



EPWORTH TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

08 February 2021 – 7.00pm

MINUTES

Present:

Councillors: Cllr. Finch (Chair of E&C Committee), Cllr. R. Whittaker, Cllr. Stewart, Cllr. Woods

Clerk and RFO: Mr S Baxter

Members of the public: Cllr. Brumby (to ascertain how and what the E&C Committee do)

Meeting commenced at 7.00pm

AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

1. Welcome to all Councillors and any members of the public sitting in observation

The Chair welcomed all and checked all Councillors were able to see, hear and be heard as the meeting was held via a digital format.

2. Members of the public participation – this will be limited to 10 minutes and each member of the public will have a maximum time of three minutes. This is at the discretion of the Chair.

There was no member of the public present.

3. Motion to exclude members of press and public from participation – but can observe

For the following agenda points members of the public can observe the meeting but cannot take part in any discussion or debate. Any persons not Councillors or the Clerk will be muted on Zoom

This motion was not tabled as there was no member of the public present. The Clerk did note that Cllr. Brumby was in attendance but she is bound by Code of Conduct in meeting participation.

4. Resignation of Cllr. Mitchell from the E&C Combined Committee

The resignation was noted by the Chair. The Chair did express her sorrow but did confirm that Cllr Mitchell has agreed to attend the E&C Meetings if required to provide assistance.

5. Apologies for absence from Councillors

The Chair received no apologies.

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6. Declarations of interest – for the Council to note including dispensations presented to the Clerk

There were no declarations of interest pertinent to the Agenda items presented nor did the Clerk receive any prior to the meeting.

7. Minutes of the last E&C Committee Meeting (06 Jan 2021) – for information only as minutes have been approved as accurate at Full Council Meeting on the 02 February 2021

The Clerk confirmed that these minutes had been approved at the Full Town Council meeting on the 02 February 2021.

8. Quotes for cleaning of gutters for Cemetery Lodge – to discuss and agree

The Clerk confirmed that a quote had been received from JT Building for £280 to clear the gutters from the Cemetery Lodge and Chapel of Rest Town Council buildings. No other quotes had been received.

- *Motion to agree and accept the quote from JT Building for the gutter work was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried*

Actions: The Clerk to contact JT Building and arrange to get the work commenced. He will report back to the Committee upon the completion of the works.

9. Provision of draft proof excluder at the door at the Chapel of Rest – to discuss and agree

The Clerk confirmed that a quote had been received from JT Building for £80 to install a draft excluder for the Chapel of Rest Town Council building which would also stop stones from entering the building. No other quotes had been received.

- *Motion to agree and accept the quote from JT Building for the draft excluder work was proposed, seconded and agreed. Cllr Stewart objected to the motion. Motion carried*

Actions: The Clerk to contact JT Building and arrange to get the work commenced. He will report back to the Committee upon the completion of the works.

10. Siting of planters (one at the bottom of and on the grassed corner of Fieldside and the second at Studcross playing area on the outside grass border) – to discuss and agree

The Clerk confirmed that the decision had been taken a Full Council to investigate the possibilities of siting the planters at Fieldside and Studcross. He had also received a quote of £140 for the moving and concrete base for the planters from a local contractor.

The Clerk confirmed he had tried to gain permission from the agents that manage Studcross playing area for permission to install the planters but unfortunately had not heard anything. He had also contacted NLC to gain permission from them for the grassed corner at Fieldside – they were assessing for any H&S issues.

The Committee discussed the issue of what due diligence had been undertaken on the feasibility of siting the planters at the locations as mentioned. Cllr Stewart asked what considerations had been made in regard to the possibility of placing the planters (or other planting street furniture) at the West End Road to ensure all of Epworth was treated fairly. He also asked if the Fold in Epworth had been considered?

EPWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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Cllr Whittaker stated that a lot of the areas that had been mentioned had narrow paths and thus placing any planters or similar pieces of equipment may be considered unsafe. She did say that historically a lot of residents down West End Road because of the narrowness of the street had objected to any pieces of street furniture.

The Councillor discussed the various issues of the placement of the planters in detail and the consensus was that the matter would be look at in-situ by Councillors and then the subject would be discussed again at the next E&C Committee Meeting.

Actions: The Councillor viewing the areas in question in-situ would report back to the Committee during the next Committee meeting.

11. To discuss the extra bin obtained for QE 2 Field – to discuss the purchase and fitting

The Clerk confirmed that a price had been investigated for a suitable bin and one for £376 had been found. The Chair of the Committee had previously checked with the Clerk to ensure that the bin was suitable for all types of popular litter – the Clerk stated that he had checked with the supplier who confirmed the bin was suitable.

- *Motion to agree and accept the price of the new bin was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously. Motion carried*

Actions: The Clerk to contact the supplier (Glasdon UK Ltd) and arrange to item ordered and then delivered. He will report back to the Committee upon the completion of the works.

12. Frequency of SLA with North Lincs Council of current litter collection across Epworth – to discuss detail and requirements of litter collection for part of the Handyman role

The Clerk confirmed that he had been advised by the Street Team at NLC on the frequency of the litter collection under the current contract the Council had with NLC. They stated that during the high season they undertook litter collections of three times a week and in the low season it was twice a week. They also then undertook a quality assurance check when they felt it was needed.

The Clerk confirmed that NLC had refunded a rebate of three months of the annual contract due to the lack of litter collection NLC stated was due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Cllr Woods stated that the frequency that NLC undertook the litter collections was appropriate and the rest of the Committee agreed.

- *Motion to agree the frequency of the litter collection by the new Handy person when appointed to mirror the frequency of the NLC contract was proposed, seconded and agreed. Cllr Stewart abstained. Motion carried*

Actions: The Clerk to ensure that the frequency of the litter collection is added to the job description of the Handy person role.

EPWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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13. Decoration of the upstairs at Cemetery Lodge – discussion of what is needed and quote

The Chair opened the issue that the upstairs of the Town Council's office at Cemetery Lodge was in desperate need of more work.

The Cllr Whittaker confirmed that upstairs top floor had been cleared – specifically the old bathroom during which when the bath was removed, they had found woodworm. There was also damp in the walls as well as the plastering needing work. Work had been undertaken on the middle floor which had been painted and had maintenance undertaken to allow this area to be used for storage.

The Chair confirmed that as the property had been gifted to the Town Council, the Council had a moral obligation to ensure that it is looked after and any significant issues addressed. The property was old and possibly had not had significant work on the top floor for a very long period of time.

The Cllr Whittaker confirmed that work had also been undertaken as live infestation had been found and there was urgent work needed. She confirmed that the Council had a duty of care for maintaining the building for the safety of Council staff that work there and Councillors who visit.

Cllr Stewart raised a strong objection of the word 'decoration' in the discussion of the agenda point as he felt that the Council should not be spending money on decoration on rooms when these rooms are just going to be used for storage. He also felt that as the rooms on the middle and upper floor had been designated as unsafe for use (other than storage) the Council undertaking this work was not appropriate.

Cllr Woods stated that the work needed, while titled 'decoration' was actually maintenance work which included walls having emulsion painted on them and exposed wood glossed – both of these was to protect the walls and building from further deterioration.

The Clerk confirmed that he had received various names and contact details of local decorators in the Town from Cllr Woods and that he would contact these tradesmen to arrange a visit to allow for a quotation.

Cllr's Woods, Whittaker and Finch said they would help and be present when the decorators visit to provide quotes so that they can ensure that the quotes are based on the same thing and are consistent.

Actions: The Clerk to contact the various decorators and arrange for times when they can visit – this then to be relayed to the Councillors to ascertain who can attend. These quotes will then be brought back to the Committee for a decision.

14. Hanging Baskets – to discuss update and actions needed for progressing hanging baskets project

Cllr Whittaker opened the agenda point as she was one of the main drivers of the project the previous year. She stated that the price of the hanging baskets charged to the businesses that wanted to partake in the hanging basket project was agreed at the Full Council to be kept at £20 despite the increase in cost to the Council – this was an attempt by the Council to take into the account the impact of Covid-19 on their businesses.

Cllr Whittaker stated that the Clerk had drafted a new letter to all business which included a deadline for the businesses to respond of 25 March which would allow enough time for the Clerk to compile a list of businesses wanting a hanging basket and get it sent to the Nursery providing the plants.

EPWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Cemetery Lodge Burnham Road Epworth DN9 1BY
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The Chair thanked Cllr Whittaker who confirmed that she would get a list of businesses in the Town centre to the Clerk who would get the letters ready for hand delivery to the businesses no later than Friday 19 February. These would then be hand delivered by the Chair and Cllr Whittaker.

Actions: The Clerk to ensure that the letter to businesses are completed once the list of businesses are received from Cllr Whittaker.

15. Production of The Echo newsletter – to discuss and agree details

Cllr Whittaker opened the discussion with the Councillors about her hope that another edition of The Echo would be published in May 2021. She stated that the money for the publication had been agreed in the budget for the year and it was a good opportunity for the Council to show the Community what the Council were both doing and hoping to do in the next year. She confirmed that it would go to the Full Council in April 2021 for approval.

She asked that if Councillors had any suggestions for articles or stories that they would like to be included – they need to email her (or through the Clerk). There was a suggestion of having biographies of Councillors and Clerk to show the Community who represents them.

Actions: The Clerk to email all Councillors to encourage them to send any news worthy articles to Cllr Whittaker.

16. Community Orchard – to discuss progress and action needed

The Chair introduced the issue – this was an issue that been discussed by the Council over the last year. The proposal was that at the bottom of the cemetery where the ground is sloped, to consider planting a Community Orchard for the benefit of the Community. It is thought that because the area of the cemetery is sloped that it is unsuitable for the use of burials and thus by planting an orchard it would benefit the green drive of the local governments as well as the local insects and small wildlife.

The Committee also discussed that if the area was suitable for an orchard and the funding could be in place, the Council could offer the service of ‘sponsor a tree’ as a memorial for lost friends and family. This would benefit members of the community as well as helping the financial impact of the project.

It was hoped that if the go-ahead was given on the project, the Council would apply for the various environment grants that NLC offer to hopefully off set a significant part of the project cost.

The Committee wanted the Clerk to investigate the legal and planning issues as well as the grants criteria.

Actions: The Clerk to investigate the various issues raised and bring the findings back to the Committee at the next E&C Meeting.

17. Town walks – to agree format and pattern

The Chair opened the agenda point on the reason for the Town Walks, the possible schedule and the volunteer Councillors. The Chair said it was a way to not only pick up litter in the various locations that are owned and managed by ETC but also areas that link to these areas owned by NLC.

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Cllr Whittaker said that these walks had been very successful in also allowing the Councillors to see first hand any issues that affect the community of Epworth as well as providing an update to the Committee and Full Council on areas that would benefit from installation of street furniture like planters.

Cllr Stewart raised the issue: Was the walks necessary in the current lockdown and would these Town Walks be breaching the current COVID-19 restrictions imposed by Government? In addition, the Town Councillors should set an example and not be seen allegedly breaching the restrictions.

The Chair and Cllr Whittaker strongly refuted this argument in stating that the previous walks were not in contravention of any lock down rules and actually the walks were done in a socially distanced manner often walking in different from each other. They stated that it also was permitted as their daily exercise of which they are not restricted from litter picking during this exercise.

The Cllr Wood and the Chair would go on the Town Walk this Sunday (14 February 2021) and would report back to the Committee on the additional issue of where to place the two large planters that the Council wanted to place.

Actions: The Clerk to ensure the issue is brought back to the Committee at the next E&C Meeting.

18. Facebook items – to agree what items are included

The Chair asked for suggestions for what could be included in any Facebook items. The Committee made suggestions of the Town Walks by Councillors which included litter picking, the extra bin that will be provided and new signage at the Cemetery Lodge Town Council Offices. The idea was also suggested to include new signage at Kings Head.

19. Questions to the Chair of the Committee – update from Councillors from members of the community

There were no questions raised.

20. Next meeting of the Committee – 7.00pm on Monday 08 March 2021 by Zoom

Meeting was closed by the Chair at 7.50pm.