

## **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

**held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council,**

**1900hrs on Thursday 10th November 2022.**

- Present:** Councillors Simon Budd (Mayor), David Somers (Deputy Mayor), James Hunt, Roberta Sunderland, Caroline Johnson, Patricia Morgan, Richard Nichols, and Alka Mehta-Graham.
- Absent:** Councillors Stephen Bassett, and Matthew Palmer.
- In attendance:** Town Clerk, Ian Lyons.
- Apologies:** Councillors, Rachael Hunt, Sadik Al-Hassan, Colin Hunt, Christopher Edwardson, and Simon Jones.
- Public:** Two members of the public attended the meeting.
- Notes:** The meeting began at 1900hrs. All resolutions are passed with a majority vote, by a show of hands, unless otherwise stated.

### **FC\_2022.101 Welcome and Introductions.**

- Minutes:** Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) welcomed everyone present at the meeting and explained the emergency procedures.

### **FC\_2022.102 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.**

- Minutes:** Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) reminded members of the requirement to declare an interest. The Town Clerk declared an interest in item 121.

### **FC\_2022.103 Public Participation.**

- Minutes:** Two members of the public were present but did not wish to speak at this stage.

## **COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

### **FC\_2022.104 Minutes.**

- Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor), and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, copies having been circulated, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Mayor.

**Minutes:** The minutes were signed at the meeting by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor).

**FC\_2022.105 Outstanding items from the previous minutes.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered a summary of the work undertaken as a result of the resolutions and action points from the previous meetings. As follows:

- The Financial Regulations policy is listed on the agenda for approval.
- The Strategic Plan is listed on the agenda for adoption.
- The Dibden Lane Allotments lease and the Vinney Green land transfer are still outstanding. Ian Lyons, Principal Surveyor at South Glos, has confirmed that this has been listed for decision at the Executive Committee.
- Building repairs have now been successfully completed.
- The IT Hardware project is still at the consultation stage.
- Coffee Mornings have been arranged in partnership with Emersons Green Village Hall and an advert is listed on the agenda.
- A suitable Human Resources consultancy has been identified (SLCC) and will be commissioned shortly.
- Honorary Titles have been researched and are listed on the agenda.
- The advertising period for the Councillor vacancy ends on November 18<sup>th</sup> and an application has been received from one candidate so far.

## **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**FC\_2022.106 Community Governance Review.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of the Mayor, a member of the public, Mr Simon Banks (South Glos Council, Deputy to the Service Director - Legal Governance and Democratic Services) gave an overview of the Community Governance Review (CGR) as follows:

The main elements of the CGR are now concluded (this covered the creation of new councils in unparished areas and internal ward and ward boundary arrangements) and South Glos Council is in the process of dealing with the last few remaining issues on the parish boundary arrangements. The remaining issues are:

- Whether Little Sodbury Parish Meeting should be amalgamated with Horton Parish;
- The boundary between Pucklechurch and Emersons Green council areas at Lyde Green; and
- Whether the last small pocket of unparished land (immediately north of the A420 and east of the A4174 interchange at Warmley) should form part of the parish of Siston.

Furthermore, a draft report was being prepared for the Regulatory Committee, which notes that Emersons Green Town Council do not object to the proposed

boundary change. The next steps are for a short window of consultation (probably by letter) with the immediately affected residents.

After this, Councillors debated the pros and cons of the official position, which was based on limited information at the last meeting. However, in the end, no motion to suspend standing orders was deemed necessary.

In fact, Mr Simon Banks and the Councillors present were content that the consultation would consider the consensus of views expressed by individual members at the meeting, which was welcoming of the new residents that would join the Parish under the boundary proposal.

## **FC\_2022.107 Strategic Plan.**

**Minutes:** To begin with, Cllr Roberta Sunderland raised a question about the necessity of the dates and timings column in the plan, and the accuracy of the section on Parish History. In reply, Cllr James Hunt, the Town Clerk, and Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) clarified the source of the data.

After this, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

The Strategic Plan was listed for adoption at the request of the Full Council on the 13th of October 2022 following two previous opportunities to make suggestions and amendments.

## **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Local Government Act 1972, s.142.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Resolve that: “The Council formally adopts the Strategic Plan, copies having been circulated”.
- Publish the plan on the Council website.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- To communicate the Council’s vision and corporate priorities to the public.
- To justify public spending.
- To provide direction to the Council’s employees and strategic partners.
- To ensure that the Council’s objectives are SMART; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic, and Time-Related.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS**

Initially, adopting the Strategic Plan will have no financial impact at all. After all, it is not a commitment to spend. In fact, at the last meeting of the Full Council, in the debate, it was argued that this was a ‘wish list’. Furthermore, clarification was given that each project would have to be considered on its merits on a case-by-case basis, as usual, along with the financial implications and risks.

However, the reputational risks are considerable. So, if the Council does commit to the Strategic Plan, it would be advisable to also commit to the necessary budget, to deliver the objectives on time. As you can see, the Strategic Plan is ambitious, and will therefore require a healthy annual budget. Nevertheless, the Council has considerable resources, in both capital and revenue. In

fact, with a modest increase in the precept, over the next five years, and some capital spending from the Earmarked Reserves, the aims and objectives listed in the Strategic Plan should be considered achievable.

**Minutes:** After this, Councillors agreed that SMART objectives were preferable, and that the timescale column should remain. After this,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr James Hunt, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council formally adopts the Strategic Plan, copies having been circulated.

## **INTEL & CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **FC\_2022.108 Crime Update.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered an update on the level of Crime in the area, as follows:

Overall, the level of crime in the area, compared to previous months, has fallen below the annual average. Notably, in September there was a shift towards burglary.

Nevertheless, as usual, violence and sexual offences consistently remain the highest reported crimes on all scales<sup>1</sup>, and anti-social behaviour remains in second place. Recently, Emersons Green Village Hall (EGVH) reported that anti-social behaviour had become a particular problem there on a Tuesday evening, and the Council has asked Creative Youth Network (CYN) to provide support. However, at the Youth Working Group meeting today, CYN reported that the problem had been resolved and, in consultation with EGVH, an intervention was no longer necessary.

### **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.31
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.17

### **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Councillors should debate suitable crime prevention measures. For example, recruiting volunteers to establish a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Council has a legal duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder within its Civil Parish boundary.

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<sup>1</sup> Police.UK (2022) Boyd Valley, Emersons and Lyde Green [Online] Available at: <https://www.police.uk/your-area/avon-somerset-constabulary/boyd-valley-emersons-and-lyde-green/?tab=Statistics> (Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022).

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS**

Of course, this will be strategy dependent. Right now, the Council does not currently have a budget for spending on crime prevention measures. However, an advertising campaign could be funded through regular spending on communications if necessary.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **FC\_2022.109 To receive any updates from Committees.**

#### **Minutes: Planning & Open Spaces.**

At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Councillor David Somers (Deputy Mayor) provided a brief outline of the work undertaken by the planning committee.

Notably, a planning application had been received for an extension to the alcoholic drinks licence for a World Cup Fan Zone to be located inside a marquee at the Science Park. The Council had raised no objection to this.

After this, a summary of activities undertaken by the Open Spaces committee was given, and it was reported that a pallet load of new plastic bollards had been received and were ready for installation as necessary. Likewise, noticeboards for Green Lane were in production. In addition, research had been conducted on dual-purpose bins and the extension of tree planting at Rodway Common, to extend the existing avenue, and to commemorate the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Finally, Councillors were reminded about the allotments evening on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> of November.

#### **Finance Committee.**

After that, Councillor James Hunt provided an update from the Finance Committee, which had approved new contracts for the office photocopier and Barclays.net. In addition, a reduced grant of £1000 had been awarded for Citizens Advice, and the Town Clerk had been asked to investigate an enhanced service, similar to the provision for Bradley Stoke.

### **FC\_2022.110 To receive any updates from Working Groups.**

#### **Climate and Nature (CAN).**

**Minutes:** To begin with, Cllr Roberta Sunderland explained that this new combined working group had now been established, and would meet monthly on a Tuesday evening, starting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November at 1900hrs with a varied agenda, including home energy.

After this, a summary was given of the highly successful Calendar Event, which resulted in a fully occupied room at EGVH. As planned, the Calendar had now been distributed to local organisations and was available to the public, and all the proceeds would raise funds for the community groups that sold them. As for the

photos, the exhibition was touring from EGVH to the Library and then to Lyde Green Community Centre.

### **Youth Working Group (YWG).**

**Minutes:** Next, Cllr Richard Nichols provided a summary of the YWG meeting which took place prior to Full Council. Essentially, the YWG had fully considered the suggestion to employ a dedicated full-time Youth Officer role, with the ability to deputise, to make progress on the specific aims of the Strategic Plan. As a result, the YWG would like this to be included in the upcoming Human Resources consultation, and budgeting process.

**Action:** Town Clerk to include options for a Deputy Clerk (Youth) in the Human Resources consultation and Annual Budget process.

**Minutes:** Finally, Cllr Caroline Johnson provided a summary from the Bristol East Fringe Cycling & Walking Group, which was currently Chaired by Jon Parker at Oldland Parish Council. Highlights included efforts to improve links to Whitchurch via Charlton Road tying up with the Keynsham Road and the nearby A road, and plans for new signs on the Bristol-Bath Railway Path.

### **FC\_2022.111 To appoint Councillors to Committee vacancies.**

**Minutes:** To begin with, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) asked the Town Clerk to display a list of the current vacancies and highlighted the opportunities to Councillors. However, no changes were made. Although, Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham did agree to join the newly amalgamated CAN Working Group.

### **FC\_2022.112 Community Nature Reserve.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr Roberta Sunderland introduced the item and gave a summary of the documents that had been circulated. After this, the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

### **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, particularly s.40.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Resolve that: "The Council develops a Community Nature Reserve, documents having been circulated".

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- To protect and improve the biodiversity of the local area.
- To increase rapport and communications with residents (Corporate Priority E1).
- To identify potential spaces for rewilding, tree planting, wildflower planting, etc (Corporate Priority B8).

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS**

In short, this opportunity represents good value for the Council with minimal investment and risk. For events, the Council has set a budget for the current financial year of £4500, which has £2387 remaining. Any events planned for the following financial year could be budgeted for in December/January, based on a recommendation by the Finance Committee.

Clearly, there will also be an impact on Council staff working hours, depending on the level of involvement required. Based on similar activities in the past (Calendar project), this will be an estimated 30 hours. Depending on the timing, and strategic decisions, the Council may already have additional staff in place to reduce the impact on core tasks.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Roberta Sunderland, supported by Cllr Patricia Morgan, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council develops a Community Nature Reserve, documents having been circulated.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **FC\_2022.113 Correspondence.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk directed attention to a letter of goodwill from Sally Hill, a former Councillor.

### **FC\_2022.114 Advertising.**

**Minutes:** The Council noted the draft articles for publication and a short discussion took place surrounding the financial and practical arrangements for the Coffee Mornings, which had been delegated to the Clerk.

In reply, the Town Clerk explained that this was planned to be a joint venture between the Council, EGVH, and South Glos Council, which would provide a Warm Spaces facility alongside a Councillors' Surgery.

As a result, the Council would be contributing towards the facility costs, and providing advertising, whilst match funding was being sought from South Glos Council, through a Warm Spaces Grant, to cover staff costs.

## **FINANCE**

### **FC\_2022.115 Financial Regulations.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk highlighted the following advice from the Clerk's Report:

In a lengthy consultation, with the Finance Committee, a detailed review of the Financial Regulations took place resulting in the amended document being presented for adoption.

## **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Local Government Act 1972, s.151.
- EGTC Financial Regulations.
- Standing Orders, particularly 16a (contingency) and 18b (regular review).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Resolve that: “The Council formally adopts the updated Financial Regulations Policy, copies having been circulated”.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- To reduce trivial referrals to the committee system by having a more appropriate Scheme of Financial Delegation to staff (Corporate Priority E11).
- To fulfil the commitments in Standing Orders by regularly updating Financial Policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS**

In summary, the updated Financial Regulations will mitigate some of the risks associated with Staff absences, providing a contingency plan. Similarly, the new regulations should reduce trivial committee referrals, increasing overall efficiency.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr James Hunt (Finance Committee Chair), and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council formally adopts the updated Financial Regulations Policy (November 2022), copies having been circulated.

### **FC\_2022.116 Honorary Titles.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk highlighted the following advice from the Clerk’s Report:

Full Council requested this item on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2022.

## **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Local Government Act 1972, s.249.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Resolve that: “The Council formally adopts the EGTC Honorary Titles Policy, copies having been circulated”.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- To recognise the selfless commitment of former Councillors who have, in the opinion of the Council, made an outstanding contribution to the community over many years.
- To inspire and encourage others to make a contribution.
- To increase rapport and communications with residents (Corporate Priority E1).



## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

Minimal. The additional costs of any civic ceremony could be arranged to coincide with other Council events. Likewise, any reputational risks are mitigated within the policy by the withdrawal and expenses clause.

**Amendment:** After this, Cllr Roberta Sunderland proposed an **amendment**, supported by Cllr Richard Nichols, and resolved that

**Resolved:** Section 3 of the circulated document be amended to read “Requests for an agenda item to vote for Honorary Aldermen or Honorary Alderwomen may only be made by an Emersons Green Town Councillor, and only by way of a letter or email to the Town Clerk, and only *for* a Member who has retired from the Council.

**Motion:** Then, it was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Richard Nichols, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council formally adopts the amended EGTC Honorary Titles Policy, copies having been circulated.

## FINANCE

### FC\_2022.117 Treasury Deposits.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr James Hunt (Finance Committee Chair) introduced the item and summarised the advantages and potential gains from this strategy.

After this, the Town Clerk highlighted the following advice from the Clerk’s Report:

The Finance Committee recommended that the Full Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk and RFO to make Treasury Deposits with Barclays Bank in consultation with the Finance Committee (27<sup>th</sup> October 2022).

## LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972 s.151.
- EGTC Financial Regulations 8.4-8.8.
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference Function 5.
- Employment Act 2022.
- Employment Relations Act 2004.
- Employment Act 2008.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Resolve that “The Full Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk and RFO to make Treasury Deposits with Barclays Bank in consultation with the Finance Committee.”

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To maximise the interest received in the Council’s bank account.
- To meet Key Objective E15 in the draft strategic plan “opportunities for generating income”.
- To retain the services of a Relationship Manager at Barclays Bank.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

The Council currently receives very little interest using the Business Savings Account. If the Full Council allows the Town Clerk and RFO to make regular Treasury Deposits this source of revenue will increase dramatically.

Treasury deposits do not leave Barclays Bank and therefore offer the opportunity to increase interest rates with no additional risk. The amount, and period of time, to be authorised can be agreed upon by the Finance Committee at each monthly meeting to reduce the risk of funds being unavailable should reserves be required for use.

This arrangement would not offer diversification but would allow the Council to maintain the level of funds required to maintain access to a Relationship Manager, which helps to reduce staff costs on trivial banking matters.

**Motion:** Then, it was moved by Cllr James Hunt (Finance Committee Chair), supported by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk and RFO to make Treasury Deposits with Barclays Bank in consultation with the Finance Committee.

## PERSONNEL

### FC\_2022.118 Privacy.

**Motion:** Due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the following items, it was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Richard Nichols, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council excludes the Press and Public for the remainder of the meeting.

### FC\_2022.119 Honorary Titles.

**Minutes:** Eligible candidates for honorary titles were discussed.

**Motion:** Then, it was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Richard Nichols, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council nominates Sally Hill for the honorary title of Alderwoman.

**Action:** Town Clerk to contact Sally Hill to confirm acceptance of the nomination.

### FC\_2022.120 Staff Appraisal Policy.

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr Caroline Johnson (Personnel Committee Chair) introduced the item and explained that only the dates had changed, to allow for budget planning. After this,

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Caroline Johnson (Personnel Committee Chair), supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:

**Resolved:** That the Council formally adopts the updated Staff Appraisal Scheme policy (November 2022), copies having been circulated.

## **FC\_2022.121 Staff Pay and Working Conditions.**

**Minutes:** At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk directed Councillors to the following advice in the Clerk's report:

This motion is listed on the agenda in consultation with the Chair of both the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee in response to the announcement from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

### **LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT**

- Local Government Act 1972, s.151.
- Employment Act 2002.
- Employment Relations Act 2004.
- Employment Act 2008.
- The Work & Families Act 2006.
- The Equality Act 2010, s.149 and schedule 19.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, s.6.
- Working Time Regulations 1998.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS**

- Resolve that: "The Council implements the NALC National Salary Award 2022-23, copies having been circulated, from April 2022."

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- To accept the recommendations of NALC and the Local Government Association (LGA).
- To maintain the association with NALC, and work towards Quality Council status.
- The alternative would have significant reputational and financial risk.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS**

The current total budget for staff costs, including tax, national insurance, and pension contributions, is £70,170. However, at the last Full Council meeting, proposals were agreed upon that would increase expected costs to approximately £77,155.76 per annum<sup>2</sup>.

Following this announcement, the new estimate will be approximately £81,492.85 per annum<sup>3</sup>, a total increase of £4,337.09.

In any case, the Council currently has a substantial General Contingency, of £175,164, and other earmarked reserves, totalling £755,307. There is also a significantly predicted underspend on the annual revenue budget in other cost centres too, totalling over £40,000.

**Minutes:** After this, the Town Clerk declared an interest and left the room. Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) nominated Cllr Caroline Johnson to record the minutes.

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<sup>2</sup> Figures provided by PATA Payroll 07/10/22.

<sup>3</sup> Figures provided by PATA Payroll 08/11/2022.

**Motion:** It was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Caroline Johnson (Personnel Committee Chair), and resolved that:

**Resolved:** The Council implements the NALC National Salary Award 2022-23, copies having been circulated, from April 2022.

**FC\_2022.122 Dates and Timings.**

**Minutes:** At this point, the Town Clerk re-joined the meeting. The Town Clerk recorded the resolutions made during the period of absence.

After this, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) announced that the next meeting of the Full Council was scheduled to take place:

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.**

Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) concluded the formal business of the meeting at 2035hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterward.