

Gerrards Cross Town Council

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Minutes of the VIRTUAL Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 15th March 2021

Present: Cllr C Brown (Mayor), Cllr N Barnett, Cllr Bayliss, Cllr J Chhokar, Cllr J O’Keeffe, Cllr H Orme, Cllr J Palmiero, Cllr P Roberts, Cllr T Scott, Cllr E Surkovic, Cllr A Wood and Cllr J Woolveridge.

In Attendance: Buckinghamshire Council:- Cllr D Smith, Cllr R Reed, MoP Crispin da Costa and Bruce Holborn and Sue Moffat (Town Clerk).

151/20 Declaration of Interests - Councillors please give any declarations of interest at the beginning of the item on the Agenda.

152/20 Apologies for absence – Apologies have been received from Cllr B Gibbs and Cllr S Chhokar.

153/20 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th February 2021.

At the proposition of Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Woolveridge, these Minutes were agreed by Council

154/20 Public Speaking - None.

155/20 Report from Buckinghamshire Council Councillors.

Cllr D Smith:- (i) There have been no meetings at Buckinghamshire Council so no further reports; Regards the outstanding Highways issues:- (i) Wapseys Wood enforcement of illegal expansion. There has been a change of ownership which has impeded enforcement as Bucks Council is trying to contact the new owner; (iii) Cllr Gibbs has spoken to the LAT about poor quality of surfacing along Windsor Rd and who is contractual obliged to carry out repairs; (iv) Dangerous potholes - TfB repair potholes in order of seriousness. Potholes along A40 have not been repaired so cannot meet the criteria. Cllr Smith is meeting with the LAT next week and will try and escalate the problem but he has no power to alter the FixmyStreet system. Cllr Brown responded that the Community Board advised GXTC to pass on serious problems to local members to get things done. If local members have no powers than there is no other avenue to report highways issues. Cllr J Chhokar asked what can the Community Boards do about highways issues? Cllr Roberts pointed out the lack of white lines at the Packhorse Rd/A40 junction. Cllr Wood responded that GXTC has been chasing this up for 2 years now. Cllr Roberts added that dust carts are turning right out of Wapseys Wood on to the A40 which is not allowed. However members were not sure if this rule is still in place and whether it only applied to Veolia lorries.

Cllr R Reed:- (i) Regards outstanding Highways issues, the only one in his area is the damaged bollard on the A40 by the Apple Tree PH. This is a matter for the Lighting Team who are suffering from the Covid pandemic so no further updates. He will keep it on his priority list; (ii) He wished to bring it to the attention of this Council the recent consultation on Statement of Community Involvement to explain how Bucks Council will involve the community in the planning process. Bucks Council lists ‘Will’ or ‘May’ do’s in the consultation. He strongly recommends we object to the ‘May’ do’s as this appears to be discouraging consulting the public on planning issues. (iii) Cllr Reed believes that the Police priorities being set by the Community Board have no reference to GXTC nor Fulmer and Denham Parish Councils. He is embarrassed that he does not know how these priorities are set.

Cllr S Chhokar:- A written report has been sent in: (i) Cllr S Chhokar has raised all the Highways outstanding issues (save for Wapseys Wood) with Bucks Council and has also now raised Fulmer Road /Windsor Road resurfacing.

156/20 To confirm the Minutes of the following meetings:-

Commons Committee of the 1st March 2021. At the proposition of Cllr Orme, seconded by Cllr Woolveridge, the Minutes of the Commons Committee were agreed by Council.

Highways Committee of the 1st March 2021. At the proposition of Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Roberts, the Minutes of the Highways meeting on 1st February 2021 were agreed by Council.

Planning Committee 22nd February and 8th March 2021 - Cllr J Chhokar confirmed the Planning Minutes.

157/20 Meetings –(i) Agreed to have the Annual Town Meeting on 14th April 2021 which will be a virtual meeting in light of Covid restrictions. May need an upgrade in video conferencing to accommodate displays and a high attendance level. Invite the police to present a short report.

(ii) Agreed to cancel the Planning Meeting on 10th May 2021 in light of the Town Council's Elections being held on 6th May 2021. The first meeting of the new Council will be the Annual Council meeting on 17th May 2021.

(iii) NALC's advice from Government is that face to face meetings will resume after the 7th May 2021 if there are no further Covid restrictions.

158/20 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) updates. Cllr Orme just heard that 'Call for Sites' on Green Belt have been declined.

159/20 Communications – The next newsletter, VOICE, will be published in April.

160/20 To agree the proposed response to the draft Town and Parish Charter. Cllr Brown has circulated a proposed response. The conclusion being: 'The point is that there is nothing new here, no localism, no new powers entrusted to T&PCs. The point of the Parish Charter is that BC grants new powers to T&PCs. There is nothing in evidence of this in this document. Where is the list of devolved powers and assets? Where is the mechanism for T&PCs to participate in BC strategy? If BC is going to trust T&PCs to report local issues, where is the commitment to respond, where are the service levels for addressing the issues raised?'

The proposed response was agreed that the draft Town and Parish Charter was not fit for purpose.

161/20 At the request of Cllr Surkovic, 'Conservation of Built Infrastructure'. To discuss the benefits of nominating buildings as community assets, notably Colston Court, Everyman Cinema and the protection of shop frontages such as The Grocer, Station Rd. The report by Cllr Surkovic has been circulated. The conclusion being: 'The cinema, library and Colston Court would all appear to be amenable to list as a Community Asset, with limited downside to either the Town or asset owner. It provides residents with further options should any of these assets become subject to potential re-purposing. Once listed as a Community Asset they can readily be added into the Neighbourhood Plan. The 21 Budget provides further opportunity for the community to raise funds. Heritage listing is not recommended as the likelihood of success is far from certain. Regarding the property currently occupied by The Grocer, we may wish to consider adding the window feature into the Neighbourhood Plan. To note, all properties are in a conservation zone'.

It was agreed that GX Memorial Hall should be added to the list of Community Assets to safeguard its present use. The Library may also be considered although this is presently run by Bucks Council with a 91 year lease and the land gifted by BP Collins is on the proviso it remains as a library. It is believed that if Colston Court is sold as a Community Asset and then rebuilt the use of the building would need to remain for the same purpose. If that is so, why list it? If the Cinema is added to the Community Asset, GXTC would not intend to manage a cinema, so why list it? The shop frontage of the Grocer should be protected as in a Conservation area.

It was agreed :- (i) The Cinema and Library should be listed in the Neighbourhood Plan as protected buildings of heritage value; (ii) The shop frontage of the Grocer (and any other building with a notable architectural design) to be listed in the Neighbourhood Plan as buildings that make a positive architectural contribution to the Town; (iii) GX Memorial Centre buildings should be nominated as a Community Asset; (iv) Continue to monitor what is happening to Colston Court before a decision is made.

It was noted that a Community Asset is only listed for 5 years and would then need to be renewed, if required. The owner of a community asset has no obligation to accept the bid if GXTC chose to make one. Land in GX is very expensive so sale of a Community Asset would be at a high price.

162/20 At the request of Cllr Scott, ‘Dog Theft – How can GXTC protect local Residents?’

Dog theft has increased considerably over the last year during the Covid pandemic and the subject has even been raised in Parliament. It was agreed for Cllr Scott to write an article for April’s VOICE to raise awareness of this problem and the safety measures that can be taken e.g. microchip to register the owner, etc.

163/20 At the request of Cllr Scott, ‘ Update on the Youth Committee of the Community Board ’.

There has been 2 successful meetings of the Youth Committee with the last one had 12 people attending. Discussed a Company that engages with youth by visiting ‘youth hot spots’ to encourage more worthwhile employment. The company organises a platform for youth activity e.g. big screen for E-Sports convention, local youth art. It was agreed that a better understanding of teenagers would be worthwhile, not only those that use the Commons, but other hotspots around GX. Funding from the Community Board may be available. It was agreed for Cllr Scott to find out more about this and liaise with other parishes so there is a joined up approach. Also to look for grant funding and then report back to Full Council.

164/20 Finances

- (a) Resolved to agree payments for February 2021- Noted and agreed.
- (b) Agreed to delegate to the Chairman of F&GP and the Town Clerk to authorise any payments up to 31st March, 2021, being the end of the Financial Year.

165/20 Report on Meetings – members update on where they have represented the Town Council since the last meeting.

Cllr Woolveridge – Meeting to discuss ditch clearance by Oxford Rd/Packhorse Rd with HO, AW and SM, Age Concern Chiropody Clinic continues.

Cllr Orme – (i) 23rd Feb – Youth Service WP, 3rd March – TfB Stakeholders conference, 1st March - Meeting to discuss ditch clearance by Oxford Rd/Packhorse Rd with HO, JW and SM, 10th March – Meeting on common with MAD who want to perform a Shakespeare play on the Common in June. Will report back at next Common’s meeting.

Cllr Roberts – None.

Cllr Palmiero – Students’ promotional video of Town Centre with WeAreGX is going ahead soon.

Cllr J Chhokar – None.

Cllr E Surkovic – None.

Cllr Wood – 1st March -Meeting to discuss ditch clearance by Oxford Rd/Packhorse Rd with HO, JW and SM, 8th March – St Huberts Lane potholes and regards planning enforcement action and lastly meeting with the Manager of Fego’s to remove canopy that was blocking the pavement.

Cllr Scott – Chairing the Youth Services Working Group.

Cllr Bayliss – 2 meetings regards office refurbishment.

Cllr O’Keeffe – None.

Cllr Brown – 3rd March – TfB Stakeholders conference where found out TfB contract finishes in March 2023 and will then be taken back in house by Bucks Council. Need to drive forward the work GXTC has been doing regards grass cutting and pothole repair so model for the future.

166/20 To note information received in the correspondence at the Town Council Office – Election packs available from the Council Office.

167/20 To confirm that the next Council Meeting of Gerrards Cross Town Council will be at 7.30pm on 19th April 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.18 pm

Signed.....

Date.....