

## PATCHWAY TOWN COUNCIL

### **Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Patchway Town Council held on the Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 at 19:00 at Callicroft House, Patchway.**

**Councillors:** Cllr Dayley Lawrence (Chair), Cllr Ken Dando, Cllr Natalie Field (7.20pm), Cllr Eric Gordon, Cllr Jenny James, Cllr Pete Knight, Cllr Denise Lansdown, Cllr Roger Loveridge, Cllr A Morey, Cllr Sam Scott (7.27pm) & Cllr Toni Scott.

**In attendance:** S Howard (Town Clerk) & J Watkins (Deputy Town Clerk and RFO).

**Absent:** None

**Members of the Public:** 10 members of the public

As the time was 19:00, the Chair, Cllr D Lawrence called the meeting to order and informed all participants that the meeting would be recorded in line with The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 (SI2014/2095) and Patchway Town Council's protocol on the filming and recording of Town Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

**21/1/2025 - No 1. To receive questions from the members of the public present, with respect to business on the agenda in accordance with Standing Order 4E.**

**A member of the public presented information to support agenda item 7.**

The Business Development Volunteer at the Coniston Community Centre gave thanks to the Council for their support given to date.

As members will know, following the pandemic the Centre was very close to handing back the keys. However, Trustees of the Centre have provided money which has enabled the Centre to keep running, but they are reliant on the income stream. With the car parking charges being introduced this will see services close as users will not be able to afford the fees being implemented.

There are many users who depend on the Centre for mental health support, those being referred to the Centre for social prescribing reasons which in turn saves the NHS system being facilitated. For some users it is the only time they venture out of their homes to seek friendship, warmth, and a meal. The volunteer has asked for the District Council to meet with her and to date no one has responded.

The volunteer confirmed that Southern Brooks who occupy the building may be looking to vacate the premises due to the parking charges being imposed.

The volunteer stated that the Community Centre is the 'beating heart' of the community and is proud to be able to provide so many services and facilities to the users. By retaining the car park as a 'free to use' facility will ensure the continuation of the community activities and only see this increase with the use of The Parade's pedestrianised area for events such as Tai Chi, markets etc. The District Council must also consider and support Patchway, being classed as a deprivation area.

**A member of the public presented information to support agenda item 13.**

The representative of the Patchway Sports & Social Club enquired whether the proposal to set up a Steering Group requested at the November Council meeting had been approved.

The Clerk confirmed that the request had not been approved by the Council.

The representative also asked if a meeting has been formalised with member of the club to confirm the closure of the Patchway Sports and Social Club.

The Clerk confirmed that to date no meeting has been arranged.

**Cllr Morey read out a letter received from the Associate Assistant Head Teacher of Patchway Community School, (PCS) to support agenda item 11.**

The letter from PCS was seeking support from the Council for students to have the opportunity of completing work experience with the Twinned town of Gauting, Germany. Those students who travelled last year truly benefitted from the experience. The students have been engaged and excited with the prospect of the 2025 trip and PCS hopes that the Council will support the programme.

**21/1/2025 - No 2. To receive any apologies for absence.**

The Council noted apologies from Cllr Dan Fry (work commitment), Cllr Elaine Martin (personal reason) & Cllr Keith Walker (personal reason).

**21/1/2025 - No 3. To receive any Declarations of Interest and to approve any dispensations for this meeting.**

The Chairman stated that any member having a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed should declare it during the meeting as specified in the Code of Conduct required by the Localism Act 2011 Section 27 and should leave the room while the matter was discussed.

Cllr Angela Morey declared an interest in item 7, being a District Councillor.

Cllr Ken Dando declared an interest in item 13, being a member of the Patchway Sports & Social Club.

**RESOLVED:** It was unanimously agreed to grant dispensation for the disclosed interests on the basis of no involvement in debate or resolutions on the following items.

Cllr Angela Morey regarding agenda item 7 and Cllr Ken Dando regarding agenda item 13.

**21/1/2025 - No 4. To approve the minutes of the Meeting of Patchway Town Council held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and to receive the Clerk/RFO's report for this meeting.**

The Clerk/RFO report was **NOTED**.

**RESOLVED:** It was unanimously agreed to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

**21/1/2025 – No 5. To note any unreported decisions made under the scheme of delegation or delegated authority, under Financial Regulations for this current financial year.**

Under the Patchway Town Council Scheme of Delegation and Regulation 4.1 of the Financial Regulations, the Clerk and Chairman have authorised expenditure items below due to the nature of these transactions being required in a timely manner for reasons of project delivery.

Cllr Knight enquired as to what names the flights in July 2025 had been booked under to support the Twinning trip.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO confirmed the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Knight advised that the Council needs to be mindful of the May Annual Council Meeting where there may be a change in the Mayor and Deputy Mayor positions which will have an impact and will incur a fee to change the names on the flight tickets.

Cllr Lansdown reminded the Council Officers that there are cheaper alternatives by way of suppliers to consider when purchasing stationery items etc.

The Clerk confirmed that alternative suppliers are being considered in order to save money.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council noted the Scheme of Delegation report.



The RFO confirmed that yes, the VAT claims are up to date which are compiled and submitted online to the HMRC.

**21/1/2025 – No. 9 To receive any reports from South Gloucestershire Councillors, Local Organisations or Working Groups.**

**a) South Gloucestershire Councillors report on items relating to Patchway.**

Cllr Sam Scott confirmed that the Scrutiny Board has not met since the last Town Council meeting was held in November 2024.

Cllr Scott had attended a South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) Accounts and Audit meeting this evening, hence reason for him being late to the Council meeting.

Cllr Scott advised that the Local Plan that supports the next 20 years will see an impact on housing numbers proposed. Cllr Scott confirmed that there are plans for 1, 2 and 3 storey apartment buildings to be built in Charlton Hayes.

Cllr Gordon asked if Cllr Scott could report to SGC the repairs to the highway that are required on Rodway Road. Cllr Scott confirmed that although Rodway Road does not fall under his Ward, he is happy to relay this request to the District Council.

Cllr Gordon also asked Cllr Scott to speak to Streetcare to ask for the electronic notification board(s) to be installed on the highway to alert people ahead of any impending scheduled works.

Cllr Dando enquired whether the provision for more Doctor's Surgeries is within the Local Plan. Cllr Scott advised that the Local Plan only supports housing, not Doctor's Surgeries.

No other District Councillor reports were received.

**b) Friends of Patchway Twinning Group.**

The Deputy Clerk/RFO advised that he had attended a meeting with the Twinning Group in December 2024 and had scrutinised the programme and funding applications that had been identified to help reduce transport costs.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO reiterated the 'buzz' across the cohort and the upcoming Year 9 students. It is important to retain the Twinning relationships and strong connections held.

**c) Almondsbury Joint Burial Committee.**

Cllr Dando confirmed that there has not been a meeting held since the Council last met in November 2024. There is a meeting at the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to discuss the land acquisition.

Cllr Dando briefly mentioned an argument that is yet to be resolved which involved a gypsy family over a grave. Cllr Dando confirmed that the Town Councils are not at fault in respect of this matter.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO advised members that the details concerning Stages 1 & 2 of the land acquisition has been received and the estimated charges to support the groundwater and biodiversity work is £26,132, with 50% of this figure to be paid by the Town Council.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO also suggested that maybe residents are unaware of the cemetery land and the work the Town Council is doing by way of supporting and investing in additional land. The Deputy Clerk/RFO proposed that an article is placed in an edition of the Town News to keep everyone informed and provide regular updates.

**d) South Gloucestershire Council partnership working.**

The Clerk confirmed that the Officers had been working in partnership with SGC and the Enforcement Team to support the bylaw at Norman Scott Park in respect of no dogs being permitted in the park. Following the Council's social media post, there have been mixed reviews concerning the introduction of the enforcement from February 2025. The Council stated that the park is a sports facility and takes pride in the cleanliness of the facility and safeguarding its users.

**e) Improving The Parade.**

No updates to report.

**f) Public Safety updates.**

The Clerk advised that a member of the Groundstaff Team was approached by a stranger whilst performing their duties, and the incident has subsequently been reported and logged by the local Police. The episode has also highlighted the need to discuss this further with the Personnel Committee and to adopt changes to the work pattern by the Team, i.e., to not work alone and to adapt the Safeguarding and Lone Working Policies as directed.

**g) Residents' communications.**

The Clerk gave thanks to Cllr Gordon and Cllr Loveridge who will be attending the South Glos Residents Support Day on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2025 which is being organised by Mamas Bristol.

A box of literature was given to the Councillors to support the Council stand and the Clerk looks forward to receiving feedback from them following the event.

**h) Youth provision.**

The Clerk confirmed that she had attended the Youth Working Group meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and the minutes are awaited.

**i) Patchway Community Larder.**

Cllr Lansdown confirmed that the larder continues to be well supported by donations and used by those in need. The Deputy Clerk/RFO confirmed that there are still funds available from SGC if the larder requires a top-up.

**j) S106 Monies awarded for Pretoria Road Allotments.**

The Deputy Clerk/RFO confirmed that the first tranche of the SGC S106 grant money is expected soon.

**21/1/2025 – No. 10. To note the date of the next Meeting of Patchway Town Council will be hold on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm at Callicroft House.**

The date of the next meeting was noted.

**21/1/2025 – No. 11. To consider a request from the Friends of Patchway Twinning Working Group for a maximum grant of £8,295 from the Youth & Community Grant budget to support the progress of the international twinning programme in 2025.**

The Deputy Clerk/RFO explained to members the reasons and importance of supporting the programme and the benefits that it brings. The school and Council are seeking additional support by way of funding from grants available with the aim of helping to reduce the amount needed in the grant application.

Cllr Lansdown reiterated that she cannot see that the Council can afford to support the grant request and that it will only support eight children. There are many more children in the Town that are a priority. The Council needs to approach local businesses to seek sponsorship and

funding. The grant request has never been paid of the duty for the Council to pay for previously and it shouldn't be now.

Cllr Field stated that the programme is important to develop the education and international connections for the students involved. With so many issues in today's world, it's important that students are given this opportunity. The Twinning opportunities has a much wider reach than the eight children who visit Gauting, Germany.

Cllr Loveridge also confirmed that the Twinning programme was always self-funded and should be funded that way now. There are many issues that the Council need to support within the Town including the Library, Patchway Sports & Social Club, and the parking charges at The Parade. The money to support the Twinning trips should be in hand before now, as funding for other things will only get tighter.

Cllr Sam Scott advised that the application is a lot of money to support and suggested that this item be deferred to the next Council meeting. In the meantime, the Council Officers seek funding opportunities to support the grant being made. The application could also be viewed as three separate applications, as per the Deputy Clerk/RFO report which has been broken down into the three components to support the trips and visits.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO expressed that the school need to know if the trips can be supported due to their curriculum and planning purposes. It was also highlighted that the price for flights is currently low and will only increase over time. There is also an underspend in the current financial year's budget to accommodate for some of the grant provision.

The Chair of Council confirmed that following all the discussion around the grant application, that a proposal of splitting the application into the three components and take a vote on the educational element, including the trips, of the grant now, and the remaining part of the grant is considered at the next meeting when further information has been sought.

**RESOLVED:** that a vote of 7 in support of the motion, and 4 against, with no abstentions.

**21/1/2025 – No. 12. To note the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and to approve the following recommendation.**

**a) To approve the recommendation that Patchway Town Council approves the 2025/2026 budget, setting the precept at £541,459 for the 2025/2026 Financial year.**

Cllr Lansdown advised that as a resident that pays into the pot, the increase of 7.94% is quite a substantial increase. When the Sports and Social Club was open, there should have been more support for them.

Cllr Sam Scott raised questions concerning the reserves which had been raised in the Finance Committee meeting. The Deputy Clerk/RFO responded, and this information was also circulated to all Councillors before the meeting.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO also confirmed that the Council had secured further new clients who want to use the 3G which will bring in more income. The Deputy Clerk/RFO has also been collaborating with the accountant who has projected a 4-month reserve which is placing the Council in a better financial position.

Cllr Field gave thanks to the Deputy Clerk/RFO for his work with the financial budget for 2025/26. The Council is aware that there will be increases to the National Insurance contributions to consider and inflation which puts pressure on retaining the precept at the same as last year. It is wise that the Council increases the precept and proposed that this is carried.

Cllr Dando enquired as to the precept increase and how this is represented per household.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO confirmed that it will be an increase of £16.32 per month. Therefore, for the average Band D property this is a total precept for a Band D Equivalent of £236.14 per annum.

In 2023/24 the total precept for a Band D Equivalent property was £219.82.

Cllr Dando proposed that the agenda item be deferred and bring this back to the Finance Committee to identify further savings.

Cllr Knight advised that he is happy with the recommendation for the 2025/26 precept. The Council currently has loans with some being paid off over the next few years, which will allow further tolerances in the financial years to come.

**RESOLVED:** Proposed, Seconded and **AGREED** by a vote of 9 in support, with 2 against.

**21/1/2025 – No. 13. To receive and consider a report on the actions taken and expenditure to date concerning the Patchway Sports & Social Club building.**

The Clerk confirmed that the Officers had been working together to support those companies with hire agreements on equipment at the Club. Utility companies have been contacted and notified of the closure. Boiler tests and checks have also been conducted. The Clerk asked how the Council wished to take this forward and whether they would consider going out to tender.

Cllr Lansdown enquired as to where the Council stands legally following the ballot by members supporting the closure of the Sports and Social Club building. The Council also needs to understand the legal position regarding the contents that remain in the building.

Cllr Loveridge remarked that the Council is jumping the gun and since the forfeiture agreement nothing has been told to the Council as to the current position. Where is the foreclosure agreement? Asbestos has been identified inside the building and to support these findings and other concerns the Council must seek Solicitor advice and bring any further spending requests to Full Council for agreement.

There is still a long way to go in order to bring the building up to standard, i.e., fire report, building survey, consideration of the Community Hub, before the Council can consider the possibility of going out to tender.

The Chair reiterated Cllr Loveridge's remark that the Council needs to understand how much it will cost to bring the building up to scratch via an inspection report. The Council needs to understand the legal position and stated that this will incur a fee of £300.00 per hour by the Council's solicitor.

**RESOLVED:** that there are no further spends concerning the Patchway Sports & Social Club building, with the exception of solicitor's fees to obtain legal advice. For Officers to establish a cost for a building survey and bring to the February Council meeting.

**Cllr Angela Morey left the meeting at 9.01pm.**

**Cllr Sam Scott and Cllr Toni Scott left the meeting at 9.02pm.**

**21/1/2025 – No. 14. To resolve that in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to information) (England) Regulations, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following agenda items.**

**RESOLVED:** It was unanimously agreed to exclude the public and press for the items below.

**21/1/2025 – No. 15. To consider the recommendations from the Personnel Committee meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.**

**09/1/2025 – No. 4. To consider approving the option for employees to receive pay for additional hours worked during large events only instead of accruing TOIL, subject to budget considerations.**

**RESOLVED:** that there is a trial period for the financial year 2025/26 to support the TOIL and pay arrangements to support the additional hours worked by the Groundstaff during large events. This arrangement to be kept under review by the Personnel Committee.

**09/1/2025 – No. 5 – To discuss and approve the change of job title from Groundstaff to Estates Team following the Annual Performance Appraisals in December 2024.**

**RESOLVED:** that Councillors confirmed that they are happy with the change of name from Groundstaff to Estates Team, as this reflects more in the work they accomplish.

**21/1/2025 – No. 16 To consider and approve the legal contract supporting the purchase of land to extend the existing cemetery at Tockington Lane, Almondsbury.**

**RESOLVED:** that the Council voted in favour of the legal contract to support the purchase of land to extend the existing cemetery at Tockington Lane, Almondsbury.

**21/1/2025 – No. 17 To receive a nomination for the role of Honorary Freeman of Patchway and any actions required with regards to the presentation of this award.**

**RESOLVED:** that the Council voted in favour of the nomination proposed by the Chair of Council.

**The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 9.25pm**