



Petworth Town Council

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A MEETING OF PETWORTH TOWN COUNCIL TOOK PLACE ON THURSDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2022 AT PETWORTH TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD BAKERY, GOLDEN SQUARE, PETWORTH COMMENCING AT 7PM

MINUTES

PRESENT

Cllr E Singleton	Cllr J Scallon
Cllr A Copus	Cllr J Thorpe
Cllr D Burden	Cllr J Fynes
Cllr P Hewlett	Cllr N Fox
Cllr M Peet	Cllr S Atkins
Cllr E Boyes	Cllr J Truscott

L Smith (Town Clerk)

Also present was Cllr E Lintill (Chichester District Council Leader) & Cllr J Duncton (West Sussex County Councillor).

126/22 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i) Cllr Singleton welcomed those present to the meeting, requested mobile phones were turned off and pointed out the fire exit.
- ii) Cllr Singleton congratulated Cllr Hewlett for her and the In Bloom volunteers' achievement in being award a gold award for South & South East England In Bloom 2022. She thanked Cllr Hewlett for her efforts in making the town look beautiful throughout the year and she asked Cllr Hewlett to pass on the council's appreciation to all the In Bloom volunteers.
- iii) Cllr Singleton asked the Clerk to record her gratitude to the Petworth Town Band for their participation in the local proclamation on Sunday 11th September. She asked Cllr Fynes to pass on the council's thanks to the Petworth Town Band committee.
- iv) Cllr Singleton advised the council that there had been a service at St Mary's earlier in the day to mark the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Petworth Boys School. She reported that the service was well attended and had included songs performed by children from local schools.

127/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported that Cllr S Frossard, Cllr C Kemp & Cllr H Desai had given their apologies.

128/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none offered.

129/22 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Subject to an amendment to minute 122/22 i) to record that the cost of the works to the street lights would be recouped in approximately 5 years through reduced electricity usage, upon the proposal of Cllr Singleton, seconded by Cllr Hewlett, the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15th August 2022 were approved as an accurate record and signed as such by the Chairman.

130/22 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of 15th August 2022 that were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

131/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Council.

132/22 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lintill presented the below report:

“We have submitted the £13.7 million Levelling Up bid to help revitalise Chichester. You have already been sent the media release, but just in case you missed it, you can also find it here: www.chichester.gov.uk/article/36821/Council-pursues-137m-Levelling-Up-Fund-grant-to-provide-economic-boost-to-Chichester-District

As you know, we had a very small window of opportunity in which to submit the bid and so officers across the council worked incredibly hard to get this huge piece of work completed in time. The government is expected to make a decision in Autumn of this year and so we will keep you posted!

I'm also pleased to tell you that the council has been allocated £1 million (over 3 years) from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to encourage economic growth and improve quality of life in the district. This month, the council submitted an Investment Plan, setting out how this money would be used, to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The UKSPF is intended to support places and communities through encouraging pride in the local area and increasing opportunities for residents and businesses. With that in mind, the council's plan includes a particular focus on supporting projects that have been identified through the district's vision groups.

We've been working with our partners to make sure that the objectives we put forward for investment will meet local needs and deliver the very best outcome for our residents, communities and organisations. Projects that aim to enhance the public realm through cleaning, landscaping and planting; increase footfall to the district and its cultural facilities; and provide support to community groups — including through improvements to facilities — are all examples of the types of the initiatives that are being proposed. The plan was submitted for consideration earlier this month, and subject to approval, the funds are expected to be made available later this year. We will keep you updated on this.

We have also recently been awarded circa £750k for the Rural Prosperity Fund one of only two councils in West Sussex to receive it. Like the UKSPF we have to submit a spending plan by the end of Nov it is to be spent over two years 4/23- 3/25

Many people are finding things tough at the moment due to rising goods and energy prices, inflation and cost of living pressures. In response, we are launching our 'Supporting You' campaign in September. The campaign aims to highlight the range of support that is available to those who may be struggling, including help with finances; help with saving money on household bills; help with housing; help with health and wellbeing; and help for businesses. We will be delivering this campaign in partnership with the Observer series this September. We would appreciate any help you can provide with this, such as distributing leaflets; signposting people to our website; and sharing our social media posts – many of which will feature videos of our inhouse experts. I'm also pleased to say that in the months ahead we will also be launching our 'Supporting You' team.

As you will be aware, this is a new service delivered by a specialist team of trained advisors who will be able to extensively support people with a range of issues by understanding their individual situation. The team will help people to access support through the council, including help with finances; help with housing; and help with health and wellbeing. The service will also link up with other partner organisations, including Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice; Arun and Chichester Food Partnership; and the Community Hub.

We also sent you an email in August to share our new video on how we are helping to tackle Climate Change in our area. The video highlights the range of work that we have done to date on this important work and we have already had some great feedback. This is now being used across our channels. If you haven't seen it yet, you can view it here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmNH9_2g4SY

Energy Rebate Scheme update:

Work continues on paying households their Council Tax Energy Rebate. To date, we have paid out £4,718,100 to 31,454 households, representing 92% of all eligible households in the district. The remaining households (2,617) who have not directly requested this rebate will instead have their £150 rebate credited to their Council Tax account in early September. Those customers who will have their energy rebate credited to their council tax account will receive an amended council tax bill to inform them of their reduced instalments.

Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme update:

All five groups of the Discretionary Energy Rebate scheme are now open. We received funding to allow for 1,831 Discretionary awards. So far, we have issued 414 awards, paying out a total of £62,100 from a grant allocation of £274,650. We continue to promote the scheme and are now looking at ways of encouraging those most vulnerable to the rising cost of energy to come forward and claim this additional support. The Discretionary Scheme is intended to support those who are financially vulnerable and those who exposed to higher energy costs, such as those with disabilities, on means tested benefit, or low incomes. We are also looking at ways that we can automate payments to certain groups, within the guidance of the scheme, to ensure that the fund is fully spent by 30 November 2022

We are starting to look at the budget for next year. It is difficult to do as everything is up in the air at the moment. Increases in utilities, fuel and higher than expected salary increases are having a negative impact on our finances. We believe we can balance our budget next year but after that it goes into deficit so if things don't change we may be looking at changes to services in the 24/25 budget."

Cllr Duncton reported that she had submitted a written report which had been circulated by the Clerk. She advised that she had attended the service at St Mary's earlier in the day which she said had been a great occasion to mark the anniversary of the bombing.

Cllr Lintill asked Cllr Duncton to establish what the unit installed in Downview Road was for.

Cllr Copus asked Cllr Lintill to chase the repairs required to the wooden railing in North Street. Cllr Duncton also advised that there were some loose paving slabs in North Street which needed attention.

Cllr Fynes reported that the pavement in Pound Street and High Street needed to be repaired and levelled, advising that some cobbles were also missing from the edging of the pavements in Pound Street. Cllr Duncton agreed to report the matter with WSCC Highways.

Cllr Atkins asked Cllr Lintill how the council could apply for some of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Cllr Lintill advised that she would send details of the application process to the Clerk.

Cllr Lintill & Cllr Duncton left the meeting at 7.19pm.

133/22 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- i) Upon the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Peet, the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings held on 19th July & 15th August 2022 were received by the Council.
- ii) Cllr Copus reported that the run rate on expenditure was at 45.1% however he advised that excluding the transfer of ear marked reserves, the run rate was at 42.2%, which was just over the assumed run rate of 41.7% for the time of year.
- iii) Cllr Copus advised that the full year forecast displayed a surplus of £6,540 at the end of the financial year.
- iv) Cllr Copus reported that having set up a £10,000 1 year bond earlier in the year, the committee would consider investment opportunities for more of the council's funds at their next meeting.
- v) Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Singleton, it was unanimously resolved to purchase 5 return train tickets for the In Bloom volunteers to attend the national awards ceremony at a cost of £241.

- vi) Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Scallon, it was unanimously resolved to pay invoices received from Muckle LLP to the value of £1,219 for legal services, from SLCC for annual membership at a cost of £351 and from Moore for the annual external audit at a cost of £600.
- vii) Cllr Copus reported that the committee had considered an email received from the Chairman of the Petworth Business Association whereby they had asked the council if it wished to purchase 20 market stalls and the trailer in which they are stored. He advised that the committee did not feel it appropriate to pay for the market stalls as they had originally been purchased by the PBA using a grant provided by Chichester District Council, another public authority. Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Fox, it was resolved to purchase a trailer from Mr J Riddell for £2,000 and to add 20 market stalls to the Council's asset register should the Petworth Business Association wish to donate them to the council.
- viii) Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Fox, it was resolved not to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements.

134/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE

- i) Upon the proposal of Cllr Atkins, seconded by Cllr Hewlett, the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 13th July & 10th August 2022 were received by the Council.
- ii) Cllr Atkins reported that the owner of Fineline Joinery attended the meeting on 28th September to present to the council. He advised that the committee had no concerns regarding their planning application to install a shed to store wood.
- iii) Cllr Atkins advised that the committee had considered consultations received from Chichester District Council regarding a new street name plate in Willow Walk, which they had supported, and regarding the street name for the new development at Rotherlea. He reported that the committee did not agree with the suggestions for the new development and had put forward 2 alternatives for CDC's consideration.

135/22 OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

- i) Upon the proposal of Cllr Peet, seconded by Cllr Copus, the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meetings held on 12th July & 3rd August 2022 were received by the Council.
- ii) Cllr Peet reported that the committee were trying to engage with the Leconfield Estate, CDC and Mr Andrew Griffith MP to identify a suitable site in the parish for a skatepark. He advised that the Leconfield Estate had not responded to the committee's letters requesting a meeting to discuss the potential purchase or lease of Leconfield Estate land.
- iii) Cllr Fynes asked Cllr Peet what the latest position was with regards to her suggestion of installing a shelter at the bus shelter near St Mary's Church. The Clerk advised that she would liaise with Cllr Fynes outside the meeting to discuss further.

136/22 RISK REGISTER

- i) Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Atkins and with all in favour, the risk register was adopted by the council.
- ii) Cllr Copus suggested that the council should consider registering Rosemary Gardens on the land registry. He asked the Clerk to source a quote for this work.

137/22 STANDING ORDERS

Under the proposal of Cllr Burden, seconded by Cllr Copus and with all in favour, the standing orders were adopted by the council.

138/22 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Under the proposal of Cllr Copus, seconded by Cllr Scallon and with all in favour, the financial procedures & financial regulations were adopted by the council.

139/22 WINTER SUPPORT & HELPDESK

- i) Cllr Singleton advised that she would like councillors to consider how the council might support residents over the winter period, particularly given the cost of living crisis.
- ii) She suggested the council should also establish what other local organisations were providing residents, for example the churches, to avoid duplication and to maximise the local effort.

- iii) It was agreed that a working group would be set up to develop a proposal for the council's consideration. Cllrs Singleton, Truscott, Hewlett & Boyes to be members of the working group. Cllr Burden suggested Mrs J Burden may also wish to join the group.
- iv) Cllr Fynes suggested the council should lobby the Co-op Head Office to request the Petworth store is changed from a convenience store to a general store. Cllr Singleton advised that the council would need to collate residents' views on whether this was required before any further action was taken. She suggested Cllr Fynes could write to the Co-op as a resident of Petworth should she wish to but that it was not appropriate to do so as a Councillor or on behalf of the Town Council.

140/22 CHRISTMAS 2022

- i) Cllr Thorpe reported that the Christmas event would take place on Saturday 3rd December 2022.
- ii) She advised that no one from the Christmas event working group had offered to be the main organiser of the event this year, therefore the staffing working group had met to consider paying someone to manage the event and to chair the working group.
- iii) Cllr Thorpe reported that given the lack of interest from those on the Christmas working group in managing the event & the volunteers involved in delivering it, the staffing working group felt it necessary to pay an Event Manager to ensure the event was a success.
- iv) Under the proposal of Cllr Thorpe, seconded by Cllr Copus, it was resolved to pay Ms J Collis up to £500 to manage the event.
- v) Cllrs Scallon & Copus stated that they felt it was important the event was provided for the community of Petworth and should therefore include community elements as well as the commercial Christmas market.
- vi) Cllr Peet confirmed that Christmas music could be played across the Market Square from the Leconfield Hall.
- vii) Cllr Thorpe advised that there was a meeting with an organiser of the St Edmund's Fair on 30th September to discuss when the Christmas tree lights would be switched on.
- viii) The Clerk reported that the Christmas market was almost full with just a few spaces for stall bookings left.

141/22 ROADSHOW

- i) Cllr Boyes suggested the council should have a roadshow to tell residents about the council, what the council does, who the councillors are and to engage with the community & the people the councillors represent.
- ii) Cllr Singleton advised that the council was looking to move premises & suggested they could organise an open day at the new location to raise awareness of the new premises, the work of the council and to encourage feedback from residents.

142/22 TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE GROUPS

- a) **Petworth Business Association (PBA)** – The Clerk reported that the PBA Annual General Meeting would take place on 19th October in the Leconfield Hall. She advised that the PBA's membership year had restarted, with new members joining the Association.
- b) **Petworth Visitors** – There was no update.
- c) **New Premises & Community Hub** – Cllr Singleton advised that discussion regarding a potential new premises were ongoing. She informed the council that should the council resolve to move premises, the new location must be a success for the town. She advised councillors that they would need to volunteer at the new premises & to be visible outside of meetings.
- d) **Planting & Horticulture** – Cllr Hewlett presented the following written report:

“Having had the most sustained driest and hottest period on record, things are greening up nicely and we are back to our Autumn tidy up, pruning before planting bulbs and winter flowering plants for next Spring. The new trees and shrubs survived and the Golden Crabapple is covered in fruit...perfect for the birds.

Petworth in Bloom are proud to announce that we achieved a gold award in the regional finals and are awaiting the result of the national finals on the 10th October at the Horticultural Halls in London. We will be stunned if we get a place as our national judges said it was, in their experience, almost unheard of for a group to go from nothing to national finalists in 5 years! We are pretty chuffed with ourselves!

This autumn we would like to propose that the berberis hedges up to the back gate in Rosemary Gardens are removed. Not only do they have vicious spines, but they are overgrown, dead in the centre and are preventing access through the back gate and are restricting the growth of shrubs behind. The gaps behind the hedges are a meeting place for the youth and others using it to take drugs and to use it as a loo! Can I ask Henry to quote on the removal of these?

A planter at the Barrie standard has been damaged, a new one can be ordered in time for the autumn planting.

The regional and national competitions involved a phenomenal amount of work not only in hard physical labour but also in paperwork and time commitment. The man hours involved by the committee was enormous, while our signed up volunteers were often missing! We are working towards a way to carry forward in the future but a paid employee, working on an ad hoc basis, who can take on some of the hard physical work would be much appreciated.

Charlotte Hamilton is standing down from the committee and the rest of us, though we will carry on, would like less pressure and time to enjoy our own gardens each summer. Oz Dallyn will hopefully join the committee in November. We will decide in early Spring whether we will enter In Bloom for the regional award for a 6th year, but whatever, we need more committed volunteers/ help to take on some of the load.”

It was agreed that Cllr Hewlett should source quotes for the removal of the berberis hedges up to the back gate in Rosemary Gardens.

Cllr Burden commended the In Bloom team and advised that Fred’s Bank was looking very good.

- e) **Leconfield Hall** – Cllr Peet reported that the Hall was busy with Petworth Festival events taking place in the Hall. He advised that Royal Opera & Royal Ballet productions as well as other films continued to be shown in the Hall.
- f) **Petworth Heritage Partnership** – Cllr Fox reported that the Heritage weekend had taken place during the mourning period for Queen Elizabeth II hence the performance from Petworth Town Band had been cancelled.
- g) **Traffic** – Cllr Scallon advised that the outcome of the council’s Community Highway Scheme application for a 20mph zone in Petworth should be known later in the year. He reported that following a recent visit to observe the work of the Petworth Community Speedwatch group, Mr A Griffith MP had reiterated his support for North Street to be included in the 20mph zone.
- h) **Petworth Park Sports (PPS)** – Cllr Peet reported that the new governance documents & membership rules had been finalized. He advised that a license to occupy was being developed and that there were various groups interested in having a base at the sports ground now the pavilion is a more attractive facility. He thanked Cllr Thorpe for her significant recent effort on policies, procedures and compliance at Petworth Park Sports. Cllr Peet reported that PPS had hired Ms. L Bartley who also managed the cinema at the Leconfield Hall, to manage the food & beverage operation at the sports ground.

143/22 NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING (Information Only)

The Chairman advised that the next Full Council meeting would be held on Thursday 20th October 2022.

Meeting closed 8.41pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date.....