



MANNINGTREE TOWN COUNCIL

APPROVED

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting
held in the Community Room on
Monday 13th February, 2017 at 7.30 p.m.**

Present: Cllr. M. Morsley (Chair) Cllr. R. Stocks
Cllr. P. Hughes-Stanton Cllr. J. Charlesworth
Cllr. M. Taylor Cllr. L. Lay-Flurrie
Cllr. H. Jones

In attendance: District Cllr. A. Coley County Cllr. C. Guglielmi
Mrs. L. Djuve-Wood (Clerk) 3 members of the public

1) Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Public Participation Session

There were three members of the public present. There was an overall view that it would be a tragedy for the town to lose the blue setts as they are such an important piece of Manningtree's history. One member of the public was outraged that they had been given little to no warning about the planned resurfacing and that the public had not been consulted about the fact that the blue setts were to be removed. It was pointed out that as the road is within a conservation area it should be treated as such in the same way any listed building would have been treated. The blue setts are an architectural detail within the road and need to be preserved as they are an important part of what makes the town distinct.

4) To discuss the planned resurfacing of South Street

Cllr. Guglielmi explained the reasons behind why ECC feels it is necessary to remove the blue setts, the main issue being the cost involved in retaining them. He pointed out that the road is in great need of attention and that many of the blue setts have already gone, particularly in areas where utility companies have previously dug up the road. ECC's budget is stretched and as new blue setts are no longer readily available they will have to be specially made which will prove very costly.

He went on to say that whereas the blue setts are protected under the Conservation Area Management Plan, having consulted with TDC the view of both ECC and TDC is that on balance the need to resurface the road is greater than preserving the blue setts. South Street is in such a bad state that it is necessary to scrape the entire surface. With the need to comply with both environmental and financial regulations all the scraped material will have to be recycled on the road and cannot be transported elsewhere to be recycled or stored.

He also noted that retaining the blue setts will increase the cost of the project and make for a longer job with more inconvenience to residents. If the job becomes too costly and too complicated there is a real risk that ECC will cancel the resurfacing work in its entirety.

Finally, Cllr. Guglielmi stated that the reason there had been no consultation period with the town council in advance of the project was that the resurfacing has been scheduled to take place within this financial year giving ECC only until the end of March to complete the job. In addition, due to the cost of moving the heavy machinery around the work needs to fit in with other resurfacing jobs in the surrounding area.

Whereas the work was due to start this week it has now been postponed to the middle of March to allow the town council to air its views.

Cllr. Charlesworth stated that ECC's decision seems to have been made on the back of mainly hypothetical answers to whether or not it is feasible for the blue setts to be retained or not. The town council has not been provided with any actual detailed costing of retaining the blue setts versus not retaining them. The councillors are not necessarily asking for new blue setts to be purchased, but they have not even been given an option to have the existing setts removed for them to be reinstated after the

scraping of the road has been completed.

Most of the other councillors echoed Cllr. Charlesworth views although Cllr. Morsley said that he is hugely concerned about the state of the road, the risk it poses to residents and if the council objects to the work being carried out as planned that the job will either be postponed for a long time or not completed at all.

Cllr. Hughes-Stanton provided everyone with a document showing several areas in and around South Street where there are existing blue setts and also areas where it is not clear whether there are blue setts or not underneath the tarmac.

Cllr. Lay-Flurrie suggested that perhaps the blue setts that are currently set in pavement along South Street be dug up and reused in the street itself. Another suggestion was to reduce the width of the blue setts along the street from three to two rows.

Finally it was suggested that the views of residents should also be heard which could be done either by the council issuing leaflets or by contacting the press asking them to run a story in the local paper.

RESOLVED that the clerk will e-mail the following questions to Cllr. Guglielmi for him to get answers to in time for Thursday's town council meetings:

1. What is the cost of lifting, cleaning, retaining and reusing the existing blue setts?
2. What is the cost of purchasing extra blue setts?
3. Can the job be completed without having to move the existing blue setts at all?
4. How much longer would the job take if the blue setts were to be lifted and then put back in and what would the extra cost be?

RESOLVED that the decision on how the council wishes to proceed be deferred to Thursday's planning or full council meeting.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting at 8.26 p.m.

Signed..... *Lay-Flurrie*

Dated..... *16-3-17*