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EMERSONS GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL

Name: Cllr Simon Budd (Chair)

Date: 13th April 2023

Signed: {Original Signed}

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council,

1900hrs on Thursday 9th March 2023.

Present: Councillors Simon Budd (Mayor), David Somers (Deputy Mayor), Roberta Sunderland, Colin Hunt, Caroline Johnson, Christopher Edwardson, Simon Jones, Richard Nichols, Rachael Hunt, and Alka Mehta-Graham.

Absent: Councillor Sadik Al-Hassan.

In attendance: Town Clerk, Ian Lyons.

Apologies: Councillors James Hunt and Patricia Morgan.

Public: No 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_2022.170 Welcome and Introductions.

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

FC_2022.171 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.

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

FC_2022.172 Public Participation.

Minutes: No members of the public were present.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

FC_2022.173 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 of February 2023, 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_2022.174 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 Dibden Lane Allotments lease and the Vinney Green land transfer are still outstanding. Ian Lyons, Principal Surveyor at South Glos, has not provided an update for two months.
- Two items deferred to Open Spaces at the last meeting, localism and Vinney Green Bollards, an update will be provided later in the meeting.
- The waste disposal contract with South Glos (Localism) was commissioned.
- Planning for the Coronation of His Majesty the King is well underway, and a detailed plan should be produced for the April meeting.

Minutes: Cllr Colin Hunt volunteered to raise the issue of the Vinney Green land transfer and the allotments lease with South Glos Council.

GRANTS

FC_2022.175 Mangotsfield Rainbows.

Minutes: To begin with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk provided advice from the Clerk's Report, which can be found at Annex A.

Briefly, Cllr Richard Nichols raised concerns about the level of match funding from parents.

Motion: Then, it was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Colin Hunt, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Council approves a grant to the 2nd Mangotsfield Rainbows for £600 towards a climbing trip.

FC_2022.176 Emersons Green Ladies Group.

Minutes: To start with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk provided advice from the Clerk's Report, which can be found at Annex A.

After this, a short debate took place where several issues were raised. For example, Cllr Caroline Johnson questioned the appropriate level of support to groups without a clear charitable cause. Likewise, Cllr Roberta Sunderland raised concerns over how funding was re-distributed. Similarly, Cllr Richard Nichols raised a point about discrimination, which posed a reputational risk.

In contrast, Cllr Rachael Hunt expressed support for the work the group appeared to be doing to support mental health.

Motion: Then, it was moved by Cllr Rachael Hunt, supported by Cllr Colin Hunt that:

“The Council approves a grant to the Emersons Green Ladies group for £250 towards the costs of an event marking the coronation.”

Minutes: This motion was *not* resolved.

INTEL & CURRENT AFFAIRS

FC_2022.177 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, which can be found in the Clerk’s Report at Annex A.

PLANNING & STRATEGY

FC_2022.178 Strategic Plan Update.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk delivered a short update on the progress of the Strategic Plan, circulating a progress chart with the meeting documents.

After this, Cllr Roberta Sunderland raised a question about the Local Nature Action Plan and agreed to research this further.

FC_2022.179 To note any updates from Committees.

Minutes: To start with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor) provided a summary, as Chair of the Open Spaces Committee and the Planning Committee.

Notably, an application had been received for a new McDonald’s restaurant and Greggs bakery near the Bristol Science Park. Concerns had been raised about traffic and other highway issues, particularly on the slip road.

After that, it was reported that the Open Spaces committee had arranged for a portable toilet to be installed at the allotments. Furthermore, the estate maintenance contract (Brandon Trust), and localism contract (grass cutting, South Glos) had been commissioned on a one-year contract. In addition, progress had been made on the issue of installing new bollards at Vinney Green, with a suitable compromise agreed upon. It was also announced that a working group was planning to visit the Folly, at the old Mangotsfield Railway, to address concerns over anti-social behaviour.

Next, the Town Clerk was invited to provide an update on the work of the Finance Committee. In reply, an overview of the previous minutes was provided, including a report on the six grant applications received, and the routine business of the committee.

FC_2022.180 To note any updates from Working Groups.

Climate and Nature (CAN).

Minutes: To begin with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), Cllr Roberta Sunderland gave a short verbal summary from the working group, including a written article that had been published in the Voice newspaper, a successful bird-box building event, and a re-launch of the photo competition.

After this, attention was directed to a circulated report, asking members to read it. The report can be found at Annex B.

FC_2022.181 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. The vacancies were announced but no appointments were made.

COMMUNICATIONS

FC_2022.182 Correspondence.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk directed attention to a circulated letter from the Business Manager at Vinney Green Secure Childrens' Home. It was agreed that Councillors would like to explore the opportunity to work with the organisation.

Action: Town Clerk to write a letter and organise a meeting.

FC_2022.183 Advertising.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk directed attention to a poster advertising the Coronation of His Majesty the King event, a 'Picnic in the Park'.

After this, several Councillors expressed support for the inclusion of timings on the poster, and the Town Clerk agreed to consider it with the other members of the working group. However, the official timings of the Coronation were still to be announced, which could present a reputational risk.

POLICY

FC_2022.184 Financial Regulations.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk explained that the Financial Regulations required updating with the new procurement limits, as recommended by the Internal Auditor.

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

Resolved: The Council formally adopts the updated Financial Regulations Policy (March 2023), copies having been circulated.

FC_2022.185 Standing Orders.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk explained that the Standing Orders also required updating with the new procurement limits, as recommended by the Internal Auditor.

Motion: Then, it was moved by Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), supported by Cllr Caroline Johnson, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Council formally adopts the updated Standing Orders (March 2023), copies having been circulated.

FC_2022.186 Code of Conduct.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk explained that the Code of Conduct was overdue a review and had been updated in accordance with the national model, using the South Glos Council template.

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

Resolved: The Council formally adopts the updated EGTC Code of Conduct (March 2023), copies having been circulated.

CIVIL AFFAIRS AND JOINT VENTURES

FC_2022.187 Emersons Green Village Hall (EGVH).

Minutes: To start with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk provided advice from the Clerk's Report, which can be found at Annex A.

After this, Cllr Roberta Sunderland and other Councillors asked questions to clarify the details of a circulated letter, drafted by the Town Clerk, which Cllr Richard Nichols expressed support towards. Likewise, Councillor Rachael Hunt also agreed that the strategic partnership arrangement being proposed would be

mutually beneficial. Furthermore, Councillor Alka Mehta-Graham raised the point that similar opportunities could be explored with other community organisations.

Motion: Then, it was moved by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, supported by Cllr Richard Nichols, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Council approves the *Strategic Partnership* letter; copies having been circulated.

FC_2022.188 Human Resources Consultation.

Minutes: To start with, at the invitation of Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor), the Town Clerk provided advice from the Clerk's Report, which can be found at Annex A, and directed attention to a circulated report from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)¹, highlighting the following quote: "it is absolutely clear that the current staff capacity of about 1.75fte is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of EGTC moving forwards (Willams, 2023).

After this, Cllr Caroline Johnson (Chair of the Personnel Committee) expressed support for the recommendations in the report, which would involve significant challenges for the Council to implement, and it was difficult to know where to start. Therefore, some direction would be welcomed by Councillors and attendance at the next Personnel Committee meeting was encouraged.

Similarly, Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham agreed with the recommendations in the report and raised concerns that the basic employment needs were not being met.

Likewise, Cllr Rachael Hunt raised the issue of employment laws, which must be adhered to, and suggested that the Council take a 'step-by-step' approach to the development plan, and asked what the first priority should be. In reply, the Town Clerk pointed out that an Environment Manager would deliver the most hours where they were in the shortest supply, and that CIL receipts, with a 5-year expiry, could be used to fund this role.

At this point, Cllr Richard Nichols opened a short debate about the merits of part-time versus full-time staff. In conclusion, Cllr Roberta Sunderland expressed the opinion that it was essential to prioritise an increase in staff hours towards the environment portfolio.

Motion: Then, it was moved by Cllr Caroline Johnson, supported by Cllr Alka Mehta-Graham, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Council refers the report to the Personnel Committee to make recruitment plans and submit recommendations to the Full Council.

¹ Willams, R. (2023) *Review of the staffing structure, salary levels and future needs*. Society of Local Council Clerks.

FC_2022.189 Dates and Timings.

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

Thursday 13th April 2023 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.

Councillors were asked to raise their hands if they would like this meeting to take place, and a majority voted in favour.

Finally, Cllr Simon Budd (Mayor) concluded the formal business of the meeting at 2005hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterward.



EMERSONS GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT OF: TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

TO: FULL COUNCIL

REPORT DATE: 8TH MARCH 2023

Contact Details: Ian Lyons
Tel. No: 0117 3026989
Email: clerk@emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with official advice and recommendations from the Town Councils proper officer for the following meeting:

**Full Council, The Council Chamber of Emersons Green Town Council,
Thursday 9th March 2023 commencing at 1900hrs.**

AGENDA ITEM: FC_2022.174

Outstanding Items.

To report that:

- The Dibden Lane Allotments lease and the Vinney Green land transfer are still outstanding. Ian Lyons, Principal Surveyor at South Glos, has not provided an update for two months. Official letter / District Councillors?
- Two items deferred to Open Spaces at the last meeting, localism and Vinney Green Bollards, an update will be provided later in the meeting.
- The waste disposal contract with South Glos (Localism) was commissioned.
- Planning for the Coronation of His Majesty the King is well underway, and a detailed plan should be produced for the April meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: FC_2022.175 Mangotsfield Rainbows.

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.137.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Decide on the merits of the grant application.
- *If necessary:*
- Resolve that: “The Council approve a grant to the 2nd Mangotsfield Rainbows for £600 towards a climbing trip.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The merits of the grant application should be debated.
- To meet Corporate Priority 3: Seek to ensure that the youth in the town are catered for in as comprehensive a manner as possible.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

If the Council approves the two s.137 grant applications, totalling £850, it cannot be fully achieved within the current budget of £40,000, which includes £20,000 for s.137. The level of grants awarded year to date, including liabilities, is currently at £45,503, of which £3,400 is s.137 spending. Therefore, there is currently a budget overspend of £5,503, mainly due to a substantial grant to Citizens Advice for an enhanced service. However, the Council has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, with a year-end forecast of £237,772.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

A large proportion of the footprint for this event is likely to be mitigated by sharing transport.

AGENDA ITEM:

FC_2022.176 Emersons Green Ladies Group.

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.137.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Decide on the merits of the grant application.
- Consider a conditional grant, subject to providing a suitable constitution.
- *If necessary:*
- Resolve that: “The Council approves a grant to the Emersons Green Ladies group for £250 towards the costs of an event marking the coronation.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The merits of the grant application should be debated, including the impact on Climate Change.
- To meet strategic objective E4 “Draw up a plan to provide more community-based events for local people.”
- To deliver the vision for the Council to “play its part in supporting the wider social and economic ambitions and aspirations of the area.”¹
- 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."²
- To increase public participation and engagement with the Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

If the Council approves the two s.137 grant applications, totalling £850, it cannot be fully achieved within the current budget of £40,000, which includes £20,000 for s.137. The level of grants awarded year to date, including liabilities, is currently at £45,503, of which £3,400 is s.137 spending. Therefore, there is currently a budget overspend of £5,503, mainly due to a substantial grant to Citizens Advice for an enhanced service. However, the Council has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, with a year-end forecast of £237,772.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

A large proportion of the footprint could be mitigated by encouraging sustainable travel or sharing transport to attend the event, and by reducing the waste created by event partners. This is a matter that Councillors could ask the event organiser to consider.

AGENDA ITEM: FC_2022.178

Crime Update.

Overall, the level of crime in the area, compared to previous months, is average. Notably, in January criminal damage and arson remained high, with shoplifting, and other types of theft dropping significantly.

Nevertheless, as usual, violence and sexual offences consistently remain the highest reported crimes on all scales³. In contrast, anti-social behaviour has dropped again to fourth place, behind criminal damage and arson. Councillors are reminded that a tension monitoring form has been introduced which can be submitted to: communitysafetyteam@southglos.gov.uk.

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

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

¹ EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Our Vision for Emersons Green’.

² EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Emersons Green Mission Statement’.

³ 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 7th March 2023).

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.

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.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

Neutral. Although, there is evidence to suggest a link between rising temperatures and the prevalence of crime⁴. As a result, the Council should expect the overall levels of Crime to rise slightly unless successful interventions are made.

AGENDA ITEM: FC_2022.187

Emersons Green Village Hall (EGVH).

On the 23rd of November 2022, Vicki Griffin the treasurer at EGVH requested an informal meeting with the Council to discuss a strategic partnership. In short, EGVH currently has a budget deficit which threatens the long-term success of the charity. As a result, on the 12th of January 2023, the Full Council agreed that Simon Budd (Mayor) and Cllr James Hunt (Chair of the Finance Committee) would join the Town Clerk at a meeting on the 9th of February 2023 at 1800hrs to discuss options. At the meeting, the Chair of EGVH expressed a preference for a supply and demand style arrangement over a grant or subsidy scheme. In practical terms, this would mean offering additional services to the Council to support the aims of the Strategic Plan. It was agreed that this would be discussed with the Full Council, and a potential list of services has been circulated for comments and suggestions.

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19
- Local Government Act 1972, s.133

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Councillors should debate the most appropriate overall strategy.
- Consider approving the circulated letter in response to EGVH.
- Consider the list of services listed and make suggestions or amendments.

⁴ Ranson (2012) *Crime, Weather, and Climate Change* [Online] Available at: <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/mrcbg/publications/awp/awp8> (Accessed 8th February 2023).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To deliver a wide range of aims in the Strategic Plan including:
- To deliver the vision for the Council to “play its part in supporting the wider social and economic ambitions and aspirations of the area.”⁵
- 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."⁶
- To meet strategic objective E4 “Draw up a plan to provide more community-based events for local people.”
- To increase public participation and engagement with the Council.
- To meet Corporate Priority 3: “Seek to ensure that the youth in the town are catered for in as comprehensive a manner as possible.”

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

Of course, this will be strategy dependent and the potential service charges at this stage are unknown. However, the Council does have a relevant budget for each of the services being described. Clearly, it would not be in the interest of the Council for the charity to fail. Under those circumstances, the reputational and financial risks would be disproportionate, and likely to fall on the Town Council eventually. Either way, acting early is likely to produce a more efficient and desirable outcome.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

In this regard, EGVH is often used to coordinate local action that leads to positive outcomes and has been used by the Council for this purpose on several occasions recently. Further collaboration could lead to an expansion of projects in this area if the Council chooses to do so.

AGENDA ITEM: FC_2022.188

Human Resources and Recruitment.

Originally, it was resolved at Full Council that: “The Town Clerk conducts a study of the human resources available to the Council and makes recommendations to a future meeting of the Personnel Committee” (09/06/22). Then, it was resolved that: “The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission a professional Human Resource consultation on the staff structure and recruitment required to achieve the ambitions of the draft strategic plan” (13/10/22).

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- 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.

⁵ EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Our Vision for Emersons Green’.

⁶ EGTC (2022) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 p.4 ‘Emersons Green Mission Statement’.

- Personnel Committee Terms of Reference Function 8, “To advise the Council on the requirements for, and the availability of, human resources necessary for the fulfilment of the Council’s policies.”

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Review the consultation document and recommendations.
- Resolve that: “The Council refers the report to the Personnel Committee to make recruitment plans and submit recommendations to the Full Council.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The report is clear evidence that the Council requires additional staff members to continue providing a professional service that meets the current demand and complies with employment legislation.
- The report demonstrates that the current staff members have no capacity to increase workload within the existing contractual hours.
- The Council currently has no redundancy plan for unexpected absences, and it will be impractical to use temporary contractors.
- Demand for Council officer time is likely to increase, with events for example.
- The report provides a professional second opinion, accurate costs, and realistic timescales for the implementation of a development plan.
- The Council can make comments and suggestions now that will influence the recommendations of the Personnel Committee before the final decision to ratify.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

The Council has budgeted £201,000 for Staff Expenditure in 2023/24, an increase of £130,830 on the 2022/23 budget, which is more than adequate to confidently begin the recruitment process, and cover the costs of additional staff. In particular, for the Environment manager, this can be funded entirely by the increase in CIL receipts, which must be spent within five years. This would also provide the Council with an immediate increase in officer hours where demand is currently the highest.

In contrast, without immediate action, the Council risks a reduction in services to a more sustainable level, given the retirement schedule of current staff, and the current deficit in working hours. In turn, this will inevitably lead to reputational risks, such as failing to deliver the Strategic Plan. In conclusion,

“It is absolutely clear that the current staff capacity of about 1.75 fte is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of EGTC moving forwards.” (Williams, 2023)⁷.

⁷ Willams, R. (2023) *Review of the staffing structure, salary levels and future needs*. Society of Local Council Clerks.

To: Ian Lyons

From: Bobbie Sunderland

Date: 6/3/23

Subject: Report from Climate and Nature Working Group

Community Nature Reserve

32 Gardens registered

Facebook Group going well.

Article in Emersons Green Voice this month.

Birdbox Building 25th February at Emersons Green Village Hall

Very popular event with 65 participants, 10 helpers and we built 51 birdboxes.

Good way of encouraging people to join the Community Nature Reserve.

Photo Competition

Poster in the latest Emersons Green Voice -competition open until 30th June.

Planning to poster in the local area soon.

Exhibition and Prizegiving in early September – venue and date tbc.

Future events in the planning stages

May – visit to Dibden Lane Allotments

June – Open Gardens for Wildlife

July – EARTHfest (formerly Three Green Festival) – Community Nature Reserve Tent with activities.

Sept – Photo exhibition and prize giving.

Oct- Seedswap and Autumn Gathering