

**George Town Council
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – 21ST AUGUST 2017
CONFIRMED MINUTES**

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Meeting Commenced at 5.00 pm

AUDIO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

The public is advised that it is **Council Policy** to record the proceedings of meetings of Council on digital media to assist in the preparation of minutes, and to clarify any queries relating to the Minutes that is raised during a subsequent meeting under the section “Confirmation of Minutes”.

The recording does not replace the written minutes and a transcript of the recording will not be prepared.

All meetings of the Council shall be digitally recorded as provided for by Regulation 33 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015 except for the proceedings of meetings or parts of meetings closed to the public in accordance with Regulation 15(2).

1. PRESENT

Cr Bridget Archer Mayor (Chairperson)
Cr Tim Harris (Deputy Mayor)
Cr Chris Ashley
Cr Heather Barwick
Cr Tim Parish
Cr Peter Parkes

1.1 APOLOGIES

Cr Doug Burt
Cr Greg Dawson
Cr John Glisson

1.2 IN ATTENDANCE

General Manager
Executive Officer (Governance)

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2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

2.1 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME PROCEDURE

[Refer to Minute No. 243/16. The period set aside for public question time will be at least 15 minutes. Questions given on notice will be addressed first. Once questions on notice have been addressed, persons who have registered their interest to ask a question will be called to do so in the order in which they have registered. Persons attending Council meetings will have the opportunity to register their interest to ask a question without notice prior to the commencement of the meeting. Council staff will be on hand to assist with this process.

Participants cannot ask more than 2 questions in a row with a maximum of 2 minutes per question. If a person has more than (2) questions, they will be placed at the 'end of the queue' and may, if time permits, ask their further questions once all other persons have had an opportunity to ask questions. Persons who have not registered their interest to ask a question will be given an opportunity to do so following all those who have registered. All questions must be directed to the Chairperson.

For further information on Council's Public Question Time Rules and Procedure, please refer to George Town Council Public Question Time Policy No. 18.]

Questions asked and answers provided may be summarised in the minutes of the meeting.

2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Commenced at: 5.00pm
Concluded at: 5.13pm

Mrs Wootton, Low Head

Q1. Mrs Wootton stated that she is a member of the Council's Regent Square Reference Group, set up in response to a 2012 community-backed motion calling for a proper Landscape Plan. It was instigated by the seemingly ad hoc development that had occurred on the Square without proper community consultation.

The Heritage Listing of Regent Square also calls for a proper Landscape Plan.

I make these points about the Regent Square Reference Group:

- After finally advertising for expressions of interest in March last year, the first meeting was held just before Christmas, with another in Feb and March.

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2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (CONT.)

- The terms of reference called for a 'review of the Kelly Plan', but a new plan had already been drawn up by GHD before the group met, and since then another three versions have been drawn – we've yet to see the final one. Surely there was someone employed by Council, capable of drawing up or adding changes to the very comprehensive existing Kelly Plan?
- No details of the \$150,000 playground project, the cenotaph refurbishment or other 'outside' suggestions were ever given to the group to consider.
- I believe I'm correct in saying most members of the group agreed that the first priority was drainage, and after that installation of tables, seating and perhaps a BBQ to make the whole Square and the Halls more user-friendly.

If the park were drained and seating and tables, and a BBQ added in strategic places, it would encourage people of all ages to use it in a variety of ways. Kids don't need to have formal playgrounds to have fun.

There is already an enclosed well-patronised public playground, a state of the art external play area at the CFC and a large skate park on the Square, and playgrounds in other areas have been installed and upgraded fairly recently.

ALSO – one of the features of the York Cove Redevelopment Plan was a large themed playground, which aimed to draw visitors, locals and activities back to York Cove.

I understand there is already \$150,000 budgeted for the playground on Regent Square.

Mrs Wootton asked is Council now prepared to incur further debt and spend \$300,000 (maybe more) on a Regent Square playground before the Regent Square Reference Group has met to discuss the final plan, and before there's been any consideration of the submissions on the York Cove/Windmill Point Redevelopment Plan.

The Chairperson acknowledged Mrs Wootton's statement, some of which she anticipated would be addressed by councillors in debating the issues however advised that she could not pre-empt Council's decision. The Chairperson referred the question to the General Manager for further comment

Through the Chair, the General Manager responded advising that she understood by Mrs Wootton's comments that she was not advised that there was a playground proposed for the Regent Square. The General Manager advised that the playground is on the Draft plan which is available to the Reference Group and referred to the recent invitation to the next meeting of the Reference Group. The General Manager further advised that whilst she cannot respond to Mrs Wootton's comments about her being unaware of the playground, the General Manager was intending to make everyone aware that it was a concept that has been flagged. The General Manager further advised that this is an opportunity that is a time sensitive opportunity and whilst Mrs Wootton may feel that it is about face, it is before Councillors for determination.

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2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (CONT.)

Mrs Webb, George Town

- Q1. Mrs Webb asked if the design for the playground by GHD included an autistic sensory playground.

The Chairperson responded advising that there may be some confusion with the plan by GHD and referred the question to the General Manager for comment.

The General Manager advised that there is no firm design on the playground itself however in response to Mrs Webb's question, no not at this time. The General Manager further advised that there is a plan for Regent Square which has an area set aside for a playground and when the design phase commences it will be fully inclusive of the community. Council would be open to what the community would like included in that playground and that will have some effect on the design that Council ends up with.

Mrs Rainbow, George Town

- Q1. Mrs Rainbow referred to the proposed York Cove beautification upgrade works and asked if this was going to be the same as proposed for Regent Square as Council is yet to come up with a plan and it has not been discussed or put out for public comment.

The Chairperson responded and advised there has been a number of discussions over the past few years by various groups and it was certainly something that has been raised consistently through community engagement with the strategic plan, for example. There has also been some ongoing discussion through Anglicare Communities for Children Group which has had some community engagement here in George Town around what types of things families would like to see in the community. The Chairperson also advised that Council has had some feedback around the types of things that the community would like to see and a lot of that fits in with what Mrs Wootton has identified; people are looking more for play scapes using the natural landscapes.

Mrs Rainbow stated that there was some discussion of the playground at the meetings of the Regent Square Reference Group and the Group was told it wasn't in their brief.

The Chairperson stated that as advised to the Reference Group at the time that would have to be the subject of a wider community conversation.

Mr Austin, George Town

- Q1. Mr Austin stated that he must speak against any motion to rescind the previous motion and referred to Council's current deficit and existing borrowings totalling \$1.5million. Mr Austin stated that he did not feel that Council needs this level of debt as there are other projects and facilities in the town without going into debt to create something already available. Mr Austin asked why this was not put out to public discussion beforehand and why does the Council want to change its mind on accepting or refusing this amount of money.

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2.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (CONT.)

The Chairperson responded advising that this is something that Council will need to determine however there is a view that there has been a change in circumstance that would make it reasonable to revisit the issue again.

Mr Austin stated there was something political involved as a decision had already been made and now Council is looking at changing that decision and asked why. Mr Austin referred to the draft Regent Square Master Plan and stated that there are things on the Plan that the Regent Square Reference Group has disagreed on right from the start however they are still shown on the Plan.

The Chairperson stated that she could not comment on this as she had not held any discussions other than those that Mr Austin had been privy to at the Regent Square Reference Group and would wait to be updated at the next meeting of the Group. The Chairperson stated that she intended to speak to the motion before Council and felt that the other Councillors would as well and she did not wish to pre-empt that debate.

Mr Austin commented that there is plenty of other areas within the town that need looking at before Council borrows any more money for this project.

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3. GENERAL MANAGER'S DECLARATION

I certify that with respect to all advice, information or recommendations provided to Council with this Agenda:

- the advice, information or recommendation is given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice, information or recommendation; and
- where any advice is given directly to Council by a person who does not have the required qualifications or experience, that person has obtained and taken into account in that person's general advice, the advice from an appropriately qualified or experience person.



**Justine Brooks-Bedelph
GENERAL MANAGER**

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nil.

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5. GENERAL MANAGER

246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING

REPORT AUTHOR: General Manager

REPORT DATE: 17th August 2017

FILE NO: 32.20

ATTACHMENTS: (A) Correspondence from the Treasurer – 29th September 2016
(B) Correspondence from the Department of Treasury and Finance - 4th October 2016

SUMMARY

This report is submitted to Council with a recommendation that Council reconsiders the borrowing of \$150,000 under the Accelerated Local Government Capital Project as part of the Northern Economic Stimulus Package for the purpose of the construction of the Regent Square playground area and children's play equipment.

BACKGROUND

At its ordinary meeting held on the 17th May 2017 Council resolved (Res 134/17):

Moved: Cr Dawson

Seconded: Cr Parkes

(a) That Council advises Treasury that it no longer wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus;

and

(b) That once design work and community consultation are completed in 2017/2018 Council consider funding the following recreation projects as part of its 2018/2019 budget or via grant funding opportunities as they become available;

- Regent Square playground area, stage two, children's play equipment, landscaping, recreation facilities and landscaping and infrastructure works.
- Windmill Point upgrade and associated works. Hillwood walking track and recreation area upgrade (Recreation/park area to Hillwood Recreation Ground; Stage one.
- York Cove beautification and upgrade area works.

and

(c) Council requests further information from the relevant Manager in respect to the following projects including scoping, design, costings and risk:

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246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING
(CONT.)

- Goulburn Street - cul de sac;
- Weymouth – cul de sac/recreation area;
- Lulworth - stormwater/drainage; and
- Bellingham - stage two.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Should the Council not proceed with the proposed project the following risks can be identified;

- (a) Damage to reputation - reputational risk
- (b) Loss of opportunity to take advantage of the interest free loan on offer

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 4

Strengthen the vibrancy of our towns and enhance the benefits of living in a rural setting and living close to the river and coast.

Key Objective

Upgrade parks to include outdoor recreational facilities.

Review and manage the assets and infrastructure Council currently owns in line with community needs.

Goal 5

Ensure Council listens to and understands community needs and continues to make responsible decisions on behalf of the community.

Key Objective

Consistently achieve a high standard of internal financial and governance arrangements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project approved by Treasury totals \$150,000.

The quote received to finance the loan of \$150,000 over 5 years @ 3% (as at the time of writing this report – provided by Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation) is 10 repayments to be made on a 6 monthly basis of \$15,000 each (note: this figure has been averaged out over the life of the loan). Interest payable amounts to \$12,651.25 over the 5 year loan term. Under the Northern Economic Stimulus Package the interest payable is refunded back to Council making the loan effectively interest free.

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246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING (CONT.)

OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Whilst the Department of Treasury and Finance (the Department) has been advised of Council's decision not to pursue funding through the program (in accordance with motion 134/17), recent discussion between the Department and the General Manager has indicated that the approved funding is still available should Council wish to reconsider taking advantage of an interest free loan for projects such as the Regent Square playground area and children's play equipment.

As outlined in the attached information provided by the Department, to be eligible for assistance under the Program, local government authorities will be required to demonstrate that each nominated project:

- Is in addition to the Council's approved borrowing program for the current year;
- Is part of the Council's planned infrastructure investment or is a capital project with a Council matching commitment from the 2016 Federal election, and is able to be brought forward to enable construction to commence within 12 months of the Treasurer's approval;
- Will provide Northern Tasmanian employment opportunities;
- Is procured through appropriate processes that deliver value-for-money outcomes; and
- Is to be financed through loan finance.

In addition to the above priority will be given to projects which demonstrably satisfy the majority of the above criteria and where construction can commence before 1st February 2018.

Preliminary investigation into the establishment of a playground and children's play equipment on Regent Square has indicated that construction would be ready to commence by the 1st February 2018, if not before.

A project such as the construction of the Regent Square playground area and children's play equipment is consistent with and demonstrates Council's commitment to the community and the objectives of its Strategic Plan 2016-2016.

Should Council wish to now pursue funding for this project, it is recommended that Council rescinds its previous motion 134/17 (17th May 2017) and replaces it with the following motion:

That Council advises Treasury that it wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus Package to an amount of \$150,000 for the construction of the Regent Square playground area and children's play equipment.

Note: In accordance with the requirements of r.18(2) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015 a council or committee may only overturn a decision passed at a previous meeting held since the last ordinary election by an absolute majority, in the case of the council.

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246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING
(CONT.)

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. That resolution 134/17, as follows, be rescinded:

“(a) That Council advises Treasury that it no longer wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus;

and

(b) That once design work and community consultation are completed in 2017/2018 Council consider funding the following recreation projects as part of its 2018/2019 budget or via grant funding opportunities as they become available;

- Regent Square playground area, stage two, children's play equipment, landscaping, recreation facilities and landscaping and infrastructure works.*
- Windmill Point upgrade and associated works. Hillwood walking track and recreation area upgrade (Recreation/park area to Hillwood Recreation Ground; Stage one.*
- York Cove beautification and upgrade area works.*

and

(c) Council requests further information from the relevant Manager in respect to the following projects including scoping, design, costings and risk:

- Goulburn Street - cul de sac;*
- Weymouth – cul de sac/recreation area;*
- Lulworth - stormwater/drainage; and*
- Bellingham - stage two. “*

AND

2. That Council:

Advises Treasury that it wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus Package to an amount of \$150,000 for the construction of the Regent Square playground area and children's play equipment.

Absolute majority of Council required.

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246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING
(CONT.)

DECISION

Moved: Cr Parkes

Seconded: Cr Harris

1. That resolution 134/17, as follows, be rescinded:

“(a) That Council advises Treasury that it no longer wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus;

and

(b) That once design work and community consultation are completed in 2017/2018 Council consider funding the following recreation projects as part of its 2018/2019 budget or via grant funding opportunities as they become available;

- Regent Square playground area, stage two, children’s play equipment, landscaping, recreation facilities and landscaping and infrastructure works.*
- Windmill Point upgrade and associated works. Hillwood walking track and recreation area upgrade (Recreation/park area to Hillwood Recreation Ground; Stage one.*
- York Cove beautification and upgrade area works.*

and

(d) Council requests further information from the relevant Manager in respect to the following projects including scoping, design, costings and risk:

- Goulburn Street - cul de sac;*
- Weymouth – cul de sac/recreation area;*
- Lulworth - stormwater/drainage; and*
- Bellingham - stage two. “*

AND

2. That Council:

(a) Advises Treasury that it wishes to borrow the funds approved under the Northern Economic Stimulus Package to an amount of \$150,000 for the construction of the Regent Square playground area and children’s play equipment; and

(b) A full project plan inclusive of scope, costs, risk analysis and whole of life costing to be developed prior to the commencement of the project.

Cr Burt joined the meeting at 5.40pm.

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**246/17 5.1 NORTHERN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE PROPOSED BORROWING
(CONT.)**

	For	Against		For	Against
Cr Archer	✓		Cr Burt	✓	
Cr Harris	✓		Cr Parish		✓
Cr Ashley		✓	Cr Parkes	✓	
Cr Barwick		✓			

**ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF COUNCIL WAS NOT ATTAINED
THEREFORE THE MOTION WAS LOST**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.44pm.

**Cr Bridget Archer
MAYOR**