



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

EXTRA-ORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 11th October 2023** at The Town Hall, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor
Cllr Roger Weeks, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Graham Bashford
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Sharon Cullingford
Cllr Rupert Evill

Cllr Alan Frith
Cllr Paul Harris
Cllr Mick Hill
Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Graham Poulter
Cllr Donna Toye

Absent:

Cllr Mark Walden

In attendance:

Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins
RFO, Tina Wright
Projects and HR Admin Officer, Serena Burgess

Via MS Teams:

Works Manager, Simon Dobie

1150. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda

There was no public participation.

1151. To receive apologies for absence

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Sarah Snook, Cllr A von Clemens and Cllr David Walsh, who were unable to join the meeting for personal reasons.

1152. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of interest.

1153. To receive a letter of resignation from the Mayor's Secretary / Customer Services Officer and to consider and agree a draft information pack, draft advert and draft recruitment timetable

It was agreed that this item would be moved to the end of the meeting. Please refer to Minute No. 1156.

1154. To receive and consider an Order issued by Dorset Council under Section 84(1,2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to revoke a length of the existing 40mph speed limit and extend the 30mph speed limit along B3081 Shaftesbury Road, Gillingham. Further information is available on the Dorset Council website [HERE](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a recommendation is made to Dorset Council that the proposed 30mph limit is extended to include the junction with Cole Street Lane.

1155. To receive and consider a report from the Property Management Sub-committee regarding Roman Court Workshops

a) To consider and agree the replacement of the roofs and installation of solar/pv panels at Roman Court Workshops at a cost of c£150,000

Cllr Kilcourse, Lead Member of the Property Management Sub-committee, presented a report regarding the replacement of the roofs and installation of photovoltaic panels at Roman Court Workshops. Please refer to [Appendix A](#).

During consideration of the report members referred to the Town Council's Climate Change and Carbon Management Plan which is available to view on the Town Council's website [here](#).

Reference was made to the Town Council's 5 Year Action Plan which is available to view on the Town Council's website [here](#).

Careful consideration was given to the financial implications and the RFO confirmed that, in accordance with Para. 3.3 of the report, the total amount currently available towards the proposals is £61,797, leaving a shortfall of just under £90,000.

It was noted that the council is currently paying £4,200 a year for electricity at Roman Court Workshops and this amount will increase as fossil fuel equipment, mowers and vehicles come to the end of their life and are replaced with electric alternatives. The proposed photovoltaic panels will reduce the cost of electricity and help the council to manage expenditure as it reduces its reliance on fossil fuel.

It was noted that there are a number of high value projects coming forward and sequencing and timing is important as some are reliant on completion of other projects.

Following careful consideration, it was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the replacement of the roofs and installation of photovoltaic panels at Roman Court Workshops is brought forward in the 5 Year Action Plan to FY2024/25.

Cllr Hill and Cllr Weeks voted against the proposal. Cllr Cullingford abstained from voting.

b) To consider and agree a timetable of work

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the timetable of work, as presented, is approved.

Cllr Hill voted against the proposal. Cllr Cullingford abstained from voting.

c) To consider and agree a tender document for circulation

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the tender document, as presented, is approved.

d) To consider and agree that Gillingham Town Council seeks the approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan of £100,000 over the borrowing term of over 14 but not over 14.5 years for the purpose of replacing the roofing and adding solar/pv panels to Roman Court Workshops in Gillingham. The annual loan repayments will come to around £10,030. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments

Consideration was given to a PWLB loan of £100,000 over the borrowing term of over 14 but not over 14.5 years; however, it was agreed that a PWLB loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years is preferable. Please refer to Para. 3.3 of the report at Appendix A.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council seeks the approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a PWLB loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years, for the purpose of replacing the roofing and adding photovoltaic panels to Roman Court Workshops in Gillingham. The annual loan repayments will come to around £9,752.90. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

Cllr Hill voted against the proposal. Cllr Cullingford abstained from voting.

e) To consider and agree that Gillingham Town Council publicise the agreement using the following statement in an immediate press release:

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council publicise the agreement using the following statement in an immediate press release:

“At the Gillingham Town Council meeting held on 11 October 2023 it was resolved to seek the approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years for the purpose of replacing the roof and installing photovoltaic panels at the council’s workshops at Roman Court in Gillingham. The annual loan repayments will come to around £9,752.90. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments”.

Cllr Hill voted against the proposal. Cllr Cullingford abstained from voting.

- f) To consider and agree that an application should be submitted by the Responsible Financial Officer on behalf of Gillingham Town Council for a loan to be repayable in the manner stated, with interest at the appropriate rate determined by HM Treasury.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that an application should be submitted by the Responsible Financial Officer on behalf of Gillingham Town Council for a loan to be repayable in the manner stated, with interest at the appropriate rate determined by HM Treasury.

Cllr Hill voted against the proposal. Cllr Cullingford abstained from voting.

- 1156. To receive a letter of resignation from the Mayor’s Secretary / Customer Services Officer and to consider and agree a draft information pack, draft advert and draft recruitment timetable**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public shall be excluded during the discussion of agenda item no. 4 as the council will be considering information about individual staff members.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the job is offered to a previous candidate from the interviews held on 18 April 2023.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that if the previous candidate declines, the offer, advert, candidate information pack and timetable, as presented, are approved for circulation.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.

Gillingham Town Council**Property Management Sub-committee****Replacement of Roof at Roman Court Workshops****Authors: Cllr John Kilcourse, Lead Member and Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk****1. Background**

- 1.1** On 11 May 2020 a survey of Roman Court was prepared by an independent surveyor on behalf of Gillingham Town Council. With regards to the roof, the survey states:

The two units each have four roof structures. Both units have two principal roof structures to the main accommodation. These are double pitched structures and are covered in corrugated fibrous cement sheets. The corrugated fibrous cement sheets are supported by a series of galvanised steel joists which are then built into the gable end and partition walls. The two self-contained eastern units to both blocks, have lead flashings and upstands where the roof coverings meet the gable end walls of the main sections of the buildings, designed to prevent rainwater getting in between the roof coverings and the masonry. However, both buildings have been extended to the front and rear (in the case of the southern unit, Unit 2) and to the front and west side (in the case of Unit 1). These later extensions are timber framed and are clad in modern profile steel sheets. In each instance the profile steel sheets are then supported by a series of wooden joists.*

**Please note that the timber framed extension to the front of the north unit has been removed by GTC.*

Condition

There are holes in the vertical plane of the south pitch of the left (north) building where ventilators and flues have historically protruded through the roof covering. The holes will need to be covered and the material made good to reduce the risk of rainwater ingress.

There are a number of sheets to the south pitch of the southern building that have lifted and there is therefore some risk of penetrating dampness where this has happened, and the repairs have not been made good. You will need to allow for the material to be repaired.

There are also a number of verge pieces to the south west corner of the southern building that are lifted and are damaged. Again, there is some risk of penetrating dampness if this material is not replaced or repaired.

Additionally, there are areas to both buildings where the fibrous cement sheets have already been replaced or repaired. This is a point that I will come back to later in this section.

*To the north west verge pieces to the southern building, again the edge piece has lifted and there is some risk of penetrating dampness in this area. You will need to monitor the condition of the roof coverings and if rainwater is discovered, then repairs will need to be implemented. I believe that **the roofs covered in the fibrous cement sheets will need to be re-covered within the next 5 – 7 years (2025 – 2027)** although by carrying out repairs in between times may extend the useful life of the existing cement sheets.*

In each case the fibrous cement and metal sheets are held in place by a series of bolts. A number of the bolts are corroding. The bolt heads holding the profile steel sheets in place should have rubber or plastic caps over them and the caps are missing. As a result of this, a number of the bolt heads are starting to corrode. Some of the profile steel sheets have also suffered minor damage. It would appear that heavy objects have been dropped on the sheets in a number of places but unlike the corrugated cement sheets which if were struck by heavy objects would crack, no damage has been done to the steel sheets as a result of these accidents.

However, the corrugated fibrous cement sheets may well contain asbestos. Additionally, the material has a limited lifespan, and it is my view that you must allow for the roof coverings to be replaced. There is evidence in the southern block where rainwater ingress has occurred. This does appear to be historic but as is often the case, you may find that this occurs when the wind is blowing in a particular direction at a certain velocity. There is no guarantee that the roof coverings will remain weatherproof for any period of time, and you must allow for each of the roof coverings to be repaired and replaced as necessary.

On the point of asbestos, this material is known as a potential killer. As a result, unless analysis shows no asbestos content within the material, only licensed contractors must be allowed to handle it. Asbestos fibres are known killers.

- 1.2** On 19 January 2022 an asbestos survey was prepared on behalf of Gillingham Town Council which confirmed that the original main roofs were asbestos. A copy of the report is available on request.
- 1.3** The Town Council's 5 Year Action Plan, Version 6.1, was approved by Full Council on 27th September 2021, minute no. 593 a) and included the replacement of the roofs at Roman Court.

The 5 Year Action Plan is a living document and reviews are done each year or when there are changes to legislation or council responsibilities, whichever is sooner.

2. Proposal

The Property Management Sub-committee recommend that the replacement of the roofs at Roman Court Workshops is brought forward in the 5 Year Action Plan to FY2024/25.

- 2.1 At the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7th August 2023 (Minute no. 386f) it was agreed and resolved that Gillingham Town Council agree in principle, subject to clarification regarding funding, to install a new roof and solar panels at Roman Court Workshops in summer 2024.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The 5 Year Action Plan Sub-committee has investigated the proposals and has concluded that a funding plan can achieve all the works in the 5 Year Action Plan, including the vehicle replacement, a new burial ground, the pump track* and the roofing works to Roman Court. All without any impact to the current precept.

**Section 106 funding is available.*

- 3.2 Estimates for the removal and replacement of the roofs have been received prior to a tendering process and the total cost, including the installation of photovoltaic panels, is not expected to exceed £150,000.
- 3.3 There is currently funding available towards the replacement roof of £24,542 in Budget No. 7211 Roman Court refurbishment (earmarked) and £10,000 in Accrual No. 8020.

At the Full Council meeting held on 25th September 2023 (Minute 1135a) the following resolutions were agreed:

- that a virement of £3,000 is made from line 5203 rain water harvesting to line 7211 Roman Court refurbishment.
- that a virement of £24,255 is made from line 7609 general insurance to line 7211 Roman Court refurbishment.

The total amount currently available is therefore £61,797 leaving a shortfall of just under £90,000.

- 3.4 A £10,000 accrual for Budget no. 7211, Roman Court refurbishment, was Included in the budget in FY2022-23 for the replacement of the roofs. The accrual was not adjusted or added to in FY2023-24 as the Council had been advised by its insurance broker to prepare for a dramatic increase in insurance premiums. The impact of this was the removal of the £10,000 accrual in the 2023/24 budget. In January 2023 the general insurance budget for FY2023-24 was doubled and set at £41,518; however, following a tendering exercise the Town Council obtained general insurance on a three year fixed agreement for £17,012.86, resulting in an annual saving to the budget of £24,505.14.

The council can now decide whether to reinstate the £10,000 accruals or use the money to finance a new roof through a public works loan.

- 3.5** If the council decides to replace the roof in FY2027/28 the council will need to accrue c£30,000 per year, which will result in an increase to the precept. Alternatively, the balance of the roof work could be funded by a public works loan with the repayment cost being in the region of £9,752.90 per year (£4,876.45 paid every six months) over 12.5 years. This can be funded from the saving made to Budget no. 7609 (General Insurance (Combined)) and would mean that the required work will not result in an increase to the precept.

4. Proposed Timetable

- 4.1** The Property Management Sub-committee consider that, as the project was started in this council term, the council has a duty to complete the refurbishment of Roman Court and handover the finalised project to the new council.
- 4.2** The Sub-committee has considered a timetable of work which will fit in around the pre-election period (formerly known as Purdah) which starts on 11th March 2024.

The recommended timetable is below:

Activity	Date
Issue of Invitation to Tender	24 October 2023
Seek the approval of Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a PWLB loan of £100,000	24 October 2023
GTC Budget Workshop	1 November 2023
Receipt of any queries from prospective tenderers	No later than 8 December 2023
Submissions of tenders	By 12.30 pm on 5 January 2024
Tender board meet to review tenders	w/c 8 January 2024
GTC Budget Meeting	15 January 2024
Decision on award of contract by Full Council on 22 January 2024	22 January 2024
Contract awarded	Not later than 16 February 2024
Pre-election period begins	11 March 2024
Commencement of work	Summer/Autumn 2024

5. Questions raised by Councillors

The proposals have been thoroughly scrutinised by councillors and several questions have been raised. The Property Management Sub-committee met on 6th September 2023 and have responded to the questions below:

5.1 *How did the sub-committee obtain a figure of £150,000?*

This figure was arrived at following significant research into possible costs from several specialist contractors and was rounded up to £150,000 to allow for unforeseen works and other contingencies, a breakdown of this is attached as Appendix 1.

5.2 *The existing roof has a 7-year life – why do we need to replace it this quickly?*

The survey dated May 2020 states that the roofs covered in the fibrous cement sheets will need to be re-covered within the next 5 – 7 years (2025 – 2027).

The 7-year life was an estimate given nearly four years ago and therefore at best there is only an estimated one to three-year life left, before the council will be looking at extensive repairs or replacement. If we start on the path of replacement, the administration and funding applications will take up to 4 months after the council has formally decided to go ahead. The roof replacement will not start until mid-June 2024 at the earliest, at which point the roof will only have just over 12 months of useful life left anyway.

5.3 *Could the existing roof be covered up instead of removing the asbestos material?*

This of course is true but not necessarily the best solution - the council would still have to employ a specialist asbestos contractor to undertake works to over clad the roof. Furthermore, we would still have an asbestos management challenge, where a report on the condition of the asbestos would need to be commissioned to comply with regulations and this would be an ongoing cost over the life of the building. Removing the asbestos material removes this requirement and eliminates the risk to people using the building from the risks associated with asbestos.

5.4 *Why does this have to be done so quickly, why can't we accrue money over the next three years or so?*

There are a number of reasons to move forward with this work:

- a) The tendering process has been set to gain approval prior to the implementation of the pre-election period.

- b) Within the 5 Year Action Plan is the replacement of vehicles for the council grounds team. It is planned to replace one van within the next nine months and the aspiration is to replace both vans with electric vans at the same time, therefore it will be beneficial to have solar power to offset the cost of charging. This proposal is also in accordance with the Town Council's Climate Change and Carbon Management Plan. There are plans to replace several other vehicles used by the grounds team in the near future. The Works Manager will shortly be submitting a request for an additional vehicle for the workforce. This is to be an electric vehicle, for which funds already exist in the budget. Gillingham Town Council has replaced petrol powered hand held equipment with electric alternatives. The proposals are a big move towards managing the council's carbon footprint and will help to follow the Dorset Council target date to be carbon neutral.
- c) The timing of this proposal therefore is time critical as we don't consider it prudent to delay works to the roof, as we have a small window of opportunity to fund this work without any increase in the precept to fund it. If, however we choose to delay and set funds aside over say the next five years, we would have to add c£18,000 per year to the precept (inflation will increase the cost over the next five years) which is considered to be an unacceptable amount to fund and would significantly increase the percentage figure for the precept. We cannot confirm that the price would stay as now over that time.

Recommendations:

- That the replacement of the roofs and installation of photovoltaic panels at Roman Court Workshops is brought forward in the 5 Year Action Plan to FY2024/25.
- That the timetable of work, as presented, is approved.
- That the tender document, as presented, is approved for circulation.
- That Gillingham Town Council seeks the approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a PWLB loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years for the purpose of replacing the roofing and adding solar panels to Roman Court Workshops in Gillingham. The annual loan repayments will come to around £9,752.90. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.
- That Gillingham Town Council publicise the agreement using the following statement in an immediate press release:

- “At the Gillingham Town Council meeting held on 11 October 2023 it was resolved to seek the approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan of £90,000 over the borrowing term of over 12.5 but not over 13 years for the purpose of replacing the roof and installing solar panels at the council’s workshops at Roman Court in Gillingham. The annual loan repayments will come to around £9,752.90. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments”.
- That an application should be submitted by the Responsible Financial Officer on behalf of Gillingham Town Council for a loan to be repayable in the manner stated, with interest at the appropriate rate determined by HM Treasury.

Roman Court Re Roofing Budget Costs

Scaffolding Cost

c£10,000 priceyourjob.co.uk

Asbestos Removal

c£10,000 Safe Environmental

New roof cost Ultra-Light Roofing

RC N 21x7x2 = c300m² cost c£30,000

RC S 12x7x2 = c170m² cost c£17,000

PV Panels to new Roof Ultra-Light Roofing (via Sub Contractor)

RC N 21x7 = c150m² cost c£45,000

RC S 12x7 = c85m² Cost c£26,000

Total Estimated Cost c137,000

Total Project cost say £150,000

At today's costs

