

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING OF STANLEY TOWN COUNCIL
Held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: C Hampson*	G Binney	H Clark	J Clark
D Marshall	A Clegg	M Davinson	J Kane
C Marshall	J McMahon	B Nair	J Nicholson
J Pallas	J Stephenson	L Timbey	D Tully
J Tully			

*Chairman

OFFICERS: James Black (Town Clerk)
Alan Tubman (Deputy Town Clerk)
Nicola James (Senior Administration Officer)
Ann Barry (Finance Officer)
James Harper (Operations Manager)

ABSENT: Cllr G Wilkinson

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Town Mayor made the following announcement.

Good evening everyone and welcome to our remote meeting of Stanley Town Council. This meeting is taking place on Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 6.30pm and is streamed live to YouTube. I am Councillor Carole Hampson, Mayor of Stanley, and I will be chairing the meeting tonight. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our guest speakers, Members, Officers, members of the public and media who are watching this live stream.

Before I commence with the formal business on the agenda, I would like to cover the housekeeping issues for us all to follow.

For those taking part in the meeting could you please only speak when invited to speak by myself as chair, keep your microphone on mute at all times unless invited to speak. If you wish to speak please use the raise hand function. Once invited to speak, please introduce yourself with your name and position unless you have already introduced yourself earlier in the meeting. If you are having issues with connectivity, try switching off your video and use the audio function. If connectivity issues continue, you may have to leave the meeting and re-join to get a better signal. If a vote is needed, a roll call of Councillors names will take place, after your name is called, please unmute your microphone and state whether you are for, against or abstaining then mute your microphone again.

Please follow these simple rules as it will help us run the meeting as efficiently as possible.

I will be pausing briefly when questions and comments are being invited to allow members to register their intention to speak.

Please be patient should we encounter any issues. Thank you.

83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members **ACCEPTED** apologies from Cllr C Bell. Cllr G Wilkinson is absent from the meeting.

84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Nicholson declared an interest in Item 13 (Neighbourhood Wardens Contract) and will not take part in the conversation or the vote.

85 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor made the following announcement:

Since our last Stanley Town Council meeting, I have attended the West Stanley Colliery Memorial, also known to many by the Burns Pit Memorial, to lay a wreath on the 112th anniversary of the horrendous disaster where 168 men and boys sadly lost their lives. Unfortunately, there was not service due to the current circumstances, but I still paid our respects as the church bells of St Andrews tolled in the distance.

Our Mayors Awards ceremony for 2019/20202 also had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but we felt it was so important the people nominated did not miss out on their awards, so this week they are being delivered to them. Please have a look on the Stanley Town Council Facebook page for updates. I would like to commend each and every one of them for their time and dedication in what they do.

I have still been active in the community helping and supporting residents with all sorts of issues throughout the pandemic. All compliant with COVID rules. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all community groups, local businesses and individuals for all of their help, compassion and kindness during these hard unprecedented times. Please keep up the great work and we will all get there together.

As the new guidelines are released to start the easing of lockdown our positive infection rates in the Stanley area are slowly coming down, but we are still above the national average, so I urge our residents to keep following the guidelines, get your vaccinations and stay safe. I send my best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who are in hospital, and my deepest condolences to anyone who has lost family or friends in this dreadful pandemic. Thank you.

The Town Clerk noted that following a question raised at the 19 January Full Council meeting, it has been confirmed that the Mohn Westlake £40,000 and National Lottery Community Fund £200,000 is exclusive to the people of Stanley and surrounding wards, it is allocated place based funding with geographies based only on the Stanley Fund. These moneys will be administered through the County Durham Community Foundation.

It was agreed that Item 20 (#102 date, time and venue of the next meeting) be brought forward before the exclusion of press and public.

The Town Clerk checked that all Members could hear, see and have all the meeting papers with them.

86 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council, Cllr L Timbey, made the following statement:

Last week, the people of Stanley remembered the men and boys who lost their lives in the West Stanley Pit Disaster. Since the memorial was held, it has come to my attention that there is a mass grave for 35 victims in St Josephs Church which is no recognition of the people in the mass grave, or if it is the mass grave as a result of the pit disaster. I would like STC to explore providing a memorial or blue plaque for the recognition of those men and boys who are in the mass grave. I hope STC officers will work with St Josephs Church and School.

Yesterday the Prime Minister announced his COVID road map to recovery, I hope it succeeds, but it will only succeed if everyone adheres to the guidance that is part of that road map. We must follow the guidance as this is the only way it will be a success. Stay safe and we will come through this in the better place. To the residents of Stanley, if you're offered a job, please take it as it will help us put a stop to COVID.

87 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Nothing was received in writing prior to the meeting and no members of the public were in attendance.

88 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Cllr D Tully requested an amendment to include Cllrs names under recorded votes.

It was proposed by Cllr J Kane, seconded by Cllr A Clegg and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on the 19th January 2021 be **APPROVED** and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record following the changes suggested above.

89 COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr J Kane, seconded by Cllr G Binney and **RESOLVED** that Council **RECEIVE** the minutes of the Finance & GP Committee held on 9th February 2021.

90 STANLEY ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Sam Scotchbrook presented a report to Members around the Advice in County Durham service, outlining what has been achieved, the difference COVID has made, how COVID has changed the service delivery and how the future will look.

Cllr C Marshall thanked Sam and the team who have worked throughout the pandemic. He noted that Durham County Council are reviewing their advice services and are looking closely at our model here in Stanley and how they can use that as best practice. Cllr Marshall noted that face to face services have

reduced due to the relaxing of sanctions, but we need to get back to face to face services as soon as it is safe, as some struggle to manage with electronic means and over the phone. Face to face services are vitally important.

Cllr L Timbey thanked Sam for her presentation and questioned whether she thought that workload will increase after lockdown restrictions are lifted. Sam is planning for a spike in the need for the advice services as a lot of government initiatives are going to stop soon, i.e. evictions, council tax recovery etc. There is a new incentive called Breathing Space for those who access FCA regulated debt advice which will give those 60 days breathing space from creditors collecting money. This comes in to place on 4th May 2021.

Cllr J Stephenson was pleased to hear that our Advice Partnership and approach as a model will hopefully be used across the County.

Council **NOTED** the presentation and update from Sam and thanked her for attending the meeting.

91 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE CIVIC HALL

Gerry Nicell and Bryan Glendinning from Engenera presented a report to Members around the energy efficiency in the Civic Hall. They outlined who Engenera are, what they have achieved challenges facing businesses & communities, energy inflation, what Engenera do and the products they offer, funding & finance options and who they've worked with.

Gerry noted that the Civic Hall is only running at 65% efficiency and that the heating system needs addressing as soon as possible.

Council **NOTED** the presentation from Gerry and Bryan and thanked them both for attending the meeting. The Town Clerk will be in touch to forward discussions.

19:33 - Cllr H Clark left the meeting

92 COVID-19 GRANTS UPDATE

Council **NOTED** the report from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members thanked officers, volunteers and those groups we provided funding for supporting our communities.

93 AUDIT REPORT

The Finance Officer noted that the only issue highlighted in the payroll audit report was relating to the authorisation of timesheets. The Town Clerk is working on a further electronic means of recording our time to give the Auditor assurance that timesheets are being authorised efficiently.

The Auditor has also amended his report in relation to the error in relation Payroll / HR.

Members **NOTED** the report.

94 GRANT FUNDING

The Finance Officer noted how much funding STC have received to date and what we are projected to receive up to year end.

Members **NOTED** the report.

95 NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS CONTRACT

Cllr J Nicholson left the meeting.

The Town Clerk noted the report provided to Members. It was proposed by Cllr D Marshall, seconded by Cllr L Timbey and **RESOLVED** by majority recorded vote that the Neighbourhood Wardens contract be renewed for another 3 years with a specification review after year 2.

Recorded vote

For: Cllrs G Binney, J Clark, A Clegg, M Davinson, C Hampson, J Kane, C Marshall, D Marshall, J McMahon, B Nair, J Pallas, J Stephenson & L Timbey.

Abstain: Cllrs D Tully & J Tully.

Cllr J Nicholson rejoined the meeting.

96 DECARBONISATION PROJECT

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council were unsuccessful in their funding application for money from this scheme, for heating replacement, replacing the ventilation system, LED lighting and solar panels.

Council **NOTED** the report.

97 POLICY WORKING GROUP (11 Dec 2020)

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the policies circulated to Members have been approved by the working group and Finance & GP Committee. He thanked everyone for their hard work in relation to getting these policies finalised.

Cllr L Timbey thanked the Deputy Town Clerk, and noted that we are now in the process of reviewing each policy yearly and that most policies have been brought forward.

Council **NOTED** the report.

98 YOUTH CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk advised that the purpose of the report is to review the County Durham Youth Council engagement plan and provide feedback to the nominated officer.

Cllr L Timbey noted that it was concerning that there was such negative feedback and that only 122 young people were consulted. Members questioned how many of the 122 were from the DH9 area.

It was proposed by Cllr L Timbey, seconded by Cllr J Kane and **RESOLVED** by unanimous vote that the Town Clerk provide the following feedback: Stanley Town Council are keen to support the engagement plan however we would like to know how many young people from Stanley are involved in the youth council, how they become part of the youth council. We are concerned with the number of negative responses and concerned around the timing. The Town Clerk should also link with Stars YC to see how they can get involved.

99 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Council **RESOLVED** 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 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Justification for excluding the public and press from consideration of the following item: *Staffing confidentiality*.

100 **PERSONNEL MATTER**

Cllr L Timbey noted that the recruitment and selection panel met on 21st January to carry out the 6 month review of the Town Clerks position.

Council **APPROVED** the recommendations from the recruitment and selection panel.

101 **APPEALS PANEL**

Council **RESOLVED** to set up an appeals panel of 3 Members (2 Labour, 1 Independent) in the event of redundancy appeals following the current restructure.

The 2 Labour Members will be Cllrs M Davinson & J Stephenson. Cllr D Tully will speak with the Derwentside Independent Members and contact the Town Clerk to advise who their panel Member will be.

102 **DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 23rd March 2021, 6.30pm, via Microsoft Teams