

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held remotely on Zoom on
Monday 7th September 2020 commencing at 7.00pm

- Present:** Chair: Cllr B Wallbridge;
Cllrs G Fuller, J Honess, R Hopkins, E Jackson, L Mansell,
R Moss, P Wilkinson and P Williams
- Absent:** Cllrs D Cooper and V Cox
- Attending:** Emily Merko, Finance Officer and Tracey Stephens, Admin
Assistant

Cllr Wallbridge chaired the meeting as Cllr Fuller was having problems with connection. Cllr Hopkins joined the meeting at 7:20 and Cllr Fuller at 7:40

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

49. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 6th July 2020

Resolved: The minutes of 6th July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

50. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Environment and Development Committee – 13th July 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the Environment and Development Committee meeting held on 13th July be noted.

(b) Finance and Personnel Committee – 22nd July 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 22nd July be noted.

51. APPROVAL OF ANY ITEMS OF £5,000 AND CONSIDERATION OF ANY VIREMENT

There were no items to discuss

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed Dated

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52. REPORT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

No meeting has yet been held. Cllr Wallbridge to email participants to agree a way forward.

54. OFFICE SPACE

The benefit of more office space was discussed in the current covid situation with a view to having officers working back in the office. The proposal was to rent another office, in addition to the current office, so that staff are able to work safely distanced and create room for storage as well as having safe space for visitors to the office. Cllr Jackson proposed acceptance and Cllr Mansell seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Resolved: to make arrangements to rent the office next door to the current office at a cost of £350 pcm and to employ Apollo Technology to move the computer hardware at a cost of £525.

55. OUTSIDE BODIES REPORTS

Radstock Museum - Cllr Jackson reported that the museum has been open on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons and is now opening on Saturday afternoons until the end of November. The shop and café remain closed. The Christmas Fayre has been cancelled.

British Legion - Cllr Jackson reported that Revd Martin Slocombe will be laying a wreath at the memorial stone in Westfield, but there will be no official Remembrance Sunday service anywhere and no poppy selling.

56. CREATING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Cllr Fuller reported that work was ongoing installing the fitness equipment at Westhill and completion was due shortly.

Cllr Jackson congratulated the team that produced the Westfield Warbler under difficult circumstances.

57. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Wallbridge thanked the office staff for continuing to work from home during these difficult times and keeping the business of the Council moving. He said that all Councillors are there to help anyone in Westfield and each other.

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58. B&NES COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Jackson reported:

- Councillors prevented a further restriction of parking in Radstock and the Coop has moved to The Street, Radstock, with no job losses, in order that work can commence on the site in Westfield.
- Discussion is being held around staff returning to the office to work. Emergency helplines – food parcels etc – are being wound down as more staff are returning to their usual jobs.
- She has presented the Chair's Community Awards as former Chair of B&NES, mostly virtual presentations.
- On the agenda for a full Council meeting on Thursday is the Government White Paper 'Planning for the Future', which contains major changes to the current process. These changes would be detrimental to the value of input of Parish Councils and individuals.
- It has been announced that badger culling is to resume through B&NES from the 1st September and she would be glad if Westfield Parish Council would take a stand against this. Labour are drawing attention to a resolution in March 2018 not to allow culling on B&NES land.

Cllr Moss reported:

- There has been a small spike in the number of covid cases in the area, rising to 15 cases per 100,000 two weeks ago, but is already reducing.
- The big debate currently in B&NES is the opening up of services safely. Risk assessments having been undertaken regarding staff working in the office versus working at home and the knock on effects of so many staff working from home are also being discussed.
- He has asked that Public Health England be more visible on social media as this is where many conspiracy theories and incorrect health information is being spread.
- He also mentioned the item on the B&NES agenda regarding the White Paper on Planning.

To resolve that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

53. REPORT OF THE GREEN AND OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUP

A site meeting had been held with B&NES and the architect of the Midsomer Norton Town Park to assess the feasibility of a nature trail between

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Shakespeare Road and the Midsomer Norton Town Park and to establish the possibility of receiving funding from s106.

Cllr Hopkins had liaised with a Surveyor, Michael Joyce, who would establish the value of the land that would need to be purchased and to contact the land owners.

Resolved: to take the next steps to ask Mr Joyce to undertake the work at a limit of 4 hours @ £195 per hour.

The meeting closed at 7:58pm

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