TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7:00PM
ONLINE


Also present: Miss E. Cox (Town Clerk), Mrs E. Bucklow-Holt (Assistant)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr B. Cutts and Cllr D. Tarbun.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Samiotis declared an interest in item 14. b) ii. Towcester Town Football. The Clerk will note the Declarations of Interests Register accordingly.

3. Open to the Public (maximum 15-minute session)

No members of the public joined the meeting.

4. Town Mayor’s Items

Cllr Dallyn was pleased to report that he had presented the winners of the Best Kept Garden Competition 2020 with their certificates and vouchers. First place went to Mr Phillips of Cedar Road; second place went to Ms Griffin and Mr Woodmason of Waterhall; and third place to Mrs Jones also of Cedar Road. He was also pleased to be present for the sounding of the Last Post for the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day and interviewed bugler, Mark Limbert, about his instrument. The video can be watched again on the Mayor’s Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=387641448885544&extid=3OEdklfdfGg0RAF

Cllr Dallyn is also looking forward to judging the Saracen’s Head staff Bake-Off challenge in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support on Friday 25th September.

5. Report back from representatives of South Northamptonshire Council

Representatives of SNC had nothing to report.

6. Minutes of Meetings

Proposal

Cllr Lynch proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th July 2020 be signed by the Chair as a true record; seconded by Cllr Blake; all in favour.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

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The Clerk confirmed that written permission has been received from SNC to reallocate a maximum of £8,500.00 towards the project to install bollards around the Recreation Ground. The TC contractor is to establish the supplier lead time. This item will be placed on the agenda for the next Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting as further discussion is needed on the options to provide authorised vehicular access.

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The Clerk confirmed the street names which were finally approved for the Furlongs/Farriers Phase 3 development as Pulpit Leys, Manning Drive and Yeoman Road. No further action was taken with respect to the request made by Towcester Town Football Club to apply weed killer to the Recreation Ground. This was due to the imminent resumption of the club’s football fixtures. Permission has been granted by Northamptonshire Highways for the Towcester Rotary Club crocus planting in the wide verge at the junction of Brackley Road/Greenview Drive. This will be carried out late October to coincide with World Polio Day.

8. Report Back from Local Bodies

Cllr Johns has attended several meetings to discuss proposals for the expansion of Towcester’s healthcare provision. Architects are due to be commissioned to determine the space required and it’s hoped the ambulance station will
relocate to provide additional car parking facilities. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 17th September. Cllr Askew questioned whether new medical facilities were due to be provided within the SUE development. Cllr Johns confirmed this is not the case; S106 funding has been earmarked to expand current services on their existing sites.

Cllr Samiotis confirmed that Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School Trust has submitted an ‘expression of interest’ to manage the first new primary school due to be constructed in the Southern Urban Extension.

Cllr Allen will be attending the Northants CALC AGM on 3rd October in his capacity as Director. Cllr Conquest will also be attending as the TC voting delegate. The issue of ‘fleasethold’ is included on the agenda for discussion, with a voting opportunity to escalate these discussions to national level. The Competition and Markets Authority is in the process of investigating this practice. The Chief Executive of Northants CALC will be drawing together examples of the agreements/fees being imposed on the purchasers of new properties to raise this issue with the new Unitary Authority. Cllr Lynch questioned again how SNC, as the planning authority, has allowed this situation to develop. Cllr Johns confirmed that arrangements with respect to the future management of open space is not a planning consideration; as such, it’s not subject to any part of planning consent. Cllr Lynch referred to previous communications on this matter with SNC’s Interim Head of Planning and the Economy, in relation to the Tove Grange development, and asked the Clerk to forward him this correspondence for review.

9. Northamptonshire Police
   Local Consultation: ANPR Camera Expansion

TC members raised no objections to the proposals forwarded by Northamptonshire Police to expand its ANPR network to Greens Norton Road, Brackley Road and Northampton Road in Towcester. The Clerk will respond accordingly.

The Clerk reported completion of the electrical works required to enable installation of the SNC’s CCTV camera on the Town Hall. The cost for this work will be recharged to SNC.

10. Climate Change Emergency
    a) Friends of the Earth; 20 Actions Town and Parish Councils can take on the climate and nature emergency

Proposal

Cllr Blake proposed that the TC formally acknowledges the Climate Emergency and forms a working group to research/put forward sustainable changes that both the TC and residents can implement; seconded by Cllr Bond; all in favour.

Cllr Askew, Cllr Bonc, Cllr Macaulay, Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Thomas all expressed an interest in participating in the working group. The date for an initial meeting of the group will be circulated in due course.

b) South Northamptonshire Council Climate Change Group
   To consider suitable locations for additional electric car charging points

SNC Cllr Catherine Tarbun has put forward a request for the TC to consider installing electric car charging points in the town. The Clerk confirmed that just one of the proposed sites, The Sawpits Centre, is in the TC ownership.

TC members discussed this item at length. Concerns were raised that the introduction of car parking spaces solely for use by electric vehicle owners would further limit parking facilities for the centre. Also, that non-users might park their vehicles at the centre to charge for extended periods. However, it was acknowledged that the Council should lead by example.

Proposal

Cllr Tarbun proposed that the TC agrees to the installation of one electric car charging point at The Sawpits Centre to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability; 7 votes in favour; 6 votes against; 1 abstention; proposal carried.

11. Sponne & Bickerstaffe Charity
    To consider the nomination received for a Town Council-nominated Feoffee representative on the charity

Karen Campbell had been nominated by a Feoffee on the Sponne & Bickerstaffe for consideration to fill the vacancy for a TC-nominated Feoffee.

Proposal

Cllr Hart proposed that the nomination for Karen Campbell to become a TC-nominated Feoffee on charity be accepted; seconded by Cllr Blake; all in favour.
The Schedule of Meetings for September/October 2020

The following schedule of meetings were approved by the TC for September/October 2020:-
Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting – Monday, 21st September
Resources & Planning Committee Meeting – Monday, 28th September
*Town Council Meeting – Monday, 12th October
*includes Resources & Planning Committee & Premises Committee
Cemetery Committee Meeting – Monday, 19th October
Resources & Planning Committee Meeting – Monday, 2nd November

13. Resources & Planning Committee

a) Planning Decisions received to 4th September 2020 were noted as follows:

Approval for development granted in respect of the following planning applications:-

S/2020/1206/FUL  16 Coulthard Close, Towcester
Additional dormer window to front elevation of approved drawings (S/2018/1233/FUL).

S/2020/1202/FUL  89 Alcester Court, Towcester
Proposed rear conservatory (retrospective).

S/2020/1191/FUL  8 Tyrrell Way, Towcester
Part two storey and part single storey rear extension, insertion of new window opening.

&

S/2020/1203/FUL  8 Tyrrell Way, Towcester
Partial conversion of garage to habitable space, creation of additional parking bay to front aspect.

Refusal of permission for development granted in respect of the following planning application:-

S/2020/1117/ADV &
S/2020/1236/LBC  185 Watling Street Pub & kitchen, 185 Watling Street West, Towcester
Replacement of existing hanging sign board. Trough and flood lights to be replaced by LED. New lanterns to entrance. New signwriting replaced like for like. Stone to be painted black (retrospective).

b) Planning applications received to 8th September 2020:-

S/2020/1369/FUL  39 Docklewell Close, Towcester
Garage conversion to living space.
No objections.

S/2020/1386/OUT  Land North East of Sheppards Farm, Wood Burcote, Towcester
Outline application (access included) for the demolition of the existing stables and outbuildings and proposals for a new access (private drive) serving 4 new residential plots.

Following some discussion; the response below was proposed by the committee:-
The committee supports the concerns raised by residents of Temple Close with respect to the unauthorised felling of a significant number of mature trees to facilitate this development and the detrimental effect of this on wildlife habitats.
A further concern relates to the safety of creating an access (private drive) to serve the new residential properties from Bessie's Lane, which is designated for pedestrianisation. Furthermore, the committee would like to request information on the community benefits due to be delivered by this development.

S/2020/1426/MAF  The Bell Plantation, Watling Street, Towcester
Variation of Conditions 2 (plans) and 4 (uses) of S/2019/1699/MAF (Canopy to allow covered access to existing café restaurant/café and ancillary office, nurse and care room) to alter approved plans to allow alternative mix and configuration of uses.
No objections.
S/2020/1403/MAF
Bungalow Sunnyside, Water Lane, Towcester
Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to form 44 Retirement Living
apartments for older people including communal facilities, guest apartment, access, car
Parking and landscaping.

Following some discussion; the response below was proposed by the committee:-
The committee would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate its previous comments
that it considers the development represents an over-intensification of the site which
will be detrimental to the street scene. Also, that the car parking provision is inadequate
for the number of apartments due to be constructed.

S/2020/1365/FUL
Former Co-op site, Richmond Road, Towcester
Demolition of the existing store to provide temporary car parking area.
The TC response to the application is included as an addendum to the Minutes.

c) Towcester Town Council – Grants to Local Bodies
To consider the applications to receive funding from the Town Council’s budget for Grants to Local Bodies
From:-
• The Rotary E-Club of District 1070
• Renew 169 Wellbeing Café

The Clerk reported to the committee that just £425.00 remains in the TC 2020/21 budget for Grants to Local Bodies.
If the committee wishes to support both applications, funding will need to be diverted from elsewhere within the
budgets.

Proposal
Cllr Johns proposed the committee approves the application from The Rotary E-Club of District 1070 to receive
£250.00 from the TC budget for Grants to Local Bodies for erection of a permanent information sign on the new
wildflower meadow near to Hazel Crescent; seconded by Cllr Blake; 11 votes in favour; 1 abstention.

Proposal
Cllr Allen proposed the committee approves the application from Renew 169 Wellbeing Café to receive £1007.52
from the TC budget for Grants to Local Bodies for the purchase of equipment for its new Men’s Support Group
located at Bell Plantation; seconded by Cllr Lynch; 11 votes in favour; 1 abstention.

The committee were in agreement with Cllr Bond’s suggestion that recipients of funding for ongoing projects be
asked to provide a follow-up report in six months’ time giving details of how the money was used and who has
benefited from it.

d) National Joint Council for Local Government Services: 2020-21 National Salary Awards

A Closed Session Report on the 2020-21 National Salary Awards is included as an addendum to the Minutes.

14. Premises Committee

a) To consider proposals for re-opening of the Town Council’s premises to returning hirers with effect from 1st
October 2020

The committee discussed the feasibility of re-opening the TC premises with effect from 1st October 2020. Much
research has been undertaken by staff into the risks and the TC responsibilities and an action plan had been
devised. However, considering the Government’s announcement on 11th September of new restrictions to combat
the rising number of Covid19 cases both nationally and locally, committee members were of the opinion that now
would not be an appropriate time to re-open. The TC has a duty of care, not only to hirers, but also to its staff and,
in respect of the Town Hall, to its long-term tenants. Less than one-third of regular hire groups are interested in
returning as soon as permitted and this combined with the increased requirement for regular deep cleaning,
additional safety measures which need to be put in place, and the physical restrictions of each building it’s not clear
currently whether it will be financially viable to re-open. The TC understands that this will be a great
disappointment for existing and potential new hire groups. It was agreed that the committee will continue to
monitor the situation and review its decision on a monthly basis.

i) To consider the request to use the Town Hall for a regular fitness class on Monday evenings
A long-term hirer of the Town Hall has requested to move her exercise session from Thursday evening to Monday
evening. Unfortunately, this would clash with the Full Council Meetings as/when physical meetings are resumed.
The committee agreed to decline this request.
b) **Towcester Youth & Community Centre**

i) **Financial Update**
The Clerk reported a balance of £78,355.75 in the Towcester Youth & Community Centre account as of 31st August 2020. This takes into account repayment of the annual recharge to the TC.

ii) **To consider the request received from Towcester Town Football Club to install an outside tap**
Following some discussion, the committee agreed to decline the request from Towcester Town Football Club to install an outside tap on the premises. Although the cost for installation would be met by the Football Club and the tap would include a tamper-proof cover, the committee were not confident, from past experiences, that this would provide sufficient protection and it would become a target for vandalism.

The meeting concluded at 8:20pm.

The next Full Council meeting will be held on Monday 12th October 2020
15th September 2020

F. A. O. Samuel Dix
Development Management
South Northamptonshire Council
The Forum, Moat Lane
Towcester
Northamptonshire
NN12 6AD

Dear Samuel,

Re: Application No. S/2020/1365/FUL
Location: Former Co-op Site, Richmond Road, Towcester, NN12 6EX
Proposal: Demolition of existing store to provide temporary car parking area

I am writing on behalf of Towcester Town Council in response to the consultation issued in respect of the above planning application.

The Town Council has previously put forward proposals via its Towcester’s SNC Councillors and were assured that these had been accepted and will be incorporated into the development of the site. Namely:-

- Reconfiguration of the car parking layout to provide a circulatory route for vehicles
- Electric car charging points
- Landscaping and seating areas
- Re-instatement of the public conveniences

I appreciate that Towcester’s SNC Councillors are involved in ongoing discussions with respect to development of the site; however, the Town Council expected these items to feature in the planning application. Their omission and the use of the word ‘temporary’ in the description for the application have raised concerns.

I’m aware, through ongoing communication with SNC’s Property Investment and Contracts Manager, John Slack, that options for the public conveniences are being considered; however, I would be grateful for your confirmation that all of these items remain as part of SNC’s proposals for the site.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate in coming back to me.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Cox

E-mail: towncouncil@towcester-tc.gov.uk
Website: www.towcester-tc.gov.uk