

3rd December 2024

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the PROCEEDINGS at the MEETING of the COUNCIL held in the Community Meeting Room, Fire Station, Kingshill Road, Dursley at 7pm on Tuesday 3rd December 2024.

Action Summary:

11236.2	Town Clerk to proceed with the early payment of the grant award to Breakheart Community Project.	11242	Town Clerk to proceed with the purchase of electric KRESS tools as recommended.
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PRESENT

Cllr A Stennett (Mayor)

Councillors: L Patrick (Deputy Mayor), D Horn, M Stennett, T Stride, K Eales (from item 11226), M Patrick, S Creswick, P Hayes, J Rubin, T White and A Rowe.

Also present: Leah Wellings (Deputy Clerk), Stroud District Councillor T Cook.

11223 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors B Schoombie (business), C Sweet (personal), A White (personal) and County Councillor W Thomas.

11224 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11225 COUNCILLOR VACANCY – HIGHFIELDS WARD

There were no expressions of interest in the Councillor Vacancy.

11226 TO NOTE THE RESIGNATION OF THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR, COUNCILLOR NICHOLSON

It was noted that the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Matt Nicholson, had resigned as a Town Councillor.

On behalf of Council, the Town Mayor expressed thanks to Councillor Nicholson for his service to Council, noting a long service award had previously been presented.

11227 TO APPOINT A DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Councillor A Stennett moved that Councillor L Patrick be elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the remaining 2024/25 civic year, all other Councillors seconded.

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No other nominations were received.

IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor L Patrick be elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the remaining civic year.

11228 REPRESENTATIONS FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Thomas was not present but would provide a written report to be circulated to members.

District Councillor Cook provided an update on the recent 'Ward Walk' that was undertaken and well received; this involved District Councillors and Heads of Departments e.g. Finance, visiting areas of the town. Town Councillor L Patrick had joined the walk for the housing areas.

An update was also provided on the May Lane meeting held on 25th November 2024, which was attended by Town Council representatives and was a useful discussion. The project status had moved from 'investment' to 'delivery', so progress would now be reported to Stroud District Council's Housing Committee moving forward. Representations could be made during the public section of this Committee; members were encouraged to make District Councillors aware of any issues/questions to be raised. One area raised and being investigated was how the appearance of the building/street scene could be improved in the interim period.

District Councillor Cook raised Council's awareness of new legislation and powers coming in next May relating to abandoned/empty shops and getting them back into use and also the English Devolution White Paper which could impact the structure of County, District and Town Councils.

Councillor L Patrick raised questions about Welling Close, following the 'Ward Walk' and plans to deal with structural issues relating to the block including number 24. Councillor Cook confirmed he would keep pressing the District Council on this and the insurance issue.

It was noted that the benches originally agreed for the Cambridge Avenue park would be installed by the District Council by March 2025.

Questions and concerns were raised about the District Council's plans to automatically delete emails after 2 years and the loss of historic communications that could prove useful in relation to dealing with ongoing/long term issues.

Councillor Cook agreed to write up some notes from the 'Ward Walk' that could be shared with Council, which would also include any actions that were agreed and also request further information on the District Council's data retention policies.

Councillor Cook withdrew from the meeting.

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11229 UPDATE FROM THE TOWN MAYOR

The Mayor reported on the Remembrance activities and Parade which went well on 10th November, with good attendance; the Chantry Centre AGM on 11th November, which noted that the organisation's finances were tight but considered stable; the Christmas Lights Switch event on 29th November which was successful and enjoyed by many and finally Kingshill House AGM, which had been delayed but would take place on 6th December.

In relation to Kingshill House, it was noted that the building, in particular the roof, had ongoing structural issues. The charity's finances had been very tight, with a small loss noted and recent discussions had been held with the Charity Commission, however things were moving in the right direction. More volunteer help would be welcome to assist the Manager, some freelance marketing support had recently been found with some potential to offer a shared service with other organisations.

11230 REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no representations.

11231 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 5th November 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

11232 BUSINESS RELATING TO COUNCIL FINANCE

Council's accounts for the financial year 2024/25:

11232.1 **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the schedule of payments since the last Council meeting be authorised and signed by the Mayor.

11232.2 The income received since the last Council meeting was noted.

11232.3 The income and expenditure summary reports for 2024/25 were noted.

11233 TOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES

11233.1 Report of the Chair of the Town Improvements and Amenities Committee

The Chair had no matters to report.

11233.2 To receive an update on Tourism matters

The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update on the Town Map which had been printed for the noticeboard in the Link area of town (by Gravity). The map is now available on the Council's website. It was noted that Discover Dursley would be holding a networking meeting at The Engine on 15th January to discuss

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development of the new website and other activities with interested parties, from 5:30pm onwards.

11234 GREEN SPACES

11234.1 Report of the Chair of the Green Spaces Committee

The Chair reported on a recent 'Winter Walkabout' with the Ground Staff to identify winter jobs across all Council's green space sites; on 17th December 2024 the Green Spaces Committee would be considering draft Management Plans from the Environmental Sub Committee.

11235 PLANNING

11235.1 To receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on the 19th November 2024.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting.

11235.2 Report of the Chair of the Planning Committee

The Chair, Councillor Rubin, reported on his new appointment into the position at the meeting on 19th November 2024.

11236 POLICY AND FINANCE

11236.1 Report of the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee

The Chair had no matters to report other than a reminder, that the Committee would be meeting on 10th December 2024.

11236.2 To consider a request from Breakheart Community Project to bring forward payment of the 25/26 Revenue Grant.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Breakheart Community Project had requested Council consider bringing forward payment of the revenue grant of £10,795, awarded and originally due to be paid to the project in May/June 2025. The reason for the request was that the tractor equipment was required urgently to help cope with the winter months, it being the busiest time for the project in relation to clearance and tidying works, especially after recent storms.

IT WAS RESOLVED to make arrangements for the immediate payment of the revenue grant originally awarded for payment in May/June 2025, totalling £10,795, to enable Breakheart Community Project to purchase the tractor equipment required to carry out works over the current winter season.

11237 BUSINESS RELATING TO STAFF

11237.1 Report by the Chair of the Staff Committee

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The Chair reported that the annual appraisal process for staff was completed.

11238 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor T White reported on the forthcoming Pride AGM which would be held on 20th December at 6:30pm in the Dursley Tabernacle Community Room. Councillor White would circulate details to all members via email.

Councillor Eales had attended the Stroud District Council May Lane meeting held on 25th November, along with the Town Clerk, Councillors Hayes and Creswick. It was noted that although the District Council had appointed an Architect, it would be quite some time before any real progress was made on the 11 May Lane site. In reality, the existing derelict building could remain for several years yet as it is being looked at alongside the wider scheme relating to the area of land at the back of Parsonage Street, and not as a separate project.

Councillor Eales reported on the Littlecombe CIC. It was noted that the Resident Directors and St Modwen representatives had undertaken an estate walk around phases 2 and 3; discussions had taken place to seek assurance that existing purchase orders with contractors would remain in place, so that agreed works (e.g. tree planting) is undertaken, and that this work doesn't fall on residents and Stroud District Council to complete. If secured, then Resident Directors would accept and could proceed with a handover.

Councillor Creswick gave an update from the Dursley United Charity. It was noted that the charity had met and considered annual Christmas gifting to those families and children in need, making several awards.

Councillor M Patrick reported that the planning application for the new memorial garden on the WMRG had been submitted to Stroud District Council. Dursley's District Councillors were supportive. Funds were still required in the region of £4,000 to £5,000; fundraising activities would restart in January and an email would be sent to the Town Clerk with information.

Councillor Stride attended the Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW) AGM. It was noted that although smaller, the 2024 Walking Festival had been successful and plans were already underway for a slightly bigger festival in 2025. The DWW volunteers/Committee had expressed thanks towards the Council for support and grant funding, which had been received and had been extremely helpful towards their activities.

Councillor L Patrick, as a veteran and individual, attended a local district Armed Forces Working Group and raised Council's awareness of the group's recent involvement in dealing with the severe vandalism of a steel War Memorial Bench in Stroud. Councillor M Patrick confirmed that the new memorial garden on Dursley's War Memorial Recreation Ground would include wooden benches with inscribed poems on plaques. It was noted that the space would be regularly monitored to help guard against any misuse/vandalism incidents.

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11239 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the 2024 Christmas Lights Switch on event held on 29th November, which went well but was a very long day for staff. Festive Dursley would be compiling feedback to consider in the new year, several comments/ideas were noted including - selling named baubles for the tree in 2025, taking care with the settings for flashing lights to avoid photosensitive issues and exploring low noise/silent fireworks. Council was awaiting the contractor to install and switch on the lights in the trees at Kingshill Parade.

The Town Mayor was joined by Councillors in thanking and applauding Council staff in their efforts on the night to help make the switch on event a success.

It was noted that the Dursley Lions Club had donated £450 towards a bleed kit for the phone box on Castle Street. Given no electrics were required, there being adequate room and the secure box would work in a similar way to the defibrillator one, no objection had been raised. The Council office would manage alongside the defibrillator with small costs only being incurred if items in the box are used/fall out of date.

It was noted that the Council office would close for Christmas at 12pm on 24th December and reopen at 10am on 2nd January 2025. Mince pies and hot drinks would be available following the Green Spaces Committee meeting on 17th December, if anyone would like to join.

11240 INSPECTIONS

The scheduled Councillor inspections and checks for December 2024 and January 2025 were noted.

Councillor Stride volunteered to undertake the Cemetery inspection in December and Councillor Rowe volunteered to undertake the Highfields inspection in January.

11241 BUSINESS DEALT WITH IN CLOSED SESSION

To resolve to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business.

IT WAS RESOLVED to carry out the remainder of business in a closed session due to the confidential nature of the business. There were no members of the public or press present.

11242 TO CONSIDER THE REPORT, QUOTES AND RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF ELECTRICALLY POWERED EQUIPMENT FOR THE GROUNDS TEAM

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IT WAS RESOLVED to purchase the package of KRESS tools identified from Dursley Farm and Garden Machinery at a cost of £9,095.01 exc. VAT, using funds from the Council's General Reserve.

The meeting closed at 20:01

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Town Mayor

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Date