

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES of the MEETING of Nailsworth Town Council
held at the Town Hall, Nailsworth
on Tuesday 20 December 2011

Present		Cllr S Robinson (Town Mayor) Cllr N Dart Cllr J L Duckworth Cllr Mrs A Elliott Cllr N I Kay Cllr MJ Kelly Cllr M M Rahman Cllr Mrs SM Reed Cllr M P Robinson	
Apologies	*	Cllr P Carter Cllr Mrs S E Thorpe	County Cllr WS Waddington District Cllr RTH Blackwell
	*	denotes absence from part of the meeting	

2011/172 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no residents present.

2011/173 MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of **15 November** were approved and signed with the following addition: P.532, last item in Mayor's report – "Cllr Mrs Elliott would be writing . . . after Christmas"

Approval of the minutes of the special meeting held on **12 December** were deferred pending submission of an addition from Cllr Duckworth to record his opinion on the format of the budget presentation.

2011/174 IMPROVEMENTS to LOCAL BROADBAND (minute 2011/152)

The Mayor reported that the matter was raised at the recent Chartered Parishes meeting, which was addressed by a speaker on behalf of broadband update. The Mayor confirmed that Cllr Duckworth was Nailsworth's Broadband Champion and passed on to him paperwork from the meeting. Forms were now available for completion at the TIC, TH, Library and online, and the campaign was promoted in the last NN, and was fully supported by Government. Cllr Duckworth added that Nailsworth would have its exchange upgraded next year and the campaign was more for the benefit of those in rural areas.

2011/175 DERELICT SITE on NEWMARKET ROAD (minute 2011/153)

The complainant had written to express thanks, in particular to Cllr M Robinson, for encouraging the owner to tidy up the site, which he had now done satisfactorily.

2011/176 A FRAMES (minute 2011/160)

Cllr Kelly reported that Cllr Carter had forwarded to the Clerk a guidance document to be copied ready for him to circulate to traders.

2011/177 MEMBERSHIP of GAPTC (minute 2011/161)

Cllr Kay had been unable to attend the last meeting and felt that his comments made at the GAPTC AGM had been misrepresented. He had told council at the September meeting that he intended to be firm with GAPTC at this year's AGM about its failure to progress the motion approved the year before to urge SDC to institute a consultation policy. He had agreed with the Mayor that the comments reported back in the letter from GAPTC were correct. However Cllr Kay had reported to the GAPTC

AGM that he would be asking council to consider withdrawing its membership of the organisation, but had not said that this matter was currently under consideration.

Cllr Kay felt that NTC should, in its response to GAPTC, make the point that Cllrs were disappointed about GAPTC's failure to push forward the 2010 motion, approved and supported by several other P&TCs, and it was agreed that the Mayor with the Clerk would send an appropriate response.

2011/178 ELECTORAL BOUNDARY CHANGES (minute 2011/168)

The Mayor apologised to Cllr M Robinson who was convinced boundary changes were going to affect Nailsworth; despite no previous indication to that effect but following Cllr Carter's discussion with County Cllr Waddington, it transpired that Nailsworth was in fact no longer to be grouped with Minchinhampton for GCC elections.

2011/179 SDC MATTERS (Minute 2011/169)

The Mayor was sorry to report that Ms Karen Toole had passed away after a long illness, and he would send condolences on behalf of NTC for SDC to forward to her family.

2011/180 REPORT of COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

There were no County or District Cllrs present.

2011/181 TOWN MAYORs COMMUNICATIONS

21 November	with representatives of Nympsfield and Horsley parishes, attended a meeting with SDC officers regarding activities on Smith's land at Tinkley Lane.
25 November	the Mayor wished to extend congratulations to the Christkindl committee for another very successful event.
6 December	with Cllr Kay, attended David Hagg's annual P&TCs meeting. (see report below at 2011/184)
7 December	with the Clerk and Cllr Mrs Thorpe, participated in the OFSTED inspection of the Children's Centre at the Arkell Centre.
8 December	attended the Chartered Parishes meeting in Gloucester
10 December	attended the first FG-RA children's Christmas party at the Arkell Centre.
14 December	with Cllr Mrs Elliott attended a meeting of the Friends of Glos Libraries at GAVCA in Gloucester.
18 December	attended the Newmarket Christmas Fair and, in the evening, the annual Town Carol Service.

The Mayor expressed his wish that the council's New Year's Resolution should be to work more cohesively during 2012.

2011/182 REPORT of DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr Mrs Thorpe was not in attendance.

2011/183 REPORT of TOWN CLERK

- The Stroud branch of the Cats Protection League regularly booked coffee mornings in the Mortimer Room and had written to thank NTC for its use, where the organisation achieved good fund raising results.
- There would be a series of Neighbourhood Planning workshops over several dates around the District, with Eastington the closest on 27 February, 6.15 - 9pm. Topics would cover "the role of the planning system" and Cllrs were asked to inform the Clerk if they wished to attend.
- The Clerk had received the winter newsletter from the Alzheimer's Society; Literature from the Glos Wildlife Trust; the CPRE winter edition of 'Fieldwork'.

2011/184 REPORT from REPRESENTATIVES on OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Kay reported on the **SDC meeting on 6 December for T&PCs** which had been well attended, useful and informative. Cabinet's decision to **scrap the introduction of additional car parking**

charges had been very well received, with the reason given as respect for the economic downturn. Cllr Kay added that the large amount of opposition received had obviously been a factor, as well as NTC's pointing out that the action would be illegal, despite SDC's conviction that it was not. The SDC report did however suggest that towns should consider positively the introduction of **residents parking schemes**.

Other topics at the meeting included the **Local Plan Core Strategy** with the draft focusing on housing needs, working towards adoption of the Plan in 2013. **Self financing/housing:** the opportunity to buyout for £92m the portion of council rents currently going to central government, the view being that borrowing from the Public Loans Board at preferential rates to cover this cost would be cheaper in the long run than the current system. How this would affect the "right to buy" was not known.

Diamond Jubilee events were planned in Stratford Park, and SDC wished to hear what other parishes were doing so that it could coordinate celebrations. It was planned as soon as 2012 to include the collection of cardboard and more plastic in the **household recycling** collections.

Mr Hagg seemed positive about improving consultation with parishes and suggested **increasing the meetings to twice a year** and to allow P&TCs for the first time to put forward items for the agenda. A number of the local council representatives present had expressed their support for the production of a consultation charter with SDC and with the agreement of the Mayor Cllr Kay had begun to make contact with them in order to progress the matter. This action was endorsed.

The **Standards Board for England** would be abolished next April and complaints would then be brought before a local investigator to be appointed by SDC, but he was unlikely to be able to impose penalties. Mr Hagg announced a **10% reduction in council tax discount** although pensioners – who comprised 50% of beneficiaries – would be fully protected. Mr Hagg indicated that if SDC was unable to achieve the appropriate saving, local P&TCs might have their precepts cut. Cllr Kay was not sure that this was legal and urged that the situation be carefully monitored.

The Mayor added that Ray Figg SDC had done his best to arrange for the **Olympic Torch** to pass through Nailsworth, but had been unsuccessful. The Mayor advised that the new recycling arrangements would mean that residents, where appropriate, would be issued with an additional wheelie bin and Cllr Duckworth added that SDC was the first council in the country to introduce a mixed bin collection, with a saving of £167k p.a. anticipated through this method.

2011/185 REPORT of FINANCE, ECONOMIC & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November, and the meeting of 29 November continued on 5 December were approved and signed.

2011/186 REPORT of PLANNING COMMITTEE

In the absence of the chairman, Cllr Dart gave the report of the meetings held on 17 November and 6 December. Cllr Dart reported that the meeting on 15 December had been inquorate with only himself and Cllr Carter present. Two applications had been on the agenda both relating to tree works at Beaudesert School. Application S.11/2208/TPO had been withdrawn and a comment of "no observations" was recommended for S.11/2428/TPO. The recommendation was accepted by Council.

RESOLVED	that the comments made by the Planning Committee at its meeting held 17 November and 6 December 2011 be approved.
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2011/187 REPORT of PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr M Robinson presented the report of the meeting held on 22 November and the minutes were approved.

The **Police Station** had now been put up for sale with a guide price of £100k and Cllr M Robinson had contacted the agent to lodge NTC's expression of interest and to ask for another viewing. The planning authority had already indicated that it would favour retention of the building for public use. NTC needed now to have a definite project in mind before deciding if it wanted to pursue the idea of purchasing the building and a working party comprising the Mayor, Cllrs Duckworth, Rahman, M Robinson and Mrs Reed, was elected to prepare a case to bring to the next council meeting. Cllr Mrs Reed added that discussion should be as a continuation of the Action Plan's views over the future of Old Market as a whole; the working party would meet in January.

Cllr Kay asked whether NTC would be given precedence if another buyer came forward, and it was thought not, so that if NTC did wish to pursue a purchase, there should be no delay. It would also need to be investigated whether NTC would get a discount.

Cllr M Robinson advised that the quote for **painting the other two sides of the TH** equated roughly to the amount left in the budget, but there were no funds to **refurbish the ladies loos**. £1000 had been allocated in the new budget for **projection equipment in the council chamber** so the choice of items would need to be tailored accordingly.

2011/188 REPORT of RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE

The Mayor, acting chairman gave the report of the meeting held on 13 December and the minutes were approved with correction to the statement under Nailsworth Games 2012, to read: "Cllr Mrs Elliott would write to town organisations to invite their participation in the 2012 event."

Cllr Kay added that NTC should congratulate itself on the recent achievement of three long term projects – Market Street Garden, town signboards, upgraded Skateboard Park, all thanks to the determination and effort of Cllrs.

2011/189 PARKING in NAILSWORTH – BUS STATION REDESIGN

Further to David Hagg's expression of support for residents' parking schemes, the Mayor presumed that NTC would in due course hear again from those residents pushing for this, at which point the idea could be reconsidered.

More pressing was the report that SDC had finally set aside funding to bring to fruition its long-term plan to redesign Nailsworth bus station, primarily to remove the danger of reversing buses. SDC's scheme involved creating 3 bus bays in the parking area between Spring Hill and Day's Mill, which had been gifted to the town for free parking, as confirmed by the minute from the 6 December 1938 council meeting, and previous acknowledgements by SDC, which evidence the current council was choosing to ignore, but without being able to provide any proof to the contrary. SDC could not find any pertinent documents among the documents handed over when the NUDC was disbanded and NTC's solicitors had nothing either.

Cllr Kay suggested if NTC was adamant in preserving these 20 parking spaces, it might have to resort to law, but a first step would be to get advice on whether there was a sufficiently strong case, which advice would cost £2-3k. However it might be of greater benefit to work with SDC to make better use of the existing bus station space for the benefit of the town and thus mitigate the loss of some parking spaces.

Cllr Duckworth suggested SDC's plans be looked at carefully to see how the overall scheme would affect the town centre as a whole, presuming that the existing bus station would still need to accommodate turning buses. He felt the provision of only 3 bus parking bays did not allow for future increased demand and reducing car parking spaces would add to congestion. The Mayor believed the plan showed an overall loss of 2-5 car parking bays.

The Clerk added that Alison Fisk had recorded that NTC had seen and approved the plans, to which she had responded that only an informal meeting with three Cllrs had taken place, and the scheme

had in no way been approved by NTC; this fact had not been acknowledged by SDC. The Clerk confirmed that the land under the 20 parking spaces was transferred to SDC when the NUDC was disbanded, but SDC continued to deny that there was a covenant on the land reserving it for free town parking.

Cllr Rahman declared a conflict of interest and took no part in the discussions.

It was agreed that SDC be invited to make a presentation to council of its plans for the bus station and be asked to provide evidence that the Old Market spaces were theirs to use freely. Cllr Mrs Reed would look at the plans previously prepared for the area to see if they would help with a new scheme.

Cllrs generally seemed to agree that if the new proposals were of more overall benefit to the town and did not lead to an unreasonable loss of parking spaces, that NTC might be willing to agree to the waiving of the covenant on the 20 parking spaces in Old Market.

Cllr Duckworth reported that he had attended the SDC cabinet meeting to observe this at first hand. Cllr Mrs Roden acknowledged the strength of public response to the parking charges scheme and the Scrutiny Committee had identified weaknesses in the consultation process which would influence future consultations – eg. that residents should only be expected to comment on issues relating to their own parish. There had been a good response to the consultation and Cllr Mrs Roden advised that the proposals had not been about fundraising, but a wish to improve services. She refuted the claim that three towns where parking charges existed already, were being expected to subsidise others where parking was free, as facilities and amenities differed and the smaller communities did not offer the same facilities as Stroud for example. Cllr Roden said a lot of work had gone into the consultation and cabinet was unanimously in favour of the report.

Cllr Cooper advised that SDC would consequently be reducing parking charges in Stroud and Painswick, which would lead to a £25k reduction in income. Cllr Carter had asked that SDC consider subsidising the minimum bus fare charged for the short run from Nailsworth Town Centre to Forest Green.

2011/190 NAILSWORTH LIBRARY – IMPLICATIONS of OUTCOME of JUDICIAL REVIEW

Following success of the Judicial Review, the Mayor had emailed the county librarian asking when Nailsworth Library would be fully reopened with qualified staff. Jo Hand, director for countywide staffing had responded that 23 opening hours would be reinstated in January, increasing the current 12 back to 35 hours per week. Group manager Ann Riley was working out staffing logistics which were complicated as many staff members had been laid off, but would be done with a mixture of trained staff and volunteers. The library service was required to reinstate opening hours as they had been last February, which it hoped to do as from 16 January. The Judicial Review had ruled that the cuts were unlawful, not because of an inadequate consultation process, but for reasons of inequality and human rights. However new proposals were being brought out for consultation from 20 January, so the long term future of library provision was uncertain.

The self-service system had been put back from January to March but this would give volunteers time to learn the ropes. Friends of Glos Libraries had asked for local contacts and groups in order to help with handling problems individual to different parishes; there was a website to consult. Shadowing sessions with Nailsworth volunteers had already started and Cllr Mrs Elliott was thanked for her help and support in organising Nailsworth's team of volunteers.

2011/191 ACCOUNTS

Item 264 – Cllr Duckworth clarified that this was the annual charge covering the gov.uk website and email addresses. He would provide a simple guide for each cllr to implement his/her new email.

PROPOSED	that the list of accounts for 20 December 2011 amounting to £48,098.65 be approved for payment.
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2011/192 Stroud & District Motor Club – Cotswold Clouds Trial 5 February 2012
Notification had been received of the annual event.

2011/193 Go Grow – thanks for use of Mortimer Gardens
Kathleen Kearns had written to thank NTC for use of Mortimer Gardens for the apple pressing day, and for provision of free water and electricity which had allowed for the very successful use of Go Grow's new apple pressing equipment. Thanks were given in particular for Cllr Carter's help and inspiration at both the Mortimer Gardens and Jovial Foresters apple pressing sessions.

2011/194 SWTT – submission of report of activities at Dunkirk & Gigg Mills
The annual report was available from the Clerk. This mentioned courses SWTT had been running at the mills and reported that all was going well with a significant number of visitors.

2011/195 GCC – closure of Fewster Road on 15 February 2012
The road would be closed for one day for BT works.

2011/196 Mr J Eddyshaw – return of cheque
The Clerk had sent the usual honorarium to Mr Eddyshaw, for his maintenance of the Town Clock. Mr Eddyshaw had returned the cheque in light of current budget constraints and suggested NTC could instead make a donation to the Friends of Stroud Hospital. The Clerk was asked to thank Mr Eddyshaw for his gesture but to explain that it would better fit with NTC's regulations that Mr Eddyshaw accept the cheque on this occasion and make the donation to FSH himself. The grants budget was the vehicle for NTC to make charitable donations on completion of an application.

2011/197 SDC – national campaign to reduce War Memorial theft
SDC asked for information on the town's memorials so that any removable components could be security marked – at no cost to NTC.

2011/198 GCC – opportunity to comment on budget priorities
As had been advertised in the local newspapers, Mark Hawthorn invited residents to take part in the consultation by means of a questionnaire on the website at www.glos.gov.uk/budget2012.

2011/199 Mrs Bevan - Right of Way over Shortwood Green
Mrs Bevan was selling her property, for which she had a right of way agreement across a corner of Shortwood Green, and was asking for confirmation that the agreement could be transferred to the purchasers, with any attendant cost being covered by Mrs Bevan and/or the purchasers.

Since a new agreement would need to be drawn up by solicitors, Cllrs wondered if this was an opportune moment to revise the terms to ensure the property boundaries were respected and to increase the long-standing annual rent from £5 to a more realistic £100. The Clerk added that there were at least two other such agreements charging peppercorn rents, but that the cost of changing the contract outweighed the financial benefit of the increased income. The Clerk was asked to respond to Mrs Bevan that NTC agreed in principle to renew the agreement with the new owners of the property, but with revision of terms and annual payment, with solicitor's costs to be borne by the property owners.

2011/200 SDC – consultation on Preferred Strategy Stage
The consultation would take place between 6 February and 19 March on the preferred location for housing and employment over the next 15 years. The Clerk would pass the document on to Cllr Carter for consideration by the Planning Committee.

2011/201 Cotswold Conservation Board, annual forum 2 March in Bath.

Cllrs were asked to notify the Clerk if they wished to attend this event.

2011/202

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 1 (sub-section 2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following proceedings because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

2011/203 Appointment of Assistant to Town Clerk

The working party had considered the applications and how the interviews would be conducted. Of the 90 enquiries received, 44 application packs had been returned and a shortlist of 12 candidates would be called in for interview over 10 and 12 Jan. The interview panel would consist of Cllrs Duckworth, Mrs Elliott and Mrs Thorpe, with the Clerk in attendance to observe. The format for the interviewing process was discussed and agreed.

2011/204 DISCUSSION between COUNCILLORS

Cllrs agreed that discussion and deliberation between Cllrs should be undertaken at official meetings and not by email. Cllr Duckworth offered to draft a paragraph to this effect for inclusion in the Communications Policy.

..... Chairman

..... Date