



## GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall

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### FULL COUNCIL

The minutes of the **Full Council** meeting convened on, **Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020** at 7.30pm. The meeting was held remotely using appropriate technology in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4 April 2020.

#### Present

Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor	Cllr Mick Hill
Cllr Paul Harris, Deputy Mayor	Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Fiona Cullen	Cllr Graham Poulter
Cllr Sharon Cullingford	Cllr Val Potheary
Cllr Rupert Evill	Cllr John Robinson
Cllr Alan Frith	Cllr Donna Toye
Cllr Alison Gale	Cllr Keith Wareham
Cllr Mike Gould	Cllr Roger Weeks

#### In Attendance

Town Clerk: Julie Hawkins

Deputy Town Clerk: Clare Ratcliffe

Responsible Financial Officer: Debra Edwards

#### Press and Public

Press: Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News

Press: Gemma Gibson, Vale Newspaper

Public: Seven members of the public joined the meeting.

#### Minute no.

**257. 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.

**258. To receive apologies for absence.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apology for absence from Cllr Dennis Griffin due to technical issues.

**259. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 are approved. The Chairman will sign the minutes when it is possible to do so.

260.	<b>To receive any questions pertaining to the previous minutes.</b>
	There were no questions pertaining to the previous minutes.
261.	<b>To receive declarations of interest. <u>Please note:</u> members are required to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, section 27 disclosable pecuniary interests.</b>
	There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests; however, personal interests were declared later in the meeting by Cllr Cullingford and Cllr Toye regarding minute no. 274.
262.	<b>To receive and consider reports from the Schools Councils, if available.</b>
	Cllr von Clemens reported that there were no reports from the Schools Councils.
263.	<b>To receive written reports from outside bodies, if available, for consideration and approval:</b>
	<p><b>a) Three Rivers Partnership (3RP) and Three Rivers Community Partnership Board of Trustees, the Gillingham Community Leisure Trust (GCLT) (Cllr von Clemens).</b></p> <p>Cllr von Clemens had nothing to report this month.</p> <p><b>b) Town Meadow Group (Cllr Cullingford).</b></p> <p>Cllr Cullingford summarised a report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix A</b>. There were three recommendations. Cllr Cullingford answered questions on the contents of the report. Cllr von Clemens suggested that the recommendations contained within the report were dealt with by the Estate Management and Properties sub-committee.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the recommendations contained within the Town Meadow report were deferred for consideration by the Estate Management and Properties sub-committee reporting to the General Purposes Committee.</p> <p><b>c) Gillingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Cllr von Clemens).</b></p> <p>Cllr von Clemens commented that he had attended an on-line meeting. The meeting which was a general catch-up meeting, went well. There was nothing to report this month.</p> <p><b>d) DAPTC (Larger Towns: Cllr von Clemens, Northern Area: Cllr Toye / Cllr Weeks).</b></p> <p>Cllr von Clemens commented that there was nothing to report this month. Cllr Toye / Cllr Weeks also had nothing to report.</p> <p><b>e) Shaftesbury and District Transport Forum (Cllr von Clemens).</b></p> <p>Cllr von Clemens had nothing to report this month.</p> <p><b>f) Gillingham Town Team (Cllr Gould/Cllr Frith).</b></p> <p>Cllr Gould summarised a report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix B</b>. There were no recommendations. Cllr Gould answered comments regarding the Anonymous Travelling Market.</p> <p><b>g) Bones (Youth Club) Management Committee (Cllr von Clemens).</b></p> <p>A report from Tony Nye, Youth Worker, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix C</b>. There were no comments.</p>

264.	<b>To receive, consider and adopt the following standing committee reports:</b>
	<b>a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020</b>
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020 are approved and adopted
	<b>b) Planning Committee meeting held meeting on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b>
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on Monday, 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 are approved and adopted.
	<b>c) Finance Committee meeting held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b>
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the minutes of the Finance Committee held on Monday, 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 are approved and adopted.
265.	<b>To approve and authorise any payments over £10,000, if any.</b>
	The Town Clerk confirmed that the discretionary grant awarded to Gillingham Community and Leisure Trust Limited (GC&LT) for RiversMeet, of £10,000 was paid on 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 as resolved by Full Council on April 2020 Minute No. 231. It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the payment.
266.	<b>To receive and approve the internal auditor's report and management responses.</b>
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the internal auditor's report and management responses are received and approved. Please refer to <b>Appendix D</b> . Cllr von Clemens thanked all the staff involved.
267.	<b>To review and consider the effectiveness of the systems of internal audit.</b>
	A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix E</b> . It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the systems of internal audit for Gillingham Town Council are independent, effective and in accordance with the town council's financial regulations.
268.	<b>To formally receive, consider and approve the Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement FY 2019/20 of the audited accounts.</b>
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council has put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statement.
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council maintain an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council took all reasonable steps to assure themselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.



	<p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control system.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Para 9; Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement was not applicable.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 should be approved and signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The document was duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr Barry von Clemens and by The Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins.</p>
269.	<p><b>To formally receive consider and approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements FY 2019/20 of the audited accounts.</b></p> <p>The RFO, Debra Edwards, certified that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities - a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of the authority.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council confirm approval of the accounting statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 and that Section 2 should be signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>The document was duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr Barry von Clemens.</p>
270.	<p><b>To agree the period for the exercise Electors Rights according to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Recommended dates: Fri 26<sup>th</sup> June to Thu 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 inclusive.</b></p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the period for the exercise of Electors Rights according to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audits Regulations should be Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June to Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 inclusive.</p> <p>Cllr von Clemens thanked Debra Edwards, the RFO, for all her hard work preparing the accounts for external audit.</p>
271.	<p><b>To receive and consider applications for Free Room Hire, if any.</b></p> <p>There were no applications for free room hire this month.</p>
272.	<p><b>To receive and consider correspondence from residents at Church View regarding the new road layout at Le Neubourg Way.</b></p> <p>Correspondence from residents at Church View had been circulated prior to the meeting. A background paper prepared by the Mayor, Cllr von Clemens, was also circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix F</b>.</p> <p>Several residents of Church View were invited to speak, and this was followed by comments from councillors.</p>

	It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the concerns of Church View residents are forwarded for further consideration by the Traffic Management sub-committee reporting to the General Purposes Committee, who will liaise with Dorset Council Highways on behalf of residents.
273.	<b>To consider and approve the wording for a plaque to be erected on Gillingham Town Bridge in recognition of John Constable's painting in 1823.</b>
	Details of the proposed plaque to be erected on Gillingham Town Bridge was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix G</b> . It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the wording and details of the proposed plaque, as presented, is approved. Cllr Cullingford and Cllr Toye declared personal interests and abstained from voting.
274.	<b>To receive and consider a report on Gillingham Town Council's response to the Covid 19 Pandemic.</b>
	Cllr von Clemens commended Gillingham's community response to the pandemic and thanked all those involved, including volunteers, key workers, NHS staff, GTC staff and councillors, organisations and individuals that rose to the challenge. Cllr Potheary also commented that she was proud of Gillingham's achievements in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.  A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix H</b> . There were 7 recommendations.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that a Community Volunteer Task and Finish Group is formed to manage an exit strategy and contingency plan.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Cllr Cullen, Cllr Harris, Cllr Toye and Cllr Weeks are nominated for the Community Volunteer Task and Finish Group.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Serena Burgess, Administrator, is assigned to work with the Community Volunteer Task and Finish Group.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Mayor continues as lead for recovery.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Health and Safety Sub-Committee continues to monitor the COVID Secure Risk Assessments.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Traffic Management Sub-Committee monitor and review the practicalities of social distancing in areas of high footfall and liaise with Dorset Highways accordingly.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the town council supports eating-out licences and a street closure from 4pm on Fridays to 10pm on Sundays at The Square, Gillingham, subject to consultation and agreement by local businesses and residents.  It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the town council supports initiatives to create a safe and welcoming town centre that will encourage residents and visitors to return to the high street to support local businesses.
275.	<b>To receive and consider a report regarding the Woodwater Farm Sports Facility, if available.</b>
	Cllr Poulter commented that despite numerous attempts there has been little progress to resolve outstanding issues with the football club and he hoped to report more favourably next month.

276.	<b>To receive and consider a report from the Future Workshops Task and Finish Group.</b>
	<p>A report from the Future Workshops Task and Finish Group was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to <b>Appendix I</b>. There were three recommendations.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council note the progress made to date.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council note the ongoing work as listed</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that Gillingham Town Council agrees the timeframe update.</p>
277.	<b>To receive and consider the Quarterly Newsletter prior to circulation.</b>
	<p>A draft newsletter was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the newsletter, as presented, is approved for circulation.</p> <p>Cllr Potheary thanked all those involved with the publication.</p>
278.	<b>To receive matters pertinent to this meeting. <u>Please note: Members are advised that inclusion of any item is at the Chairman's discretion and that a council cannot lawfully decide upon any matter which is not specified in the summons (agenda).</u></b>
	<p><b>a) Correspondence from Aidan Dunn, Executive Director, Dorset Council</b></p> <p>The outbreak of Covid19 in early 2020 is likely to have an impact on the collection rate in 2020/21. The impact on 2019/20 cannot be determined accurately, though there was a marginal reduction in the in-year CT collection rates compared with 2018/19.</p> <p>Amounts budgeted for in 2020/21 will be paid by the collecting authority (Dorset Council), from the collection fund account, to all precepting authorities according to the precepts that were set during the respective budgeting processes. This means that the agreed amounts will be paid to each of the Town and Parish Councils, Dorset Council, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Dorset Police.</p> <p>If more is collected than is paid out on precepts during the year, the collection fund will be in surplus. If less is collected, the fund will be in deficit. The Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992 require any surplus or deficit on the fund to be shared between the <i>major</i> preceptors – the Council, Police and Fire. Town and Parish Councils are not specified in this legislation and therefore do not share in any distribution of surplus or risk of deficit i.e., Town and Parish Councils are not exposed to any Covid-19 collection fund risk in 2020/21.</p> <p>Should the reason for the collection fund deficit persist – such as might prove to be the case with the Coronavirus, we may well anticipate a lower collection rate in the following year as part of the budget setting process. This lower collection rate effectively impacts on the yield via the tax base calculation and reduces it for all preceptors. Although again Town and Parish Councils would be protected from any in-year deficit, the budgeted amount itself would be lower because of the lower expected collection rate, meaning Town and Parish Council precept income would reduce.</p>



**b) Dorset Coronavirus Community Fund**

The Town Council has been successful with an application to the Dorset Coronavirus Community Fund and awarded £2,425 to help offset some of the additional expenses incurred while setting up a community volunteer next work, which continues to enable people who need to stay safe to do so and has also helped to alleviate fear and anxiety associated with the current crisis. Residents have been very grateful for the support received and many have found new friends as a result. The exercise has demonstrated how people can come together to make a stronger and more resilient community.

**c) Thank you from the NHS in Dorset**

**Thank you for all you've done; you can continue to help us help you.**

The NHS in Dorset would like to say thank you for everything you are doing to support our staff during the global coronavirus pandemic.

We are incredibly proud of all that our amazing NHS staff have achieved with the help and support of all other key workers. We'd like to say a huge thank you to them too.

Thanks to your support and commitment, you have helped to reduce the spread of the virus, saved lives and protected your NHS in Dorset. Sadly, coronavirus has not gone away and it looks as though it will be with us for at least the next 12 months and possibly beyond. We need to remain vigilant and prepared for a potential second peak. We will need your continued support and help as we move forward together under a 'new normal' for everyone.

During the coronavirus pandemic our staff have been working hard to ensure all patients who need care - not just those with coronavirus - have been able to get it. To avoid unnecessary contact, and to protect patients, some appointments and surgeries have been postponed and others rapidly transformed to be delivered differently using technology.

We'd like to be upfront with you that the way we're delivering local health services will continue to be different. Returning services quickly to how they ran before this pandemic is not possible. This will take time as we know coronavirus is likely to be with us for a while.

We are ensuring that all urgent problems are being seen and must stress that people with possible heart attacks, strokes, severe infections, and life-threatening illness call 999 and those with worrying symptoms of cancer seek help from their GP without delay. GPs are continuing to maintain as much care as possible, including immunisations and screening procedures. As in the last few weeks, electronic consultation, telephone and video consultation will be the first contact as this ensures safety for patients and staff. GP staff will plan care for and with

you, and you should continue to contact them, even though the way services are delivered will look different for the foreseeable future.

You can also continue to support your NHS by choosing the right care when you need it. We are here for you. If you aren't sure where to go visit [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) or call 111 and this service will be able to book appointments directly with urgent treatment centres, minor injuries units and out-of-hours GP services for non-life-threatening conditions; please use these services as the hospital A&E facilities must be kept for emergencies.

We will continue to ask patients to attend face-to-face services only when it is really necessary, and where it can be done safely without putting our patients, the public or our staff at greater risk of catching coronavirus. Where possible, appointments will continue to be offered using remote services such as a video or phone consultation.

At the same time, we are looking at how we restore routine services at our hospitals and other services in a way that is safe for everyone. This is a huge task for our hardworking staff as they continue to provide care alongside implementing social distancing measures, apply caution, and put safety first; and our staff will do their best to let our patients know how it will affect them.

Meanwhile, it's important for you to look after your health and wellbeing at this current time – which will also support your local NHS. See <b><a href="http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk">www.livewelldorset.co.uk</a></b> Finally, we'd like to thank you all for your continued help, support and understanding at this time.
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There being no other business on the agenda, the meeting closed at 9.12pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor of Gillingham**

#### **Dorset Councillor Report – Cllr Val Pothercary**

Cllr Pothercary informed the meeting that she has attended virtual Dorset Council meetings. The Town Council receives many updates from Dorset Council, and she had nothing further to add at this time.

Cllr Pothercary referred to the regulatory advice regarding Reopening Dorset High Streets – Community and Public Protection. There is a single point of contact for anyone needing advice: [reopeningbusiness@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:reopeningbusiness@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk).

Cllr Pothercary is the Economic Champion for Dorset Council.



Minute no. 263 (b)

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**Gillingham Town Council**

**Town Meadow Report**

**Author: Cllr Sharon Cullingford**

A meeting was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June

All pre-booked events for 2020 have been cancelled.

Hidden Pizza has been given permission to use the meadow daily for coffee, pastries and drinks from 8am until 11am. This has proved to be successful. On Friday's coffee will be served from 8am until 11am, pizza will be served at lunch time and again in the evening. Once the restaurants are allowed to open The Town Meadow Group will approach the local restaurants to see if there are any objections, to Hidden Pizza continuing through the summer.

Town Meadow lamps have been repaired and are working, and CCTV signs are now fitted to the lamp posts.

Three Cedar tree trunks have been laid as a natural barrier between the Red Lion car park and the meadow.

The new removable bollards are installed, and the key is held by Bob Messer to remove for vehicles for event access.

The drinkable water tap project is still in progress TMG are in discussions with the Red Lion to have a metered lockable tap installed at the rear of their building.

The TMG has contacted the owner of the fence near the meadow's stone wall as it is falling over and requires attention; Several attempts have been made but all go unanswered.

A local contractor has brought the group's attention to the old building at the back of Scope and Netplay that is crumbling and in danger of falling. The Town Meadow Group will ask if this building is protected as it may be within the Conservation Area.

The TMG would like to maintain the balance of the attractions of meadowland with the practicalities of an area that is used for large events and gatherings. They would like to ask the Town Council ground staff if mowing can be adjusted to suit the season and rainfall.

The TMG would like to leave the strip of land between the path and the river without mowing until the first event of year which is normally in June. The TMG Bookings Secretary, Mandy Greenwood, will notify the council at least one month in advance of the date of the booking. The large open area of grass to be regularly mowed as per existing schedule but mown to approximately a 2" height and during drought conditions mowing to be suspended.

As many people in the town still seem unable to understand the ecological benefits of leaving grassland unmown, TMG wonder if the council would consider producing explanatory notices which can be left at areas around the town to advise people why the areas are being left uncut. It was felt a note on a spike to push into the ground would be the most appropriate or cemented into the ground on a small wood stake if the notices were pulled free.

TMG would like to point out if anyone is interested in booking the Town Meadow for meetings/ gathering and events that they check with the Booking Secretary, Mandy Greenwood, to ensure that any maintenance mowing and watering is not planned for the same date / time.

Friends of The Town Meadow are actively seeking New Members £5.00 is the annual fee, the fees collected go towards the promotion and upkeep of the meadow.

**Please note:** that the Building Control Officer and Conservation Officer have been notified of the issues with the building to the rear of Netplay (formerly known as Tudor News).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That the strip of land between the path and the river at the Town Meadow is not mown until the first event of the year which is normally held in June.
- That the large open area of grass at the Town Meadow is to be regularly mown as per the existing schedule, but mown to approximately a 2" height and, during drought conditions, mowing is to be suspended.
- That the Town Council's Estate Management Sub-Committee is asked to produce explanatory notices to be displayed at areas around the town advising people that the area is unmown for environmental reasons.

Minute no. 263 (f)

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**Gillingham Town Council**

**Report from Town Team**

**Author: Cllr Mike Gould**

Following the letter encouraging local councils to make use of open spaces and to have town markets, we are pleased to report that we have physical meeting in Gillingham with the director of The Anonymous Travelling Market on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June at 10.00am.

The Anonymous Travelling Market feel this is a very good time to establish a regular market in the town as it will bring much needed footfall into the town centre and trade will bring trade.

Provisionally, Town Team have arranged to do a short presentation of Bournemouth University students very comprehensive study and recommendations for the town. This will be of great interest and benefit to councillors. The presentation is planned for Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm prior to the Full Council meeting at 7.30pm.

This morning, Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Town Team had a very constructive and valuable meeting with Caroline Richardson who is the coordinator for Dorset Food and Drink. At this meeting was John Laing, the proprietor of Hey Moscow - a very successful local branding company, who helped brand the Peak District. The objective of this meeting was to consider the opportunity of promoting local products and events to the wider world, to encourage inward investment into the town, and to help make the potential town market into a successful venture for the town's benefit.

Finally, Town Team would like to remind councillors that the remit and objective of Town Team is to continue to work to enact the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.



Minute no. 263 (g)

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**Gillingham Youth Club**

**Report: April - May 2020**

**Author: Tony Nye, Lead Youth Worker**

Obviously, things have been very different to how I thought my first couple of months as the permanent Lead Youth Worker would go. Instead of my plan to bed in the developments from the 6 months when I was the interim Lead Youth Worker, there have been 3 main areas of focus as we responded to the lockdown. These are:

- Developing online youth work provision
- Supporting the team of volunteers
- Work to prepare for the future

It would be fair to say that planning and delivering the online youth work provision and supporting the team of volunteers has taken up most of my time but hopefully this will start to settle down and give me more time to look at future plans as well as policy documents.

We have an amazing team of volunteers. Over the last couple of months, Alisha Hill and Karen Johnson have been instrumental in developing our online offer and Karen has also been incredibly helpful and involved in looking at policy documents and beginning to look to the future.

With regards to our current offer to young people, this evolved with the online skills and knowledge of Alisha initially using our social media sites and then including the use of zoom. In addition to offering young people the opportunity to engage with us through our pages on social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and a dedicated email address, we are currently running the following each week:

- Wednesday 7pm to 7.40pm Zoom (video conference) session for Year 7 young people
- Wednesday 8pm to 8.40pm (although this does tend to run on to 9pm) Zoom session for Year 8 and up young people
- Thursday currently 6.30pm to 7.30pm (but this is under review) : An activity is posted on our social media sites for parents/carers to access for our Year 6 members (so far these have been quizzes and a scavenger hunt)

The main support for the team of volunteers has been a weekly gathering for an activity on messenger (text chat) on Thursday evenings after the Year 6 session led by a different volunteer each week and is usually a quiz or bingo.

In addition to reviewing the policies we have and identifying any gaps, my intention is to write a document for discussion amongst the Management Committee about possible developments within the youth club once we are able to re-open.

I hope this report is helpful, please don't hesitate to contact me ([tonyyouthworker@gmail.com](mailto:tonyyouthworker@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.

Full Council – 22 June 2020

**APPENDIX D**

Minute no. 266

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Internal audit report 2019/20

Visit 3 of 3

# GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Report author: R Darkin-Miller  
Email: [r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk](mailto:r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk)

## **Introduction**

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Gillingham Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 2014 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended to include additional tests required by the AIAR section of the 2018/19 AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

## **Audit Opinion**

The internal audit for 2019/20 has now been completed in accordance with the provisions of the Practitioners' Guide and the CIPFA code of internal audit practice.

Based on the sample testing carried out at this final audit visit and during the year, all of the Council's current financial controls appear to be operating effectively with the exception of:

### **Test L: Public Rights**

In order to test compliance with the Council's requirement for the exercise of public rights, I checked the Council's calculation of its public rights period, and checked the Council's website during the statutory public rights period to confirm that the required items had been published. I can confirm that the Council correctly calculated the period, and published the correct information on its website. The External Auditor subsequently confirmed that, in order to pass this test, a Council must be able to demonstrate via its website audit trail that all required information was uploaded the day before the public rights period commenced, and that the information remained on the website for the duration of the period. The Council's website does not have this facility. I have, therefore, assessed the test as 'not covered'.



### Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	1
Low	1
Information	2
TOTAL	4

The number of recommendations made at all of the audit visits in 2019/20 and their priorities are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number			
	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	TOTAL
High	0	1	0	1
Medium	2	3	1	6
Low	2	1	1	5
Information	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	4	6	4	14

I would like to thank Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk; Clare Ratcliffe, Deputy Town Clerk; and Debra Edwards, Responsible Financial Officer for their assistance during this audit.

**Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants**  
**2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT OF GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINAL REPORT VISIT 3 OF 3: 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2020**

**Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Recommendation number</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Priority (Low/ Medium / High)</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
3.3 – Fidelity Guarantee Cover	<p>I checked to see that insurance cover is appropriate and adequate. I found that the cover was consistent with the asset register, but that the fidelity cover (currently £750k) appears to be too low, based on the closing balance of cash for 2018/19 plus 50% of the precept for 2019/20 (which gives a total of £960k). A similar calculation for 20/21 with opening cash at bank on 01/04/20 of £668k + half the 20/21 precept (£899k/2) gives an indicative cover requirement of £1.12m.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council considers increasing its fidelity guarantee cover.</p>	L	The Council will review the Fidelity Guarantee Cover in the insurance review meeting to be held with the broker in July/August 2020.	Clare Ratcliffe/ Debra Edwards	July to August 2020
5.1 – Monitor output tax and consider VAT registration	I checked that VAT output tax was treated correctly. In common with many other Councils which make only zero and/or exempt supplies, the Council is not VAT registered. The gov.uk guidance on VAT Notice 749 (published 26/06/18) notes at para 3.1 that 'Local authorities are required to register for VAT if they make any taxable supplies, whatever the value of those supplies is. But for ease of administration HMRC's practice is to only enforce this where it's anticipated that output tax will reach £1k a year':	M	Enquiries will be made with HMRC VAT for guidance on this matter and the possible registration for VAT. Any future income for disposal of assets will be reviewed.	Debra Edwards	July to August 2020

	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authorities-and-similar-bodies-notice-749#section3">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authorities-and-similar-bodies-notice-749#section3</a></p> <p>During the year, the Council received a part exchange credit of £5k for a flail and received a self-billing invoice from the supplier. No VAT was accounted for. The supply of goods is a taxable supply for VAT purposes. Depending on how the asset was valued, this could have given rise to output tax of either £833 or £1k (contingent on whether the £5k price was deemed VAT inclusive or exclusive), which could put the Council at the threshold for VAT registration.</p> <p>Officers have indicated that further part exchange sales of assets are possible as the Council renews the plant and equipment necessary to deliver its services.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council monitors the value of likely output tax during a rolling 12 month period, and ensures that it applies for registration if the threshold will be breached.</p>				
10.1 – Adjusted errors	<p>The following adjustments were made to the draft annual return:</p> <p>1. Staff costs were amended for the current and prior years to remove costs related to staff which did not fall within the Practitioner's Guide definition. This reduced staff costs and increase</p>	Info	1. Adjustments were carried out and presented on Section 2 of the AGAR for 2019/20 with adjustments for the	Debra Edwards	18/6/20



	<p>other payments by £23.5k (19/20) and £5.5k (18/19) respectively.</p> <p>2. The value for fixed assets was amended for 19/20 to remove in-year revaluations of assets.</p>		<p>2018/19 comparatives as discussed.</p> <p>2. The Schedule of Fixed assets for the AGAR was revised and the Total value presented in Section 2 Box 9 for 2019/20</p>		
12.1 – Public rights	<p>I checked to see that the Council was compliant with its statutory duties as regards the exercise of public rights during the summer of 2019. I confirmed that the Council had correctly calculated the public rights dates, and I checked the Council's website during the statutory period of public rights to confirm that all required information had been published. The External Auditor subsequently confirmed that, in order to pass the public rights test, a Council needed to provide a website audit trail to prove that the information had been uploaded before the public rights period started, and that it was in place for the duration. The Council did not have such a facility on its website.</p> <p>I understand that the Council has since changed its website provider, so that it should be possible to provide an audit trail in future years.</p>	Info	The requirement for an audit trail on the Council website has been noted in particular for Public rights and will be communicated to the new Website provider.	Julie Hawkins	June 2020

**GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIT**

	<b>Expected Standard</b>	<b>Evidence of Achievement</b>	<b>Areas of Development for FY 2020/21</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Scope of Internal Audit</b>	<p>Prior to the start of FY 2019/20 five audit companies were invited to tender for the provision of internal audit. A tender documentation was prepared with a set criterion of what was required.</p> <p>An internal auditor was appointed by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019, minute no. 478 for a period of five years from FY 2019/20 through to FY 2023/24.</p> <p>The internal auditor will follow the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government and the detailed provisions of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) / NALC (National Association of Local Councils) Practitioner's Guide, plus any new guidelines that are required, or the town council would like to include. Current controls include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper book-keeping</li> <li>• Payment controls</li> <li>• Risk management arrangements</li> <li>• Budgetary controls</li> <li>• Income controls</li> <li>• Petty cash controls</li> <li>• Payroll controls</li> <li>• Asset Controls</li> <li>• Bank Reconciliation</li> <li>• Year-end procedures</li> <li>• Exemption criteria</li> <li>• Proper exercise of public rights</li> </ul>	<p>This internal audit procedure was scrutinised and reviewed fully in FY 2018/19. There are no further actions for: FY 2019/20, FY 2020/21.</p>

<b>2</b>	<b>Independence</b>	The Internal Auditor is independent of Gillingham Town Council with no operational or governance responsibilities. The Internal Auditor has direct access to the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer. The Internal Auditor provides written reports, which are made available to the Full Council.	No further action required.
<b>3</b>	<b>Competence</b>	The Internal Auditor is a fellow of ICAEW, member no. 9003137, with several years of internal and external auditing plus 17 months with the Audit Commission. Both the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk are members of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and have obtained a CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration). Regular training courses are attended to maintain Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The Responsible Financial Office (RFO) is qualified as an FCCA (Fellow of Chartered Certified Accountants). The Council is a member of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC), South West Councils (SWC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who ensure the council is informed of changes in legislation so that they are aware of any potential changes that will affect the town council and its business.	No further action required.
<b>4</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	The relationships between the internal auditor, the Town Clerk and other staff and members are clearly defined in the Financial Regulations.	No further action required at this time.
<b>5</b>	<b>Audit Planning and Reporting</b>	All matters relating to audit and finance are reported to members as per the requirements of the Financial Regulations, which are reviewed annually. The Internal Auditor checks minutes to see that procedures have been followed correctly.	No further action required.
<b>6</b>	<b>Access</b>	Access to all records is permitted as per the Terms and Conditions of the Internal Auditor.	No further action required.
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning</b>	The Internal Auditor's visits are scheduled in advance and to coincide with the requirements of the Financial Regulations.	No further action required.



8	<b>Understanding</b>	The Internal Auditor interviews the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer to determine procedures and then tests the procedures to see whether they provide adequate control. Minutes are checked to ascertain the council's strategic priorities and its current and future operations and potential risks. The Town Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are reviewed annually. In addition, several policy documents have been drafted and approved.	On-going.
9	<b>Catalyst for Change</b>	The internal auditor reports actions to be carried out and anticipated changes that may affect the organisation in the short to medium term. The Town Clerk and staff regularly attend seminars and training so that they are aware of any potential changes that will affect the town council and its business.	The are no outstanding actions. All actions are dealt with swiftly.
10	<b>Value for Money</b>	The internal auditor recommends if any improvements can be made to improve value for money and advises on accounts and financial matters that may arise, which will improve competence and efficiency.	On-going. For example; book-keeping procedures and VAT etc may arise.
11	<b>Forward Looking</b>	The Internal Auditor allocates time for CPD each year by attending courses organised by Southern Branch of Chartered Accountants, South Eastern Branch of Chartered Accountant, liaison groups with PKF Littlejohn. Review Practitioner's Guide annually for changes that would impact on the AGAR. All council staff and members are encouraged to attending training and seminars.	On-going.
12	<b>Challenging</b>	The Internal Auditor will challenge the status quo of the organisation if it is not performing as it should. The Internal Auditor is a 'critical friend' to help bring improvements to financial controls and overall value for money.	On-going.
13	<b>Resources</b>	The Internal Auditor has professional indemnity. In the event of failure to provide a service due to physical or mental incapacity, details of an alternative auditor have been provided.	No further action required.

**Gillingham Town Council**

**Church View traffic and landscaping concerns – Background paper**

**Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens**

**17 June 2020**

Residents of Church View have submitted several letters and emails to the town council, raising their concerns about the highways works that are being carried out along Le Neubourg way.

The residents have also raised their concerns in communications with Dorset Council Highways Authority and have received prompt and detailed responses to their questions. On several occasions site meetings have been set up between DC and Church View representatives to explore resident's concerns. These meetings have been constructive and well received, with positive outcomes.

The Highways Authority has listened to the concerns raised by the residents and they are doing their best to deal with them on an issue by issue basis.

The Highways Authority has explained that the traffic modelling does not anticipate delays for vehicles entering and exiting Church View and traffic counts do not show a heavy enough right turn into Church View to require a right turn lane. The new signaled junction at Waitrose will provide natural gaps in the traffic from the all red phase and pedestrian crossing stages. Vehicles travelling along Le Neubourg Way will be slowing down on approaching the traffic signals at Waitrose and are likely to be more inclined to let vehicles out of Church View if they see them waiting.

Regarding the landscaping work that has been carried out along the bank; although this is unattractive at present, it is expected that within a 12-18-month period the trunks will look like large shrubs and will thicken out. It has been explained that as the shrubs grow, they will make new root growth which will stabilize them over time and the small gaps within the planted area should allow wild flowers to return. There is also be the possibility of some planting at the top of the bank in the Autumn at the end of the scheme.

The issues regarding the retaining wall and the removal of trees during the bird nesting season have also been explained to the concerned residents by Dorset Council as follows:

*"As work has progressed the amount of retaining wall has been adjusted and the original grass bank recreated where possible as it gives a softer less imposing feel. The topographic survey completed prior to works starting gave a good overview of the site however due to the amount of overgrowth in some areas the survey was indicative, so the worst-case design was prepared. The section from Waitrose to Church View was not as bad as expected and the retaining structure requirement was able to be removed.*

*The short section of retaining structure that has been removed from the scheme by the west side of the public footpath was initially proposed to prevent the removal of two very poor trees, which were growing out towards the carriageway at an angle – but it meant that they would have been unstable*

*if the retaining wall had been built, as it would have required cutting the bank back closer to their trunks.*

*Please be assured that we never take the decision to remove a tree lightly. The scheme designer went out on site to view the situation from all angles, and took advice from Dorset Council's Arboricultural Manager, before making a decision. In this particular instance they were not safe due to their location and shape. There is still a continuous line of trees along the back of the bund, which has remained undisturbed and provides a wildlife corridor.*

*Whilst we are in bird nesting season, the damaged trees which needed to be removed for safety reasons are right next to the footpath/cycleway and clearly had no nests in them. However, highway safety over-rides other acts such as that relating to nesting season so had there been any nests, we would still have been able to proceed. Fortunately, there weren't any. The original tree clearance which we carried out was done before nesting season began.*

*The trees that have been felled were in good health, but because of root damage, they were unstable. We have cut them to just above ground level, in effect coppicing them, so that they will re-sprout from the base of the trunks. Within a 12-18-month period they will look like large shrubs and will thicken out. These trees are large, overgrown shrubs (*Prunus spinosa* - blackthorn) and they will re-grow fairly quickly. As they do so, they will make new root growth which will stabilise them over time. There are a few small gaps within the planted area which should allow wildflowers to return."*

In answer to the concerns that some documents were not presented to the public at the public exhibition the Highways Authority has also responded to the residents as follows:

*"The drawing (HI1199/01/04/Orig) you attached was the consultation drawing presented at the public exhibitions in July 2019. At this time, we also presented the proposed signalling of the Waitrose Junction, which was the alternate design referred to. The consultation response was supportive of the signalled Waitrose Junction and therefore this improvement was included in the scheme construction program. The consultation report refers to this in paragraphs 3.1.4 and 4.2".*

Cllr Val Potheary has been in regular communication with the Highways Authority as one of our Gillingham Ward representatives at Dorset Council. Cllr Potheary has also been in communication with the Dorset Council Cabinet member who has responsibility for Highways and is awaiting a date for a video conference meeting to talk through the residents' concerns.

Gillingham Town Council has no statutory role in the county's highways, but we were given the opportunity to take part in the consultation process, along with all the residents of the town.

At the meeting of Full Council when our response to the consultation was debated, it was agreed to support the current scheme with a number of comments. These comments can be found in the minutes of the meeting. GTC has been happy to forward the Church View resident's concerns to the Highways Authority, through Cllr Potheary as a Dorset Councillor.

Signed



Cllr Barry von Clemens.

17 June 2020.



Scale = Half size (ORIGINAL PLAQUE SIZE 535 x 295 mm)

**IN SEPTEMBER 1823  
THIS BRIDGE WAS THE SUBJECT  
OF AN OIL PAINTING  
COMPLETED IN GILLINGHAM  
BY  
JOHN CONSTABLE R.A.  
ORIGINAL IN TATE BRITAIN GALLERY**

GILLINGHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2020

**Gillingham Town Council**

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC 2020**

**Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Authors:**

**Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk and  
Serena Burgess, Community Emergency Management Team (CEMT)**

**1. BACKGROUND**

During March 2020, the UK was affected by the global COVID-19 Pandemic and on 23 March the Prime Minister announced that the whole country was going into lockdown.

This meant that non-essential businesses closed, and staff worked from home where possible, and vulnerable people and people with symptoms needed to self-isolate at their own home. People were only expected to leave home for essential journeys, e.g. key workers to go to work, to get essential shopping and medication.

Only recently lockdown measures have started to ease, the need for social distancing is likely to be in place for some time.

**2. ACTIONS TAKEN DURING MARCH 2020**

**2.1 Community**

- The Mayor, Cllr von Clemens held a meeting on 20 March with representatives from local voluntary groups, schools and supermarkets to gain support to help residents. The Town Clerk joined by phone as she was away on holiday.
- The schools asked parents for volunteers, and local groups and organisations, including the Gillingham Support Group, contacted their members with details of the town council's proposals. A list of volunteers was compiled. A call for help was posted on the Town Council's social media platforms and subsequently more volunteers were found.
- Following the lockdown announcement, the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Paul Harris, set up a Community Emergency Management Team (CEMT). Members were the Deputy Mayor (Cllr Harris), the Town Clerk (Julie Hawkins), the Project Administrator (Serena Burgess), Cllr Fiona Cullen and Cllr Roger Weeks.
- The CEMT worked from the Town Hall until 30 March creating a database of streets and number of properties, telephoning volunteers to go through a registration process and allocating a volunteer to every street in the parish. Packs were assembled and delivered to volunteers – these contained a high viz jacket, disposable gloves, an ID card, useful information and volunteer contact cards to post through letterboxes.
- Volunteers posted their contact details through letterboxes and contact was made with vulnerable residents. Some vulnerable residents contacted the Town Council direct for help and were put in contact with the designated volunteer for their area.

- Volunteers undertook to do tasks such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, befriending and walking dogs for residents. The Mayor liaised with supermarket managers and shop owners.
- A standby list of volunteers was compiled to be used if volunteers needed replacing.
- A WhatsApp group was set up for the CEMT members.
- By 30 March 2020, the team had put together a network of over 100 volunteers covering every street in Gillingham, from Bainley Bottom to Lox Lane and from Huntingford to Madjeston – a total of 240 areas.



## 2.2 Town Hall

- On 16 March, Dorset Council arranged a meeting via Skype for Business for Dorset Town Council Clerks to discuss arrangements for the COVID-19 Pandemic with the Dorset Council Senior Management Team. Regular meetings are continuing throughout the pandemic and are attended by the Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins.
- On 23 March, in accordance with Government Guidelines, the Town Hall was closed to the public and office staff started to work from home. Critical Teams were set up for the Grounds Staff and work was prioritised accordingly. By 1 April all office staff were working from home in line with the Council's Risk Management Assessment.



- In accordance with Government Guidelines, the Full Council meeting scheduled for 23 March was cancelled.
- New procedures were put in place to ensure an efficient method of authorisation and payment of invoices.
- On 24 March 2020 all play parks and outdoor gyms were closed, as instructed by the Government.
- Preparations were made for a worst-case scenario. To assist with contingency planning, the Grounds Team assessed the availability of burial space and the Old Mortuary Building was prepared in case extra space was needed. Staff were prepared for redeployment to assist Dorset Council.



### 3. ACTIONS TAKEN DURING APRIL 2020

#### 3.1 Community

- A weekly Newsletter was started for volunteers – this contained useful information about local shopping deliveries, meal deliveries, prescription collection etc.
- Councillors were allocated to support the volunteers by calling them regularly to check how things were going and to help with any problems.
- A collection desk was set up in the Town Hall car park for volunteers to collect protective gloves. Neal's Yard Remedies donated products, and these were also given to the volunteers.
- Discussions took place with the Social Prescribing & Wellbeing Lead and a representative from the pharmacies to agree a centralised prescription delivery service. This service started at the end of April and is co-ordinated from the Town Hall – initially this was 5 days but reduced to 2 days per week during May due to decreasing demand. The Town Hall is also the collection point for outlying village representatives to collect prescriptions for delivery.
- A few volunteers had to be replaced due to developing symptoms or being overwhelmed with requests for support.
- Our volunteer scheme was registered with Dorset Council and HelpandKindness so they could refer any requests for support to us.





### 3.2 Town Hall

- All Councillors were set up on Skype for Business and Council meetings started to be held remotely. This also included the facility for members of the public to join.
- Regular staff meetings were held via Skype for Business.
- The Town Clerk attended regular meetings with the Senior Management Team at Dorset Council and representatives from other Town Councils across Dorset via Skype for Business.
- A spreadsheet was circulated to staff and councillors to document things that have gone well/could have been done differently as they happen. These will be pulled together at the end of the exercise so lessons can be learned for any similar future projects.
- The Registration Service continued to work at the Town Hall by telephone – there were no face-to-face appointments.
- It was agreed that meetings should be held in accordance with s.78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4 April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England.
- On Monday 6 April 2020, the first council meeting was held via Skype for Business. Cllr Graham Poulter chaired a meeting of the General Purposes Committee which was attended by ten councillors and two officers. It was agreed and resolved that Gillingham Cemetery and the allotment sites located at Cemetery Road and Park Farm would remain open until advised otherwise.
- On Monday 14 April 2020, Cllr Val Potheary chaired a meeting of the Planning Committee which was held via Skype for Business. The meeting was attended by nine councillors, one Dorset councillor, two officers and one member of the press. Nine Planning Applications were considered including an application for the construction of a new section of highway referred to as Gillingham Principal Street.
- On Friday 18 April 2020, the Mayor, Cllr von Clemens, addressed residents via social media to thank them for staying at home. Cllr von Clemens also thanked local businesses and volunteers.

- On 20 April 2020, Cllr Donna Toye chaired a meeting of the Finance Committee via Skype for Business. The meeting was attended by eleven councillors, three officers and one member of the press. Draft end of year accounts were approved and a report from the internal auditor was received.
- On 23 April 2020, Cllr Barry von Clemens chaired an Extra-Ordinary meeting of Full Council. The meeting was attended by sixteen councillors, two officers and one member of the press. The following was agreed and resolved:

That the Annual Town Assembly would be suspended until April 2021 as permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020, s.78, Regulations 3 and 6.

That the Annual Town Meeting would be suspended until May 2021 as permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020, s.78, Regulations 3 and 6.

That as long as The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (Regulations) remains in force, the Town Council will conduct remote meetings using appropriate technology as per the Coronavirus Act 2020, s.78, Regulation no. 5.

It was noted that Gillingham Town Council will continue (providing it is safe and possible to do so), to post copies of the agenda on the Council's notice boards and on the Council's web site as per the Local Government Act 1972, s.232, Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s.1(4) and the Coronavirus Act 2020, s.78, Regulation no. 13.

It was noted that Gillingham Town Council will continue to make available copies of the agendas, minutes and background papers available to members of the public via the Council's web site as per the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, Regulation no. 8 and the Coronavirus Act 2020, s.78, Regulation no. 17.

- On 27 April 2020, Cllr Barry von Clemens chaired a meeting of Full Council. The meeting was attended by sixteen councillors, two officers, two members of staff and one member of the press. 20 items were considered and a Pandemic Contingency and Recovery Plan was approved and adopted.
- On 28 April 2020, at 11am, the Town Council joined the nation in a minute's silence in memory of health and care and other front-line workers who lost their lives due to Coronavirus.



## **4. ACTIONS TAKEN DURING MAY 2020**

### **4.1 Community**

- Street volunteers and centralised prescription deliveries continued.
- Following an easing of the lockdown, some volunteers started to return to work and replacements were found.
- A number of resident wellbeing/safeguarding concerns were flagged to the Social Prescribing and Wellbeing Lead for action.
- A grant application was made to the Dorset Coronavirus Community Fund and an award of £2,425 was received towards the costs of setting up the volunteer scheme.

### **4.2 Town Hall**

- Events arranged to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day were cancelled. Residents were encouraged to celebrate at home and on 8 May 2020, the Mayor, Cllr von Clemens, addressed local residents via social media platforms.
- On Monday 4 May, Cllr Mick Hill chaired a meeting of the General Purposes Committee via Microsoft Teams. The meeting is attended by nine councillors and two officers.
- Dorset Council provided banners to be displayed in Gillingham's Public Open Spaces reminding members of the public of the requirement for 2 metre social distancing. These were erected by GTC Grounds Team.
- As instructed by the Government, Household Recycling Centres were closed and as a result there was an increase in fly-tipping. The GTC Grounds Team assisted Dorset Waste Partnership to deal with problem areas.
- The good weather encouraged more people to use the council's public open spaces and football dramatically increased. Due to the continuing warm weather the risk of fire was assessed by the fire service as extreme, which is the highest it can be. Concerns were raised regarding the use of disposable BBQs. Areas were monitored and signage erected where necessary.
- On Monday 11 May, Cllr Val Potheary chaired a meeting of the Planning Committee via Skype for Business. The meeting was attended by twelve councillors, two officers, one member of the press and seven members of the public. The committee considered seven planning applications.
- On 16 May lockdown restrictions were relaxed slightly and there was a sharp increase in the number of people using the council's public open spaces. As a result, the amount of litter and fly-tipping dramatically increased. Rounds to empty litter bins were increased to cope with additional litter.
- There were incidents of vandalism across the town. Two memorial benches were destroyed and flower beds damaged.
- There were incidents of graffiti across the town, including the Skatepark and Town Bridge Office.
- Problem areas were reported to the police. The Town Council worked with Dorset Council and other Dorset Town Councils on a social media campaign to highlight and help reduce the issues.



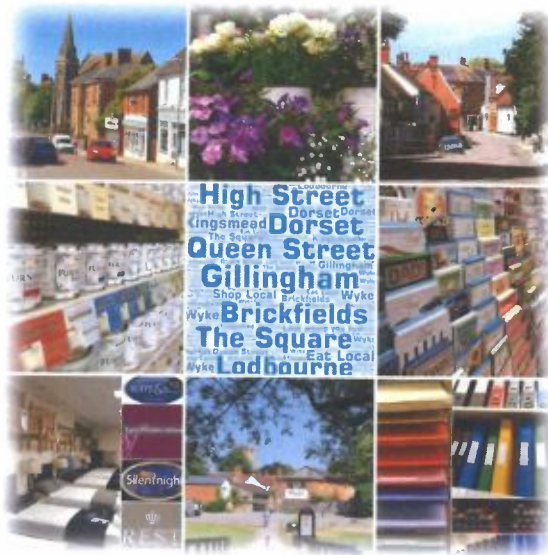
- On 18 May Cllr Sharon Cullingford chaired a meeting of the Finance Committee via Skype for Business. The meeting was attended by eleven councillors, two officers and one member of the press.
- Confirmation was received from Dorset Council that the outbreak of Covid19 was likely to have an impact on the council tax collection rate in 2020/21; however, Town and Parish Councils are not exposed to any Covid-19 collection fund risk in 2020/21. Should the reason for the collection fund deficit persist Dorset Council anticipate a lower collection rate in the following year as part of the budget setting process and this lower collection rate will effectively impact the tax base calculation.
- On 26 May, Cllr von Clemens chaired a meeting of Full Council via Skype for Business. The meeting was attended by sixteen councillors, two officers and two members of the press.
- Regular staff meetings were held via Skype for Business.
- The Town Clerk continued to attend regular meetings with the Senior Management Team at Dorset Council and representatives from other Town Councils across Dorset via Skype for Business.





## 5. ACTIONS TAKEN DURING JUNE 2020

- On Monday 1 June, Cllr Mick Hill chaired a meeting of the General Purposes Committee via Microsoft Teams. The meeting was attended by eleven councillors, two officers, two members of the press and two members of the public.
- In line with Government guidance, staff continued to work from home where possible. Risk Assessments were regularly updated by the Works Manager as Government advice changed. Daily Management Checklists continued to be completed as recommended by the council's Health and Safety advisors. The GTC Grounds Team continued to work on a staggered starting/finishing time rota to enable social distancing in the workshop.
- The Town Clerk and CEMT Administrator worked from the Town Hall when necessary. The Registration Service continued to work from the Town Hall. Face to face appointments for the registration of births and notices of marriage will commence on Monday 22 June. A risk assessment was completed by the registration service and necessary adjustments were implemented.
- A Perspex screen was installed at the Reception Desk in the Town Hall.
- Social distancing banners and signage was placed around the Town.
- The Town Council recognised and thanked the many volunteers during Volunteers' Week which ran from 1 June until 7 June. On 5 June the Mayor, Cllr von Clemens recorded a message of thanks which was shared via social media and viewed by 2,380 people.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> June Cllr Weeks informed members that since 24<sup>th</sup> April, 121 prescriptions had been delivered to vulnerable residents by the council's prescription delivery service.
- The Mayor, Cllr von Clemens held a site meeting with a representative from Dorset Highways Authority to discuss and consider ways to help and support businesses. Areas of concern were assessed where social distancing would be compromised.
- Boards to thank NHS staff, volunteers and key workers were displayed in flower beds. A short film was made in recognition of the volunteers and shared on the Town Council's social media platforms reaching over 6,700 people.
- On 8 June, Cllr Val Potheary chaired a meeting of the Planning Committee. The meeting was attended by eleven councillors, two officers, two members of the press and two members of the public.
- On 15 June, some non-essential shops re-opened. On 16 June, the Mayor Cllr von Clemens visited shops in the High Street to welcome them back and the Town Council used its social media platforms to encourage residents to shop local and support local businesses #shoplocal #staylocal.
- On 15 June, Cllr Sharon Cullingford chaired a meeting of the Finance Committee. The meeting was attended by ten councillors, two officers and one member of the press.
- On 22 June this report was presented to Full Council.



## 6. RECOVERY PLAN

Whilst the whole country is still affected by the pandemic and many lockdown measures are still in place, there is a need to plan for the recovery of the Town Council and the Town over the coming months and possibly years. The Mayor, Cllr von Clemens, is leading this on behalf of the Council.

### 6.1 Community

- The need for street volunteers and the prescription delivery service will be kept under review as Government advice changes, particularly the advice relating to shielded residents (i.e. those who were advised to stay at home for 12 weeks due to serious underlying health issues). The 12 week period ends on 30 June.
- Despite Government advice regarding the easing of lockdown, we are aware that many residents continue to be afraid of going out. We will work with the Social Prescribing and Wellbeing Lead on this issue.

### 6.2 Town Hall

- All office staff are working from home successfully and this will continue while the Government advises that people should work from home where possible.
- Council meetings will continue remotely until rules on social distancing have been relaxed sufficiently for face-to-face meetings to occur.
- The Town Hall will remain closed to the public until further Government guidance is received and the building meets the Government's requirements on being COVID-19 secure.
- From 15 June, appointments can be made to see the Town Clerk, face to face for the authorisation of foreign pensions.
- The Health and Safety Working Party will continue to review Council Risk Assessments.

### **6.3 Local economy and support to businesses**

- The Mayor will be leading the recovery and working with the Town Clerk, Community Emergency Management Team Administrator and representatives from local organisations and businesses on ways to create a safe and welcoming town centre that will encourage residents and visitors to return to the high street to support local businesses.
- The Mayor and a representative from Dorset Highways Authority have discussed the option of a pinch point using current parking spaces in the High Street to enable pedestrians to comply with social distancing when queuing at the Post Office/Pharmacy, however the benefit of an increased area for pedestrians needs to be considered against the loss of free parking spaces.
- The Mayor and a representative from Dorset Highways Authority have discussed the option of eating-out licences for restaurants and cafes in preparation for their re-opening. Areas considered included The Square, the area to the front of Lidl (subject to agreement with Lidl), the area adjacent to the Town Bridge and the Town Meadow (subject to agreement with The Town Meadow Group).
- SaveTheHighStreet.org's COVID 19 Recovery and Resilience Health Check Survey has been sent to the Chamber of Commerce for distribution to their members.
- The Mayor and Town Clerk will be meeting remotely with representatives from other Town Councils in the Northern Area of Dorset to discuss and share ideas.
- Consideration will be given to the use of railing banners and lamppost signs reminding people of social distancing, vinyls of footprints to go on pavements to help people queuing to maintain the correct distance and posters for use inside shops reminding them of social distancing. Dorset Council will be providing street dressing material free of charge.

### **7. CONTINGENCY PLAN**

- GTC is mindful that there could be a second wave of the virus which would result in having to reinstate the measures and services already in place.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **That a Community Volunteer Task and Finish Group is formed to manage an exit strategy and contingency plan.**
- **That membership of the Task and Finish Group is agreed.**
- **That the Mayor continues as lead for recovery.**
- **That the Health and Safety Sub-Committee continues to monitor the COVID Secure Risk Assessments.**
- **That the Traffic Management Sub-Committee monitor and review the practicalities of social distancing in areas of high footfall and liaise with Dorset Highways accordingly.**
- **That the town council supports eating-out licences and a street closure from 4pm on Fridays to 10pm on Sundays at The Square, Gillingham, subject to consultation and agreement by local businesses and residents.**
- **That the town council supports initiatives to create a safe and welcoming town centre that will encourage residents and visitors to return to the high street to support local businesses.**



**Gillingham Town Council**

**Workshop Task and Finish Group**

**Lead: Deputy Mayor**

**1. Current Progress**

Since the last report the T&F Group has:

- Had the GTC Workshop Project webpage “go live”
- Sent out the Press release in accordance with the approved Consultation plan
- Noted that the Press release was subsequently posted to the Gillingham Facebook page by two recipients.
- Received three questions from residents, which have been answered.
- Received one offer of a site from an Estate Agent. Being far in excess of our PWLB borrowing limit plus any Council funds, this was politely declined.
- Noted there have been 3100 engagements on the Council Facebook page representing 25% of Gillingham residents. Assuming each has spoken to a partner/family member it can be assumed that around 50% of residents have direct knowledge of the project. With few comments, and most being positive, we can assume support for the project.
- Noted that projects page on the town council website has been viewed 260 times in total. 198 of those views came via a link on Facebook, 42 views via a search for the town council website on Google, 16 views going directly to the website without using a search engine, 1 via the search engine Bing and 3 from website management
- Drawn up a draft PWLB submission in accordance with requirements; 7 parts each including a report or statement plus a total of 37 attachments thus far.
- Met virtually once on 11 Jun 20. Meeting minutes are attached.
- Released the second Press update dated 15 June 2020. This is attached.
- Entered into negotiations with the Seller and have agreed a purchase price.

The T&F Group ongoing work includes:

- Finalising PWLB submission
- Finalising presentation to GTC
- Seeking an appropriate solicitor to represent the Council in the purchase process noting that the Councils regular solicitor is being used by the Seller.



**2. Timeframe Update:** The key activities have been rescheduled. Those to be considered are:

- Extraordinary Full Council 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020
  - Consider price negotiated.
  - Receive reports as appropriate.
  - Make a purchase decision based on all information in front of the Council.

If Yes:

- Make formal statement in the prescribed manner at the meeting and record the specific wording of the statement in the meeting minutes
- Authorise submission of PWL application
- Select an appropriate solicitor from the quotes provided through the T&F Group research

If No:

- Close Project
- If Yes, Subsequent Full Council meetings after the PWL is authorised:
  - Direct T&F Gp to manage the final purchase process
  - Authorise exchange and final completion of contracts
  - Direct T&F Gp to oversee the relocation

### **3. Recommendations**

- That GTC **note** the progress made to date
- That GTC **note** the ongoing work as listed
- That GTC **agree** the timeframe update

Attachments:

1. Minutes of the T&F Group 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020
2. Press Release dated 15 June 2020

**Gillingham Town Council**

**Workshop Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting Minutes 11 June 2020**

**Attendees:**

Cllr P Harris Lead  
Cllr J Kilcourse  
Cllr J Robinson  
Cllr G Poulter  
Mrs J Hawkins Town Clerk  
Mr S Dobie Works Manager

This meeting was held in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4 April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. Whilst the 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England and not Task & Finish Groups, this Group met under the same regulations.

**4. Building Survey – Cllr John Kilcourse**

Cllr Kilcourse had provided a report to the meeting. This was reviewed as follows:

- a. Roof works. Eventually roof repairs will be needed (circa 15 years). Costs could be accounted for as accruals to create a fund for repairs. This is business as usual for Precept construction. It was suggested that all building maintenance accruals (currently broken down by building) could be amalgamated into a single building's maintenance accrual. This can be considered at the next Precept construction workshop.
- b. Drains Repairs. Noted. A figure has been inserted into the budget.
- c. Heating to North Units. Air Source Heat Pumps had been investigated. The cost is significant and therefore a system similar to that used in the current workshop will be used for the moment. A figure has been inserted into the budget.
- d. General structural comments. Internal and external observations can be dealt with under a routine maintenance programme.
- e. Electrical Installation. The current installation will be stripped back to the distribution boards. We intend to rewire the buildings. A figure has been inserted into the budget.
- f. Plumbing. For staff health reasons a shower will be installed. Toilet facilities will be renovated. A figure has been inserted into the budget.
- g. Mezzanine floors. The mezzanine floors will be addressed. A figure has been inserted into the budget.
- h. Perimeter Security. A figure has been inserted into the budget. This was reviewed and it was determined that it remain as budgeted.

The remainder of the report points were noted.

It is clear that the future use of the building is likely to incur costs associated with the potential development of the site and future maintenance. These are outside the budget for purchase and renovation. This maybe in a timeframe of 10-15 years when Gillingham is likely to have changed in size and population.

**Action:**

- **Cllr Poulter** to include an observation about costs in the longer term associated with site development and maintenance in the next press release.
- **Cllr Harris** to include this in the T&F Group report to Full Council 22 Jun 20.

## **5. Mezzanine Floor – Works Manager**

The Works Manager acknowledged the mezzanine floor discussion in the previous item. A quote for work had been received and this formed the basis of the figure inserted into the budget. The verbal report was noted.

## **6. Planning Issues – Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk summarized the current situation, noting that a Building Control certificate for the mezzanine floors was not accounted for in Dorset Council records.

## **7. Press Release Response – Cllr Poulter**

Cllr Poulter reported that the Press release went out to various organisations in the town and onto the GTC website. Two local organisations then placed the release onto the Gillingham Facebook page. Reaction had been muted, with only three direct enquiries to the Council thus far and a number of mainly positive comments on Facebook. There have been 3090 hits on the Press release on the GTC Facebook page. Whilst this numerically represents 25% of the residents, many of those who have seen the Press release are in a relationship, in partnerships or have families. We can therefore assume that each person accessing the website has talked to one other person about the Workshop proposal, therefore around 50% of residents have direct knowledge of the project. With few comments, and most being positive, we can assume support for the project.

## **8. Consultation Plan – Cllr Poulter**

Cllr Poulter referred to the original consultation plan and survey. He noted that as the Precept was not going to rise as a result of the site purchase, if approved by Council, then a Residents survey was not needed. It has therefore been dropped from the plan. Press releases, and responses to residents' questions, will continue.

## **9. Update on Potential Site Negotiations – Cllr Poulter**

Cllr Poulter confirmed that the negotiating team now had the information it required to start negotiations. During this item the Town Clerk made contact with the vendor. It was confirmed that negotiations would commence on Thu 18 June 2020.

**Action:**

- Council appointed team to commence negotiations.

#### **10. Draft Public Works Loan Board Submission – Cllr Harris**

Cllr Harris referred members to the seven part draft PWLB submission previously distributed. Further work now relied on the outcome of the negotiations.

#### **11. Other points**

Council had to appoint a solicitor to handle its legal work.

##### **Action:**

- **Town Clerk** was tasked to identify solicitors with suitable experience of commercial properties within Dorset, noting that the Councils regular solicitor is being used by the vendor.

#### **12. Next T&F Group Meeting**

The Group's next virtual meeting will take place once negotiations are complete.



## **Updated Press Release**

### **Proposed purchase of premises for Council workshops**

Following our earlier Press release we are pleased to report that considerable progress has been made with this project.

All surveys have been completed and we are now in a position to finalise the purchase terms with the Seller before proceeding with the usual pre-contract legalities and obtaining final approval from the Full Council.

Our surveys show that, in common with normal practice, the Council will need to conduct some work to suit our purposes prior to occupation. The cost of this work has already been budgeted for. Future maintenance liabilities for the site will be met by following the present practice of being built into the annual precept by way of accruals.

We will achieve our key principle of funding the purchase by ensuring the annual repayment amount is less than the current annual rental costs of the existing units. This will be through a loan from the Public Works Loan Board – a lending facility operated by the UK Debt Management Office (DMO), on behalf of HM Treasury, providing loans to local authorities. This being the case, there is no longer a need for the Council to conduct a resident's survey as there will be no increase in the precept as a result of funding the loan. The Council will therefore not conduct the survey previously announced. However, it remains the Council's stated wish from the outset of this project to fully engage with the residents of Gillingham throughout this process, taking all views into account before making its final decision on whether to proceed.

The Council invites any queries, suggestions or otherwise; please contact your local Councillor or the Council by emailing or writing to it:

[gtc@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk](mailto:gtc@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk)

Gillingham Town Council

The Town Hall

School Road

Gillingham

SP8 4QR

Also see:

[gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/yourtowncouncil/projects](http://gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk/yourtowncouncil/projects)

Gillingham Town Council on Facebook

15-06-2020