



Minutes of a Remote Meeting of Ecclesfield Parish Council held on Thursday 4 March 2021 via Zoom Video Conference

The meeting commenced: 7.30 pm - concluded: 8.45pm

Councillors Present. John Housley [Chairman], John Brownrigg [Vice-Chairman], Victoria Bowden, Paul Brunt, Kate Guest, Alan Hooper, Carol Levery and David Ogle.

Absent Councillors. Terence Bawden, Tracy Grantham, and Gary Lakin.

Officer. Andrew Towleron – Parish Clerk/RFO [minute taker].

Members of the Public. Four members of the public.

Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman opened the main meeting. He outlined the procedure for the meeting to ensure that it was effective and lawful. He explained that the Clerk would be recording the meeting to assist with minute taking. The Chairman noted that the Council intend to review its policy and procedures for the holding of remote meetings.

2020/140 (FC)

Item 140: Apologies and Reasons for Absence

The Clerk stated that he had sought and received independent and qualified advice from the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations on whether the Council was acting lawfully in not accepting ill health related grounds as a reason for absence from a Councillor. This, he explained, was following a challenge from Councillors as to whether the Council could do this. The Clerk reported this advice in verbatim. In broad terms there was nothing in law that would specially prevent a Council not accepting ill health related grounds as a reason for absence but in doing so Councillors would need to be mindful of the wider 'Wednesbury' test that they were acting reasonably in doing so. This was then discussed in detail. For the avoidance of doubt this advice is shown as Appendix A.

The Clerk reported that he had received two apologies and reasons for absence from Councillors Tracy Grantham and Gary Lakin. These were then considered.

Proposed by Councillor John Housley and Seconded by Paul Brunt, and

RESOLVED: That the apology and reason given for Councillor Tracy Grantham be approved.
(4 in favour, 3 abstentions, 1 against)

Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and Seconded by Victoria Bowden, and

RESOLVED: That the apology and reason given for Councillor Gary Lakin not be approved.
(4 in favour, 3 abstentions, 1 against)

	The Clerk was asked to convey to Councillor Tracy Grantham that the Council wishes her well and a speedy recovery.
<u>2020/141</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<p><u>Item 141: Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>The Clerk explained that Councillor Kate Guest had declared an interest in an aspect of 2020/146 specifically 2020/109 (F&P) 3, which related to a grant for Friends of Ecclesfield Park. The Clerk also explained that he granted Councillor Kate Guest a dispensation to speak, but not vote on this item.</p>
<u>2020/142</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<p><u>Item 142: Exclusion of Press and Public</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that there were no items on the agenda that he considered would require the exclusion of the press and public.</p>
<u>2020/143</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<p><u>Item 143: Public Participation Session</u></p> <p>A question was asked about progress with the investigation following the challenge to the Council's accounts for 2019/2020. The Clerk explained that the Council was restricted in what it could say as this was subject of an on-going investigation. He then provided a brief progress report, as did Councillor Kate Guest, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee leading this investigation, who confirmed that the investigation was underway.</p>
<u>2020/144</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<p><u>Item 144: Council Minutes</u></p> <p>The Chairman, Councillor John Housley, introduced the minutes of 4 February meeting. Councillor John Brownrigg raised a query about the accuracy of item 2020/128 (FC). While not disputing that this was passed by the majority of the Councillors voting he sought clarification on whether the specific number reported as voting in favour was correct and asked that the voting intentions be reported in full. The Clerk said he would look into this.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Housley and seconded by Councillor John Brownrigg, and RESOLVED: That subject to the outcome of the clarification in relation to 2020/128 (FC) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 4 February 2021 be approved.</p> <p>Councillor Paul Brunt stated that the minutes from the January 2021 Council meeting did not appear to be on the Council website. The Clerk said that he would look into this. <i>(7 in favour, 1 abstention)</i></p>
<u>2020/145</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<p><u>Item 145: Environmental Planning Committee Minutes</u></p> <p>Councillor Alan Hooper gave a brief commentary of the draft minutes and associated actions from the meetings of 4 February 2021 and 18 February 2021.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor Alan Hooper and seconded by Councillor Carol Levery, and RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environmental Planning Committee held on 4 February 2021 be approved. <i>(7 in favour, 1 abstention)</i></p> <p>Proposed by Councillor Alan Hooper and seconded by Councillor Carol Levery, and RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environmental Planning Committee held on 18 February 2021 be approved <i>(7 in favour, 1 abstention)</i></p>

2020/146
(FC)

Item 146: Finance and Premises Minutes

These were considered. The Chairman asked that specific references in item (2020/114 (1) (F&P) to the suspension of Financial Regulation 11.1 (h) be included in the minutes of this meeting.

Proposed by Councillor John Brownrigg and seconded by Councillor Victoria Bowden, and **RESOLVED:** That: -

1. The schedule of payments dated 30/1/21 to 16/2/21 shown in item (2020/108(1) (F&P)) and below at Appendix B be approved.
2. The Council agrees to the purchase of 100 hedgehog highway signs at a cost of £200 or below (2020/1098(2) (F&P)).
3. High Green in Bloom be granted an award of £2,500.00 towards replacement tools and equipment (2020/109 (1) (F&P)).
4. That High Green Women's Institute be granted an award of £356.67 in support of environmental activities in support of the 'Show the Love' event (2020/109 (2) (F&P)).
5. That Friends of Ecclesfield Park be awarded £2,837.00 towards more bins and benches in Ecclesfield Park (2020/109 (3) (F&P)).
6. 10 litter bin/dog poo bins be purchased, which would then be installed and managed by Sheffield City Council at an approximate cost of £4000 (2020/110 (F&P)).
7. The Disposal Policy be approved (Item 2020/111 (1) (F&P)).
8. The Document Retention Policy be approved (Item 2020/111 (2) (F&P)).
9. 4 laptops are purchased for Council staff at an approximate cost of £2,500 which includes their installation and associated software (2020/114 (2a) (F&P)).
10. **Financial Regulation 11.1(h) is suspended so that the laptops for Council staff can be purchased through a single quotation obtained through 'Supake' who provide specialist IT services to the Council (2020/114 (2b) (F&P)).**
11. Up to 4 laptops (including installation costs and associated software) be purchased for Councillors (2020/114 (3a) (F&P)).
12. The budget for the 4 laptops for Councillors be found from the underspend from the Training and Development budget for 2020/21 (2020/114 (3b) (F&P)).
13. These laptops for Councillors are offered first to the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Finance and Premises, Planning and the Environment and Staffing Committees. Should there be any remaining, they will then be offered to the Vice-Chairman of the Council and then the Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Premises, Planning and the Environment and Staffing Committees (2020/114 (3c) (F&P)).
14. **Financial Regulation 11.1(h) is suspended so that the laptops for Councillors can be purchased through a single quotation obtained through 'Supake' who provide specialist IT services to the Council (2020/114 (3d) (F&P)).**
15. The Clerk was asked to develop and bring forward costed proposals so that all Councillors who require a laptop in support of their duties to the Council is able to offer them one (2020/114 (3e) (F&P)).
16. The minutes of the Finance and Premises meeting held on 23 February 2021 be approved.

(7 in favour)

2020/147
(FC)

Item 147: Payments for Approval

The Clerk outlined the payments for approval between 17 February and 25 February 2021.

Proposed by Councillor John Brownrigg and Seconded by Councillor David Ogle, and **RESOLVED:** That the payments for approval between 17 February 2021 and 25 February 2021 (and as shown below) be approved.

PAYMENTS LIST FOR APPROVAL from 17 February 2021 – 25 February 2021

Date invoice	Payee Name	Description	Ref	Amount
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received				
17.2.21	Russell Richardson	Shredding bags	BACS	£70.80
17.2.21	Salaries	Salaries: February 21	BACS	£4,898.60
18.2.21	YLCA	Council Vacancies Webinar session held on 17.2.21	BACS	£30.00
19.2.21	Supake	Site visit: 18.2.21	BACS	£167.86
19.2.21	British Gas	Gas: Council office 1.12.20-31.1.21	DD	£270.15
22.2.21	HMRC	Tax & NI: February 2021	Cheque	£1,018.10
24.2.21	Look Local	Parish Council leaflets printed and distributed	BACS	£480.00
24.2.21	Firecrest	Fire alarms serviced and works carried out	BACS	£463.85
25.2.21	Talk Talk	Broadband	DD	£35.40
25.2.21	Pension contribution	Standard Life	BACS	£685.33

(8 in favour)

2020/148
(FC)

Item 148: To consider next steps in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the Parish

The Chairman reported that at its 4 February 2021 Full Council meeting there was a presentation and discussion on crime and safety issues in the Parish. This included contributions from Dr Alan Billings, the South Yorkshire Crime and Police Commissioner and local police Sergeant, Matthew Cook. The Council needs to consider next steps.

The Clerk explained that local police Sergeant, Matthew Cook, had agreed to provide monthly statistics on crime and anti-social behaviour in the Parish. It was agreed that this was a useful development and should be included as part of the Full Council agenda.

A discussion then took place on £10,000 allocated in the budget for the next financial year for a crime and anti-social behaviour initiative. A wide-ranging discussion then took place on this. This included the need to learn from best practice from other areas, opportunities for drawing in external funding and that activities should be tailored to the different needs of the Parish. Councillors were asked to suggest projects and activities that may work well in their Ward. This would then be discussed at the next meeting of the Council. Councillor Alan Hooper reported that Sheffield City Council has agreed, in principle, to introduce neighbourhood officers across the City and there may be scope to dovetail this with activities supported by this budget.

Councillor Alan Hooper suggested that in addition to crime and anti-social behaviour the Council should also keep a close eye on the Covid pandemic and implications and Climate Change.

2020/149
(FC)

Item 149: Policy for Approval

The Clerk provided a commentary on the draft Data Protection policy, which was then considered. The Clerk confirmed that he was the Data Controller and Data Protection Officer as referenced in the document.

	Proposed by Councillor Carol Levery and seconded by Councillor David Ogle, and RESOLVED: That the Data Protection policy be approved. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(8 in favour)</i></p>
<u>2020/150</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<u>Item 150: To receive an update on the COVID pandemic and its implications for the Council</u> The Clerk provided an update. The main issue he explained was that without any further action from the Government, all local authorities including parish councils must return to face-to-face meetings from 6 May 2021. Adding that these meetings should be held safely having regard to COVID-19 regulations. Office staff were preparing for the possibility of face-to-face meetings being required from 6 May 2021. It was unlikely, however, that the Council Chamber would be big enough to safely hold meetings in accordance with the COVID-19 regulations. Various suggestions were made of alternative venues that could be used. It was also noted that previously the Council had indicated that it would like to take Council meetings out to the community.
<u>2020/151</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<u>Item 151: To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group</u> The Chairman gave a progress report. He explained that it was developing well. It was noted that the intention was that members would be invited safely to view and inspect the various maps prepared with the initial list assets of heritage assets, community assets and local green spaces which the Plan would seek to protect.
<u>2020/152</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<u>Item 152: Correspondence</u> The various correspondence was noted.
<u>2020/153</u> <u>(FC)</u>	<u>Item 153: Date and time of future meetings</u> The Clerk confirmed that the next Full Council would be on Thursday 1 April 2021 at 7.00 pm. It was also confirmed that the next meetings of the Environmental Planning Committee would be held on Thursday 18 March and Thursday 1 April 2021, both at 6.30 pm and the Finance and Premises Committee on Tuesday 23 March 2021 at 6.30 pm He added that it would be necessary to arrange the next meeting of the Trustees of Grenoside Exhibition Foundation Trust before the end of the financial year and it may be necessary to an additional meeting of the Full Council in March. It was agreed that meeting of the Trustees of Grenoside Exhibition Foundation Trust should take place on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 6.30 pm followed by a Full Council Meeting at 7.00 pm, if required. Councillor Alan Hooper paid tribute to the work and dedication of the Council staff especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPENDIX A: ADVICE FROM THE YORKSHIRE LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS OF COUNCILS

We have discussed the issue of the nature of the reasons for absence and a council's responsibilities or considerations that it must have when making this decision. The Local Government Act 1972, Section 85(1) gives the *power* (a choice) to a local council to

approve reasons for absence and thereby enabling a councillor with consecutive absences to keep their seat. What is not mentioned anywhere are the considerations that a council should have when making this decision. In our view this is based on reasonableness ie the Wednesbury principles which focus on a reasoning or decision being so unreasonable that no reasonable person, acting reasonably, could have made it. The case was between Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd and the Wednesbury Corporation in 1948. Also inherent in that, is consideration for legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 that you have mentioned, and whether the Council is acting fairly in this regard.

APPENDIX B: PAYMENTS LIST FOR APPROVAL from 17 February 2021 – 25 February 2021 ((2020/108 (F&P))

Date invoice received	Payee Name	Description	Ref	Amount
31.1.21	Google	GSuite monthly subscription	DD	£73.60
3.2.21	YPO	Hand towels case 3x	BACS	£62.86
4.2.21	B & M Waste	Sanitary bins 2x	BACS	£9.70
4.2.21	Russell Richardson	Shredding sacks	BACS	£59.00 + VAT
5.2.21	e-on	Electric – Council office 06.12.20-31.1.21	DD	£163.98
5.2.21	Redwood Heating	Boiler servicing – Council office & Community room	BACS	£120.00
8.2.21	YLCA	Fire Safety training – Admin Asst.	BACS	£15.00
9.2.21	Look Local	Hedgehog Friendly invitation Postcards for Look Local	BACS	£400 ex VAT
9.2.21	Wybone	Bins	BACS	£3,335.64
11.2.21	SYPA	Pensions	DD	£892.20
11.2.21	EBay	Pride Flag	BACS	£3.99
15.2.21	Adobe Pro – on behalf of A. Towlerton	Purchase of Adobe Pro for one month	BACS	£13.14
15.2.21	e-on	Electric – Community room 25.11.20-31.1.21	DD	£53.29
15.2.21	Pitney Bowes	Photocopying	BACS	£26.18
16.2.21	HMRC	Tax & NI	Cheque	£1,713.23