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Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of Kingswood Parish held on Monday 30th April 2018 commencing 7.00p.m.at Kingswood Village Hall, Wickwar Road.

PRESENT

Councillors: Chairman Cllr. D. Rockey, Vice Chairman Cllr K Wood, Cllr. Christopher Dunn, Cllr. Sue. Evans, Cllr Toby Phillips, and Cllr. Jean Simmons

Clerk: Miss. M. Leonard

Public There were various members of the Public present

Kingswood Annual Parish Meeting

1. The Chairman of Kingswood Parish Council to open the meeting and explain the format.
2. An open session for the public to meet representatives from the following organisations and to view information.
 - **Meet with John Cordwell Gloucestershire County Councillor (Cllr John Cordwell will be in attendance for some of meeting due to other meeting commitments).**
 - **Meet with Mark Reeves Stroud District Council Councillor.**
 - **Meet with Richard Lewis Ecologist from Stroud Valleys on the wild life project for Kingswood.**
 - **Meet with representatives from Whitehill Parish Council in connection with Automated Number plate Camera Recognition and the benefits on controlling speeding in the community.**
 - **Meet with representatives of the Police.**
 - **Meet Alex Myrie Stroud District Council Dog Warden.**
 - **View Reports from Kingswood Community Organisations.**
 - **View Kingswood Parish Council objectives for 2018/19.**
 - **View Kingswood Parish Councils draft accounts for 2017/18.**
 - **View draft minutes of the 2016/17 Annual Parish Meeting.**
 - **View Kingswood Parish Council's Annual Report.**

The formal part of the meeting to start at 7.20pm

1. **To receive and note** apologies for absence.

Cllr. Hemming, Peter Booth and Jean Dove Kingswood Historic Society, Peter Cox AC Archaeology and Rachel Pratt Neighbourhood Warden

2. To approve the minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting.

Cllr. Ken Wood proposed that the draft minute of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting be accepted as a true record. **This was seconded by Cllr. Toby Phillips.** All in attendance agreed with the proposal and **the minutes were resolved.**

3. To receive a report from the Chairman of Kingswood Parish Council.

See appendix 1.

4. To receive a brief financial report from the clerk to Kingswood Parish Council.

See appendix 2.

5. To receive a report from County Councillor John Cordwell.

See appendix 3

The Chairman thanked the County Councillor for attending the parish council meetings throughout the year.

6. To receive a Report from District Councillor Mark Reeves.

See appendix 4

Cllr. Reeves stated that he would be available to answer questions after the meeting.

7. To receive a report from Alex Myrie Stroud District Council's Dog Warden (Alex Myrie has to leave due to other appointments so needs to speak early)

The officer gave the following statistics.

618 animal related service requests of which 121 related to stray dogs

4 complaints received from Kingswood only 2 in connection with dog fouling.

The Officer gave an over view of the reporting system and asked the community to report any offences and she would take the appropriate action.

Questions were asked on dog licencing and micro chipping.

8. To receive an update from the David Hagg Chief Executive of Stroud District Council (SDC) on Local Council.

David Hagg gave an update on the Local Tax support grant and the amount of money that SDC would be required to pay to central government.

David Hagg explained why the council were considering car parking charges in some market town including Wotton. A consultation will be carried out later in the year.

David Hagg gave an overview of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- 9. To receive a presentation on the benefits of Automated Number plate Recognition cameras (ANPR) from Helen Dunn Clerk of Whiteshill Parish Council and Sergeant Liz Lovell.**

Helen Dunn clerk from Whiteshill Parish Council gave a presentation on the benefits of the ANPR system. Sgt Liz Lovell discussed what action the Police would take on the evidence provided by the camera.

Questions were raised on the location of the camera the late stage in the process that prosecutions would be considered and the cost of the camera.

- 10. To receive a presentation from AC Archaeology on the archaeology found at Chestnut Park.**

This item was withdrawn due to the presenter being ill. A separate session to be arranged.

- 11. To receive a presentation from Richard Lewis from Stroud Valleys on a new Wild Life Project for Kingswood.**

Richard Lewis updates d the community on the latest Great Crested Newt count (GCN) and on the community events that have been arranged. 18 out of the 20 traps had newts in them. There were 7 GCN in total 4 male and 3 female. 46 smooth newts 25 female and 21 male.

He thanked the volunteers and put out an appeal for more volunteers to help on a Monday.

- 12. To receive a report from Kingswood Defribillator Group**

David Owen updated the community on the Kingswood Defibrillator Group and explained where they were located

- 13. To receive reports from any other Kingswood Community Group who wishes to give an update to the community.**

Patricia Broadfoot updated the community on the St Mary's Church plans for a Community Garden the church

Cecilia Williams informed the community of the new footpath group and its first meeting on the 31st May at May the St Mary's room.

Alex King updated the community on the Greenway Group. He thanked KPC for their grant and Stated that the feasibility study would be undertaken by Sustrans over the summer.

14. An opportunity for members of the community to ask questions or to raise issues with any of the representatives present.

No questions were raised. The Chairman David Rockey thanked the community for all their hard work in particular all the volunteers who under take work throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 21.05 hours.

Appendix 1

Report for the night of the Annual Parish Meeting

Thank you all for coming along tonight we hope that you will enjoy listening to the speakers that we have invited to present to you tonight.

Planning

The building work has started at Chestnut Park and we are working with Crest Nicholson on ensuring that issues are kept to a minimum. Crest Nicholson has put up speed signage and has a banksman at the entrance to Chestnut Park to direct traffic. We are aware that there have been some issues but we are working with Crest Nicholson to overcome these.

We have a presentation from Peter Cox from Ac Archaeology who will be enlightening us on what archaeology was found at the Chestnut Park site.

Last year you heard from HC1 on their plans for the Penwood Lodge site at Wotton Road. Some of you may have attended their recent presentation here at the village hall. This application has now been given permission and we hope to have more information to give you on when this build will start.

Wildlife land at Chestnut Park

The land at Chestnut Park with the wildlife ponds and community orchard has finally been transferred to Kingswood Parish Council. Last year we managed this land in partnership with Stroud Valleys Project. We are pleased to announce that we have renewed this partnership for the year 2018/19. Richard from Stroud Valleys Project is here tonight to talk to you about the work that has taken place and what is hoped to be achieved this year. He will also update you on the many events that we have planned for this year. I do have one plea on this project! More people from Kingswood are needed to help manage the land. Richard and his volunteers will be at the shed at the community orchard from 10.00am every Monday morning. Please if you have the time come on down and help.

Allotments

The new allotment site is looking fantastic so a big thanks to the Allotment holders for achieving so much in such a short time. The Allotments won an award from Campaign for Rural England for setting up a unique type of allotment which is environmentally friendly and has to exist along with the Great Crested Newts which presents many challenges.

Highways Objectives

We are very aware of many issues in relation to highways within the parish and the parish council are committed to trying to resolve these issues if we can. The issues in the main relate to speeding, parking and lack of footpaths. The parish council had as its main objectives in 2017/18 to purchase an automated vehicle number plate recognition camera (ANPR). The parish council has purchased two cameras. These will be located on Hillesley Road, Charfield Road and Wickwar Road. The Police have committed more resources to help with this initiative. There is a presentation from both the Police and Whiteshill parish Council on the benefits of this initiative. To enable this to happen the parish council has updated 3 lampposts to enable them to take the cameras. We are currently awaiting the installation of the cameras this should take place any day.

The parking issues are more difficult to resolve as we do not want to just move an existing problem to another area. The parish council will be carrying out a consultation with the community on these issues and looking at possible solutions.

We are also looking at the provision of footpaths and cycle routes within the parish. We have a new Footpaths working Group and are looking for keen walkers to help with walking the footpaths and letting us know of the condition of the footpath. This way we can work with landowners to ensure that there are no issues. Celia Williams is helping the parish council with this initiative and is calling for volunteers to help walk the footpaths. If you want to find out more come along to an informal meeting to be held at The St Mary's Room on Thursday 31st May, 7-9 pm.

Kingswood Parish Council is supporting the Greenway Project which is a major initiative to introduce a project to provide cycle path and footpath links between Kingswood Wotton and Charfield. There is a representative here from the group who will be able to give an update on this project. Kingswood Parish Council has just awarded a grant to this group to help towards the cost of a feasibility study.

The Playing Field

An issue in relation to the use of the playing field has been raised. The parish council are taking these issues seriously. Complaints have been made in respect of dogs being allowed to use the playing field. Dogs are currently allowed in the playing field but not on in the area with the play equipment. The council has upped its patrols of this area. The parish council will be consulting with the community on this issue during the summer and then will review its policy to see if it needs to be changed.

Local Council Award Scheme

The Local Council Award Scheme is monitored by the National Association for Local Councils (NALC) The council applied for Quality status and achieved it. There are 3 levels Foundation, Quality and Gold. NALC state the following in relation to the Quality Award "*The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.*" The council are very pleased to be seen as a quality council but will now strive to achieve the Gold Award.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Some of you will be aware that there is new regulation coming in to effect in connection with data. The parish council has taken advice and is working towards being fully compliant. The council has carried out a data audit and has a new privacy policy. The parish council will also be reviewing its email data base and will be seeking new permission from you to use this information. To help with this the parish council has set up a Mail Chimp Account to manage this data base and to seek new permissions. If you still wish for the parish council to be in contact with you and to update you in parish news please access this link and sign up to updates. From May 26th 2018 the old email data base will be deleted and not used.

Website/Social Media

Please have a look at the Kingswood Parish Councils new website. There is a lot of information on there that may be of interest. Please visit Kingswood Parish Council's Facebook page. This is proving

a successful and speedy way of updating the community on information as it becomes available.
Please like and follow our page.

Objectives for 2018/19

To analyse the ANPR camera data base and ensure that action is taken by the Police against persistent speeding offender.

- To extend the CCTV camera coverage at the playing field
- To put in a new footpath at the entrance to the village hall
- To consult with the community on how best to spend the Section 106 money on improving community facilities at the site adjacent to the Chestnut Park development
- To update the handwashing facilities at the Public Convenience
- To carry out a consultation on Highways and the use of the playing field.

Any Questions

Appendix 2

Accounts

The accounts are available for inspection with notice and by appointment with the Clerk. The books are here to night if any one wishes to view them. I will give you a very brief overview of the main points.

Kingswood Parish Council has set the amount of Local council tax 2018/19 for Kingswood at £91,089 Based on a property in band D this is an increase of £1.18 per month. This equates to a 4.82% increase on 2017/18 precept but due to changes in the tax base does not generate an increase for house holders.

Receipts for 2017/18 are £91062.64 and expenditure is £98000.29. The parish council at the end of March held. £121,907.77 in the bank. This includes the amount of £96,931 received to manage the land transferred to the parish council. This money is earmarked for that purpose and cannot be used for any other reason. The general reserve held for 2018/19 is £24,976.

The accounts are available for inspection with notice and by appointment with the Clerk. The books are here to night if any one wishes to view them. If anyone has any general questions I will be available to answer questions after the meeting.

The accounts will audited in May and the final accounts approved in the May Parish Council meeting.

I confirm that the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights are as follows:
Commencing on Monday 4th June 2018 and ending on Friday 13th July 2018. The external Auditor is PKF Littlejohn and full details of the regulations in respect of the public inspection will be on the parish council website and on the notice board.

APPENDIX 3

Report on County Council Matters to Kingswood Annual Parish Meeting

30th April 2018

John Cordwell

County Council Elections, May 2017

[The Conservatives now have an overall majority on the County Council, having gained a net six seats from Labour, UKIP and independents. Liberal Democrats retained all 14 seats they held and with all the same councillors! The Conservatives took all the Cabinet places, plus a new one and took the chairmanships of all the council committees except one they can't constitutionally hold where they supported Labour.](#)

My roles on the County Council

My committee memberships remain unchanged and I continue as my group's lead member on these. I also became a member of a Highways Cabinet Panel, which monitors the awarding of the three new highways contracts. I also represent the county on various outside bodies.

County Council Budget 2018/19

The council has had to absorb a continuing year on year reduction in Government revenue support grant (RSG). By the end of the present five-year comprehensive spending review period in 2019/20 RSG will have reduced by 84%. In the Government's financial settlement, the County Council was accepted as a 100% business rates retention pilot. This also means it gets no RSG this year.

At the February budget meeting the Council took up half the extra increase that is now being permitted without a referendum, adding 0.5% to council tax on top of the 1.99% previously proposed. Most of the extra money raised through this and other changes would enable an additional £5M funding for Children & Families following the highly critical Ofsted inspection. To this must be added the 2% permitted by Government specifically to fund Adult Social Care, giving a total council tax increase of 4.49%.

Several amendments were proposed to the budget by the Liberal Democrat group and also by the Labour & Green alliance. These were in part accepted but did not alter the final revenue budget for 2018/19 of £412.90M which gives a Band D precept of £1,232.21, an increase of £52.95 over 2017/18.

The money allocated to councillors to recommend for use in their individual divisions for the coming year is £20k for Highways Local (following a successful Lib Dem amendment to increase it from a proposed £10k: last year it was £30k) and £10k for a new Growing our Communities fund which replaces the previous £5k Children's Activity Fund.

For Public Rights of Way my group had asked for an extra officer to tackle the large backlog of requests for definitive map modification orders. The administration agreed to look at this. The 2026 cut-off date for using historical evidence will increase the number of applications.

Bids for a £300k project on domestic abuse focusing on young people who have either witnessed or been victims, and £200k for the expanding of the self-harm hotline for vulnerable people were not agreed but the administration said that it will carry out an in-depth review using a scrutiny committee and report back in September. A bid to reinstate a £32k cut in mental health support was not supported.

A £50k per year grant to each district council to support youth work, following the cutback in county provision, has ended after 3 years. The administration was not prepared to continue it.

Highway Contracts

A post-election mind-change by the Conservatives meant the Amey contract has not been extended beyond April 2019.

There will now to be three contracts dealing with different highways aspects:

Term Maintenance Contract for seven years starting next April to deliver routine highways maintenance. Five contractors have been shortlisted. Amey did not put in a bid.

Final tenders are to be submitted in July and a decision made in September this year.

Structural Maintenance Contract a two-year contract to deliver roads resurfacing work, which Tarmac won and has now started. It has now been agreed that they will also take over all road patching work with immediate effect.

Professional Services Contract to support council staff in specialised detail design work such as on bridges, geotechnical (landslips), drainage schemes as well as to provide design and project management support for major schemes.

This will mean that some services, involving around 46 staff, will return to be delivered in-house. Public rights of way staff have already transferred back.

Road Safety

Shortly before last year's county budget meeting the Police and Crime Commissioner withdrew the contract for NDORS driver retraining from the Road Safety Partnership. An emergency change protected the road safety budget for a year. A review during the year has

led to a cutback in staff previously used for road safety educational work and road safety being restricted to statutory requirements. In 2017 the Stroud district area had its lowest number of road casualties ever and no fatalities.

Ofsted inspection of the County Council's Children's Services

An inspection was carried out last spring, but the findings not published until after the County Council and Parliamentary elections. It found that overall the children's services were inadequate. The experiences and progress of care leavers required improvement and leadership, management and governance were inadequate. Several children's services senior managers left the council. The former cabinet member with this area of responsibility did not stand for re-election in May. Ofsted required the council to submit an Improvement Plan addressing the recommendations and findings of their report by 19th September. The Plan was agreed by the Cabinet on 18th September!

_____ In the latest visit, Ofsted inspectors saw some recent improvements, but said children in need of help and protection in Gloucestershire continue to experience delay at every point of their involvement with children's services.

Motions at County Council meetings during the year

Around twenty motions have come before the council in the last twelve months. At last September's council meeting the Conservatives appeared to filibuster, preventing some motions being discussed. At the meeting this March they used their majority to push through amendments that greatly diluted the wording of most of the motions. For example, a Green/Lib Dem motion that called on the council to phase out the use of unnecessary single use plastic products in all its buildings and at council events by January 2019 and to end the council's purchase and procurement of single use plastics was amended to put January 2019 back to "by 2020" and to only cease buying single use plastics by 2025.

Highways Local Funding

My allocation for 2017/18 included £7k kerbing and carriageway patching in Walk Mill Lane. I was concerned to see the number of defects still in the lane and raised this with Local Highways Manager, Paul Helbrow. It turned out he was already pursuing it.

Planning Application for bunds for clay pigeon shooting

The application came to the January meeting of the Planning Committee. It was refused on the grounds of insufficient information and lack of a clear demonstration that the proposed development could adequately secure the shooting operation safely within the site boundaries.

John Cordwell

Appendix 4

Stroud District Councillor Report for Kingswood Ward

Mark Reeves (cllr.richard.reeves@stroud.gov.uk)

Introduction

I have now reached the end of my second year as Stroud District Councillor for Kingswood Ward. Following the final go-ahead for the Chestnut Park Development in late 2016/early 2017 it does not seem like a momentous year for Kingswood however there have been more noticeable events in the District as a whole.

The Stroud District Council (SDC) Annual General Meeting was held on 18 May 2017 where the new Council Chair, Councillor Gary Powell and Vice-Chair, Councillor Jenny Miles were elected. The meeting formally confirmed that the Council will continue to be run by an alliance of Labour, Liberal-Democrat and Green Councillors under the leadership of Steve Lydon (Labour). The Conservative Party remained the largest single group on the Council.

All Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs were re-elected (no changes from last year) and the committee members confirmed with no change from last year.

Unfortunately in January 2018 Steve Lydon had to step down as Leader of the Council due to ill health. Councillor Doina Cornell was proposed for the role and accepted without a vote with no other candidates being proposed.

The key posts are therefore:

- Steve Lydon – Strategy and Resources Committee Chair, replaced by Doina Cornell from January 2018.
- Simon Pickering – Environment Committee Chair
- Mattie Ross – Housing Committee Chair
- Steve Robinson – Community Services & Licensing Committee Chair
- Tom Williams – Development Control Committee (DCC) Chair
- Nigel Studdert-Kennedy - Audit & Standards Committee (ASC) Chair

I continue to serve on the DCC and the ASC.

Three areas of Council business impacted on Kingswood over the last year:

- Local Development and Planning Applications
- Recycling and refuse collection
- Budget and Council Tax

Local Development and Planning

In early 2017, the committee met to explore why we seem to have so few planning applications referred to DCC. We will be encouraging more local referrals by clarifying call-in rules. Call-ins for planning evaluation is encouraged in order to ensure transparency in the planning process and to provide opportunity for interested parties to be heard by the committee of elected members who you can hold to account.

It is interesting that Stroud has approved applications for *three* “discount food stores” with residential space in 2017-18 for Stroud town. My voting preference tends to promote retention of industrial zoning to provide capacity for local jobs/employment however when business does not adopt these spaces it is better to redevelop for mixed retain/residential and help to relieve pressure on greenfield sites. As a planning organisation we do not choose between retailers. It will be up to the market to decide which move ahead first, or even at all.

The Penn Wood Lodge planning application for new buildings on the edge of Kingswood was referred to DCC in March 2018. I did not see any strong Kingswood opinion for or against the development however I voted with Council Officers recommendation against the application on the basis that it is not compliant with Stroud District Plan or Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan and to me the adopted plans should carry dominant weight in any decision. The vote in the end was a majority in favour of the application. I think that Pennwood Lodge is and will continue to be a good neighbour in Kingswood however I am concerned that the local plans were not given more prominence in the decision making process.

Recycling and Refuse disposal

In July 2016 a new refuse collection agent, UBICO, started operations. One of the most visible SDC developments was the November 2016 change in the refuse and recycling operations in order to increase the amount of material recycled rather than buried as landfill.

Resident recycling collections were revised to a two-weekly collection of a bottles/plastics/metals “wheeley” bin and paper/cardboard tubs plus a new weekly collection of food waste in specially provided tubs. A garden waste recycling service, using another wheeley bin, also provides a two weekly collection service from February to November but this incurs an additional cost and has not been taken up as widely as expected. This has produced another increase in recycled materials collected with a rapid local adoption of the new food waste service.

Despite some initial local problems on introduction the new service now seems to be working, **however your views are welcome.**

The Environment Committee meetings in mid 2017 identified that the Recycling campaign for Stroud District proceeds well however it was noted that the forecast for the environment committee's budget showed a net overspend.. In brief, while the new system has been well received and the results are the best in the County it is well over budget. The original assumptions used by Ubico to estimate the costs appear incorrect and communication with Ubico to discuss the contract proved difficult. Part of the problem lies in the reduced prices paid on the world market for raw materials produced by the scheme.

Budget and Council Tax

A significant issue at the start of 2017 was the decision by the controlling coalition on the Council to spend more on public housing stock in the next four years, exhausting the reserve funds by 2020, making maximum advantage of annual council tax rises and using some general funds available for housing stock (capital) expenditure.

While a desire to increase housing stock spending to accommodate the Stroud District waiting list is understandable and there were elements of the total budget which were laudable (eg investment in revenue/jobs generating business-parks and the canal restoration project), the Conservative (opposition) group voted against the overall capital budget plan on the basis that by 2020 all funding sources would be exhausted and the sources for subsequent spending is unclear. Ongoing close monitoring of spending is required.

In July/August 2017 it was announced that Stroud District Council will be seeking to balance the emerging hole in its finances from 2021 when reserves will have been used up.

This will have a substantial effect on Council services including a reduction in council staffing levels. An initial phase in 2017 was to not fill posts open for the previous six months. The areas affected include Finance, Legal, Human Resources, Asset Management, Elections, Land Charges, Regeneration, Community Facilities, Environmental Health and Planning Strategy. Following on from this into 2018 there will be restructuring affecting Customer Services, Community Services, Public Spaces, Finance, Planning Strategy (Regeneration) and the Museum in the Park. Further phases will follow with an objective being around 20% reduction in the workforce over 4 years.

In early 2018 during the SDC Council meeting the capital programme and medium term financial plan were debated at length. The Conservative opposition proposed an alternative

budget plan. It involved a £2 million reduction in capital spend on housing to be replaced by (among other things):

- £1 million spent on homelessness reduction
- Electric vehicle incentive schemes
- Discretionary spending scheme for councillors
- Removal of plans for town centre parking charges
- Retention of some money in the general fund to “future proof” against uncertainty in future years.

The amendment was not accepted and the original budget plan voted through by majority.

The council tax levels for 2018/19 were voted through by majority following debate.

One point of interest is that in late 2017, SDC agreed to be part of the 100% Business Rate Retention Pilot. The Council agrees to be part of the Gloucestershire bid for business rate pilot status for 2018/19 whereby the Council retains local business tax but forgoes some central government grants.

Holding to account

The Audit and Standards Committee role is to hold SDC to account in following its legal and procedural requirements. We are trying as a committee to be more active in this role particularly with respect to risk mitigation and the effects of the coming reduction in staff levels on required levels of service.

For example in July 2017 the Procurement Review (PR) 2017/18 was debated. This is intended to consider the actions required to further improve the Council’s performance in relation to adherence to procurement procedures in contract placement and value for money in contract management. This theme will be followed up in the coming months with Key Performance Indicators promised by Council Officers.

In October 2017 there was review of Stroud District Council operating procedures in the area of procurement contract placement, contract enforcement and value for money. This is an area that we will increasingly challenge as we move into an era of squeezed spending and possible limits on recruitment at the Council.

In February 2018 the Audit and Standard Committee addressed an update report on risk management prompting a discussion on how the list of risks would be mitigated i.e. risks are listed but no concrete management plan exists for most of them. It was decided that the category of each risk would be reviewed by officers before every ASC meeting and that those where an acceptable improvement has not been made would result in the chair of the committee being asked to attend the ASC meeting to discuss.

Stroud Subscription rooms

During the latter months of 2017 a significant topic of discussion in Council was the fate of the Stroud subscription rooms in the centre of the town. This facility costs Stroud District a significant sum of money to run every year and a cross-chamber "Task and Finish Group" was set-up over a year ago to consider options on the future with a view to saving money while still retaining the public amenity. A draft report from this Group was available in November 2017 with an SDC meeting the same month to consider the outcome and ask questions about the decision making process and the conclusion with a routine Strategy and Resources Group meeting in December to make a decision on the report.

The conclusion of this Group was to sell the freehold ownership of the Subscription Rooms to a private company who would in turn guarantee ongoing public access to the rooms for arts and social events. This conclusion was unpopular in Stroud with many Council and public voices raised against loss of ownership of the facility.

It was announced in December 2017 that the decision of the "Task and Finish Group" set up to consider the way forward would not be adopted. The Subscription Rooms will now be retained in public ownership and a new leasing arrangement sought to minimise cost going forward. In my opinion this is a good decision. This is a community asset which the Council should be able to manage as effectively as a private organisation purchasing it.