

## SOUTHBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Virtual Extraordinary Full Council meeting of Southborough Town Council held on Thursday 8 October 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Lewis (Chairman), Ms Hill (Deputy Chair), Backhouse, Blackwell, Bullion, Clay, Francis, Harris, Kinghorn, Lane, Munn, Prance, Poile and Wharton.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Tracy Kelly (Town Clerk) Paul Gosling (Finance Officer)

1. **APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE** – Councillors Mrs Kinghorn (ill health) Councillors Evans and Lewis Grey (Work Commitments)
2. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS** – No interests were declared.
3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION** – No Public or Press were present
4. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was proposed that during the consideration of the following items, the public and press shall be temporarily excluded (Standing Order 3 (c)): -

These items are considered confidential for the following reason(s)  
Information relating to the financial and personnel affairs of the Council.

**Councillor Backhouse entered the meeting at 6.35pm**

**Councillor Kinghorn entered the meeting at 6.38pm**

- a) **Ridgewaye Fields drainage** – Members discussed the recommendations supplied by the independent surveyor's report and the additional advice from the Councils insurers. Members **AGREED** to seek the costs of carrying out the remedial works for option one as recommended by both the independent surveyor and Councils insurers and to instigate those works. Members further **AGREED** to set up a working group consisting of Councillors Blackwell, Clay, Kinghorn and Prance. This working group will commission a further independent report over the long-term management of the fields. It was also requested the residents who had been involved previously be kept informed of the Council ongoing proposals.

**Councillor Lane entered the meeting at 6.48pm**

- b) **Neighbourhood/ Local Plan Update** - Councillor Lewis verbally updated the Council on the meeting with Tunbridge Wells Planning Officers and representatives of Southborough Town Council in respect to producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Southborough and High Brooms. It was **AGREED** the Southborough Town Council would work towards on a shorter Neighbourhood Plan using just the design codes as set out in legislation. The Chairman would write to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council advising of this Councils intention. It was further **AGREED** that the matter be brought back to a future Full Council meeting to discuss a possible working group including members from the greater community utilising their experience and ideas.
- c) **Freedom of Information request Confidential Matters** – Members **NOTED** the previously supplied papers.

- d) **Southborough Community Hub Confidential Matters** – Members discussed the ongoing hub operations and future requirements. Councillor Blackwell updated Members on the most recent developments surrounding the Hub Including the recent Hub Board Meeting where Southborough Town Council had expressed its ongoing concerns with the financial aspects.

### **Southborough Hub Board Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020**

Cllr Francis ran through the VAT issue that STC has been raising with the Board since November 2019. We had previously agreed that we would hold a Hub board meeting in August to address this. Although there has been some advice received at the end of September this has not been progressed to a position where the board is able to make a decision. Cllr Oakford (KCC) expressed the position that he did not believe that KCC should have to take on the Head Lease as originally agreed by the three authorities.

It was resolved that officers from the respective authorities and Rosemary Jones for STC would meet to work through the still remaining VAT and Medical Centre head lease issues.

We are awaiting confirmation on the figures for the FFE but due to the hall, storage and workshop areas being omitted from the initial specification the costs may well exceed the allocation on the budget. There may need to be further VE. This is also dependent on the outstanding £97k from the Crest contingency being returned by the end of the year.

We discussed the communication that STC has agreed to in the form of a leaflet to the residents of Southborough and High Brooms. STC will invite submissions from the public for the name of the building for consideration by STC. KCC stated that they believe the board should have the final say in the naming of Southborough Town Council's building. I believe that this should a decision for our council and those of us who live in the town.

Without a TWBC representative in attendance the Board was unable to reach a position regarding the required changes to the building around the scenery doors, meeting room windows and store for the community room/council chamber. This is estimated to be in excess of £40k and KCC have expressed the position that they are not able to fund this expenditure at present. STC, if they are able to fund these changes now, may be able to recoup their expenditure if funds are available at the end of the project but this is not guaranteed. Members will need to discuss and decide how they would like this to progress.

I have subsequently written to the board asking for clarification on how these oversights were not picked up earlier and how these apparent design faults were not picked up by the architects. The Collaboration Agreement requires the council leaders of the KCC, TWBC and the chair of STC to convene a meeting within five days if a resolution cannot be reached.

KCC have stated that the designs were signed off by our previous Hub Board lead who had been given delegated authority by STC and who was able to agree minor amendments to the building. I have written to Cllr Kinghorn to ask if any of these issues were previously actioned.

## **Public Realm Meeting with HMY/Baxall 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

HMY have worked up a new design to replace the approved wave pattern. A pre-app meeting has been booked with TWBC planning and we will be guided by advice from officers. The proposal is to work to a slanted grid pattern using tramlines that take their orientation and proportions from the Hub building and the adjoining Crest paving. It would use the same type of granite sets to the same depth but vary the tones with three different pavers and reverse the contrasting trim on the Crest side. We may have to be guided by the availability of materials which Baxall are following up on. Whatever the final choice of material it needs to be resistant to the pollution and discolouring that will result from the proximity to the A26.

- e) **Southborough Hub Finances** - Members discussed the ongoing finances surrounding the Hub Project. Members discussed the additional forward funding for the design changes at £7,500 to one meeting room and for an additional window. Members further discussed the forward funding of £34,000 for the provision of larger external and internal doors for the allowance of scenery/equipment get in.

**A recorded vote was requested for the vote for this Council to accept the proposed additional forward funding of £7.5k to enable the additional works to be carried out to the meeting room and the addition of a window.**

**For the proposed additional charges of £7.5k** Cllrs Lewis (Chairman), Blackwell, Bullion, Clay, Elliott, Francis, Harris, Ms Hill (Deputy Chairman), Kinghorn, Lane, Prance, Poile and Wharton.

**Against the additional charges of £7.5k** 0

**Abstentions:** 0

**The vote was carried**

**The Chairman called to extend the meeting at 8.30 pm for a further 30 minutes.**

**A recorded vote was requested for the vote for Southborough Town Council to accept the proposed forward funding of £34k to enable the works to be carried out to provide additional height doors both externally and internally. Together with a side letter to be sent by STC's Hub Representative to the Hub Board requesting that these funds be refunded to STC at the completion of the building should the funds be available.**

**For the proposed additional charges of £34k** Cllrs Lewis (Chairman), Blackwell, Clay, Francis, Harris, Ms Hill (Deputy Chairman), Lane, Prance, and Wharton.

**Against the additional charges of £34.k** 0

**Abstentions:** Bullion, Elliott, Kinghorn and Poile

**The vote was carried**

The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance then closed the meeting at 9.00 pm

**CHAIRMAN**