STREET PARISH COUNCIL

Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 21st January, 2020 at

6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor P. Goater (Chair)

Councillors: C.E. Axten, P. Birch, S. Carswell,

M. Daniells, D. Drew, D. Ellis, D. Goater,

A. Leafe, L. Mogg, T.W.E. Napper, A. Prior,

H. Shearer and L. Zaky

IN ATTENDANCE: L.A. Ruff - Parish Clerk

M. Sandiford – Assistant Clerk Projects Officer

J. Marshfield – Assistant Clerk

County Councillor L. Leyshon

J. Stafford and O. Woodhams – Somerset

County Council Library Service

APOLOGIES: Councillors: R. Boyce and J. Diment - another

another engagement – reasons accepted

180. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th January, 2020 which had

been circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the

Chair subject to the addition of ‘As a parish council we are looking

forward to working with the YMCA in a positive way to support the

vital work they do with young people in Street’ after ‘initiatives’ at the

end of the first paragraph of Minute No. 174.

181. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct Councillors Carswell, P.

Goater, Napper and Shearer declared an other interest under Appendix

B in any matters relating to the District Council and stated that they

would keep an open mind when considering issues at either District or

Parish level. Councillor Napper declared an other interest under

Appendix B in any matters relating to Somerset County Council and

stated that he would keep an open mind when considering issues at

County or Parish level.

All members present declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the alteration of the Parish Rooms for Council and library use and that they had been granted dispensation to speak and vote by the Clerk and would keep an open mind when considering the matter. Councillor Axten declared that she was Chairman of the Friends of Street Library and Councillors Drew and Prior that they were a Friend of the Library.

Councillors Leafe and Zaky declared a personal interest in the selection of a contractor for the works as they both knew one of them and took no part in the consideration of this.

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182. SOLAR STREETS MENDIP

Details of the scheme had been circulated.

RESOLVED

that the Chair be asked to clarify the discounted price and then the

scheme to be set up in Street.

183. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act

1960 amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies

Regulations 2014, the press and public be excluded from the meeting

for the following item, apart from consideration of setting the budget

and precept for 2020/21 at the end, in view of the confidential

information to be considered on tenders received and legal proposals.

184. ALTERATION OF PARISH ROOMS, SELECTION OF

CONTRACTOR AND BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21

RESOLUTION TO BORROW

The Clerk submitted a report, most of which was confidential, which

had been circulated. Councillor Napper wished it to be recorded that

he felt uncomfortable about the cost and need for the proposals and

the loss of space for the Council for a number of years. Councillor

Axten reminded members that if the library had not moved to the

Parish Rooms in 2019 it would have closed. During consultations held

by the County Council there had been more positive responses from

people in Street than from any other areas where the library was under

threat.

The proposals would create a library and a hub. A flexible space would

be available and the building would be more accessible. The provision

of a lift would allow all meetings apart from full Council to be held on

the first floor and there would be storage there also.

Councillor Shearer felt that it was great that the library had been saved

and that it would be difficult to find an alternative space for it and the

cost would be greater. There was a lot of space on the first floor which

could be used as offices if a unitary authority was formed in the future

and more responsibilities were passed to the Council. The IT facilities

would be much improved and of particular importance to the

disadvantaged. The building was in a good location for access

including being near bus stops. Councillor Drew felt that the library had

given the building a purpose to an extent and that it had become a

space for a cohesive community.

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Councillor Leafe asked about costs and felt that the other option

previously considered would have created a large room which would

have been good for the Council in the future. The Chair explained that

£50,000 had been earmarked for works needed to the exterior of the

building and £50,000 would be given by the County Council to fit out

the interior of the library. Other costs for fees etc. and the temporary

relocation of the office were detailed in the report. The Council had

agreed not to proceed with the other option as it would have cost far

more. Councillor Zaky was informed that it had cost around £8,000 to

move staff from the ground floor to the office on the first floor including

blocking in a door, cabling and carpet. Members felt that it should be

made clear that the precept for 2020/21 would be raised to £460,000

to balance the budget. Councillor Daniells felt that he had been slightly

misled and that the improvements were library rather than council

orientated. There was no guarantee that the library would move out of

the building in 7 years and so a lot would be spent but the library could

still be there for a long time. It was agreed that the survey form should

be worded carefully to make it clear what the total increase in council

tax precept was for and that it was a small increase in money

terms. A number of members felt that the building would become a

community information hub where the vulnerable could be supported.

Council staff had a much better working environment.

O. Woodhams circulated a list of improved services which could be

provided in the refurbished library. The County Council would commit

to the arrangements set out in the permanent CLP agreement until

31st March 2026 but there was a break clause for the Parish Council

at 31st March 2023 if it wished. £50,000 would be provided for the

interior of the library and any remaining funds would be contributed to

the project.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Shearer and

seconded by Councillor Leafe -

1. to agree in principle that an agreed contractor be selected to carry

out the specified works to alter the Parish Rooms at an agreed cost +

VAT to enhance the building for the library and make the first floor

accessible, improving the building as a whole and renovating the

exterior, subject to final agreement following public consultation,

consent to apply for the loan being granted and to Somerset County

Council entering into the draft permanent Community Library

Partnership agreement for 6 years

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2. RESOLUTION TO BORROW

RESOLVED

subject to final approval on a date to be agreed following consideration of the results of the precept increase consultation, to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £100,000 over the borrowing term of 14.5 years, repayable by half yearly annuity, for the alteration of the Parish Rooms. The annual loan repayments will come to around £8,111. It is also intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 1.5% which is the equivalent of an additional £1.60 a year on a Band D property

In accordance with standing order 3 m several members requested that

the way in which members voted be recorded in the minutes. The

voting was as follows:

Members Who Voted For Motion Members Who Voted Against

Councillor Axten Councillor Daniells

Councillor Birch Councillor Zaky

Councillor Carswell

Councillor Drew

Councillor Ellis

Councillor D. Goater

Councillor P. Goater

Councillor Leafe

Councillor Mogg

Councillor Prior

Councillor Shearer

Councillor Napper abstained from voting. The motion was passed by

11 votes to 2 votes.

RESOLVED

A. that in principle subject to the provisions detailed above, Melhuish

and Saunders Ltd. be selected to carry out the specified works to the

Parish Rooms at a cost of £177,408.15 + VAT and figures be adjusted

for the additional cost of £6,242 with the general revenue reserves

being reduced

B. that the current temporary CLP agreement be extended to 31st

March 2020 and the document for this be signed by Councillors

Carswell and P. Goater and witnessed by the Clerk

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C. that specialist legal advice should not be sought on the permanent

CLP agreement

D. that the extraordinary Council meeting to make the final decision

on the project be held at 6.30 p.m. on 25th February

E. that the grant applications for the Citizens Advice Bureau and

Strode Theatre be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee for

consideration

F. that the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair be

given delegated authority to alter the wording of the survey form and

business plan to clarify that the total increase in the council tax precept

was to balance the budget rather than to provide a budget for

vulnerable people

G. that the Estimates for 2020/21 be as attached as Annex A to the

minutes in the Minute Book and the precept on Mendip District Council

for 2020/21 to be in the sum of £460,000 giving a tax of £121.47 on a

Band D property

H. that the information for the council tax section of the District

Council’s leaflet/website to be as attached as Annex B to the minutes

in the Minute Book

I. that the general revenue reserves be set at £178,821Jh for 2020/21

to maintain current assets such as Street Skate Park, the Parish

Rooms and Merriman Park and fund new projects or services as they

arise.

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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