

NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Newent Town Council held on Monday 12 December 2011 at the Market House, Newent at 7.00 pm.

Present: Cllr L Lawton (Mayor), Cllr E Wood (Deputy Mayor), Cllr B Wellington, Cllr A Parsons, Cllr Mrs K Draper, Cllr R Beard, Cllr R Pilkington, Cllr D Blick, Cllr Mrs M Duncan, Cllr S Draper, Cllr Mrs J Bevan, Cllr J Celino

Also Present: Cllr Mrs J Gooch

Apologies: Cllr J Clissold

12.00 Mr Chris Townley Gloucestershire County Council and Mrs Wendy Jackson Forest of Dean District Council were in attendance to give an update on Town Centre improvement plans following them having been on display in the Library the previous week.

Wendy explained they had now a revised design taking on board the comments received at the last Information Share for Phase 2 which included the pavements and bus stop outside the Co-op. The Highway Safety Audit team have revised the design and have signed this off. The Co-op asked that the lighting be switched off in the bus shelter to co-incide with their closing which can be arranged. Wendy went on to advise there had been lots of positive feedback about the pedestrian crossing being retained – some people would like to see the lighting levels increased on the crossing however. There could be some opportunity to do this either from the buildings or by extending the existing beacon poles, similar to those in Watery Lane. This to be done at a later stage. There is still some concern about the bus bay – a compromised design has been reached. It won't be out in the carriageway – and they have widened the footpath as much as they can to get the bus shelter in. At the widest point they have come out approx 600mm from the existing kerb line which they ascertain will be enough to get the shelter in. As the location is in a 20mph zone they feel they can get the visibility criteria that they require, which was a concern previously. They have had a request to trial it but as it has been redesigned and safety audited they are not keen to do this. The timetable for implementation is early January starting at the Co-op location and working towards Phase 3.

Questions were taken on plans for Phase 2. Cllr Wood expressed concern about increased lighting at the pedestrian crossing and particularly in the beacon poles which he believed could be dazzling to drivers. He also raised concern about vehicles pulling out of the car park behind the bus which he thought would be a danger. Cllr Wellington asked why Stage Coach had refused to take their buses into the car park instead? Chris advised they had absolutely no control over this matter, particularly as Stage Coach was not a subsidised service of the County Council.

Work to and around the new bus shelter was anticipated to take up to three weeks and there would be a temporary stop outside the hairdressers whilst this work was being carried out. Cllr Beard expressed concern that vehicles

parked in the bus bay frequently preventing the bus from pulling in, and called for it to be policed. Chris advised that it could be made more enforceable. Currently the area was marked by double yellow lines but vehicles could stop to load and unload in this area. He said they were intending to make it a bus stop clearway – so that it becomes illegal for anything other than a bus to stop there. This would then be a matter for enforcement.

Cllr Mrs Duncan said she believed the pedestrian crossing was in the wrong place. It was in the narrowest part of the street and created a bottle neck. She believed what was needed was a mini roundabout at the junction into the car park. Chris advised he knew the crossing wasn't in the most ideal location but this was at the time considered to be the most suitable location because of the close vicinity of the two junctions of Watery Lane and the car park.

Phase 3 – Broad Street section

Concern was expressed about the Culver Street junction and the extent of the footway into Culver Street. Wendy advised that the emphasis was on the Town Centre and therefore extending the footway into Culver Street was limited. A new alignment of kerbing will allow pedestrians to keep within the pavement area whilst accessing visibility into Culver Street. Chris advised they will trial the kerb line changes in January whilst the other work to the bus stop is taking place using low level concrete circles and will leave in place for a couple of weeks. He will video to see how many vehicles are using. Members were pleased and encouraging of Chris's suggestion to put some additional weight restriction signage on the by-pass discouraging large lorries coming into the town and turning in Culver Street. He advised that as a traffic regulation, this will show on satellite navigation systems. It was noted however, that this may take some time to go through the legal process. Cllr Mrs Draper requested consideration be given to a No Right turn for heavy vehicles coming out of Culver Street into the town. Chris advised however that this would have to apply to all vehicles and there would be low compliance – this was therefore withdrawn.

Cllr Parsons requested consideration be given to making the pavement wheelchair friendly given the number of wheelchair users in the town.

Cllr Mrs Duncan asked if there was to be any disabled parking incorporated in Phase 3? She was advised that the former taxi-rank outside the Market House would shortly become allocated for disabled parking. Wendy advised that this matter had seemed protracted but that they had had to give the taxi-drivers 12 months notice of these intentions.

A further question was asked regarding when the tarmacing of the Market Square would be undertaken? Chris replied that he would be investigating the timing with the sub-contractors. Cllr Blick reminded him that the Market Square was in a conservation area and that the width of the double yellow lineage in this area should reflect this.

Wendy and Chris were thanked by the Mayor on behalf of the Council for attending the meeting and updating Members on the Town Centre progress.

12.1 Mayor's Announcements

1. Members were advised that a company known as BUDK supported by the Government is looking to pump funding into faster broadband across the country. There is currently a survey being undertaken to ascertain usage in the district and to push for faster broadband. Forms are available to complete or by doing so on-line by visiting Gloucestershire First. The Mayor urged Members to support this by completing the survey and to encourage others to do so too.

2. Travellers – Southend Lane update. The site is currently not being utilised to full capacity. An application has been submitted to extend their stay but this has not been validated. The Mayor advised that Planning Enforcement at the District Council would be investigating rumours of possible illegal settlement of travellers elsewhere in the town.

3. Public meeting – 16 December 2011. The Mayor reminded everyone of the forthcoming public meeting with the Police at the Community Centre and that the Police would be attending the next Council meeting in January to give feedback from that meeting.

4. The Town Council offices would be closed over the Christmas period although limited cover would be given to litter clearance on Council owned land during this time.

5. The Mayor advised referring to the last Council meeting when it was suggested knives were taken into School that he had had a meeting with the Head teacher of the Community School and had discussed the matter fully. He advised there was no complainant although the school took such allegations extremely seriously and will deal with them. The Mayor advised he had been passed alleged evidence and would be passing this on to the School accordingly.

12.2 Approval of Minutes of Council meeting – 14 November 2011

Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting of 14 November 2011 was proposed by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.

12.3 Matters Arising

P.117 10.1.2 8.1.2 Lighting under the Market House

The Mayor advised that the new antislip lighting strips had now been installed. Unfortunately this did take away the brightness of the light to a degree but the area was now safe to walk on. He further advised that he had had a meeting with Chris Townley from Gloucestershire County Council with regard to the

finish and he had insisted this be changed – he was currently awaiting to see to what degree and when this would be done.

P.118 Computer Upgrade

Cllr Pilkington reported that the new photocopier had been installed and was talking to the computers. Techcomp would be returning shortly to finalised the upgrade as planned.

P.118 6.1.4 Newent Rugby Club – Changing Rooms, Recreation Ground

Cllr Lawton advise he had put the Rugby Club's case to the Asset Management Committee to discuss the specifics of their bid. If it goes forward a proposition may come to the Town Council for a letter of support.

12.4 Approval of Minutes of Council meeting (Planning) – 28 November 2011

Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting (Planning) of 28 November 2011 was proposed by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.

12.5 Committee Reports

12.5.1 Finance & General Purposes Committee

Approval of the minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Committee meeting of 28 November 2011 was proposed by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.

7.1.3 Government Procurement Card

Cllr Pilkington gave an update on the progress made regarding enquiries made with regard to the use of a Government Procurement card. He advised the Council's Auditors' had been approached by the Clerk who stated they were not able to advise on this matter but expressed some reservation with what they referred to as a credit card. Cllr Pilkington pointed out this was not the case and that he had sourced that the card was in fact approved by the National Audit Commission. Enquiries were on-going regarding this matter.

12.5.2 Recreation & Environment Committee

Approval of the minutes of the Recreation & Environment Committee meeting held on 28 November 2011 was proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.

7.2.1 Allotments – bonfires

Cllr Blick asked that this matter be put back on the Agenda of the Recreation & Environment Committee as he believed the introduction of a skip would be

very expensive and that the matter had not been thought through properly. This was agreed.

12.6 Finance & Sundry Payments

Cllr Lawton declared an interest in this matter and refrained from discussion and voting.

Finance & Sundry Payments were agreed and considered lawful to a figure of £10,641.23.

12.7 Correspondence

12.7.1 Newent United Charity – nomination of Trustee

Advise that Cllr Parson's four year term was coming to a close and request the Council nominate a representative for a further period. Cllr Blick proposed Cllr Parsons be nominated for a further term, which was seconded by Cllr Mrs Draper and unanimously agreed.

12.8 Business

12.8.1 Planning applications – see attached

12.8.2 Update on Community Centre – Cllr Beard

Cllr Beard advised they had been concentrating in getting a long term lease in place for the existing building so that all users had got security of tenure for the next 15 years. The draft lease was currently with their solicitors who were looking at the detail. Cllr Beard advised that they would be coming to the Town Council to discuss what the Town Council wanted in a new building – currently they were looking at a choice of architects with whom to engage in drawing up plans so that they could be put forward for discussion and public consultation. He advised that the Paddock area was favoured as a location particularly as it was in the ownership of the Town Council and had been intended for development as community use, but again this would be open to discussion in the fullness of time.

12.8.3 To give consideration to Budget 2012/13 – Precept to be no more than 2% rise on Precept figure of 2011/12 of £172,481

Members agreed the budget as calculated prior to the addition of the project items – 11 votes in favour, 1 abstention and unanimously agreed that the Precept should be no more than a 2% rise on the Precept figure of 2011/12 of £172,481.

Members considered the project items – namely

Cllr Beard	Newent Initiative Trust Youth & Community Centre Young Carers	£10,000
Cllr Mrs Bevan	Newent in Bloom	£2,000
Cllr Mrs Duncan	Newent Allotments	£1,500
Cllr S Barker	Cliffords Mesne Village Hall Air Source heat pump	£1,000
Cllr Wellington	Jubilee Walk – Newent Lake	£1,000
Cllr Wellington	Increase in P/Time Staff	£4,000
Cllr Wellington	Arboretum – tree thinning	£1,500
Cllr Lawton	CCTV Camera Market Square	£1,700
Cllr Lawton	CCTV Camera Church Street	£1,700
Cllr Parsons	CCTV Recreation Ground Play Area	£1,700
Cllr Pilkington	Computer Equip fund/upgrade	£1,000
Cllr Beard	Chill-Out Zone	£3,840

Cllr Pilkington withdrew his £1000 bid for computer upgrade given the balance remaining in the existing budget.

Cllr Blick proposed that the remaining total of £29,940 be accepted and that the overspend of £8,472.38 (beyond the 2% rise) be taken from general reserves. This was seconded by Cllr Wellington and unanimously agreed.

12.8.4 To give consideration to Protocol- CCTV usage

Members referred to a draft document as drawn up by Cllr Clissold suggesting the protocol to be used in the usage of the CCTV system at the Cemetery Lodge.

Cllr Lawton reminded Members that whilst the CCTV system was housed at the Cemetery lodge, Members were not permitted to view the images on it.

Cllr Lawton proposed adoption of the draft document which was agreed by 8 in favour, 4 abstentions.

12.8.5 Representative Reports

Representative reports were received from:-

Fishing competition Newent Lake for Town Council cup	Cllr Wood
Newent Orchestra – Concert	Cllr Lawton
Newent Community School Winter Concert	Cllr Lawton

12.8.6 Any Other Business

Cllr Mrs Draper referred to an email forward by the Clerk that day advising that Newent Library would be closed for one week in January to enable public networking of their computers and the installation of two self-service machines and questioned how the public would access the Police point? It was suggested this matter be taken up with the Inspector at the forthcoming public meeting with the Police later that week.

This concluded the business of the meeting and it was declared closed at 9.15 pm