

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Monday, 14th May 2018, at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Laurie Davies, Steve Dechan, Rob Green, Camilla Hale, Sarah Lunnon, John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

In attendance: Marianne Sweet (STC Communications), Helen Bojaniwska (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk), Cllr Skeena Rathor, 3 representatives of Stroud Against the Cuts and 1 press representative

Action

1. Election of Mayor for 2017–18

Cllr Kevin Cranston was proposed, seconded and **elected** as Mayor for the coming year.

2. Mayor's declaration

The Mayor signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

3. Election of Deputy Mayor for 2017-18

Cllrs Margaret Poulton was proposed and seconded and **elected** as Deputy Mayor for the coming year.

4. Deputy Mayor's declaration

The Deputy Mayor signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

5. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Sage (personal).

6. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

None received.

7. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 26th February were **approved** by the members present and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

8. Mayor's remarks

The Mayor noted that councillors are now half way through their period of office and thanked members for re-electing him for a further term.

The Mayor reported on a recent visit to Marah and praised the work that they do in the town. He noted a worrying rise in the number of street sleepers in the town.

9. Questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

10. Celebration of the anniversary of the NHS

A representative of Stroud Against the Cuts gave a presentation to support a grant application for funding for an event and activities to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the creation of the NHS and answered questions from members.

11. Grant application for celebration of the anniversary of the NHS

Concern was expressed that the events might be overtly political and not therefore suitable for council funding. Stroud Against the Cuts representatives sought to reassure members that Council funding would be used for a community celebration and promotion of the work of the NHS and not for political campaigning or protests. It was **agreed** to authorise the Clerk to approve a grant of up to £1,000 subject to suitable terms being agreed to ensure that the grant is used only for community celebrations.

Clerk

Cllr Rathor arrived.

12. District and County Councillors' reports

District Cllr Rathor reported that the final Stroud District Council meeting of the civic year had been a jovial affair, but members had approved important motions regarding mental health and single use plastics.

District Cllr Townley reported that he has been nominated for election as Chair of the Housing Committee at the upcoming Annual meeting and may as a result no longer be able to serve on the Town Council. He also reported on a growing housing crisis and the need for Stroud District Council to review its housing delivery programme.

District Cllr Sutton reported that the Environment Committee had had a good year, but were still working on issues relating to refuse collection.

District Cllr Marjoram welcomed the recent debate about mental health.

13. Clerk's report

The report was noted.

14. Investment strategy

An updated investment strategy was **approved**.

15. Internal audit report

A year-end report from the Council's internal auditor was received.

A recommendation to ensure that sufficient internal audit checks are completed was noted.

16. Internal controls

A report on a review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal reviews was received.

17. Year-end earmarked reserves movements

The Clerk explained the intended purposes of the reserves. Transfers to and from earmarked reserves were **approved**.

Clerk

18. Annual Governance Statement

It was **resolved** to approve the annual governance statement for the period 2017–18 which was then **signed** by the Mayor and Town Clerk.

Clerk

19. Accounts

The annual accounts for the period 2017–18 were **approved** and **signed** by the Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer.

Clerk

20. Accounting Statements for 2017–18 and bank reconciliation

It was **resolved** to approve the 2017–18 accounting statements and the year-end bank reconciliation, which were then **signed** by the Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer.

Clerk

21. Delegation arrangements

It was **agreed** to amend the Terms of Reference for the Subscription Rooms Working Group to include responsibility for reviewing tourism provision in the town and the emerging cultural strategy.

Clerk

22. Committees' terms of reference

No changes were proposed.

23. Membership of Committees

Membership of committees was **agreed**, and Chairs and Deputies **elected**, as follows,

Clerk

Consultations –

Simon Arundel (Chair), Alice Campbell, Camilla Hale (Deputy Chair), Sarah Lunnon, Margaret Poulton, Alan Sage, Lucas Schoemaker, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

NB further changes were agreed later in the meeting (item 26).

Green Spaces –

Steve Dechan, Rob Green (Chair), Sarah Lunnon (Deputy Chair), John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Vanessa Price, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley.

Finance, Community and Policy

There were more nominations than positions on the committee so it was **agreed** to increase the membership of the committee from 9 to 12, and the following members were **elected**:

Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Kevin Cranston, Laurie Davies, Steve Dechan, Rob Green, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram, Margaret Poulton, Alan Sage (Chair) and Lucas Schoemaker (Deputy Chair).

Personnel

There were more nominations than positions on the committee so a ballot was held and the following members were **elected**:

Alice Campbell, Kevin Cranston (Deputy Chair) and Rob Green (Chair).

Appeals

Geoffrey Andrews, John Marjoram and Lucas Schoemaker

24. Membership of working groups

Membership of working groups was **approved** as follows.

Lansdown Hall – Alice Campbell, Camilla Hale, John Marjoram and Lucas Schoemaker. Plus co-opted member Steve Hurrell.

Communications – it was **agreed** to disband the group.

Trinity Pocket Park – it was **agreed** to disband the group following a final meeting on 17/5/2018.

Neighbourhood Development Plan – Simon Arundel, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Steve Dechan, Camilla Hale, Lucas Schoemaker.

Sub Rooms – Kevin Cranston, Laurie Davies, Steve Dechan, Camilla Hale, Alan Sage, Lucas Schoemaker and Haydn Sutton.

Road Safety – Sarah Lunnon, Steven Naumann and Chas Townley.

25. New committees

There were no proposals for new committees.

26. Standing orders and financial regulations

Revised standing orders based on the recently updated NALC model were considered and **adopted**.

In response to a question about procedures for dealing with non-attendance at committee meetings the Clerk advised that Council approval would be required to remove members from committees. The Clerk also suggested that attendance data could be published annually.

Clerk

In the light of this discussion Cllrs Sutton and Townley resigned from the Consultations Committee and Cllr Naumann was elected to fill one of the vacancies arising.

Financial Regulations were **re-adopted** with no changes.

27. Representatives on external bodies

Representatives were **agreed** as follows:

Cotswold Canals Western Consultative Group – Kevin Cranston

Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils – Sarah Lunnon

Stroud Hospital League of Friends – Camilla Hale

Stroud in Bloom – Margaret Poulton

Concordat – Kevin Cranston (as Mayor)

Joint Cluster Group – Haydn Sutton

Gloucestershire Chartered Parishes – a representative to be appointed by the Road Safety Group

28. Councillors' special interests

Councillors' special interests were **confirmed** as follows:

<u>Fair Trade Group</u>	Steve Dechan, Steven Naumann
<u>Allotments</u>	Haydn Sutton
<u>Children, play, young people and families</u>	Laurie Davies
<u>Cycling</u>	Sarah Lunnon, Steven Naumann
<u>Environmental responsibility</u>	Rob Green
<u>Heritage</u>	Camilla Hale
<u>Business and economy</u>	Steve Dechan
<u>Health and wellbeing</u>	John Bloxsom
<u>Equality and diversity</u>	Laurie Davies

29. General Power of Competence

It was **resolved** that the Council continues to meet the eligibility conditions required for it to use the General Power of Competence.

30. Assets

The Council's inventory of assets was **noted**.

31. Insurance

Confirmation of insurance cover was **received**.

32. Subscriptions

The list of subscriptions was reviewed and **approved**.

33. Complaints procedure

The Council's complaints procedure was reviewed and no changes were proposed.

34. Freedom and information and data protection

The Council's procedures for handling requests under the Freedom and Information Act 2000 were reviewed and no changes were proposed.

It was noted that the General Data Protection Regulations come into force on 25/5/2018 and new policies and procedures are being developed by the Deputy Clerk for consideration at the Finance, Community and Policy Committee.

Deputy
Clerk

35. Press/media policy

The Council's Policy for dealing with the press/media was reviewed and no changes were proposed.

36. Employment policies and procedures

An updated Personnel Handbook was reviewed and **adopted** subject to some rewording of the section relating to data protection. The Clerk was asked to check some details of the policy relating to paternity leave.

Clerk

37. Expenditure under the General Power of Competence

A report on expenditure was noted.

38. Civic calendar

The calendar of meetings was reviewed and **approved**.

39. Internal controls

Geoffrey Andrews, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton and Lucas Schoemaker were **appointed** to conduct internal control checks.

40. Bank mandate

The mandate was reviewed and no changes were proposed.

41. Subscription Rooms

A report on the proposed heads of terms for a transfer of the freehold of the Subscription Rooms was considered. The Clerk reported that Stroud District Council had subsequently agreed to increase their grant offer to £230,000 and had offered to amend some of the covenants.

Details of the revised covenants were tabled for discussion. The Clerk reported that the Council's solicitor still had concerns about the prescriptive nature of some of the covenants and recommended further negotiation to ensure that the terms are acceptable to both councils.

It was **resolved** to agree in principle to a transfer of the freehold of the Sub Rooms based on the heads of terms provided by Stroud District Council with the following amendment:

- revision of covenants regarding use of the property and forecourt – negotiation of final wording to be delegated to Town Clerk in consultation with the Council's solicitor

This agreement is subject to:

- agreement of terms under which Stroud District Council will provide a grant of £230,000 for working capital
- provision of information to inform due diligence checks as set out in letter to Stroud District Council 11th April 2018
- agreement of overage terms
- agreement of terms for a management agreement or a short-term lease to allow SDC to manage the premises until March 2019.
- legal requirements regarding:
 - pre-contract enquiries
 - satisfactory commercial search results
 - SDC being able to provide a Certificate to accord with Restriction entry B.3 of the Proprietorship Register of the title (this relates to compliance with Localism Act)
 - Inclusion of rights of access to the rear

42. Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils AGM

Members had been requested to suggest resolutions for the AGM. It was **agreed** to defer this item until the end of the meeting.

43. Stroud District Council funding

It was **agreed** to write to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government and David Drew MP to express the Council's concern about the requirement for Stroud District Council to pay Stroud residents' council tax back to central government and the impact that this will have on local services.

Clerk

44. Removal of white lines

A report from the Council's Road Safety Working Group recommending that Gloucestershire Highways be asked to consider removing central white lines from roads in Stroud town to improve road safety was considered.

Members felt that they would like to receive more evidence on this proposal and in view of the late hour it was **agreed** to refer this matter to the Council's Finance, Community and Policy Committee for further discussion.

42. Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils AGM (resumed)

It was **agreed** to submit a resolution regarding district council funding (as item 43).

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Chair

Date