

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.00 pm on Thursday 04 June 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R J Barry (Chair, from FGS.101).

Councillors: P Austin, A G Chalmers, M F Coker, J A Cooke, S A Cooke, A M Dearing, J A Dearing, K S Dickson, R G Dickson, T J Drew, A J Firth, G D Hyde, P J Jones, A J Kennedy, A W Milton, J E P Worrall.

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Mr N. Eaton.

25 Members of the Public were present. The Press were not represented.

FGS.99 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor J A Dearing, and seconded by Councillor A J Kennedy and

RESOLVED that Councillor R J Barry be Chairman for the ensuing year.

FGS.100 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor M F Coker, and seconded by Councillor P Austin that Councillor K S Dickson be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

It was further proposed by Councillor K S Dickson, and seconded by Councillor S Cooke that Councillor J Cooke be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

Members considered these two proposals by simple majority vote and it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor K S Dickson be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

The outgoing Chair, Councillor R Dickson reminded the meeting that this was Volunteer week. He wished to say thank you to volunteers across the UK for giving their time to help others. In particular, the COVID-19 Support Group in Kenilworth has carried out some amazing work.

FGS.101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

The Chair NOTED that most Members of the Public were present to listen to any consideration of a draft Warwickshire County Council (WCC) proposal concerning reallocation of road space in Warwick Road. Therefore, in the absence of any objection from Members, this agenda item was considered first.

FGS.102 DRAFT PROPOSALS REGARDING A TEMPORARY RE-ALLOCATION OF ROADSPACE ALONG A SECTION OF WARWICK ROAD

Members considered and debated a draft proposal from WCC.

On conclusion, Councillor J Dearing informed the meeting that the Group Leaders would compose a response to WCC, taking into account Members comments and the submitted concerns of both residents and the business community.

Post Meeting Note - Although initially intended for circulation to Members for approval, subsequent WCC urgency in finalising a decision, the Group Leaders submitted this document the next day.

This formal response is attached to these minutes as “Appendix A”.

FGS.103 APOLOGIES

None.

FGS.104 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 6 February 2020. These were received and approved by Town Council on 27 February

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.105 TOURISM AND KENILWORTH VISITORS LEAFLET (FGS.6, FGS.23, FGS.39 and FGS.80)

Councillor Alix Dearing gave an update report regarding the recent progress that has been made in this area. The final version of the Visitor Guide 2020 has now been printed and collected from WDC. She thanked all Members involved in this work.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.106 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) (TC.174 and FGS.84)

Councillor J Dearing reported that a draft CIL protocol was still in process and would need to be considered at a subsequent meeting.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.107 VE75 (FGS.83)

Following cancellation of original VE75 celebrations due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Councillor Kate Dickson reported on the alternative arrangements that were put in place for the VE75 weekend. A number of photographs from the KTC website were displayed and Members informed that the Mayor has been distributing the commemorative coins that KTC had purchased.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.108 TWINNING ARRANGEMENTS WITH ROCCALUMERA (FGS.18, FGS.26 and FGS.82)

Councillor G Hyde reported on liaison with Kenilworth Twinning Association regarding arrangements to formally twin with Roccalumera. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this will need to be rescheduled.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.109 REVIEW OF BUDGET

The Town Clerk gave a summary of the published budget reports, following the first month of the new financial year. This was the first opportunity for Members to see the new budget set out with all monies allocated. It included accruals that have been made as we await invoices etc.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.110 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2019-2020

The Chair reported that no further reports of grants awarded during the 2019-2020 Financial Year were due until July.

Members NOTED this update.

The Chair further reported that, an email from the Scouts regarding Eurojam has been received. This has been postponed until 2021 (due to the virus pandemic).

Members AGREED that any grants awarded to individuals could be retained in order for them to attend the rescheduled event.

FGS.111 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Q4 internal audit has been completed and a report prepared. No matters were arising.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.112 CEMETERY

A published report was received from Councillor Richard Dickson.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS.113 REVIEW OF SIGNATORIES

Members reviewed and confirmed signatories for financial authorisation for the current year would remain as:

Councillors: K Dickson, R Dickson, J Dearing, J Cooke, A Firth, R Barry.

FGS.114 REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS

Members reviewed the arrangements in place for the Town Council's savings and reserves and AGREED no changes were necessary at this time.

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council currently has £250,000 in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund. Yield at 0.4025%, net of fees (30/4/20).

FGS.115 TOWN CENTRE WORKING GROUP – REPORT AND PROPOSALS

Members considered a report from Councillor M Coker on the Town Centre Working Group, outlining the funding of various projects, from the £10,000 business support grant received from Warwick District Council. It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that Kenilworth Town Council approve procurement of various designs of Banners to be placed in vacant Shop Windows within the Town at a cost of up to £750.00.

RECOMMENDED that Kenilworth Town Council fund a project in Talisman Square to be run and maintained by the Kenilworth Festival to improve the walls and beds/shrubbery around the Car Park at a cost of up to £4,500.00.

RECOMMENDED that Kenilworth Town Council fund the Autumn Planting in the new planter tubs at a cost of up to £3,500.00.

FGS.116 TWO YEAR COUNTDOWN TO COMMONWEALTH GAMES

The Mayor, Councillor Richard Dickson gave a verbal update report regarding arrangements to mark the 2 year countdown to the Commonwealth Games.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.117 NEXT MEETING

To note that the next scheduled meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on 9 July 2020, at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.06 pm.

Signed

Dated.....

Attachments

Annex A – Formal response to WCC on draft proposals regarding a temporary reallocation of road space along a section of Warwick Road.

DRAFT PROPOSALS REGARDING A TEMPORARY REALLOCATION OF ROADSPACE ALONG A SECTION OF WARWICK ROAD

Kenilworth Town Council considered this matter at its Financial and General Services Committee on 04 June 2020.

This virtual meeting was attended by all Town Councillors and viewed by 25 members of the public.

Summary

In acknowledgement of its previous letter to WCC, KTC remained generally supportive of the pedestrianisation scheme but had increased concerns over the alternative traffic routes proposed.

This has explicit regard to the high number of valid and reasonable concerns submitted to the Council, from residents, businesses, schools and professionals with specific expertise in this subject area.

Comments

The following attributed comments were made by Councillors during their debate –

Background

- KTC has received a large number of emails, the large majority against these proposals due to traffic displacement issues.
- The fundamental problem is too much traffic.
- KTC represents the whole town, residents and businesses. 7 days is not long enough for balanced representation.
- Accept safety issue caused by Covid 19. Kenilworth needs a safe Town Centre. It is currently not possible to social distance and comply with legislation whilst enabling shops to open. If road closure does not take place there would have to be other measures – eg one-way pavements, stickers.
- Also serious associated issues including poor air quality – Something has to be done.
- Keeping out through traffic is the major issue. Unless this is considered, Kenilworth will be condemned to ever increasing levels of traffic.
- Advantages of pedestrian zones are clear across other Towns and Cities.
- KTC supports this as an opportunity to make ‘once in a generation’ improvements to transport and public space in the Town Centre.

- This view is not unanimous. Notably, Conservative Members, having regard to previous issues with traffic displacement, do not support this scheme.
- A lot more can be done by WCC to reduce traffic. Signage and measures for through traffic. 20mph zones. Active Travel promotion. Junction signage. Proper traffic calming, all with strong monitoring.
- Active travel is a key requirement. This is currently not prioritised eg K2Lcycle path.
- Modal shift is required in attitude and expectation.
- Do this properly – set out what pedestrianisation is intended to achieve, work with residents, review against set criteria.

General Concerns

- More precise plans are required to avoid current confusion.
- Numerous specific and technical questions have been raised by consultees, requiring feedback.
- Need more time and consultation. There are real concerns regarding displaced traffic. No evidence has been presented on consideration of alternative routes. However it is accepted that such changes would present their own serious issues due to the layout of the town.
- Proper traffic modelling is required for this sensitive Town. Previous traffic modelling (for Waitrose) was not a success. Unintended consequences arise. No easy diversion routes exist.
- These are temporary proposals but length unknown. A regular review process is required.

Specific Concerns

- Businesses south of Sainsburys not considered
- The junctions at Upper Rosemary Hill and Southbank Rd/Bertie Road are examples of real concern.
- Altered bus routes may create access issues for the disabled, who have already been marginalised by Covid.
- These proposals cannot be assumed to be good for trade. Further consultation with the Chamber for Trade and other bodies is required.
- Bear and Ragged staff area particular social distancing issue
- There would be potential issues affecting two schools and nurseries along routes for diverted traffic.

Conclusion

1. The majority of the Kenilworth Town Council (KTC) remains generally supportive of a pedestrianisation scheme along Warwick Road.
2. KTC would want measures undertaken to ensure any disturbance and nuisance from traffic displacement is minimised.
3. Better communication and consultation.
 - A published review process including timescales.
 - Consideration of impact limitation for any scheme. For example restricted operation within reasonable daytime hours 10-3pm?
 - Careful review of alternative routes.
4. Reducing the amount of through traffic before it gets to Kenilworth (e.g. Gamble's garage/Balsall Common, A46 Thickthorn roundabout, Gibbet Hill roundabout/ Coventry Rd) is seen as a key requirement, and applying weight restrictions to commercial vehicles.