



**Minutes of the Cinderford Town Council Meeting
The Council Chamber, Cinderford,
Tuesday 9th January 2024, 7 p.m.**

Present:

Cllr Graham Morgan (Chair)
Cllr Louise Bent
Cllr Jeremy Charlton-Wright
Cllr Darren Flower
Cllr Carol Marsh
Cllr Di Martin (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Alison Pflug
Cllr Lynn Sterry
Cllr Roger Sterry
Cllr Mark Turner

In attendance:

Emma Bennett, Clerk
Les Love, Estates Manager

Apologies received:

Cllr Matthew Bishop.
Cllr Chris Brown
Cllr Tim Holder
Cllr Jacob Sanders
Cllr Karen Turner

Absent:

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1) To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Cllr Bishop, Cllr Brown, Cllr Holder, Cllr K Turner, Cllr Sanders.

2) Declarations of Interest – to receive any declarations of interest in any matter to be discussed at the meeting. Members and Officers are requested to identify the nature of the interest.

- Council Tax Arrears - The Local Government Finance Act provides that any councillor who is two or more months in arrears with their Council Tax payments has a legal duty to make a declaration of interest. No arrears were declared.
- Item 14(d) Dockham Road - Cllr D Martin declared a non pecuniary interest as a Trustee of FVAF. Item 14(d) was for information only.

3) Public Participation Session – A period not exceeding fifteen minutes for members of the public to make statements and ask questions of the Council. (i) Each person will be allowed no more than three minutes plus a brief follow-up to any answers given by the Council. (ii) Questions may be answered but not debated by the Council. (iii) Any issues which the Council deem require consideration will be referred to the appropriate committee or deferred to the next Council Meeting.

None present.

4) Chairman's Urgent Business (for information only items)

Highways Road & Footpath Closure - information on closures can be found at

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/>

St White's Road condition - issues are being dealt with by GCC Highways.

Christmas Light Storage - lights are stored in a free unit at Rothdean who no longer have storage facilities available. The need for a replacement storage unit was discussed. The Clerk advised that a quote had been requested from a previous unit supplier. The previously purchased steel store

suppliers (company 1) had cost CTC £3348 for a unit. The storage unit currently being used was available to purchase from company 2 at £2k plus £300 deliver + VAT and was for a bigger unit. Proposed to purchase the currently used steel unit from company 2 (Rothdean) based on known condition, price and delivery miles. Council suggested that the unit was painted green, the location considered and added on a base. The Clerk would forward Council comments to the Grounds Team. Proposed by Cllr R Sterry, Seconded Cllr Turner. All in favour.

5) To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th December 2023

The Minutes of the meeting were accepted and signed as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Martin, Seconded Cllr J Charlton-Wright. All in favour.

6) Matters Arising from Minutes (for information only)

- Kissing gates for Miners Welfare Playing Field ordered
- Public liability & property damage for skatepark in place
- Climate Adaption draft report circulated to Climate Action Working Group
- Mayor had judged the Christmas lights competition
- A local TC had advised that regular monitoring at Waterwells by the Police does not occur. Arrangements are in place for the Police to view Cinderford's CCTV system out of hours when needed.

7) Police Update

a) To receive and note the written monthly report

The December 2023 report was provided detailing Incident/Crimes and Proactive works.

b) To discuss recent issues

To discuss when police are in attendance. A recent window breakage incident was discussed.

8) To receive an update from the Estates Manager on the Levelling Up Fund, Changing Places, Estates Matters and note and agree future works:

A. The Wesley - works complete under LUF.

B. 6 Market Street - update on works by Harris Evolution provided. Tenants are considering the VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme grant.

C. Rheola House - internal redecoration started. Flooring and velux windows ordered. External works to be undertaken when weather improves.

D. To receive an update on the stage and associated works at The Wesley and agree any further works and actions

Stage works commenced 8.1.2024. Green Room works start 15.1.2024 by Gloucestershire College construction students. FODDC Building Control & Conservation Officer are very supportive of works which are externally funded.

F. To receive an update on the Town Clock installation at 6 Market Street, note the second quotation, note the Clerk & Estates Manager decision on the Contractor

Clock assembled and sound test completed. An automatic winding mechanism was being explored.

F. To receive an update on the Changing Places Toilets and agree any further works and actions

Electrics & plumbing currently being installed at Dockham Road. Sanitaryware ordered and due to be installed at the end of February 2023. The funding deadlines would be met.

G. To receive an update on the Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Performance Certificates

Cotswold Energy had visited premises to provide a detailed quotation: The Wesley at £240.00, St Annals House & Rheola House would be £320.00 per building. All prices were plus VAT.

Proposed to appoint Cotswold Energy based on local supplier by Cllr Martin, Seconded Cllr L Sterry. All in favour.

9) To receive and approve the purchase of a secondhand truck following an update from the Ground & Maintenance Technician noting the current vehicle condition

CTC received a condition update on the current 2009 Volkswagen Crafter truck. Staff and a Councillor had viewed a 2014 Mercedes Sprinter truck. Council received written details noting it was available to purchase at £5,500. The previous owner also owned the VW Crafter. CTC could part exchange the 2009 truck for £1000. The balance to pay would be £4,500 and would include a full MOT, serviced and 6 months warranty.

Proposed by Cllr R Sterry, Seconded Cllr Flower to purchase the used Mercedes Sprinter truck and part exchange the VW Crafter truck with Shaun Walding. All in favour.

10) To receive an update from the Cinderford Community Emergency Plan Working Group

No further update since last meeting

- 11) Climate Action - to receive an update from a member of the Climate Action Working Group**
JBA Consulting had circulated the draft climate adaptation plan. This had been forwarded to the Working Group to respond to the draft by 11.1.2024.
- 12) Correspondence (N/D/A)**
- a) **To receive the grant thank you letter from the the Forest Drop-In Client Committee**
Council noted the thank you letter noting the grant had contributed towards a pantomime visit.
 - b) **To receive and note the FOD Inclusion Group Minutes & TOR - 7th December 2023**
Received and noted.
- 13) Reports/Minutes (N)**
- a) **Written update from County Councillor**
 - b) **Written update from District Councillor**
 - c) **Committee Updates**
No updates provided. Councillors had not met since the previous December 2023 meeting.
- 14) Community Hospital, Skatepark, & Dilke Hospital update (A/N/D):**
- a. **Skatepark & associated works update incl Severn Dean Lions Club donation**
 - Mavericks have completed work.
 - MFFreeman are due to return to site for the next phase of works.
 - S104 agreement for the connection of the stormwater drainage to connect to a manhole in Cartway Green - Guinness Housing Association are in contact with CTC and MFF.
 - A donation of £250 has been received from SDLC to include their logo on a bench/bin.
 - Lighting and fencing will then be installed. Dates unconfirmed due to challenging weather conditions.
 - b. **To receive and note the maintenance and guarantee statement from Mavericks**
Received and noted by Council. The statement had been forwarded to the Ground & Maintenance Team staff.
 - c. **To receive and note the ROSPA skatepark inspection report**
Received and noted. The skatepark will be included in external inspections going forward.
 - d. **Dockham Road lease position update**
Looking to conclude by the end of the financial year.
 - e. **To receive the response from FODDC re Dilke Hospital ACV submission and agree a reply**
Council considered the correspondence dated 3.1.2024. The Clerk suggested a Working Group was set up to progress the evidence gathering, required information and the reply to be submitted. Borough Councillors would raise the burial site idea at a FODDC meeting. A historic photo would be circulated. The Working Group would consist of Cllr Turner, Charlton-Wright, Morgan & Pflug.
- 15) Internal Auditor Visit Report - 15th December 2023 (visit 1)**
- a) **to note and agree actions and response**
The report from the first visit was received and noted. Internal control procedures are adequate to meet the needs of the Council. Council considered the report:
 - **Investment Policy** - Council agreed to delegate to the Estates & Finance Committee to review a draft Policy prior to Council approval. The Clerk would also contact other Council's with regard to seeking external financial advice.
 - **Bank Reconciliation** - comments noted. The Clerk had discussed it with the accountant.
 - **Transparency** - AGARs for 2019-20 & 2018-19 added to the www.
 - **Steam Mills Recreation Ground Charity** - discussed with accountant & SLCC contacted. A meeting of the SMRGC would be held on 9.1.2024.
 - **Contract of Employment** - duplicate issued and signed. The original could not be located.
 - b) **To re-discuss the Chairman/Mayor role**
Council re-discussed the role of Chairman/Mayor noting the role cannot be split. Council discussed the historical position at Cinderford where the Chairman and Mayor have been separate roles since 1998. The Clerk advised the position as in Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration.
Cllr Sterry proposed and Cllr Charlton-Wright seconded that the roles still remain separate. 3 Councillors abstained. Remaining Councillors were in favour.
It was agreed to obtain further advice before the next annual meeting.
 - c) **To approve updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations noting the NALC documents have not been updated to reflect changes**
The documents had been amended to reflect revised thresholds. Model regulations had not been changed by NALC and Staff would not have been aware of the changes.

Proposed Cllr Martin, Seconded Cllr Flower. All in favour.

d) To note the increase in fidelity guarantee to £700k

The Clerk had increased the Fidelity Guarantee commercial crime cover. The policy changes had been made with Aviva. The annual cost was circa £30 increase.

16) Finance (N/A)

a) To agree the Accounts for Payment as per the list circulated prior to the meeting

b) To note any urgent payments already made for ratification including card payments

Members were circulated with the figures for the accounts requiring payment and it was resolved that the accounts and wages totalling the following payments be paid:

Payment made since last meeting December 2023 - £192,362.05 (see appendix 1)

Payroll to be approved £14,151.58

Expenditure to be approved: £1,668.81 (see appendix 2)

Approved Cllr R Sterry, Seconded Cllr Charlton-Wright. All in favour.

c) To receive the latest financial reports - income & expenditure, earmarked reserves, balance sheets, debit card use, bank statements, bank reconciliation to 31.12.2023 (mth9)

Received, noted and signed.

Proposed Cllr R Sterry, Seconded Cllr R Sterry. All in favour.

d) To receive the Internal Control Checklist & Clerk/RFO Update

Not completed due to Councillor illness. To complete at the earliest opportunity.

e) To receive the staff salary 2024/25 information (confidential paper)

To cover under confidential session (item 21)

f) To receive the Gifts & Hospitality Register

Received and noted.

g) To discuss earmarked reserves & virements

Report noted and discussed. Council agreed the following income virement:

- o Move £9485 from 300/1315 Rheola - utilities recharges to 300/1301 Service charge
- o Move £9485 from 305/1315 St Annals - utilities recharges to 305/1301 Service charge
- o Move £2500 from 305/4115 St Annals Equipment Maintenance to 305/4120 St Annals Repairs & Maintenance

Council agreed the following expenditure virements:

- o Move £4500 from 320/4110 Wesley new equipment to 320/4121 Wesley Enover project (10% grant funding contribution).

Proposed: Cllr Charlton-Wright, Seconded Cllr Flower all in favour.

h) To receive the FODDC taxbase correspondence for 2024/25 noting this is 2,515.82

Noted.

i) To receive and approve the draft 2024/25 budget as previously reviewed

There had been several meetings involving councillors to discuss the draft budget. The detailed draft budget, which had been previously circulated, was noted.

The Council agreed to set a budget of £599,151.00 in 2024-25.

Proposed Cllr Martin, Seconded Cllr Charlton-Wright. All in favour.

j) To agree the precept for 2024/25

The Council discussed setting the precept for 2023/24 at £498,601.00. This will be a band D charge of £198.18 which is a 4.5% band D increase. Council noted the majority of Cinderford properties were Band A & B and would not be subject to band D rates.

Proposed: Cllr Cllr R Sterry, Seconded Cllr Martin that the agree to submit the precept requirement for £498,601.00 for the financial year 2024/25 to be submitted to Forest of Dean District Council. All in favour.

k) To receive the update on the PWLB application for CTC's contribution to the skatepark project

Form LC1 was signed at the meeting and would be submitted.

17) Planning Applications - see list attached (D)

Council discussed the applications and agreed the following responses to be submitted:

Conversion of garage into holiday let.

Brickyard Bungalow Hawkwell Green Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3JJ (P1627/23/FUL)

No objections/Support. All in favour.

Erection of two storey dwelling, garage with hobby room above and widening of existing vehicular access. Demolition of existing dwelling. (Part Retrospective)

Former Hillgarth Littledean Hill Road Cinderford Gloucestershire (P1655/23/FUL)

No objections.

Change of use of residential dwelling to holiday let. (Retrospective)

24 Meendhurst Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 2EG (P1524/23/FUL)

Objections remain the same as submitted previously - objection due to the lack of parking, access on a narrow road and commercial waste collection would not be viable.

Land At, Littledean Hill Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

Erection of a detached single-storey dwelling with associated parking, garaging, landscaping and associated works - alternative scheme to P0507/23/FUL.

No objections.

Discharge of condition 04 (full foul and surface water drainage scheme) relating to P1633/22/FUL.

Rackham House Floors Ltd Newtown Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 2YT

Ref. No: P0117/23/DISCON

No objections

Conversion of barns to holiday accommodation, erection of two holiday cabins and conversion of outbuilding to a dwelling. (Part Retrospective)

Herbert Lodge Monmouth Road Drybrook

Cinderford Councillors did not wish to comment on the Drybrook application. However Councillors suggested that the view of Highways should be sought.

18) Date of next Meeting (N): 13th February 2024, 7pm.

19) CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. To resolve to continue in 'Closed Session' under the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following business to be discussed is considered to be of a confidential nature.

Proposed by the Chair. All in agreement.

20) To receive an update on staffing matters and consider and agree any recommendations
See confidential restricted minute.

21) To receive and note the staff salary 2024/25 information (confidential paper)
See confidential restricted minute.

22) To discuss any matters arising from the FODDC lease meeting on 9th January 2024
See confidential restricted minute.

23) Close of Meeting

Signed:.....

Date:.....