



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

MINUTES

Council Meeting

6.00pm Monday 21 September 2020

VENUE:
Virtual Meeting

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING
6.00pm Tuesday 24 November 2020

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**MINUTES OF GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
HELD VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 6.00PM**

PRESENT: Cr Helena Kirby, Cr David Evans, Cr Joanne Gilbert, Cr Nathan Hansford, Cr Des Phelan, Cr Les Rowe, Cr Owen Sharkey (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE: Eric Braslis (CEO), Phil Josipovic (Director Infrastructure and Development), Philippa O'Sullivan (Director Corporate Services), Lisa Letic (Director Community Services), Jacquilyn Douglas (Governance and Legal Services Officer)

The Mayor made the following statement:

"Welcome everyone tonight to this Council Meeting. In light of the current Coronavirus situation, this meeting is being presented in a different way, virtually via livestream.

The Victorian Governments COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020 has introduced new mechanisms that allows for virtual Council Meetings to be held between 1 May 2020 and 2 November 2020. This ensures that Local Government decision making can continue during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The public are encouraged to watch virtual meetings through live streaming which is available on Council's website and YouTube page.

As Chair of the Meeting I give my consent for this open Council meeting to be, recorded and published online, in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

The stream will stop at the conclusion of the meeting.

Should technical issues prevent the continuation of the stream, every effort will be made to bring the steam back online as soon as possible.

A recording will be made available on Council's website following the meeting.

I will now run through the procedures to ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

In accordance with Requirement 1 of the Ministers Good Practice Guideline, I will address each Councillor individually to confirm the following:

- they can hear the proceedings;*
- they can see other Councillors in attendance;*
- they can be seen by other Councillors; and*
- they can be heard when speaking.*

If a Councillor is unable to confirm that they can hear and see the proceedings, or if they cannot be seen or heard, they will be recorded as absent in the Minutes and be ineligible to vote on Agenda items.

I will now confirm that all Councillors can be seen and heard:

- Deputy Mayor, Cr Joanne Gilbert, can you please confirm that I can be seen and heard?*
- Deputy Mayor, Cr Joanne Gilbert, can you please now confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?*
- Cr David Evans, can you please confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?*
- Cr Nathan Hansford, can you please confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?*
- Cr Helena Kirby, can you please confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?*
- Cr Des Phelan, can you please confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?*

- Cr Les Rowe, can you please confirm that you can hear and see other Councillors?

If any Councillor drops out during the meeting, they will be recorded as having left the meeting at that time and the meeting will continue as normal.

If a Councillor re-joins the meeting, I will in accordance with Requirement 1 of the Ministers Good Practice Guideline again ask the Councillor to confirm that they can hear the proceedings, see others in attendance and can be heard. Upon this confirmation it will be recorded in the minutes that the Councillor re-joined the meeting.

Councillors, if you would like to move or second a motion, please raise your hand in a manner that can be clearly seen on your computers camera.

Councillors, when voting on a matter, please also raise your hand either for or against the motion in a manner that can be clearly seen on your computers camera. Please leave your hand raised until I have declared the motion as being carried or lost.

If you wish to speak to an item during debate, please also raise your hand in a manner that can be clearly seen on your computers camera and leave your hand raised until I have asked you to speak. This will allow me, as the Mayor, to manage the debate accordingly.

When you are not speaking please ensure you are on mute.

Due to Coronavirus situation and the meeting being held virtually, any public questions submitted will be read out by the Chief Executive Officer as proxy (where appropriate).

Again due to Coronavirus situation, any public presentations and submissions received in accordance with Council's Governance Rules will be read out by myself as Mayor after the introduction of the relevant report. The maximum time limit of five minutes still applies.

Thank you."

1 OPENING DECLARATION

We the Councillors of Golden Plains Shire declare that we will undertake, on every occasion, to carry out our duties in the best interest of the community and that our conduct shall maintain the standards of the code of good governance so that we may faithfully represent and uphold the trust placed in this Council by the people of Golden Plains Shire

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council acknowledge the traditional Wadawurrung owners of the land where we meet today. Council pays its respects to Wadawurrung Elders both past and present and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe
Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 25 August 2020, the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 1 September 2020 and the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 8 September 2020 be confirmed.

CARRIED

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor made the following statement:

Tonight we have received 9 questions from 5 local residents in relation to the Inverleigh Structure Plan. As these questions relate to a decision of Council yet to be made on a matter that is on the agenda tonight, a response to the questions will be provided in writing, following Council's determination. A copy of the questions have been circulated to the Councillors. Another question was received from 1 other local resident which will now be read out and answered by the CEO.

The following public question and response was read by Eric Bralis, CEO, by proxy:

ANNE BOLITHO

Question

In view of :

1 Clause 23.1.1 (a) -(c) of the recently adopted new Governance Rules & Public Transparency Policy as mandated by the LGA reforms and particularly the words " Councillors must ' Avoid - all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest' " and

2 C87's growth forecasts of the significant availability of new land and property for sale in Inverleigh in the life of the Plan

Q: Will the changed policy potentially give rise to conflicts of interest for any councillors who are property developers or estate agents who may benefit from the adoption of C87 in future years?

Response

The Local Government Act provides the provisions for Conflict of Interest. It is the individual responsibility of each Councillor and officer to identify and disclose any conflict of interest they have.

Our Councillors and officers take this responsibility seriously and undergo training to assist them in recognising and declaring conflicts.

7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To present Council with written records of Assembly of Councillors in accordance with section 80A of the Local Government Act 1989 from 26 August 2020 to 20 September 2020.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Nathan Hansford

Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council notes the Assembly of Councillors Record from 26 August 2020 to 20 September 2020 as attached.

CARRIED

7.2 DELEGATES REPORT - 25 AUGUST 2020 TO 20 SEPTEMBER 2020**Cr Owen Sharkey**

28 August	G21 Board virtual meeting
30 August	Bannockburn Soccer Club presentation
3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
4 September	CHCV Mayor's/CEO's virtual meeting
8 September	Golden Plains Shire Council Audit & Risk Committee virtual meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
9 September	Virtual meeting with Mohamed Elrafihi from The Hon. Ben Carroll MP
10 September	Goldfields World Heritage Bid virtual meeting
11 September	2020 MAV Representatives virtual forum
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting
18 September	G21 Board virtual meeting

Cr David Evans

3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
4 September	Rural and Peri Urban Advisory Committee virtual meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting

Cr Les Rowe

3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
8 September	Golden Plains Shire Council Audit & Risk Committee virtual meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting

Cr Helena Kirby

26 August	G21 Arts, Heritage & Culture Pillar virtual meeting
26 August	Rokewood Recreation Reserve virtual meeting
3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
10 September	Goldfields World Heritage Bid virtual meeting
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting

Cr Nathan Hansford

3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
4 September	MAV Board virtual meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
10 September	Goldfields World Heritage Bid virtual meeting
14 September	MAV Workcare Board virtual meeting
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting

Cr Des Phelan

3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
8 September	Council Meeting

Cr Joanne Gilbert

3 September	CEO Performance Review meeting
8 September	Council Meeting
15 September	Councillor Briefing virtual meeting

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans
 Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council receive and note the Delegates Report – 25 August 2020 to 20 September 2020.

.CARRIED

7.3 P20-076 1805 ROKEWOOD-SHELFORD ROAD, ROKEWOOD (THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND FOR A SERVICE STATION)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report relates to a planning permit application for the use and development of the land for a service station, access to a road zone category 1 and signage at 1805 Rokewood-Shelford Road, Rokewood. The application has been referred to a Council meeting for determination because there are objections to the application. This report provides a background to the application and a summary of the relevant planning considerations, Councillors have been provided with a full copy of the application, objections and submissions of support for consideration prior to making a decision.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Nathan Hansford

Seconded: Cr David Evans

That Council resolves to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the Use and development of the land for a service station, creation of access to a Road Zone Category 1 and business identification sign subject to the conditions attached to this report.

CARRIED

7.4 AMENDMENT C87GPLA (INVERLEIGH STRUCTURE PLAN) - RECEIPT OF PANEL REPORT AND ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Amendment C87gpla replaces the Inverleigh Structure Plan Review 2005 with the Inverleigh Structure Plan 2019 in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.

This report invites Councillors to consider the recommendations from a Panel Report dated 28 August 2020, prepared in relation to Amendment C87gpla. A resolution is required before the Amendment can be sent to the Minister for Planning for Approval.

MOTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council defers this item, until the new Councillors are sworn in, three months from now.

LOST

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Des Phelan

Seconded: Cr Joanne Gilbert

That Council:

1. Receive the Panel Report for Amendment C87gpla noting the recommendations contained within.
2. Amend and adopt the Inverleigh Structure Plan 2019 as shown in Attachment 1, in accordance with the recommendations of the Panel as follows:
 - Abandon the exhibited changes to Clause 21.07-5 (Inverleigh).
 - Amend Clause 11.03-6L consistent with Council's final version of the Clause (with the exception of the 'Bushfire management strategies').
 - Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.08 (Background documents) to include reference to the 'Inverleigh Structure Plan Review (Golden Plains Shire, 2019)' and delete reference to the 'Inverleigh Structure Plan Review (Connell Wagner, 2005)' consistent with Council's final version of the Clause.
3. Adopt Amendment C87gpla as shown in Attachment 2, in accordance with the recommendations of the Panel Report.
4. Request the Minister for Planning to approve Amendment C87gpla in accordance with Section 31(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

CARRIED

7.5 AMENDMENT C93GPLA - REVISED LAND SUBJECT TO INUNDATION OVERLAY - BATESFORD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Amendment has been made at the request of the Ramsey Property Group who seek to amend the Golden Plains Planning Scheme to reduce the extent of the LSIO for an area of land adjacent to the Moorabool River, and a nearby tributary in Batesford (Riverstone Estate). Recent earthworks onsite have altered the floodplain, rendering the current extent of the LSIO as outdated.

The preparation of the Amendment has been undertaken in consultation with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) who support the proposed amendment. The Amendment is proposed to follow a fast track process in accordance with section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Section 20(4) of the Act enables the Minister for Planning to amend a planning scheme with exemption from notice requirements.

The Amendment seeks to amend the LSIO mapping in a particular area and will not make any changes to the ordinance. The formal planning scheme maps are currently being prepared by DELWP. It is anticipated they will be available to include as an attachment prior to the September Council meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council resolves to request the Minister for Planning to prepare, adopt and approve Amendment C93gpla without notice under section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

CARRIED

7.6 AUTHORISED STREET TREE GUIDE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Approved Street Tree Guide has been developed to aide Council staff, residents and developers in selecting suitable street trees. Species included in the guide provide a range of options to suit locations and conditions across Golden Plains Shire.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe

Seconded: Cr Nathan Hansford

That Council note the development of the Approved Street Tree Guide.

CARRIED

7.7 GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT - PART 1**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the LGA), Council must prepare and adopt an Annual Report every financial year. The majority of reporting requirements for the 2019-20 year have been completed and the Annual Report – Part 1 is presented to the Golden Plains Shire Council of 2019-20 for endorsement.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council:

1. Endorse the Golden Plains Shire Council 2019-20 Annual Report - Part 1.
2. Note that the final version of the Golden Plains Shire Council 2019-20 Annual Report, accompanied by the audited Financial Statements, will be presented to the November Council meeting for adoption.

CARRIED

7.8 REVIEW OF INSTRUMENT OF APPOINTMENT AND AUTHORISATION - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appoints the majority of authorised officers under Council's delegation to the CEO. However, the appointment of authorised officers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* cannot be delegated and must be made through resolution of Council.

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Instrument) was last reviewed and adopted by Council in July 2020.

A review of that instrument has now been completed and specifically updated to reflect the successful recruitment and appointment of a new Statutory Town Planner.

It is recommended that Council consider and adopt the revised the Instrument, as shown at Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Les Rowe

That Council in the exercise of the powers conferred by s313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation ('the instrument'), resolves that:

1. The members of Council staff referred to in the instrument as shown in Attachment 1 be appointed and authorised as set out in the instrument.
2. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to execute the instrument by affixing the common seal in accordance with Councils Governance Rules of 2020, Council Meeting Procedures & Common Seal.
3. The instrument comes into force immediately upon execution and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.
4. The previous instrument dated 28 July 2020 is revoked.

CARRIED

7.9 GOVERNANCE RULES - CONSIDERATION OF REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its 25 August 2020 Council Meeting Council adopted the Governance Rules (including Public Participation in Council Meetings Policy and Election Period Policy). As part of that resolution, Council required a report back to the 21 September 2020 Council Meeting to consider a further review of the Governance Rules.

Following the extensive review process undertaken prior to adoption of the Governance Rules in August 2020, it is not considered by officers that any changes to the Governance Rules are required and therefore, it is recommended that Council do not proceed with a review at this time.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), a formal process is required to review the Governance Rules, including review of the documents, development of a new draft version, Council resolution to commence public consultation, undertake public consultation, review and consideration of any public submissions received, development of final version and final adoption by Council.

If Council does however, decide to undertake an early review of the Governance Rules then this should be deferred until February 2021. Due to the upcoming Council Election Period and as in accordance with Councils Election Period Policy, from the 22 September 2020 to 24 October 2020 (Election Period) public consultation is limited to only where necessary to facilitate the day to day business of Council and should not commence on any contentious or politically sensitive matter. This impacts a review of the Governance Rules given public consultation is required under the Act. Deferral until February 2021 would also allow the new Council to first complete meeting procedure training and hold at least two Council Meetings to familiarise themselves with the Governance Rules before undertaking a review, noting that historically Council has not held a Council Meeting in January.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Nathan Hansford

That Council:

1. Note the Council Resolution of 25 August 2020 that required a report back to the 21 September 2020 Council Meeting to consider a further review of the Governance Rules.
2. Do not proceed with a review of the Governance Rules at this time.

[CARRIED]

7.10 FINANCE QUARTER FOUR REPORT**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As at 30 June 2020, the Income Statement reports total operating revenue of \$45.4m and total operating expenditure of \$40.7m, which results in a year to date surplus of \$4.7m. This is \$2.2m favourable compared to the original budget, and \$0.5m favourable to the revised budget.

The Capital Works Statement indicates total capital works expenditure of \$21.4m, which is \$2.7m above the original budget, and \$7.3m below the revised budget.

The Finance Report for quarter four was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at the 8 September 2020 meeting to note.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr David Evans

Seconded: Cr Helena Kirby

That Council note the Quarterly Finance Report for the 12 months ended 30 June 2020.

CARRIED

7.11 IN-PRINCIPLE PERFORMANCE STATEMENT AND IN-PRINCIPLE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for Council to note the Audit and Risk Committee approved in principle the Performance Statement and Financial Statements as attached, and two Councillors certified these statements in accordance with Section 132 of the Local Government Act (1989).

Due to the tight timeline in approving the 'in principle' Performance Statement and 'in principle' Financial Statements following completion of the audit, it is necessary to delegate authority to the Audit and Risk Committee to approve the Statements and to authorise the two Councillor representatives of the Committee to certify them. Council delegated this approval at the 28 July 2020 Council meeting.

Two issues are impacting the Performance Statement and Financial Statements this year:

- Anticipated delay in the audit process due to COVID-19 impacts – the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) have advised their sign-off will be later than normal; and
- Council election resulting in no Council meeting in October.

Timing for the signed Report and Audit Certificate to be with the Minister has been extended this year due to impacts from COVID-19 causing delays in the audit process, with the timeline extended from 30 September to 30 November 2020.

The Performance Statement and Financial Statements can be approved 'in principle', being approval of the statements subject to VAGO clearance and no material changes to the accounts are presented, which is consistent with the approach adopted in prior years and also by other Councils. Any material changes require approval from the Audit and Risk Committee.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe

Seconded: Cr David Evans

That Council note:

1. The Audit and Risk Committee having delegated power to act, and in accordance with Section 132 of the Local Government Act (1989), approved in principle the Performance Statement and Financial Statements, and submit the statements to the auditor for reporting on the audit.
2. That due to External Audit's positive outcomes in the Management letter, the Audit and Risk Committee recommended the 2019/20 financial statements to be certified.
3. As authorised by Council, the Mayor and Cr Rowe, as Council representatives of the Audit and Risk Committee, certified the Performance Statement and Financial Statements.
4. The attached 2019/20 financial and performance statements, and
5. The delay with the external audit process as advised by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) due to COVID-19

[CARRIED]

7.12 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT - 8 SEPTEMBER 2020**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is being submitted to Council to provide a summary of business considered at the 8 September 2020 meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe
Seconded: Cr Joanne Gilbert

That Council receive the Audit & Risk Committee report from the meeting of 8 September 2020.

[CARRIED

7.13 RESERVE ROAD ROKEWOOD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT - TENDER GPSC-RFT-05-2020**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Golden Plains Shire Council wishes to engage suitably qualified and experienced contractors for the Reserve Road Bridge replacement. This replacement is fully funded via an Australian Government Grant under the Local Roads & Community Infrastructure program (LRCI).

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Helena Kirby
Seconded: Cr Nathan Hansford

That Council:

1. Resolves to award Tender GPSC-RFT-05-2020 to construct the Reserve Road Bridge Replacement, Rokewood to Begbies Contracting for the sum of \$393,583.86 (*exclusive of GST*).
2. Note that the earthworks associated with road approaches up to and including the abutments, are to be carried out by Council's in house works team, as separable works additional to the contract sum.
3. Note that any unspent funds from the approved Local Roads and Community Infrastructure grant for this project, will be reallocated to the Meredith – Shelford Road widening project, as per Council resolution of 28 July 2020.

CARRIED

7.14 OUTGOING MAYORAL AND END OF COUNCIL TERM SPEECHES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2019 – 2020 Mayor to provide an overview of his term of Mayor, along with all Councillors reflecting on their 4 year Council term.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Joanne Gilbert

Seconded: Cr Les Rowe

That Council note the outgoing Mayoral speech from Cr Owen Sharkey, Mayor 2019 – 2020 and the speeches of Councillors on their 4 year Council term

.CARRIED

7.15 RECOGNITION OF RETIRING COUNCILLORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To acknowledge the service to the community of retiring Councillors, Phelan and Evans, and allow each Councillor a few minutes to publically reflect on their time in public office.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Joanne Gilbert

Seconded: Cr Les Rowe

That Council recognise and acknowledge the commitment and achievements of retiring Councillors Phelan and Evans for their term on Council.

CARRIED

The following statement was ready by Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey.

“Good Evening

Welcome to Country

I would like to acknowledge the Wadawurrung [Wuddah-wah-rung] people as traditional custodians of this land, and their elders; past, present and emerging.

First, it's truly been an honour to serve as the Mayor of Golden Plains Shire this year and I would like to thank my Councillor colleagues for your confidence in electing me and for the opportunity to serve another year as Mayor.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Cr Joanne Gilbert for again taking up the position of Deputy Mayor of Golden Plains. Joanne, I have greatly valued your support and advice this year and we all appreciate your leadership in Council and service to the community as a councillor and the Deputy Mayor.

And most importantly, I'd like to sincerely thank my family and friends for their support this past year and the whole Council term. To my wife, Julie, and our three beautiful daughters, I greatly appreciate and value your love and encouragement this year – and every year.

It's a tradition that at the end of the Council year, the outgoing Mayor delivers a speech at the final meeting. Certainly, it's been a busy 12 months and there have been several important highlights for me, Council and the Shire this year including:

The opening of Stage One of the Bannockburn Heart;

Serving as the Chair of the Central Highlands Council Victoria;

*The completion of the Golden Plains Civic Centre and the move to the new Council Chamber; and
The culmination of the rating review that was four years in the making, to implement a fairer, more balanced rating system across the Shire.*

This year, we also had a near record year for securing government investment in Golden Plains and we delivered six significant road projects, built three new bridges and completed seven major capital works.

Looking through the Annual Report that we will discuss tonight, there's a really exciting list of highlights and achievements that Council ticked off this year. But this is not what has defined Council this year and will not be why I, or any of us, will always remember 2020. While all these highlights are indeed valuable for the Shire and our communities, this year was unlike any other

year we have lived. This year has been defined by the COVID-19 pandemic – in every aspect of our lives, and that’s also true for Council.

The commitment and dedication of the Council staff at all levels to keep serving the community throughout restrictions and significant changes to operations has been impressive. All Council’s essential services continued through the entire crisis - from maternal health appointments for newborn babies to personal homecare for the elderly, Council staff met the new challenges and swiftly adapted to all the new pandemic controls to make sure we continued to care for the most vulnerable in Golden Plains.

On behalf of Councillors and the community, I’d like to extend our appreciation to the CEO and all Council staff for their flexibility and innovation.

When we started this Council term four years ago and even when we started this year, we had no idea what lay ahead and this year, as a Council group, we met this unprecedented crisis with new initiatives to support our local residents and businesses.

Most notably, Council’s Financial Hardship Plan introduced significant rates reductions and put in place new payment plans as targeted relief for local ratepayers and businesses in financial hardship. While it may not have been what everyone expected and we understand other Councils chose a smaller rates freeze, Australians have a long history of supporting their mates when they’re down. Of caring for their neighbour who may have lost their job and who genuinely need a helping hand to get back on track. Here in Golden Plains, we can be proud that we took a unique path that has much greater value and meaning for those need it the most. It was a move that appropriately reflected Council’s Be Kind movement, encouraging the people of Golden Plains to care for themselves and their neighbours as we face these uncertain times.

Of course, it wasn’t just Council who followed this path – so many individuals and groups embraced the idea in their own backyards and really grew Be Kind into a movement. If I take one memory from this year as Mayor, it will be our local communities coming together to support each other during a very challenging time.

There’s too many wonderful stories to mention them all but, as a sample...

The resilience of local businesses to keep serving their customers – and the local residents who supported them to keep the doors open. Who will be ready when they reopen to build their businesses back up. The sporting and community clubs who couldn’t operate as usual but who embraced new technology and old-fashioned channels to keep our communities connected. The schools in our Shire who made the leap to remote learning while caring for the education and welfare of every student and supporting local families to make get through this together. The new programs and initiatives that were developed by our creative and caring residents to make life better for those struggling, such many local primary school students who wrote heart-warming postcards with messages of hope to isolated and elderly residents. All the local children who posted rainbows in their windows and teddy bears at their front door, just to brighten the spirits of someone walking or driving by and the community groups who support the vulnerable in their villages and towns such as the Linton Progress Association’s food pantry and the Smythesdale IGA who home-delivered care packages.

To every local person who picked up groceries for a friend or checked up on a neighbour who lives alone or made a phone call to someone who was isolated.

I know people say that it takes a village to raise a child but it’s that same village that cares for its residents and neighbours for their whole life and we are fortunate in Golden Plains Shire to have 56 wonderful villages and townships full of people who did just that. I’m sure that many of our residents feel that same pride and gratitude I feel to live here, to be a part of Golden Plains and there was no time when the value of community was more evident than during this crisis.

Again, on behalf of Council and our whole community, thank you to everyone who cared and made a difference when it matters.

Of course, we know that the COVID-19 pandemic isn't over. That in the years ahead, we will continue to support and lean on each other as we recover from this once-in-a-lifetime event. There are sure to be more challenges ahead but it is of great comfort that we live in a special corner of the world and we have a very bright future in Golden Plains Shire. Certainly, this past year has been unique and one we will all remember.

Finally, tonight, I would again like to thank the Councillors, CEO and Council team, my family and friends, and the people of Golden Plains Shire for all the support over the past two years. It has indeed been a great privilege and an honour to serve as the Mayor of Golden Plains and as a Councillor for the past four years.

Thank you."

8 NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

9 PETITIONS

Nil

10 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR DECISION

At 9:02 pm, Cr Des Phelan left the meeting.

At 9:05 pm, Cr Des Phelan returned to the meeting.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe

Seconded: Cr Nathan Hansford

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020:

10.1 Chief Executive Officer Performance Review

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1)f - of the Local Government Act 2020, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Les Rowe
Seconded: Cr Des Phelan

That Council moves out of Closed Council into Open Council.

CARRIED

The Meeting closed at 9.10pm

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Council Meeting held on 24 November 2020.

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CHAIRPERSON