



Minutes of a meeting of Full Council meeting held virtually on Zoom on 23 September 2020 at 7pm.

Councillors present:

James Adman	Desna Allen
Richard Bambury	Holly Bradfield
Jenny Budgetell	Clare Cape
Bill Douglas	Teresa Hutton (Chairman)
Ruth Lloyd	Mary Norton
Andy Phillips	Nina Phillips
David Powell	Chris Ruck (Vice)
John Scragg	Sandie Webb

Officers present: Mark Smith, Chief Executive
Nick Rees, Director of Resources
Barry Pirie, Director of Community Services
Daryl Jones, Business Support Manager
Gillian Ballinger, Finance Manager
Heather Rae, Democratic Services Manager
Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer
Andy Conroy, Planning Officer
Lynsey Nichols, Communications and Customer Service Manager
Paul Harvey, Head of Leisure Services
Melissa Barnett, Head of Museum and Heritage Services
Helen Bywater, Corporate Support Officer

Public present: There were nine members of the public present.

In advance of the meeting Councillors received a presentation from a representative of Modern.gov, a meeting management software.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were two verbal questions and one written question from members of the public which are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The responses to these questions were not part of the meeting but are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pete Bishop, Raj Gill, Peter Hutton, Michael Merry, Nick Murry, and Ashley O'Neill.

17. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. MINUTES

The minutes from the extraordinary meeting held on 15 July 2020 were proposed by Councillor Chris Ruck and seconded by Councillor Sandie Webb. The minutes from the extraordinary meeting held on 22 July 2020 were proposed by Councillor Sandie Webb and seconded by Councillor Chris Ruck.

It was agreed that the minutes of the extraordinary meetings held on 15 and 22 July 2020 were a correct record and

RESOLVED that:

The minutes were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

19. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

i)

- a) The Mayor reminded all Councillors of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust engagement session on 28 September at 6pm for Councillors and CEAG members. The Chairman encouraged all to join the session and to confirm attendance in advance with officers. There will be five public engagement sessions on 30 September and 02, 12, 14 and 17 October all joining details are on the Town Council website.
- b) The Mayor noted that herself and the Head of Heritage and Museum Services were interviewed live on BBC Radio Wiltshire on 23 September 2020 regarding Colin the Caterpillar, a formation of painted stones which appeared in Pewsham over the COVID period, there were over 700 stones at one point. The Council agreed to make Colin a permanent feature in the park and this is in process. Part of Colin will be laid in the park and the rest will be at the Museum with some parts included in the lockdown exhibition.
- c) The Mayor noted that during the COVID19 pandemic and lockdown period, letters of support had been received from the Council's major partners and friends of the town including the Mayor of Friedberg, the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and 9RLC. The Mayor had responded.
- d) The Mayor noted that the Royal Wessex Yeomanry visited the town on 18 September, and they communicated to the Mayor that they were impressed with the friendliness of the town.

ii) Councillors received the list of engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since the last meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2020.

20. POLICE REPORT

PC Ash Bray updated on current and ongoing policing issues within Chippenham including increased anti-social behaviour, street drinking and speeding. There are increased patrols and police attendance in the town centre and any alcohol found is removed. The police are working with many partnership agencies and organisations and have been able to house and re-house some rough sleepers within the town but this is ongoing. It was noted that speed checks and visibility with speed equipment on the A350 has reduced speeding.

Councillors thanked PC Ash Bray and the police for their constant work to make a difference to resident's daily lives. Councillors questioned PC Ash Bray on elements of anti-social behaviour and speeding within different areas of the town such as Pewsham Way and Hungerdown Lane. PC Ash Bray noted that these areas will be looked into but that the police must prioritise.

PC Ash Bray highlighted that the current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) will not be renewed next year by Wiltshire Council. PC Ash Bray noted this was concerning as policing street drinkers would be very difficult without the ban on alcohol, but will take this forward strongly with Wiltshire Council to ask them to reconsider. Council noted their support of this and the Chief Executive noted contact would be made with colleagues at Wiltshire Council to understand rationale and report back to Council as appropriate. The Chairman thanked PC Ash Bray for attending the meeting.

PC Ash Bray left the meeting.

21. COMMITTEE MINUTES

a. Amenities, Culture & Leisure Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 July and 09 September 2020 were presented by Councillor Desna Allen with all matters resolved, they were proposed by Councillor John Scragg and seconded by Councillor Chris Ruck.

b. Planning, Environment & Transport Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 July, 06 August and 27 August 2020 were presented by Councillors Andy Phillips and Richard Bambury with all matters resolved, they were proposed by Councillor Mary Norton and seconded by Councillor Bill Douglas.

c. Strategy and Resources Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 July and 02 September 2020 were presented by Councillor Sandie Webb with all matters resolved, they were proposed by Councillor Jenny Budgetell and seconded by Councillor Mary Norton.

d. Human Resources

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 July and 03 September 2020 were presented by Councillor Sandie Webb with all matters resolved, they were proposed by Councillor Richard Bambury and seconded by Councillor Chris Ruck.

22. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND PROCUREMENT POLICY REVIEW

The Director of Resources presented the report on the review of the Council's Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy. It was noted that Financial Regulations had been looked at in comparison to the model Financial Regulations produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Procurement Policy had been reviewed at the same time.

In the reviewed Financial Regulations, some references to Councillors acting as bank signatories had been removed and the Regulations had been amended where roles had changed for officers. In the reviewed Procurement Policy, changes had been made to the terminology to make the process clearer and references had been included to take environmental factors into decisions. These documents had been reviewed carefully by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 02 September 2020 and had been recommended to Full Council for adoption.

With all in favour it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) Full Council adopted the revised versions of the Council's Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy.

23. AREA BOARD BOUNDARY REVIEW CONSULTATION

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report regarding Wiltshire Council's Area Board Boundary Review consultation. It was noted that following the Electoral Review of Wiltshire, the Area Board boundaries would not align to the new Electoral Divisions from May 2021. The changes proposed for Chippenham would bring the Area Board boundaries in line with the Electoral Divisions. The consultation ends on 31 October 2020 and it was recommended that the Chief Executive be delegated authority to respond in favour of the amendments.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Chief Executive be delegated authority to complete the Area Board Boundary Review consultation on behalf of the Town Council in favour of the draft recommendations.

24. VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROTOCOL

The Democratic Services Manager presented the proposed amendments to the Virtual Meetings Protocol following Councillor feedback to ensure more clarity in virtual meetings.

Councillor James Adman noted that the electronic raise hand function was a good idea as when raising hands physically it can be difficult to count votes or questions but virtual backgrounds should be enabled for anyone who doesn't wish to share their environment. Councillor Mary Norton agreed that virtual backgrounds should be the choice of Councillors.

Cllr Sandie Webb questioned the reference to Standing Orders at the beginning of the Protocol and noted that adopting the amendments would be too quick a change and suggested waiting until Councillors had received tablets. The following amendment to the recommendation of the report was put forward:

That the virtual meetings protocol be delayed until the adoption of Councillor tablets and that the first part of the protocol referring to Standing Orders be amended.

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Nina Phillips, seconded by Councillor Andy Phillips and with thirteen in favour and three against it was

RESOLVED that:

i) The Virtual Meetings Protocol be delayed until the adoption of Councillor tablets and that the first part of the protocol referring to Standing Orders be amended.

25. OVERVIEW OF COVID19 RELATED ACTIVITY FROM MARCH 2020

The Chief Executive updated Councillors on the COVID19 related activity undertaken by the Council since March 2020 highlighting key work in all areas that the Council had achieved. It was highlighted that the Council was on a trajectory to become a more flexible employer before the COVID19 pandemic. Guidance has now shifted back to work from home if you can, it was noted that this will be discussed in the next few days to give staff clarity.

The Chief Executive highlighted that section three of the report demonstrated the initial response to the pandemic and projects and initiatives of Council. It was noted that there is nothing to suggest the Council would return to face to face council meetings in the near future, virtual meetings will continue.

It was highlighted that there are nine pages of the report on all council staff accomplishments. It was noted that the officer team had done a fantastic job over the last six months and most work goes on in the background without being noticed.

Councillor Bill Douglas thanked the Chief Executive and questioned whether there was any clarity on the May 2021 elections. The Chief Executive confirmed nothing had been clarified yet but the Council will assume they are going ahead until told differently. Councillors noted their pride of the hard work by officers and all the Council has done.

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors noted the report.

26. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Officer updated Councillors on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan since the last update at the Full Council meeting in January. It was noted that good

progress had been made on Topic Groups, there are seven Neighbourhood Planning Topic Groups.

Some achievements included the Sustainability and Climate Topic Group hosting workshops with the Centre for Sustainable energy. The AECON needs assessment, Green Spaces Policy and the Town Centre Topic Group's shop front survey. The Neighbourhood Plan online community survey took pace and received good feedback.

The focus of July, August and September was to review the draft policies, twenty draft policies had been agreed in principle with five or six more to be considered by the Steering Group. The project timeline attached to the report was noted. The Planning Officer suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan was on a trajectory to be adopted in Spring 2022.

Councillor David Powell thanked the Planning Officer for the update and questioned whether any work had been done in the Transport Topic Group on statistics gathered on the impact of the Monkton Park cul de sac on traffic flow in the town, The Planning Officer noted no work had been done on this.

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors noted the report.

27. COUNCILLORS FEEDBACK

- i. There were no updates from Town Councillors on significant work they are involved with.
- ii. Councillor John Scragg updated Councillors on the activities of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) including his attendance at the last meeting of the Executive Committee held virtually on 21 July 2020. It was noted that the outturn of the last financial year was break even and WALC fees will not be put up next year by more than the rate of inflation. WALC organised the accreditation panel for the Local Council Awards Scheme, Devizes, Salisbury and Chippenham were awarded Quality Gold Council status.

One member of the public joined the meeting.

- iii. There was no feedback from Wiltshire Councillors on significant work they are involved with.
- iv. There were no Committee Membership changes.
- v. The following idea for potential CIL projects to be forwarded to Wiltshire Council was raised:

Councillor Nina Phillips suggested putting CIL money towards a pedestrian crossing across Bristol Road by the Hathaway Surgery noting people there have been inconvenienced by development. Councillor John Scragg noted that this had been

considered by the Planning, Environment and Transport committee and the next CATG meeting will be considering this.

vi. There were no Community Matters updated requested.

28. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

There were no specific items for communication requested.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this Committee will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

The meeting concluded at 8.43pm

These Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the Committee as a true record of the meeting

Chairman:

Date:

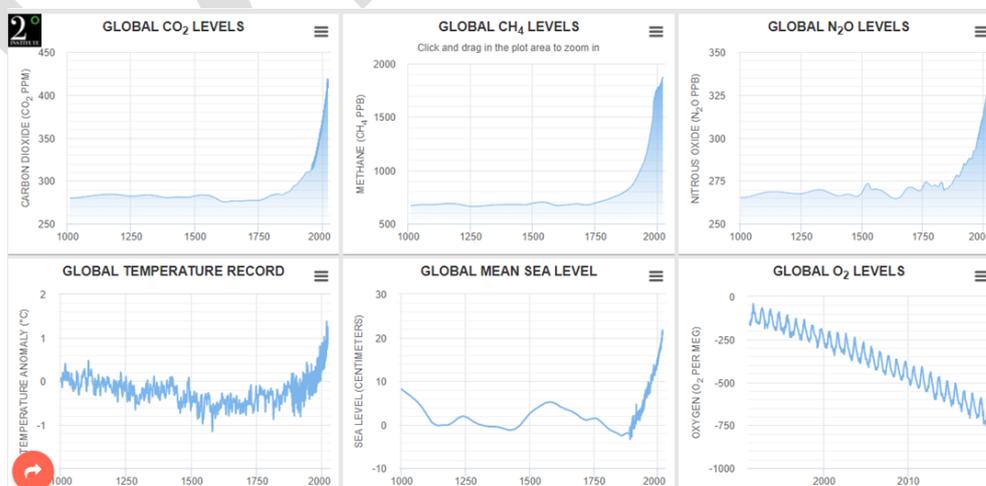
Public comments and questions

At the invitation of the Chairman a resident addressed the council:

1. “Good Evening Councillors, the first Covid restriction closed my businesses, but that gave me more time to find out about why the climate is broken. Before we discovered industry, the amount of sunshine landing on the planet was always balanced by the amount of heat that left it. It turns out that industrious humans excel at three things: **Burning stuff, Building stuff and Breeding.** A by-product of this excellence is that we’ve insulated the atmosphere and knocked the *Planet* out of energy balance. So could we send lots of renewable energy off the planet and fix the imbalance? Yes we could, but we’ll need 20x the total amount of energy that humanity uses to fix it. The imbalance is *Huge*. A cubic meter of soil can release a tonne of Carbon Dioxide when it’s dug up. Rather than demand an estimate of carbon emissions with every planning application, councillors don’t think Planning Policy needs updating to include emissions estimates. We’ve killed 60% of all wildlife in the last 50 years. But rather than demand an estimate of the Death inflicted on Nature *before* building over the countryside, councillors doesn’t recognise that the very soil we dig up supports a network of life.

Several councillors are becoming developers and they’ll get public money to finance their new countryside building ventures. Several councillors don’t understand that burning *anything* generates Carbon Dioxide and actively promote a Policy of incinerating waste without a care for the air. The Covid *might* kill around 1% of the population, so our politicians avidly listen to and Act on “the science”, every day. Climate or Ecological breakdown *will* kill 100% of humans, but our politicians *actively ignore* “the science”, and the evidence, and pursue a policy of GDP Growth. Let’s face it, current Core Policy across Wiltshire is Economic Growth, forever: “**To build and to burn, from this day forth and for ever more**” If ever there was a time and a reason for “Non Violent Direct Action”, now is the time for Councillors to say ‘No’ to the Core Policy of Growth and stop the damage to Climate and Nature.

Perhaps the second Covid restriction will give the politicians amongst you the time to read, to think and to reflect on Climate *Action*. I ask each one of you to use *this* time to find out for yourself about the *real* crises, because neither the Government, nor the Media are going to tell you how catastrophically bad things are, right now. I’ve been to a few council meetings and yes, there’s been some fiddling around the edges of policy, but nothing *significant* has happened. I am not getting through to you with scientific data, so my question to the Leader of the Council today is this: Could you please have a count up after this meeting and let me know what percentage of Chippenham councillors can read a graph? I thank you in advance.”



A written response was sent to the resident following the meeting and this is also attached at **APPENDIX B** (not part of the meeting).

At the invitation of the Chairman an officer read the following written public question received in advance of the meeting:

2. "I have been hearing on the grapevine that there is a proposal to change the dog walking status in John Coles Park to all dogs being required to be on lead at all times in all areas. As dog owners who uses the park twice a day to run our dogs off lead I am extremely concerned that if this is correct why there appears to have been no consultation with the park users.

Please could you confirm what the exact status on this is and if so how the decision has been reached. With Birds Marsh Wood being made more difficult to access the park is a vital dog park for many dog owners in the area so a large number of people will not be happy with the situation. I will try and attend the MTG via Zoom but would appreciate a full answer regardless. I look forward to your response. Many thanks"

A written response was sent to the resident following the meeting and this is also attached at **APPENDIX B** (not part of the meeting).

At the invitation of the Chairman a resident addressed the council:

3. "I've been to the Full Council meeting and the ACL Committee on a number of occasions and I've asked about the excessive cutting of grass and tidying. Every time I've been told it's down to Wiltshire Council and the 'croft' you've inherited with the devolved services. So when I heard strimming on the green on Stainers Way today I thought I'd go and investigate. I was quite surprised to see three Chippenham Town Council employees with industrial trimmers, so I spoke to them to make sure they were aware of the hedgehogs in the area, we do have a lot of hedgehogs and obviously they are endangered and protected and hedgehogs and trimmers don't really mix terribly well. I was told that they were just cutting round the trees so that the mowers could do the rest. The rest really doesn't need cutting. It's hardly grown since the last time it was scalped. We've seen positive steps with creating a wild flower meadow on the Bridge Centre but on the other hand there's still this excessive cutting going on. So there is no point on one hand doing a project with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on the Bridge Centre roundabout and on the other hand cutting grass and leaving wildlife with absolutely nowhere to go. I'd like to know with the new employees that Chippenham Town Council has taken on, why is this still happening?"

A written response was sent to the resident following the meeting and this is also attached at **APPENDIX B** (not part of the meeting).

Written responses to public questions asked at Full Council on 23 September 2020.

1. Thank you for your comments and question asked at Full Council on 23 September 2020. All Chippenham Town Councillors are actively aware of the Climate Emergency and declared this at Full Council on 27 March 2019. The Climate Emergency Advisory Group are dedicated to addressing this and continue to work on this for the Council and residents of Chippenham.
2. Thank you for your question asked at Full Council on 23 September 2020. Councillors considered options for the dogs on lead rule at John Coles Park at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee meeting (ACL) on 09 September 2020, this was a public meeting and discussion.

At the start of the COVID lockdown in March 2020, Government guidelines stated that all dogs had to remain on leads at all times while being walked by owners in the park, and signage was put up to reflect this. Guidelines have since been relaxed and the appropriate signage was removed, however the Council received feedback from members of the public expressing their wish that John Coles Park should remain a dog on lead area.

Councillors discussed the options at the ACL meeting and all were in favour of changing John Coles Park to a dogs on lead area at all times. Please read the full report with options and the associated decision at minute (23) on the [Town Council website](#).

3. Thank you for your question asked at Full Council on 23 September 2020. Your comments have been noted and will be taken on board as part of the ongoing development of our management plans.