



Name: Simon Budd (Mayor)

Date: 8th September 2022

Signed

<Original Signed>.....

Minutes of the Full Council

held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council

1900hrs on Thursday 14th July 2022

Present: Councillors Simon Budd, David Somers, James Hunt, Sadik Al-Hassan, Colin Hunt, Patricia Morgan, Christopher Edwardson, Simon Jones, Sally Hill, Richard Nichols.

Absent: Councillor Matthew Palmer.

In attendance: Town Clerk, Ian Lyons.

Public: No members of the public were in attendance.

Apologies: Councillors Rachael Hunt, Roberta Sunderland, Stephen Bassett, Caroline Johnson, Alka Mehta-Graham.

Notes: The meeting began at 1900hrs. All motions are unanimous unless stated otherwise.

INTRODUCTION

FC_2022.51 Welcome and Introductions.

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

FC_2022.52 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.

Minutes: Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) reminded members of the requirement to declare an interest.

FC_2022.53 Public Participation.

Minutes: No member of the public requested an audience with the Council.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

FC_2022.54 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 9th June 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_2022.55. Outstanding items from the previous minutes.

Minutes: As requested, the Town Clerk informed the meeting that correspondence had been received from Avon and Somerset Police (PCSO 7937 Joshua Morris), concerning speed limits in the Parish boundary. Furthermore, South Glos Council had kindly supplied an internal document, which mapped the speed limits for the Emersons Green CP. After this, the Town Clerk requested that members lobby South Glos Council to share information layers like this, through Parish Online, so that constituents can benefit from the information through our website. Other Town and Parish Councils in the district had also expressed an interest in this functionality through the Avon Local Council Association (ALCA).

FC_2022.56 Correspondence.

Minutes: The Town Clerk informed the meeting that correspondence had been received from Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity, thanking the Council for the grant of £300 towards arts and crafts resources for children and teenagers spending time in hospital. Similarly, the Town Clerk informed the meeting that Emerson's Ladies group had written a thank you letter for a £250 grant towards the Queens Jubilee Celebrations.

PLANNING & STRATEGY

FC_2022.57 Strategic Plan.

Minutes: To begin with, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) asked members to provide initial comments. Firstly, Cllr Sally Hill suggested the Council take time to consider the document carefully, due to the volume of information. After this, the Town Clerk explained how the document had been produced and how it would be used in the future, directing attention to the Clerk's Report as an example. In conclusion, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) asked members to email the Town Clerk with formal amendments ahead of the next meeting of the Full Council.

Action: Town Clerk to collate suggestions and amendments, in anticipation of a formal motion at the next meeting of the Full Council.

INTEL & CURRENT AFFAIRS

FC_2022.58 Crime Update.

Minutes: To begin with, the Town Clerk informed the meeting that Avon and Somerset Police (PC 4874 Barton) visited the Town Council office, on the 1st and 11th of

July, to request and retrieve CCTV footage in relation to a burglary. Upon further investigation, this month, all crimes related to stealing were reported to be significantly higher than both the 12 and 36-month averages. However, it was noted that violence and sexual offences consistently remained the highest reported crimes on all scales¹. After this, the Town Clerk reminded the Council that it has a legal duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder within its Civil Parish boundary and recommended that Councillors debate suitable crime prevention measures. For example, recruiting volunteers to establish a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme where it would have the most impact.

After this, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) invited comments and suggestions from Councillors. Firstly, Cllr Richard Nichols suggested that there may be a statistical inaccuracy due to the recent increase in new housing and questioned what level the theft and anti-social behaviour was 'retail related'. Secondly, Cllr Sadik Al-Hassan expressed concern at the level of anti-social behaviour being reported, and that it may be helpful to compare the demographics with other areas in the district. Next, Cllr James Hunt cautioned the Council against responding with a "knee-jerk" reaction and suggested that any action the Council takes should be balanced and proportionate, considering the wider picture. In support, Cllr Colin Hunt agreed that an increase in new housing may be contributing to the issue.

With no motion being proposed, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) concluded the debate.

FC_2022.59 Property Services Meeting – South Glos.

Minutes: Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor) informed the Council that a productive meeting took place with South Glos Council Property Services department on the 15th of June 2022 at the Council office. Those present at the meeting were: the Town Clerk, Cllr David Somers, Sarah Fletcher (South Glos – Senior Valuer), and Jason Herbert (South Glos - Senior Valuer). At the meeting, a variety of matters were discussed, and the meeting proved to be productive and worthwhile. In fact, an agreement was reached that an attempt would be made to reach a conclusion over several outstanding matters, such as the lease renewal for Dibden Lane Allotments, the access for Vinney Green House, and the future of the Skatepark. In conclusion, Cllr David Somers provided a brief outline of the proposal for each of these matters and the potential consequences of failing to reach an agreement.

FC_2022.60 Allotments Lease.

Minutes: To start with, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) introduced the motion, which was a result of the meeting with South Glos Council discussed moments earlier by Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor).

¹ 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 11th July 2022).

At this point, at the request of the Mayor, the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.23

RECOMMENDATION, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Conduct a debate. For example, “What is the value of enhancing the Council’s strategic partnership with South Glos Council?”
- Consider this item in tandem with FC_2022.61, the two are inextricably linked.
- *IF* Council decides it is appropriate then:
- Resolve that: “That the Council agrees to the terms and conditions, copies having been circulated, to arrange a 25yr lease with South Gloucestershire Council for the continued use of the Dibden Lane allotment site.”
- Resolve that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to sign the necessary documents to complete the lease and engage the services of a solicitor, if necessary.”
- Resolve that: “The Town Clerk creates a new budget heading for allotment rent and set a budget of £600 from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To meet Corporate Priority 4 to “Ensure that all opportunities for the devolution of services from South Gloucestershire Council are considered, along with all joint working opportunities.”
- To resolve the invoice discrepancy/dispute with a value of £4200.

The strategic partnership with South Glos Council is invaluable, and a reliable working relationship will inevitably result in better outcomes for constituents in the parish. Crucially, alternative allotment sites are in short supply and could be prohibitively expensive to secure. Similarly, assets like this may not be offered in the future if joint ventures like this continue to be challenging.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The commitment of £600 per annum has been projected for the financial year 2023/24 but a budget has not been set for this year. Similarly, a budget line has not been created. At the time of writing, the Council has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, of £180,614.12. As part of the deal, the Council could negotiate the settlement of disputed invoices for the period of rent where a contract was not in place, at a peppercorn rate.

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

- Resolved:**
1. The Council agrees to the terms and conditions, copies having been circulated, to arrange a 25yr lease with South Gloucestershire Council for the continued use of the Dibden Lane allotment site.
 2. The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to sign the necessary documents to complete the lease and engage the services of a solicitor, if necessary.
 3. The Town Clerk creates a new budget heading for allotment rent and set a budget of £600 from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves.

FC_2022.61 Vinney Green.

Minutes: To start with, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) introduced the motion, which was a result of the meeting with South Glos Council discussed earlier by Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor).

At this point, at the request of the Mayor, the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

Local Government Act 1972, ss.124, 126 & 127.

RECOMMENDATION, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- *IF* the Council resolves the listed allotment motions (FC_2022.60), then:
- Resolve that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to negotiate the freehold transfer of the land at Vinney Green, as per the request from South Gloucester Council, copies having been circulated.”
- Resolve that: “That the Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to sign the necessary documents to complete the transfer and engage the services of a solicitor, if necessary.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To secure the allotment lease.
- To improve relations with our strategic partners at South Glos Council.
- To meet Corporate Priority 4 to “Ensure that all opportunities for the devolution of services from South Gloucestershire Council are considered, along with all joint working opportunities.”

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council would be exchanging a small but tangible asset of land at Vinney Green in return for the long-term lease on the allotment site at Dibden Lane. Moreover, the Council will benefit from the goodwill of South Glos Council, when considering future proposals with the potential to increase the social capital of the Emersons Green CP.

After this, Cllr Sally Hunt raised concerns over the potential loss of trees, which Cllr Hunt addressed. Shortly afterward, given that this issue was debated in conjunction with the previous motion, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) decided to put the issue to the vote.

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

Resolved: 1. The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to negotiate the freehold transfer of the land at Vinney Green, as per the request from South Gloucestershire Council, copies having been circulated.

2. The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to sign the necessary documents to complete the transfer and engage the services of a solicitor, if necessary.

YOUTH SERVICES

FC_2022.62 Youth Services Meeting: South Glos 30th June 2022

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered a summary of the meeting, as follows:

Highlights:

- Other Town and Parish Councils in the district are delivering highly successful schemes.
- South Glos is focusing resources on high-priority areas.
- South Glos is interested in commissioning Youth Services in partnership with Town and Parish Councils.

Yate Town Council gave a presentation, slides attached, which was a great example of a successful partnership with young people. In particular, projects like the Armadillo Youth Café and the Urbie Bus project demonstrated the use of initiative. Elsewhere, Bradley Stoke Town Council described the employment of a dedicated Youth Officer as a significant commitment to young people that had proved to be invaluable.

From South Glos, it was clear that resources were limited, budgets were not being increased, and it would be necessary to collaborate with Town and Parish Councils to commission youth services in the future. Emersons Green was not listed as a high-priority neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, the Town Clerk recommended that the Council consider an independent strategy and partnership with young people in Emersons Green CP.

The Council noted the Town Clerk's recommendation.

FC_2022.63 Youth Services Meeting: Mangotsfield FC Visit 5th July 2022.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr Richard Nichols delivered a summary of the meeting, as follows:
Apologies were made to the Council, that the meeting was held without due notice. However, it was not pre-arranged. The Town Clerk was being given an impromptu tour of the Parish when the opportunity arose to inspect the facility, and meet with the Manager, Mr Peter Brown.

At this meeting, it became obvious that the location had the potential to deliver some of the aims of the Council, regarding Youth Services. However, the building is not currently fit for purpose and has several serious health and safety issues. To achieve the Council's aims, the site would require significant investment, and human resources, from any interested third parties. Any project at this location would require coordination with the current landowner, South Glos Council, and engagement with other local stakeholders, such as Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Council.

Motion: At this point, it was quickly moved by Cllr Richard Nichols, supported by Cllr Sally Hill, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Council establish a Youth Working Group

Action: Cllr Richard Nichols to organise the inaugural meeting.

Minutes: A point of order was raised by Cllr James Hill, questioning the Standing Orders related to a motion that was not listed on the agenda. The Town Clerk advised that written notice of a motion was not required on this occasion (*Standing Order 10, Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice – ix. To appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members*). As a result, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) ruled that it was not required (*Standing Order 26d*).

However, Councillors were also reminded by the Town Clerk that, under normal circumstances, it was good practice to provide written notice to the proper officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting, for Councillors and members of the public to be fully aware of it. Although, normally in exceptional circumstances, it was also possible to suspend any standing order, unless it reflects a mandatory statutory or legal requirement.

FC_2022.64 Youth Services Strategy.

Minutes: Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) invited members to debate the Council's overall strategy for Youth Services.

At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 s.19.

RECOMMENDATION

- Conduct a debate. For example, “How can the Council achieve the strategic aims?”.
- Ask Councillors to draft a suitable motion for a meeting of the Full Council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

A debate will help to provide the Council, and its employees, with direction and make progress towards achieving the aims of the strategic plan, if adopted, which states “to engage with, and seek to provide, additional and better facilities and services for young people in the town.” In fact, a key corporate objective is listed as “seek to ensure that the youth in the town are catered for in as comprehensive a manner as possible.”. Moreover, section C1 states “seek out and provide a dedicated youth venue”. Furthermore, section C3 suggests the possibility of employing a Youth Officer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council currently has a substantial earmarked reserve of £487,435.21 for a community project, and this is budgeted for an increase to £624,684 by year-end 2023. As a result, several viable options are available to the Council for delivering a significant community project from existing capital. After that, the Council would need to consider raising the precept to fund additional staff salaries and the revenue costs of any new facility that was provided.

After this, Cllr Sally Hill raised concerns that previous Council projects, such as the facility earmarked for the area next to the library, had been shelved. Cllr James Hunt agreed that the Council had taken on risky projects in the past and suggested that employing a qualified Youth Officer might be a sensible course of action.

After this, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), pointed out that the matter could now be progressed through the newly established Youth Working group, and the debate was concluded.

OTHER MEETINGS

FC_2022.65 Emerson’s Green Village Hall (EGVH) Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), The Town Clerk delivered a summary of the meeting, as follows:

At the request of Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, the EGVH AGM was attended to discuss the possibility of working with EGVH to deliver an event in May 2023. Similarly, Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham wanted to explore the possibility of working together on other community projects. It was noted that meetings of this kind

could be considered as meeting the Council’s draft corporate priorities (E1 – to increase rapport and communications with residents, local clubs, and stakeholders).

As a result, several opportunities for joint ventures were identified. For example, sharing resources to deliver first aid training, which would reduce costs, and using the EGTC Grant Scheme to fund a publicly accessible defibrillator on the outside of the building. Overall, the meeting was considered worthwhile, and a strategic partnership could result in a positive outcome for constituents.

COUNCIL PROJECTS

FC_2022.66 Events Working Group.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk explained that Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham had requested a deferral due to unavoidable absence.

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

Resolved: This item is deferred to a future meeting of the Full Council.

FC_2022.67 EGTC Calendar.

Minutes: To begin with, Cllr Patricia Morgan outlined the circulated plan for the Calendar and summarised the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group, which had led to the motion. In addition, to address concerns over demand and supply, it was noted that the Town Clerk had suggested producing the Calendar at the cost of the Council but allowing community groups to sell the Calendar themselves, at a recommended retail price, to raise funds for charitable causes.

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

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.145.

RECOMMENDATION

- Conduct a debate. For example, “What is the aim of this project?”.
- Resolve that: “The Council organises a photo competition and produces a calendar”.
- Nominate a Councillor to lead this project.
- Resolve that: “The Finance Committee create a budget for the EGTC Calendar from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To deliver the vision for the Council to “play its part in supporting the wider social and economic ambitions and aspirations of the area.”²
- To live up to the mission statement of the Council, which states, "using its allowable powers, Emersons Green Town Council will do all it can to create a welcoming and vibrant town, promoting civic pride and improving the quality of life for those who live, work and visit."³

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council does not have a specific budget for a calendar. However, there is a budget of £4500 for events, which has not been used and has not currently been earmarked. Similarly, the Council has also budgeted £6252 for communications, which is forecast to be significantly underspent, mainly due to the absence of a permanent clerk to write articles. Any events planned for the following financial year could be budgeted for in January, based on a recommendation by this Events Working Group.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Patricia Morgan, and resolved that:

- Resolved:**
1. The Council organises a photo competition and produces a calendar.
 2. The Finance Committee creates a budget for the EGTC Calendar from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves.

COMMUNICATIONS

FC_2022.68 Advertising.

Minutes: The Council noted a draft article for publication in the local media (Voice), copies having been circulated.

FC_2022.69 Website.

Minutes: To begin with, Cllr Richard Nichols questioned the need for a new website.

At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.142.
- Equality Act 2020.

² EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Our Vision for Emersons Green’.

³ EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Emersons Green Mission Statement’.

RECOMMENDATION

- Resolve that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission a website project, copies having been circulated”.
- Resolve that: “The Finance Committee increase the budget for IT from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves, to include the costs of a new website.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To comply with the law (Equality Act 2010).
- To meet strategic aim E8 of “an upgraded and more informative and interactive website”.
- To meet the overall strategic aim of continuous service improvement.
- To simplify and align website support with communications and IT.
- To meet the technical recommendations from the Council’s IT contractor.

The Council has a legal and moral obligation to make the website accessible, and risks litigation for discrimination without acting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has no specific budget for the website. The current budget for IT costs is £6000, which may be slightly over budget this year, mainly due to significant ‘ad-hoc’ out-of-contract expenses at the start of the financial year, during the Town Clerk handover period. In the year 2021/22 the budget was £10,000, which is more appropriate. Nevertheless, the Council has also budgeted £6252 for communications, which is forecast to be significantly underspent, mainly due to the absence of a permanent clerk to write articles. Either way, the Council has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, of £180,614.12 to create a new budget for the website or increase IT costs to include this expenditure.

After this:

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

Resolved:

1. The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission a website project, copies having been circulated.
2. The Finance Committee creates a budget for the website from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves.

FC_2022.70 Social Media.

Minutes: Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) invited members to debate the Council’s overall strategy for using social media, in order to provide direction for employees.

To begin with, Cllr Sadik Al-Hassan highlighted the Council had a low volume of interaction through existing channels. However, Cllr Richard Nichols suggested this could be improved when the Town Clerk increased the volume of content creation, as planned, and described the platforms as a useful communication tool. At this point, Cllr James Hunt suggested that if the Council did eventually employ a Youth Officer the job description could include promoting the work of the Council through social media.

After this, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk highlighted the strategy document, previously circulated, by the Local Government Association, and provided the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972 s.142.

RECOMMENDATION

- Conduct a debate. For example, “How can the Council use social media effectively, with limited resources?”, or “How many social media accounts should the Council have?”
- For now, ask Councillors to share news articles from the website through their existing social media channels.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To meet strategic objective E7: “Develop a communications plan, to include social media and digital services”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this stage, there are no financial implications. However, should the Council resolve to employ a media officer, or direct current employees, to create content, monitor, moderate, and engage with the public, through a variety of social media outlets, this will inevitably require a significant investment of working time, which may eventually result in an increase to staff costs. At the time of writing, all the Council’s employees are running a significant deficit in working hours. This backlog is mainly due to the absence of a full-time clerk, and the subsequent hand-over period. However, the recent work involved with preparing for the internal audit, and other statutory meetings of the Council, has also had an impact. Similarly, the recent round of Covid 19 resulted in additional working time dedicated to cleaning, in the absence of a contractor. All of this presents a challenge when deciding how to spend working time most effectively.

At this point, Cllr Patricia Morgan encouraged Councillors to share the Town Council’s future publications from the website through their own social media channels, and there was a broad consensus for continuing with this strategy.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FC_2022.71 IT Hardware Replacement.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.133.

RECOMMENDATION

- Resolve that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to replace the scheduled IT equipment as proposed, documents having been circulated”.
- Resolve that: “The Finance Committee increase the budget for IT from the General Contingency, earmarked reserves, to include the costs of replacing the IT equipment in the proposal, copies having been circulated, and consider a specific earmarked reserve for the future.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To prevent IT failure.
- To prevent reputational damage.
- To meet the technical recommendations from the Council’s IT contractor.

Almost everything the Council does relies on the use of IT equipment, and the reputation of the Council has been damaged when it does not function correctly, even for short periods. The Council’s IT contractor, Nebula IT, recommends replacing the equipment now, before it breaks. The hardware the Council has is very old and operates using traditional storage devices (HDD). The replacement equipment will use modern (SSD) devices that are faster, quieter, smaller, more durable, and consume far less energy. According to Nebula, it should make a noticeable difference.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Like the website, the Council has no specific budget, or earmarked fund, for replacing IT equipment. However, the current budget for IT costs is £6000, which may be slightly over budget this year, mainly due to significant ‘ad-hoc’ out-of-contract expenses at the start of the financial year, during the Town Clerk handover period. However, the Council has also budgeted £6252 for communications, which is forecast to be significantly underspent, mainly due to the absence of a permanent clerk to write articles. Either way, the Council has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, of £180,614.12 to create a new budget for the website or increase IT costs to include this expenditure.

After this, several Councillors questioned the accuracy and technical specifications listed in the circulated proposal and questioned the justification for early renewal. For example, Cllr Simon Jones, suggested an alternative arrangement, with laptop docking stations, might be more suitable. In agreement,

Cllr Christopher Edwardson, questioned if the current working practices could be adapted. After this, Cllr Richard Nichols argued that the Council is “not an emergency service”, suggesting that a short interruption of service, due to IT failure, could be tolerated.

At this point, Cllr James Hunt withdrew his support for the substantive motion, and instead:

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

Resolved: This item is deferred to a future meeting of the Full Council or Finance Committee.

FC_2022.72 **Broadband and Telephone.**

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.133.

RECOMMENDATION

- Resolve that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to switch the supplier of the broadband and telephone as proposed, documents having been circulated”.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To save the taxpayer money.
- To simplify and align communications support with IT.
- To meet the technical recommendations from the Council’s IT contractor.

Almost everything the Council does relies on the use of IT equipment, and the reputation of the Council has been damaged when it does not function correctly, even for short periods. The Council’s IT contractor, Nebula IT, recommends switching to a system that they use for their own services. Crucially, the customer service, and response time, will be far quicker, of higher quality, and it is significantly less expensive than the alternative being offered by the current supplier, British Telecom.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council currently has an office cost of £729 per annum budgeted for ‘telephone’, which includes broadband. The renewal offer from British Telecom was £119.95 per month (£1439.40 per annum), with a 5yr contract. The offer from Nebula IT is £43.95 per month (£527.40 per annum).

After a short discussion, Councillors agreed that this was a sensible course of action.

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

Resolved: The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to switch the supplier of the broadband and telephone as proposed, documents having been circulated.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

FC_2022.73 **To receive any updates from Committees.**

Minutes: To begin with, Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor) described the difficulty of Councillors attending the planning committee during the day, and the result was increasing numbers of meetings that were inquorate.

After this, Cllr James Hunt summarised the minutes of the Finance Committee, which consisted mainly of routine business, such as the monthly payments list, scrutiny of the budget, suggestions for updating the financial regulations, and the renewal of contracts, such as IT.

FC_2022.74 **To receive any updates from Working Groups.**

Minutes: Cllr Patricia Morgan explained that the important updates from the Working Groups had been covered earlier in the meeting.

FC_2022.75 **Dates and Timings.**

Minutes: Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) reminded Councillors that the next meeting of the Full Town Council was currently scheduled for Thursday 8th September 2022 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.

After this, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) concluded the formal business of the meeting at 2045hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterwards.