

Amesbury Town Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council
Tuesday 2nd April 2024
At 7.15pm in the Bowman Centre

Present: Cllr Dr M Devendran (Mayor), Cllr T Edwards (Deputy Mayor), Cllr R Yuill, Cllr R Crook, Cllr J Swindlehurst, Cllr M Strange, Cllr S Hedge, Cllr A Lord, Cllr A Hagger, Cllr L Knight, Cllr E Taylor, Cllr J Jaconiah, Cllr I Mitchell

In Attendance: Mrs SJ Tucker (Town Clerk)

Visiting Public: 13

Public Questions – There were no public questions

Guest Speaker – Chris Hilldrup (National Highways) provided information about the flooding of the underpass at Countess Roundabout. Due to the unprecedented rainfall experienced, the worst since records began in 1871, there is undue pressure on the water table and the pumping system at the sub way. Work was conducted to separate the light circuit at the roundabout and the pumping system to make it more effective. Gully suckers have also been deployed to clear detritus that may prevent the pumps from working properly. With the level of the river being so high it means pumping of the water out of the underpass is not always effective. National Highways are working on a detection system whereby a regional centre is alerted to the issue so that engineers can attend. If the A303 Tunnel goes ahead the planned Flyover will replace the need for the underpass. In a response to questions raised by Town Councillors about actions should the tunnel not go ahead, Chris explained that other options for the underpass could be considered but would have to be prioritised in line with National Highways schemes.

Andy Harris then provided an update on preliminary works for the Tunnel, particularly the cabling work that SSEN were carrying out on the A360, work would be carried out 24/7 wherever possible. A trenching machine would make progress from the City at quick speed excavating the land, this reduces normal trenching times. Traffic, along with weight limits that have been placed on smaller roads/routes will be monitored. More preliminary work is dependent on the current appeal process but includes work to improve the Rollestone Junction and Allington Track.

In response to a question about the amount of disruption that Amesbury may face should the project go ahead, Andy stated that the majority of works were offline, adjacent to the A303. Disruption would however be expected when the Flyover is built but National Highways would work to mitigate this, there would also be a requirement for the new route to join the original route at the latter end of the project. There is a Designated Fund Project that National Highways is working with Wiltshire Council on, there may be funding available for the Town Council through this fund but any project would need to meet National Highways priorities.

In a response to a question about the local diversion routes that would bear the brunt whilst works were ongoing and the question about whether these roads are fit for purpose, Andy said this is something that National Highways would look into. Likewise, the Risk Assessments relating to disruption and impact on Amesbury, this would all be considered whilst working on the contract with the provider and would be in line with CDM Regulations.

Upon completion of the Tunnel, any Fire and Rescue requirements would be the responsibility of the local emergency services. National Highways are working with them throughout the process to understand the tunnel construction. National Highways has been working with Neighbourhood Policing Teams to discuss the impact of the works, influx of people, how it may affect local life

and potential protests along with site security. Chris advised the Town Council contact their NPT for updates.

The Mayor along with the Town Council thanked both speakers for their update.

53/2024. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Buchanan MBE, Cllr D Kuczera and Cllr J Lord.

54/2024. To approve the minutes of the last meeting dated 5th March 2024.

The Minutes were approved and signed as a true record.

Proposed: The Mayor

Seconded: Cllr R Crook

Resolved

55/2024. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members

No Declarations of Interest received.

56/2024. To receive the Clerk's update (to deal with business from the last meeting)

The Clerk, Operations' Manager and Deputy Mayor conducted a site visit with a local resident following concerns raised about vehicle access onto grassed areas near to the sun dial. Planters will be placed at points where vans and cars are gaining unauthorised access, this is damaging the grass but it also a danger to pedestrians. The caretaking team are also measuring for knee high fencing in other areas to prevent vehicular access. The Clerk has also met with SSE and a local electrician to determine the best option for the Town Council to control the use and make payment for the electricity to the lights within Bonnymead Rec. Both SSE and the local contractor have suggested a separate digital metre whereby we will be able to note the KWz used. Amesbury Town Football Club will still receive the invoice from the supplier, we will be able to correlate the readings of our metre with their main metre and determine the amount of electricity used. The Football Club will then be able to invoice us.

This month's focus is on end of year accounts closure and the internal audit, both of which are taking place at the end of the month.

57/2024. Councillors' Questions and Statements

JJ Cllr Jaconiah enquired about the possibility of providing more public toilets in the Town, given the only ones available were in Central Car Park. The Mayor suggested that there may be comments to highlight this in the Survey that is currently ongoing.

SH Cllr Hedge asked if anyone had responded to the email received, asking about bus shelter cleaning. The Clerk was unaware but would look into this.

JS Cllr Swindlehurst thanked the Chamber of Trade for their Easter Bunny Parade.

MS Cllr Strange noted that the parking metres in Central Car Park aren't always working and some users aren't able to use the online parking service. The Mayor will contact Parking Services.

TE/AH Cllr T Edwards noted that some potholes had been repaired on Stockport Avenue however, there were still a lot that required work and reporting and emphasised the need to lobby Wiltshire Council. The Mayor informed him the best way to report them is via the Wiltshire App as recommended by the Wiltshire Council Highways Matters team at the meeting held the previous week. As a result of that meeting Cllr Hagger stated that there is a significant structural issue with roads and their deterioration due to hot and then cold and wet weather, and only £10million Wiltshire Council has to spend to repair them.

58/2024. To receive the Mayor's remarks (report)

It was a delight to host a Bingo Afternoon on 21st March 2024 to raise funds for the Amesbury Soul Singers. A heartfelt "Thank You" goes out to all the wonderful residents who attended and showed their support. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the community champions who helped on the day. Thanks to the Soul Singers for the lovely performance on that day. An amazing sum of £500 was raised. I would also like to render a special thanks to the Amesbury Filling Station for the sponsorship.

I participated in the memorial service honouring Liz Rose, a distinguished Community Champion, on March 22, 2024, at the Amesbury Methodist Church. Liz made significant contributions to the community, demonstrating unwavering dedication and passion throughout her service. She played a pivotal role in fundraising efforts for my charity appeal and left a lasting impression as a remarkable individual. My heartfelt condolences and prayers are with her family during this difficult time.

I would like to thank our Town Clerk Sarah and the council staff for their support.

59/2024. To receive the Police Report

The Police report was received and noted.

60/2024. To receive reports/updates and proposals from Committees and Working Groups

60.1/2024 Planning (Meeting of 2nd April 2024) – Cllr Yuill outlined the outcome of the meeting held prior to the Full Council meeting:

PL/2024/02715 Householder Planning Permission

Restructuring and extension of conservatory to provide better accommodation at 2 Fairways Court, Salisbury Street, Amesbury

SUPPORT

PL/2024/02755 Full Planning Permission

Installation of kitchen extract flue to proposed new restaurant within premises at Unit 2-5, Bence Court, Archers Way, Amesbury

SUPPORT

PL/2023/11074 Consent to display an advertisement

Replace signage – Amended Plans at Nationwide Building Society, 37 Salisbury Street, Amesbury

SUPPORT

PL/2023/06709 Appeal Notice

Erection of 2 dwellings and associated works at land to rear of 42 Kitchener Road, Amesbury
OBJECT on the basis of over development

60.2/2024 To approve the Minutes of the Projects' Committee (18th March 2024)

Proposed: Cllr Swindlehurst

Seconded: Cllr Hedge

Resolved

Cllr A Hagger informed the Council that the Town Survey produced by the LGRC was now live and we awaited the results in order to make plans for improvements.

60.2.1/2024 To review the tender submissions for the Men's Shed and appoint a contractor, taking into account the recommendations of the Projects' Committee

Both tender submissions from Boden and D&N Construction were provided to the Council, costs came within £200 of each other and both companies had previously worked with the architects with a good record of work.

It was proposed that Boden be awarded the contract based on their submission of **£333,050.71 + VAT**

Proposed: The Mayor

Seconded: Cllr Swindlehurst

Resolved

AL Cllr A Lord asked for a full cost breakdown for the project and to ensure the design meets the needs of the users. The Clerk will provide all the information once information about a suitable contract type is received from the architects.

TE Cllr Edwards reminded the Council about the phrase used for this project, given its wider usage of storage for the Council and sports teams, rather than just a Men's Shed. The Clerk stated that the original wording in the S106 Agreement was the Pavilion Extension.

60.3/2024. To approve the Minutes of the Amenities' Committee (19th March 2024) and receive the Allotment and Cemeteries Report

Proposed: The Mayor

Seconded: Cllr Hagger

Resolved

60.3.1/2024. To approve the issue of retrospective Exclusive Rights of Burial at no cost should the need arise, as recommended by the Amenities' Committee

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell

Seconded: Cllr Edwards

Resolved

60.3.2/2024 To decide if the Town Council wishes to fund a Community Shop post end of the current lease in December, as discussed at the Amenities Committee meeting

A report was provided to Councillors containing information about the Shop, this included its costs, its products, its volunteers. Cllr Edwards highlighted these points. Councillors asked if there was an option for the shop to be housed within the History Centre. The Clerk explained that there may be clauses in place with the lease that prevent this and the History Centre and the shop in its current form would probably not be suitable for the History Centre. This item was deferred until more information was available and the results of the Town Survey were known. Cllr A Lord will liaise with the History Centre over their plans. He also thanked the volunteers that have been working in the shop over the years.

60.4/2024 To receive the Staffing Panel Minutes (8th and 18th March)

The Mayor reported that the Staffing Panel had reviewed the organisational staffing structure and suggested that the council consider appointing an independent reviewer.

60.4.1/2024 To approve the recommendation of the Staffing Panel to appoint an independent provider to carry out a Staffing/Structure Review

Proposed: Cllr Jaconiah
Seconded: Cllr Swindlehurst
Resolved

60.4.2/2024 To approve the incremental increase by 1 x SCP (Spinal Column Point) to the Clerk's pay as at 1st April, as approved by the Staffing Panel

Proposed: The Mayor
Seconded: Cllr Crook
Resolved

60.4.3/2024 To update the Council on the recruitment of the Admin and Communications' Officer

The Mayor reported that the Staffing Panel conducted an interview process and chose a candidate for the Admin and Communications Officer position. The selected individual has accepted the job offer and is pleased to commence full-time employment starting July of this year. The clerk notified the Panel that the candidate is available to work Fridays in May and June, which would facilitate her acclimatisation to the Town Council's operational procedures.

60.5/2024 To receive an update from the Policy Group (26th March 2024)

The Mayor reported that the Policy Group convened on March 26, 2024, to look at the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. During the review, adjustments were made to replace "Chairman" with "Mayor" and "Clerk" with "Town Clerk." The articles of association is a work in progress and will be looked at in the near future. The minutes of the meeting will be distributed next month, along with the summons for the May Meeting.

61/2024. To receive reports/updates from external meetings attended

61.01/2024 The Stonehenge Area Board/Highways Meeting (27th March)

The Mayor presented the following report:

I attended a meeting on 27/3/2024 called "Our Roads Matter," organised by Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Ian Blair Pilling as part of the Stonehenge Area Board's commitment to keeping the parishes informed.

The Town Clerk, Sarah Tucker, along with Cllr Strange, Cllr Haggard, and Cllr Knight, attended the meeting.

The meeting was well-attended by residents, councillors, and representatives from National Highways and Wiltshire Council.

During the meeting, it was highlighted that Wiltshire Council has allocated an additional £10 million of funds with the aim of improving the condition of our highways and bringing them to a more reasonable standard.

Overall, the "Our Roads Matter" meeting provided a valuable platform for open dialogue and collaboration between the council, National Highways, and the parishes. It showcased the commitment of all stakeholders to prioritize the improvement of our roads and ensure that the community's needs are met.

I will pass on the slides and minutes to the councillors once they have been well-received.

61.02/2024 Amesbury Town Council and the Chamber of Trade/Carnival Committee (26th March)

Cllr Jaconiah explained why the meeting had been held, the Chamber of Trade Events that are being held in 2024. The requirement for trained personnel in TMCE and first aid provision at Remembrance. The Chamber of Trade are considering holding a Firework Event, subject to a suitable location being found. The Clerk had said that funding and support was available through the Events Budget that had been significantly increased in 2024.

62/2024. To approve Payment of Accounts and Bank Reconciliation

It was proposed to approve the March payments and Bank Reconciliation

Income: £1,557,235

Expenditure: £644,580

Proposed: The Mayor

Seconded: Cllr A Lord

Resolved

63/2024. To approve the installation of a digital electricity metre and timer at Bonnymead Rec Pavilion in order for the Town Council to determine future electricity usage for their lights (cost £957.10)

Proposed: The Mayor
Seconded: Cllr Mitchell
Resolved

LK Cllr Knight asked about Solar Lights given the Council was looking to refurbish Bonnymead Rec. The Mayor said that this project was some years away but would be investigated as part of it.

RY Cllr Yuill asked if the light heads could be looked at to make them more efficient.

64/2024. To review the Kebab Van's use of the Pavilion Car Park on a Wednesday evening following the 3-month trial period (Jan-Apr) and determine the next steps

The Mayor highlighted that only one complaint had been received since the Kebab Van had started, this had been dealt with immediately.

LK Cllr Knight asked if another consultation was required to see if people still wanted this provision and whether there was opportunity for other providers to use the car park.

TE Cllr Edwards asked about future charges.

The Council could not agree at this point based on the information it had.

It was therefore proposed to extend the current contract for 2 months, Councillors were asked to email the Clerk with questions for consideration.

Proposed: Cllr Hagger
Seconded: Cllr Jaconiah
Resolved

65/2024. To agree that Town Council land will not be sold off to residents following requests to consider this

TE Cllr Edwards provided an update following the last meeting where the Clerk had received a request for the council to consider selling some land to a resident. In light of this and other previous requests the Council agreed to **NOT SELL** its land to any potential buyer.

Proposed: Cllr Yuill
Seconded: Cllr Hagger
Resolved

66/2024. To agree the sublet of the History Centre café (this is permitted under the lease) and consider the Town Council's financial undertakings in relation to this

AL Cllr Lord provided information on the current lease conditions and legal requirements for the sub-let of the café at the History Centre. The Council were fully supportive of the sub lease and could see how this would only serve as a positive move for both the Town and History Centre in terms of extra income and footfall. He explained that the tenant would normally pay the costs for the legal documentation required as part of the History Centre and Town Council lease. But, as this was the History Centre's first

year in business the Council understood the financial pressures. Cllr Lord therefore put three recommendations to the Council to consider:

- a. The Council pay the legal costs of £1250+vat and recharge to the History Centre
- b. The Council bear the legal costs of £1250+vat itself
- c. The Council meets the costs of the legal fees £1250+vat but will seek reimbursement through the non-payment of electricity charges for the CCTV that it would make to the History Centre (circa £50 per month)

There was much debate amongst the Council as to how it wished to proceed on this matter but consensus was that the Town Council would provide some financial support.

Options b and c above were therefore put forward for councillors to vote on.

Option c received the majority of votes, therefore it is proposed that The Council meets the costs of the legal fees £1250+vat but will seek reimbursement of these costs through the non-payment of electricity costs it incurs for the CCTV at the History Centre (circa £50 per month).

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell

Seconded: Cllr Hedge

Resolved

67/2024. To outline the requirements in accordance with Standing Orders ROP 01 for Mayor/Deputy Mayor candidates to submit their documentation to the Clerk by 24th April 2024

The Mayor outlined the requirements for those candidates wishing to stand for Mayor and Deputy Mayor in accordance with SO ROP1, all documentation is to be with the Clerk.

68/2024. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7.15pm, this will be the Annual Meeting of the Council