



Minutes of a meeting of Full Council meeting held virtually on Zoom on 25 November 2020 at 7pm.

**Councillors present:**

James Adman	Desna Allen
Richard Bambury	Pete Bishop
Jenny Budgetell	Clare Cape
Bill Douglas	Peter Hutton
Teresa Hutton (Chairman)	Ruth Lloyd
Nick Murry	Mary Norton
Ashley O'Neill	Andy Phillips
Nina Phillips	David Powell
Chris Ruck (Vice)	John Scragg
Melody Thompson	Sandie Webb

**Officers present:** Mark Smith, Chief Executive  
Nick Rees, Director of Resources  
Barry Pirie, Director of Community Services  
Matt Kirby, 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  
Helen Bywater, Corporate Support Officer  
Julie Hook, Head of Venues

**Public present:** There were 7 members of the public present.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There was one written question from a member of the public which is appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The response to this question was not part of the meeting but is appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

**30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Holly Bradfield, Raj Gill and Michael Merry.

### 31. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 32. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 23 September 2020 were proposed by Councillor Mary Norton and seconded by Councillor Richard Bambury.

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 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.

### 33. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i)
  - a) The Mayor announced that since the last Full Council meeting, there had been very sad news of the passing of Tracy Howell. Tracy was the Market & Compliance Manager at the Town Council and worked in Customer Services before that, she was very willing and enthusiastic and when she stepped up to role of Market & Compliance Manager she was well perceived by the market holders. She will be missed and was a great person who brought a lot to the Council. A minute's silence was held in remembrance of Tracy.
  - b) The Mayor announced that it would be the last Council meeting for the current Director of Community Services, Barry Pirie. The Mayor thanked Barry for all his hard work and support in the role and noted he had been extremely helpful in her previous role as Chairman of ACL, and current roles of Chairman of Council and CEAG. The Mayor gave appreciation for all Barry had done for the Council and wished him and his family well for the future.
  - c) The Mayor welcomed Matt Kirby, who started in his role of Director of Community Services on Monday, the Mayor noted that starting a new job during the COVID lockdown and only meeting virtually must be challenging, but looked forward to meeting properly in the future.
  - d) The Mayor thanked the Democratic and Civic Officer, Michael Weeks, for all his work put into recent Civic Events. In October the five Civic Award winners were able to come to the Town Hall to receive their awards. In November Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day were held, they were well planned and managed.
  - e) The Mayor noted she virtually switched on the Christmas Lights last week and thanked officers for their hard work on producing the Christmas video. The Joy of Christmas trail will take place next weekend around the Town.
  - f) The Mayor reminded all present that there will be free parking in Chippenham on Saturday 05 and Saturday 12 December 2020 and

hoped that people will be able to come into Town and support traders around Town.

- ii) Councillors received the list of engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since the last meeting of the Council held on 23 September 2020.

#### **34. POLICE REPORT**

Apologies were received from Sgt Richard Marshall, who could not be in attendance due to attending a live incident. The Police report had been circulated and was noted. Councillors were asked to send any questions they have by email.

#### **35. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

a. Amenities, Culture & Leisure Committee

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 14 October 2020 and the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were presented by Councillor Desna Allen with all matters resolved, they were seconded by Councillor Sandie Webb.

b. Planning, Environment & Transport Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 September, 08 October and 29 October 2020 were presented by Councillor Richard Bambury with all matters resolved, they were seconded by Councillor Bill Douglas.

c. Strategy and Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 were presented by Councillor Sandie Webb with all matters resolved, they were seconded by Councillor Jenny Budgell.

d. Human Resources

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 November 2020 were presented by Councillor Sandie Webb with all matters resolved, they were seconded by Councillor Desna Allen.

#### **36. SPECIAL COUNCILLOR MOTION**

Councillor Desna Allen presented the Special Motion, signed by four Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 19.1. It was highlighted that this motion was to seek approval from Councillors to rescind the following decision taken at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee (ACL) on 09 September 2020:

With all in favour it was resolved that Councillors agreed to change the rules to make John Coles Park a dogs on lead area as a whole at all times.

With 8 Councillors in favour it was resolved that the dog compound in John Coles Park should be removed.

*Whilst we acknowledge that the proper democratic process was followed, given extensive public feedback since the date of the meeting we request that consideration be given at the Full Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, to*

*rescind the previous decision detailed above, prior to a future report being brought back to the Council's ACL Committee, where further options can be presented and discussed.*

Councillors discussed the Special Motion and thanked members of the public that had taken the time to write letters and emails to the Council on this matter with rational arguments. It was highlighted that some unacceptable abuse on this topic was received by officers and on social media. Councillors requested clear communications on this decision for members of the public and that public consultation be considered to make an informed decision at a future ACL meeting.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sandie Webb, and with all Councillors in favour it was

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) Full Council rescind the decision regarding John Coles Park being a dogs on lead area and removal of the dog compound, made at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee (ACL) on 09 September 2020.
- ii) A future report be brought back to the Council's ACL Committee, where further options can be presented and discussed.

**37. ANNUAL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/22**

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report regarding the draft annual calendar of meetings for 2021/22.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Calendar of Meetings be adopted for the municipal year 2021/22.

**38. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE**

The Planning Officer updated Councillors on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan since the previous update in September 2020. It was noted that the two vacant public positions had been filled.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the Town Council has regular communication with Wiltshire Planners, and they are aware of the draft policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillors questioned whether the Neighbourhood Plan would consider a second exit from the Monkton Park cul-de-sac to improve traffic flow in the Town Centre. The Planning Officer noted this was outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan which acts as a guide for new development. Councillors requested more information on the detail of the Neighbourhood Plan for new Councillors in 2021.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) Councillors noted the report.

### **39. DORSET & WILTS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING DATES**

#### **RESOLVED that:**

The following meeting dates of the Wiltshire Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee were noted:

25 November 2020 at 10am-12pm  
25 February 2021 at 10am-12pm  
17 May 2021 at 10am-12pm

### **40. COUNCILLORS FEEDBACK**

- i. The following updates were received from Town Councillors on significant work they are involved with:

Councillor Desna Allen updated on the successful Zoom meeting for the Community Safety Forum held on 24 November which shared how different agencies were dealing with COVID. There were many attendees, and the police reported that there had been less trouble with drinkers but increased trouble with drugs, all were urged to read the notes.

Councillor John Scragg attended meetings concerned with the railway, as the Council's representative on the Friends of Chippenham Railway Group. It was noted that funding is available for improvement of forecourt of Chippenham Station and some has been spent on a toucan crossing. Great Western had provided slides to show how the forecourt will be changed, and it was hoped more passengers will use the railway.

Councillor Sandie Webb updated on the Chippenham Eco Hub. It was noted that negotiations were taking place on the lease of number 23 Borough Parade to use this space for two years rent free. At the first meeting of the Eco Hub, 11 members were appointed to a Working Group. The Eco Hub is being set up for public benefit with objectives to prevent or relieve poverty, promote social inclusion and promote sustainability and environmental responsibility by signposting to advice.

- 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 24 November 2020. The County Secretary is working remotely, and meetings are taking place virtually. Training courses are running and being planned, and material is being prepared for elections in May including courses for new Councillors. Councillor Scragg noted that work is being done to make remote meetings legal, there were 50-60 people present at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) AGM and there was a voting system which could be considered for Council meetings.
- iii. The following updates were received from Wiltshire Councillors on significant work they are involved with:

Councillor Bill Douglas updated that he was contacted by the Head of Abbeyfield School over cars and the safety of pupils and families and is progressing this.

Councillors Peter Hutton and Clare Cape confirmed that the 'Chippenham Area Board' had been renamed 'Chippenham and Villages Area Board'.

- iv. There were no Committee Membership changes.
- v. The following idea for potential CIL projects to be forwarded to Wiltshire Council was raised:

Councillor Peter Hutton suggested that following meetings with community groups, CIL could be used to fund small community venues within Chippenham as they are becoming scarce and there are concerns over losing venues. It was noted that large developments should come with community facilities. This request shall be passed to Wiltshire Council for consideration.

- vi. There were no Community Matters updated requested.

#### **41. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION**

Councillors requested clear communication to the public on the special motion regarding rules for dogs on or off lead in John Coles Park.

#### **42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Chris Ruck closed the meeting due to technical difficulties. The next meeting of this Committee will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

The meeting concluded at 8.27pm

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. Thank you for the chance to make a short representation to the full council on the recent decisions around dogs on leads in John Coles Park. I will be brief as this is a local issue that needs to be considered in perspective of the bigger issues of the times we live in.

The dog walkers in JCP were very pleased that council has found a process to re-consider the decision regarding dogs on leads in John Coles Park, made at the 9th September 2020 ACL Committee. The strong local adverse reaction to the decision continues to build with now over 900 signatories to the petition against it with 80% - over 600 living within 3KM of JCP. The full analysis of responses is included in my written representation copy. The community of dog walkers in JCP has become closer and more aware of all uses of the park and the issues around it since the decision and has talked to varied users of the park on the matter. Anticipating a new paper on this issue to be considered by the Council we look forward to talking and consulting with the authors. Given our observations in the many hours we have spent in the park recently I would like to suggest three areas that should be part of the evidence and considerations in that paper:

#### **1: Signage**

Signage in and on the entrances to the park needs a good review and revamp. The current signage of the on/off leads is ambiguous, tiny and not clear. There is nothing on the majority of gates as to the on/off leads status of that entrance. There is no obvious sign about the closure of the park being signalled by a bell. The purpose of some older signage is not clear - for example the “no ball games” signage in the lower area. It is not all bad - The recent signage on the play area is an excellent example of clear signage.

#### **2. The use of the “dog pen”.**

This is not used as suggested in the last report an area for nervous dogs, it has evolved into a highly valued and locally unique resource used by many to socialise rescue dogs, nervous dogs and puppies. Socialisation is important to reduce aggression to other dogs and humans and to establish and improve recall. The next report should consider the value of this resource accordingly.

#### **3. Accessibility.**

The next report must fully consider accessibility for disabled or vulnerable - a key benefit of JCP is the good access for wheelchair and mobility scooters that is used by those dog owners with mobility challenges or feel vulnerable in more isolated areas. JCP is a secure area and is valued by many vulnerable and disabled users as a key contributor to good mental health.

Thank you for the chance to speak. We are sure there can be a positive outcome to this matter that will maximise the value of John Coles Park to the residents and voters of Chippenham.”

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 response to public question asked at Full Council on 25 November 2020.

1. Thank you for your representation at Full Council on 25 November 2020. The Special Motion considered at Full Council on 25 November 2020 was passed with all Councillors in favour to rescind the decision made at the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee (ACL) on 09 September to make John Coles Park a 'dogs on lead' area. Therefore, this previous decision no longer stands. Your comments and suggestions have been noted and will be taken into consideration when future options are brought back to ACL to be discussed.

DRAFT