenance of the area. It was RESOLVED that Greenbelt be contacted to ask for a video meeting to discuss the PC's concerns. Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr McQuillan. All in favour. It was considered that a public meeting and a petition may be appropriate in the future.

b) Request for memorial – A request has been made for a headstone which differs to those normally allowed and to those in the burial ground. The design was discussed and it was RESOLVED to respond to the request to say that “the PC has considered the proposed design and feels it is not in keeping with a rural churchyard and respectfully asks that the family consider a less ornate design”. Proposed by Cllr Cartman and seconded by Cllr McAllister Kemp. Motion carried with 1 abstention.

C20.100 - To receive reports from LACA and the Youth Club

a) Report from LACA – received from Cllr Cave

“Understandably there is little demand for the use of the indoor facilities at present and this reflects on the income derived from the complex. We have sufficient funds available in our general reserves to be solvent until mid-October, and we shall keep the PC updated as matters develop. We have opened the cafe for take-out only, employing a one way system with distancing. There is in place a strict cleaning regime and one toilet is available. Encouragingly the income derived is covering the overheads with signs of increasing patronage. The tennis courts are being very well used and a new online booking system providing an access code is proving successful. Some outside activities are taking place; Boot Camp and Hula Hoop are examples, which are bringing in some income. We are investing in a fogging machine which will enable us to disinfect an area quickly and efficiently after use. As part of our planned maintenance the sports hall floor will be renewed within the next couple of months, and as soon as the contractors are available, we are granting access to the Pavilion by the Bowling Club from Friday August the 7th to the 11th of September inclusive, on Fridays between 18:00 and 22:00. We anticipate a gradual increase of demand for indoor activities from September but not reaching previous volumes in the foreseeable future given the need for distancing.”

The PC still has questions about LACA's finances and is trying to organise a meeting with LACA but this is taking time to arrange in the present situation. It was noted that the report indicates that uptake from September is expected to be slow and was concerned that LACA is only solvent to mid-October. It was agreed that the Clerk contact LACA re the finance meeting and to seek clarification regarding solvency.

b) Report from the Youth Club – Cllr Jackson provided this report:

“The youth club continues to engage with young people online using FB live providing three to four sessions a week on sports, arts and crafts, cooking and street dance. In addition, EPIC Youth are also putting online a number of quizzes together with further information out about internet safety and other issue-based subjects that are useful to young people whilst maintaining a light hearted and upbeat feel. The Youth Club has secured a grant from Quartet Community Foundation through a bid application for additional extra sessions. A grant submission has also been submitted to The Langdale Trust to address issues such as gaming and social isolation that can occur.

The Youth Club is exploring changing the Monday nights session to a tech session where volunteers will come along and teach young people skills including coding and video editing. A meeting is being arranged with the Community Association to discuss the risk assessment associated with re-opening the Youth Club after the school holidays in early September

Recommendation and Decisions

The Council is asked to note the current activities being provided by the youth club. No decisions are required at this meeting.”

A meeting regarding re-opening of the Youth Club in September has been requested but LACA are unable to meet before mid-August. Cllr Jackson pointed out that the risk assessments may take several meetings and advice is needed from LACA on the protective measures they are putting into place and to establish how the Youth Club can re-open safely. The Youth Club is taking a break over the school summer holidays. He also noted that there

would be a financial impact and that recovery period is unknown. Cllr Cartman was thanked on behalf of the Youth Club for his assistance with the application to NSC for a discretionary business grant.

C20.101 - PC priority projects

- a) To receive updates on the VES – no update
- b) Library – It is hoped that a meeting will be held soon with an update to be brought to the next Council meeting.
- c) Skate Park – Cllr Jackson gave the following report. “The skate park design brief has been drafted; central to this is that the skate park should be available for a range of activities, ages and abilities. The soil survey RFP (request for proposal) for the proposed site in Peel Park has been drafted and is currently being reviewed. The timeline for the skate park project activities is currently being drafted. Recent activity has included preparation of communications for the skate park. Articles have been prepared for the village newsletter, North Somerset Times and Mendip Times. A Facebook page will also be launched soon.

Recommendation and Decisions

Delegation is requested to a small number of Councillors to finalise the soil survey RFP prior to issue”

It was RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with Cllrs Jackson, Sellars and Wilkinson to review and agree the suitability of the soil survey RFP draft. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and Seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour.

C20.102 - Correspondence

- a) From a business re possibly opening a new café – it was noted the proposer is aware that there are two cafés in the village. It was agreed that the PC will respond to confirm it will not actively promote or object to another café in the parish.
- b) From PCAA – noted.
- c) From Bristol Airport – noted.
- d) From Audley Redwood highlighting their care services and offering to work with the PC to deliver them. It was noted that the Coronavirus network is in contact with Audley and it was agreed to respond to thank them for their offer but to confirm that no further action is needed at present.
- e) From resident re broadband – A resident has written regarding the poor internet service. It was noted that government subsidies are not available due to the networks already in place. Mike Riggall, made the point that there is a universal service obligation which states that consumers are entitled to ‘adequate broadband’ provision and residents should contact their suppliers. Cllr Cartman agreed to take the matter forward with the resident on behalf of the PC.
- f) From Above and Beyond thanking the PC for support - noted.

C20.103 - Any items for information.

- a) NSC town and parish forum is to be held on the 29th July and is open to all Cllrs.
- b) Climate Action Planning Day 30th July – Cllr McQuillan confirmed he is attending and will provide a report.
- c) Speedwatch – Cllr McQuillan confirmed that the Police have resumed the Community Speedwatch initiative and will look into having areas with the Long Ashton Parish assessed.

Meeting closed at 22:07

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

- 10th August - Environment Committee (additional meeting)
- 17th August – Planning Committee
- 7th September - Council