

## **CINDERFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Cinderford Town Council held online in a secure Zoom video conference on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

### **PRESENT**

COUNCILLORS - C. Witham (Chairman), C. Brown, J. Charlton-Wright, Ms R. Lewis, Mrs E.D. Martin, G.L. Morgan, Mrs S Reader, Mrs L.I. Sterry, R.A. Sterry, M. Turner.

Locum Town Clerk - Mrs E Bennett

APOLOGIES for Absence – Mrs L. Bent, Max Coborn (Mayor), Mason Coborn,

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

Recorded as above.

**2. Chairman's Report**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting. The Chair reported that Councillors had embraced the technology to hold online meetings and Councillors and Staff had gone above and beyond their normal duties during Lockdowns. He advised that charities, businesses, the public, churches, voluntary organisations and Councils had come together which had brought about a community spirit and looking out for neighbours. The Chair thanked Cllr Brown for his work on the Future High Street Fund and the Levelling Up Fund. A new park at Miners Field was being used well and residents were thanked for their fundraising and for monitoring its use. PCSO's continue to be active in monitoring play areas and the new equipment was also monitored by CCTV. Residents would shortly be consulted on plans for a new skate park. Some community events such as the Memorabilia Day, Church Parade and Remembrance Day Service were shown online and had included overseas viewers. The Christmas Tractor Run had been well received by residents. Aspects from this event will be taken forward when planning future Christmas events. The innovative ways these events had taken place during Covid-19 restrictions had been welcomed. The Council said a fond farewell to Mrs Lynda Thomas, Town Clerk, who had retired after 30 years service to Cinderford Town Council. Her drive on projects and impact as a champion of Cinderford Town was highlighted. She would support the Locum Clerk and Belle Vue Centre going forward. The Chair finished by thanking all Councillors for their work and help in developing an excellent community spirit and the Council looked forward to the new normal.

**3. County Councillor's Report – Cllr Graham Morgan**

Cllr Morgan provided a written report:

Speeding Vehicles, We have at long last managed to get the two new VAS up at running at either side of Cinderford Bridge Junction, this will free up the old sign for use in other speed hot spots in Cinderford Parish.

Flooding with regard to flooding over the Christmas period in Cinderford, we have managed to get underway a Forest of Dean surface water forum, which will be attended by all the relevant agencies, the first meeting will be on the 8th June 1-30pm to 4-00pm, I am pleased this is now up and running because of lot of the flooding could have been

avoided, that is with the necessary maintenance on these main water courses being regularly carried out.

We have also reported many pot holes in Denecroft and Hildene areas I have also reported the poor state of Forest Vale Road and Collage Road Cinderford with a severe large sunken drain cover at Forest Vale adjacent to Leeway's Building.

We have also reported the suspicious sunken area on the pavement and road very close what was the shaft of St Annals Iron Mine Shaft in Causeway road, myself and Mark Turner reported this and I have asked highways to take a careful examination with this being a school route for many children.

#### **4. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Mrs Di Martin**

Cllr Martin highlighted that liaison between the District and Town Council had been positive. Cllr Martin provided a written report:

Cinderford Town Council currently has three serving Councillors on the District Council due to the resignation of Cllr Coborn for health reasons in December 2020. The last twelve months have been particularly challenging for staff and members of the District Council due to the ongoing COVID Pandemic and the ensuing restrictions and regulations.

Decisions made at Full Council during the last twelve months include:

1. The Council voted to have a photovoltaics renewable energy system at its Coleford offices. with the underlying principle to achieve the most significant carbon reduction

2. The majority of the Council approved and endorsed the strategic option for the Forest of Dean Local Plan ii.

3. Although the government delayed the publication of the White Paper on Devolution and Recovery, I successfully proposed that a meeting with Mark Harper MP to discuss the issues - a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for support for our key 'asks' and asking for a briefing to parliamentarians on the issues and uniqueness of our Forest of Dean.

4. All Cinderford Councillors opposed the Council decision to approve amendments to the current Council Tax Support scheme, in relation to Working Age claimants for 2021/22, including any uprating, as follows:

- a) The introduction of a Banded Council Tax Scheme from 1 April 2021.
- b) That a capital limit of £16,000 is retained within the scheme.
- c) That backdating is reduced to three months.
- d) Second Adult Rebate will be removed.
- e) That Council Tax Support is restricted up to and including a Band E property
- f) That a hardship fund is created to support those most affected by the changes.
- g) That the Council contribute 10% of its savings from the changes to support the hardship fund.

5 Council accepted my motion to ban the release of helium balloons from Forest of Dean District Council owned land and discourages their use because of the risks

they pose to livestock and the environment. To provide advice and guidance to organisers of events and use the Licensing regime to promote a voluntary ban on the use of helium balloons.

6. Council also voted to ban the use of glyphosate herbicides, pesticides and chemical slug pellets on council land used for food growing. To encourage town and parish councils within the District to cease the spraying of glyphosate in all their council operations as soon as possible.

7. Council also adopted my motion to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.

To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

8. Council budget was accepted at February meeting, but Council did accept my amendment that due to the approved changing in the Local Council Tax Support scheme to increase the Council's contribution to the Local Council Tax Hardship Fund to £58,400.,

9. The Council Housing Strategy has been approved after consultation with the Community and the Council continues to work with Housing providers to build Affordable Homes.

Casework has continued throughout the pandemic and councillors continue to work hard to represent the interests of its Cinderford constituents.

**5. Any questions from the Public.**

Although no one from the Public had attended, the meeting had been live streamed and the Chair thanked everyone for attending.

The Meeting closed at 19.00 p.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....