

Operations Committee
26th May 2020 The Old Courthouse

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Cllr P Harris (Chairperson), B Prentice (arrived at 19.10), P Rainbow, M Stott, R Blaney, K Roberts, P Scorer, L Harris (arrived at 19.10), Cllr S Thompstone

In Attendance Town Clerk – T Broughton, S Reynolds
2 members of the public and the press

Chairperson stated that the Town Clerk is making a recording of the meeting and others are recording.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Martin.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

Members are hereby reminded that, under the provisions of sections 26-34 and Schedule 4 of the Localism Act 2011, a member with a Disclosable pecuniary interest of which they are aware in a matter who attends a meeting of the council at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent. –None declared.

3. Approval of previous minutes dated 11th March 2020

Town Clerk went through all the amendments as suggested by the Chairman of the committee Cllr Thompstone was present at the meeting and will be added to the attendee list. Cllr Roberts stated there was a discussion about the colour of the bollards between black and dark and it was agreed that it would be dark green and agreed gloss paint. It was stated that there was a mention about the ball game signs for the Market Place and this has been agreed. This is on the Action Log of tasks to be undertaken. Cllr Blaney stated that there was the word unanimous on the minute that was not seconded and should be removed.

Proposed Cllr P Harris, seconded Cllr R Blaney

Agreed as a true record of the meeting with suggested amendments above.

Unanimous

4. Public Question Time –

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Tracey Broughton PSLCC Clerk to the Town Council

No public have questions at this time.

5. To note and review the update paper on Southwell Town Review of Southwell Town Council Property & Services

The Chairperson stated it is the intention to use the staff to water some baskets. However a number of automated watering services are not available due to closure of premises or permissions have been withdrawn. It will be unlikely that there will be many baskets in King Street until the Admiral Rodney is permitted to open. The Chairperson stated that there are funds in budget that will be used to purchase union flags and these will be tied onto flag poles and as many as possible erected by June 6th. Cllr Perry will assist preparing the flags onto poles and the Clerk will pick up the task of writing to the Clubs and Societies with a view to getting their flags up by the start of the school summer holidays.

It was stated that there is only one member of groundstaff available for work at present.

6. Procedures for increasing the safety of traders and residents using the town centre if the Government allow additional shops and business to open

The Chairperson stated it is the intention of the staff to construct the market stalls on Friday 29th May 2020 but not to re-open the market until Saturday 6th June 2020. This will give the staff the time to look at the system and how the stalls are constructed which will be in an internally facing square similar to how the market is for events such as the Christmas Market. Traders will be inside the square. The residents and shoppers will queue outside the square. Clerk will purchase socially distant reminders in the form of buttons to be placed on the floor of the market to identify places to queue. The buttons will be ordered and the longevity of the buttons can be monitored. There are at present five or six traders wishing to trade. Two of the traders will be on the Market Square on Saturday 30th May but using their own vehicles. It was suggested that the re-opening of the public toilets should be discussed prior to the committee discussing the opening of the shops and market as it would be embarrassing inviting people to come and shop if there are no toilet facilities. The Chairperson stated that there is difficulty getting government guidelines on the opening of public toilets. It was suggested that the percentage of local people visiting the market and shops would be high and there will not be a huge number of day visitors to the town at this time. It was suggested government will issuing guidelines prior to shops being opened. It was stated that the best course of action was to wait for government guidelines on opening of the toilets.

Town Council Clerk will be meeting a District Council Officer and a Highways Authority Officer to discuss the possible closure of King Street and Queen Street. There has been increased queuing on King Street. Clerk confirmed she was meeting the District Council Planning manager and the Area Highways Officer. Clerk will report back to Full Council by email. The Chairperson suggested a one-way pedestrian system on the pavement and suggested the use of buttons to highlight this one way system. He went on to suggest to take funds for buttons from the Hanging Basket budget and to use the Town Council logo.

It was suggested that the market this will include possibly one or two traders and they will arrange their own social distancing. Cones would be available should they be required. A member asked if there has been any consideration of staffing a road closure? The Chairperson stated that Southwell Town Council should wait for the County Council for guidance but there are four council volunteers who have agreed to support the closure.

7. Proposals for communications of a questionnaire to be published inviting feedback and comments on the permanent Saturday closure of King Street

The Chairperson invited the member of the public to speak on this item. The Chairperson read the agenda item.

There was no comment from the member of the public other than it is a good idea.

The Chairperson stated that this was discussed and agreed at the last meeting. The Town Council does not have the authority to close the road. The County Council has its own consultative position. It was felt by the committee to assess the views of the residents and traders of the town. The Chairperson went on to state that the questionnaire was to identify any issues. A member questioned whether the questionnaire was for all the whole town and surrounding villages and it was affirmed that it was. It was also stated that at the last meeting of the committee that the committee agreed that all occupants of Kings Street would be consulted. Furthermore the councillor went on to suggest that if the residents and traders of King Street were opposed would there be any benefit in contacting the rest of the town. It was suggested that the questionnaire should go to residents and traders of King Street and then go wider if the response is positive. The Council should consider disabled access and traders who require delivery spaces. There are volunteers prepared to deliver communications to King Street and a decision should be made on whether to more widely deliver the questionnaire in a month or two months time. It was felt that the decision of the residents and traders of King Street should bear significance on whether to communicate with the rest of the town. One member stated that there was no evidence of traders support of a King Street closure and the Chairperson confirmed that it is in writing by The Shop Southwell group. The Chairperson went on to point out that all evidence should be gained prior to going to the County Council. The Chairperson wished the communications to be ready to go in two weeks time. It was suggested to contact the Officer at Newark and Sherwood DC traders contact. Clerk stated that the Town Council also have a list of traders on a data base. Communications to go to the traders, the residents and the questionnaire to rest of the community. The question was asked what the cost of a closure would be and the Chairperson asked the Clerk to confirm that it was around £300 – Clerk confirmed that a road closure is approximately £350 per closure. She went on to state there may be different procedures if it was a regular closure. It was stated the questionnaire was just part of the project. A letter to go to residents on King Street and Waterloo Yard would be more personable. Communications group would work on communication for King Street residents.

The Chairperson stated that the proposal was to circulate the questionnaire in July and the residents letter would be a separate communication drafted by the Communications Group. The Chairperson asked if there were any committee members against the proposal. Cllr Blaney is against the proposal and went on to state that the costs of a road closure would be too high. There was clearly a misunderstanding of what costs were being discussed and the Chairperson asked for the facts to be corrected. The Chairperson stated that the cost of the closure was not known but the cost of the newsletter was around £300. The Chairperson stated that the cost of a closure has not been debated. The questionnaire would be distributed in place of the July newsletter.

Opposed to the questionnaire is one member. No abstentions. Chairman stated the motion is carried.

8. Discussion on Re-wilding areas in Southwell – reports from Notts Wildlife Trust to Green Southwell Habitat Management advice for Southwell

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The Chairperson stated that there is a report available commissioned by Green Southwell. He went on to state that although time was getting on the tasks should be addressed.

Chairperson asked the member of the public if she wanted to speak on this matter.

It was stated by the member of public that she was instrumental in commissioning the report and is interested in where the report has got to within the council. The question was asked where is the report being implemented. Cllr Prentice wished to speak and the Chairperson replied that he wished to table his proposal and the Vice-Chairman can then table her amendment for debate.

The Chairperson stated there are actions in the report that need to take place this growing season. Operations committee should influence and ensure the urgent actions are undertaken both on Froggatts Field, Harveys Field and Little Burgage. Actions on Higgons Mead are no within our remit to action. It was suggested to recommend those actions be reported to the Cathedral Council. It was stated that the council did not act quickly enough to action the work required on Higgons Mead.

The Vice-Chairman stated that her proposal is the report from the Notts Wildlife Trust and the Open Space Paper be taken to the Climate Change Working Group to be considered as part of the Environmental Plan and the committee should not be making ad hoc decisions on Town Council land.

Proposed Cllr B Prentice,

The report from the Notts Wildlife Trust and the Open Spaces paper previously circulated are more sensibly dealt with by the Climate Change Working Group where they can be considered as part of the whole Environmental Plan for the Town.

There was no seconder for the proposal above so motion was not carried

The Chairperson stated some of the proposal in the paper are urgent and some are less urgent. The Chairperson stated that the two can run side by side. The Chairperson stated that some of the issues should not be deferred for yet another growing season in particular Harveys field as that is a prime spot and the detailed suggestions for this year on Harveys field. The Chairperson went on that additional staffing would be back by August to address these issues. The Vice-Chairman stated that the Council does not have the correct equipment. The question was asked as to the author of the report. It was stated that the council should not be telling the Cathedral Council what to do. Member of public stated that the discussion took place when walking past Higgons Mead and the Wildlife Trust are talking the church. It was suggested to share the report to the Cathedral Council and draw their attentions to the results in the report.

Cllr Scorer proposed that that the committee should proceed with the Chairperson's recommendations and if the Climate Change Working Group come up with alternative suggestions the Operations Committee review them in the future as there is some urgency for immediate action on Harveys Field and Minster Field.

One member stated that the SE corner of Harveys field as a different landscape and contains Orchids and needs to be treated differently so that area should not be destroyed. Cllr Stott supports for the proposal with an amendment that Harveys Field triangle of land is dealt with. Triangle of land on the SE corner is subject to different treatment from a member of the Potwell Grasslands group and resident in terms of management of that area. The Chairperson invited member of the public to speak again. She stated that the church as possibly seen their relevant section of the report.

The Chairperson asked the Vice-Chairman if she is happy with the above proposals and to suspend standing orders six month rule if the Climate Change Working Group wish to take any action contrary to

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what has been suggested above and is within the six months of this proposal. Vice-Chairman said she is happy with this.

The Chairperson proposed that the paper is amended in two ways, the Orchids on Harveys field and also an additional item to ask Climate Change Working Group to make an alterations or additions to the Operations Committee for management of the Open Spaces referred to.

One member stated a missing word on Item 17 of the report the second line should read after the comma, *these will be cut back*.

The Chairperson asked if any objections to the paper with the two amendments. There were no objections and no abstentions so the Chairperson confirmed the motion is carried unanimously.

The Chairperson asked how DC votes are effected. The members are invited to state their vote. Chairman asked the clerk to ratify the vote by subsequent email.

9. Re-opening of Southwell Town Car Parks

Car Parks ceased charging as the Enforcement services was stopped without any notice from NCC and N&SDC. The Town Council had not officially been noticed that there would be no enforcement. The Clerk is still waiting to hear the date of Enforcement commencement. The machines could not physically be emptied. The machines have been emptied and the Town Council now has the capability of resourcing the machines. The charges being removed was to help key workers. The District Council will reintroduce charges at the end of June and on and off street parking Enforcement will be introduced in mid July 2020.

AGREED

Proposed Cllr P Harris

To re-introduce on Saturday June 6th and notify residents.

Unanimous

10. Re-opening of public toilets

The Chairperson confirmed that the council had not received information on maintaining the cleanliness of the toilets. Clerk stated that she needs to resource the information on maintenance of cleaning and making them COVID-19 safe.

One member stated that the British Toilet Association have advice. It was suggested to read the article in the Sunday Times. The committee will consider the future financial challenge in maintain the public toilets.

Vice-Chairman stated that an earlier paper on the future of the public toilets had been discussed. It was proposed by Cllr Prentice to resurrect the paper for discussion at a future Operations Committee. The Chairperson agreed to work with the Vice-Chairman on the future of public toilets paper. Clerk asked the committee what options are there for market traders for toilets. Deputy Clerk stated a RADAR key can be given to the traders for the disabled toilet. Clerk stated cleaning materials be left in the disabled toilet for users to clean after previous use if they wish and these processes agreed.

11. Re-opening of Southwell Town Market – discussion and forward planning for a potential start date of Saturday 6th June 2020.

Has been discussed above and a staff report will be available when the stalls are erected and procedures are known in more detail.

12. Items for communication – individual items discussed above and Council Chairperson will assist with local coverage. It was stated to use Council social media in terms of the re-opening of the town.

13. Items to be included on the next agenda –

14. Date of next meeting.

The Chairperson thanked all for taking part and thanked the staff and members for all that has been achieved to help the town and the residents through the challenging times.

Meeting Closed at 20.14

Cllr P Scorer has confirmed by email on 27th May 2020 that he is seconder to all of Cllr Harris's proposals contained within these minutes.

Signed.....Date.....
Chairman, Operations Committee