

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices,
The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 9th December 2019 at 7.00 pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr J Wyatt
Cllr J Taylor
Cllr J Zarczynski (Chairman)
Cllr D Sheridan-Shaw
Cllr J Hannay
Cllr J McNally
Cllr N Macve

St Paul's Ward

Cllr R Hanratty
Cllr V Howard
Cllr R Coombs
Cllr P Carrigan
Cllr C Gilson

In attendance

Cllr P Twiss DCC/EDDC
Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
4 members of the public

PART A

19/991 The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.

19/992 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr N Hannay (personal reasons)
Cllr M Pollington (personal reasons)
Cllr C Hattle-Spence (personal reasons)
Cllr T Darrant (personal reasons)
Cllr Mike Allen EDDC
Cllr Dean Barrow EDDC
Cllr T McCollum EDDC

19/993 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest

19/994 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

None were made.

19/995 Public question time on items on the agenda

Mrs Marjorie-Ann Howe spoke regarding item 16 which she described as a brilliant idea which she hoped would receive the funding needed as it would make people in Honiton more aware and proud of their town. Her question was how many pieces of artwork is the Deputy Mayor envisaging can be provided for the £5000.00 budget sought?

The Town Clerk confirmed that 6 pieces of artwork had been costed for £5000.00 but this was only the first phase of the project with a second phase in due course.

19/996 Mayor's announcements

The Mayor confirmed that he had attended the following events:

Christmas Lights switch on – The Mayor thanked the Chamber of Commerce and the Christmas Lights Committee for all their hard work in organising the very successful event.

Honiton's Evangelical Congregational Church 248th Anniversary Service which was also attended by Cllr Colin Hattle-Spence and his wife for which the Mayor thanked Cllr Hattle-Spence.

19/997 To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11th November 2019.

A copy of the minutes of the meetings had been circulated in advance and were approved by a majority vote of 11 for with 1 abstention.

19/998 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr P Twiss presented the following report:

As we draw towards the end of due to the end of election purdah on the 13th of December this short report is historical in content, but I am always happy to answer individual questions in the interim from councillors or residents that they have before we return to 'business as usual'

My contact details are as below.

Councillor Phil Twiss, DCC member Feniton & Honiton Division

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Correspondence address during purdah;

Cllr Phil Twiss

Devon County Council

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Signed Chair

13th January 2020

Communities

The three new funding initiatives launched in May to replace the old Town & Parish funds are progressing:

The DCC **Doing What Matters** Community Grants Fund is on the DCC website at:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/economy/business-support/doing-what-matters-communities-grants-fund/>

This scheme features an intervention rate of 75% (25% match required) – offering one-off grants of between £5k to £20k to successful community project applicants.

This grant is open to legally constituted and registered as not-for-profit organisations. This includes voluntary, community and social enterprises (vcse), town and parish councils, charities and businesses. Applications can also be made by a combination of these groups working together.

From a standing start DCC have received some 30 submissions with over £150k provisionally allocated, this goes alongside an additional £55k of matched funding from bidders; clearly assisting DCC funding to go further.

Crowdfund Devon (extra funding for Devon) – details are on the Crowdfunder website: <https://welcome.crowdfunder.co.uk/crowdfund-devon/>

Set up to support community groups, start-up businesses, charities and individuals across the County to raise money from the crowd and unlock extra funding from our partners.

“If you have a project that makes an impact to your community, supports well-being, works towards a better environment, rewards innovation or supercharges business ideas, then we want to hear from you”

This leading pilot is growing and developing with Torbay Council recently requesting to join the six District Councils and D&C Police partners – for every DCC pound invested £6.13 has been added by the wider crowd – a 613% amplification!!

The third grant funding scheme is **Making the Connection** grant fund at:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/making-the-connection-grant>

The scheme provides small, one-off non-repeatable, grants of up to £300 to support community-led ideas and initiatives across Devon. Just over 50% of the fund has already been allocated to some 80 schemes covering a wide range of small community-led initiatives across the County.

Libraries

- The Summer Reading Challenge seems to go from strength to strength from when DCC started the initiative some seven years ago:

12,703 children took part in the challenge (**11,162** last year);

7,811 children completed the challenge (**6,661** last year)

1,366 children became library members in order to take part

169 young volunteers helped to deliver the challenge in 41 libraries

The resources used to deliver the Summer Reading Challenge cost **£10,390** which equates to **83 pence** per participating child.

DCC considers the Challenge to be very important to bridge the gap during the long summer school holiday and library staff collaborated with 197 primary schools to promote the Challenge (160 last year)

- Nationally, visits to libraries and book lending has been in decline. I am delighted to say that the latest data has seen Devon bucking the trend with a 4% **increase** in lending.

Community Transport

Still no 'white smoke' from the Department for Transport (DfT) on the future of Community Transport such as our very own TRIP, based in Honiton. A court case is due to start around now with the DfT in the dock over their handling of what is called Section 19 and 22 permits that differentiate between commercial and not for profit transport operators, In the meantime the message to CT providers is the usual 'keep calm and carry on'!!

South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEEG)

Devon County Council is a member of the SWEEG collaborative partnership between public sector organisations which shares information and research on use of energy and environmental issues in the built environment and I am one of three DCC representatives that sit on this Group.

The attached Annual report for 2019 won't be everyone's cup of tea, but one of the highlights of it is the benefit to DCC that this forum brings, particularly in respect of the work it does on climate change and getting DCC to a position of zero nett carbon much earlier than its previous target date of 2030. Clearly it would be excellent if other large scale employers and businesses could achieve this position too.

Cllr Twiss added that DCC has two free tree schemes currently in operation that the Council might find useful in its community. Please see details at <https://www.devonashdieback.org.uk/take-action/free-tree-schemes/> - this could work well with the Mayor's open spaces project.

At EDDC, Cllr Stuart Hughes will be holding an event at Blackdown House to mark Holocaust Memorial Day which will involve planting a tree on 27th January 2020. Cllr Twiss hoped Honiton Town Council would also arrange an event to mark the day.

Cllr Coombs raised the issue of ongoing flooding on the Dunkeswell Road near Cheney's Lane. He suggested that if the road was classed as a B road this would assist in resolving the issue. Cllr Twiss advised that there was no chance the road

would be reclassified. He has already discussed the matter with Cllr Howard and with Mike Brown from DCC Highways who will be investigating the flooding.

Cllr Hanratty accepted the Mayor's thanks in respect of the Christmas Lights switch on evening on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. He asked Cllr Twiss whether there would be any difficulty in obtaining the road closure permission for New Street/Silver Street in respect of next year's event. Cllr Twiss suggested that any application should be made in the summer and that he would support the application.

Cllr P Twiss left the meeting at 7.30pm

19/999 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

Cllr Darrant's report on the Millennium Green AGM was noted.

19/1000 Update Report

The Clerk presented the update report.

Cllr Coombs queried the recommendation to close all the HTC Lloyds Bank Accounts as the Council should be supporting local businesses. Many other towns have lost their bank branches and having the banks branches in Honiton brings in footfall to the town. There are no Unity or Nationwide branches in Honiton and the Council is sending out the wrong signal by using these banks.

Cllr Hanratty agreed that the Council should use a bank with a branch in the town.

Cllr Zarczynski advised that the Council had started using Unity Bank on the advice of the locum town clerk, Mr Nick Randle. Lloyds Bank were difficult to work with and much more time consuming. Unity Bank specialise in local government banking and since the Council has been with Unity, the Councils banking has been much easier to deal with. Lloyds Bank has not been helpful to the Council and what is important is what works best for the Council and gives the Council best value for money.

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that none of the banks had contributed to any of the town's community events as far as he was aware, and all had refused to contribute to the Christmas lights appeal.

Cllr Macve stated that having the banks in the town did bring people in.

Cllr Taylor queried the proposal as it would remove the government backed guarantee in respect of deposits.

The Town Clerk advised that the proposal was for four reasons:

- Officers had had many problems with Lloyds in respect of changing signatory details and these had still not been resolved.
- The government backed guarantee for deposits only applies to private individuals and therefore the Council's accounts are not covered by this.
- The Council will incur more bank charges if the accounts are not closed.
- As the RFO he finds Unity Bank easier to deal with in respect of management changes and day to day banking.

Cllr Taylor maintained that Councils are covered by the government backed guarantee and that the banks cannot agree to contribute to every town's Christmas lights appeal as the cost would be prohibitive. The Town Clerk agreed to look into the government backed guarantee to confirm the position.

Cllr Coombs maintained that a local bank should be used and if the Town Clerk was unhappy with the service from Lloyds, there are other banks in Honiton. He requested a recorded vote on the matter.

Cllr Zarczynski proposed to suspend the item until the January meeting to give the Town Clerk the time to obtain the information needed.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to defer the item to the Full Council meeting on the 13th January 2020.

Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Hanratty.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

19/1001 Planning Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 12th November 2019.

Members received the minutes of the Green and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the 18th November 2019

GOS 19/20 Permissive path at Woodhill View

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Deputy Town Clerk be authorised to approach EDDC to obtain clarification as to the status of the Wood Hill View footpath and to discuss possible funding of a handrail. Members of the Committee would investigate the possible costs of a handrail which they would provide to the Town Clerk as part of the current budget setting exercise.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Jason Hannay.

GOS 19/23 Lilley Walk Gate

Members **RESOLVED** by 11 votes in favour with one abstention that the Deputy Town Clerk be authorised to make further enquiries regarding the matter at Lilley Walk Gate.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Zarczynski.

GOS 19/24 Roundball Wood

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously that disclaimer notices be erected at each of the wood's three entrances to make users of the area aware of the slipping risks of the boardwalks and bridges in wet conditions and particularly in winter.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Coombs.

Note: The Town Clerk would investigate prior to erecting the signs what legal liability would be conferred onto the Council as a result.

GOS 19/25 Bench from the Glen

The Town Clerk advised that there was no room for the bench to be stored in the container at the Beehive which is being shared with Honiton Community Complex.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously that the bench should be moved from its present location and stored behind the Council's new container at the Beehive until it can be repaired.

Proposed by Cllr Coombs and seconded by Cllr Taylor.

GOS 19/26 Relocation of benches to Dowell Street

Cllr Howard spoke against the proposal as she was of the view that it was a dangerous location.

Cllr Taylor queried why the pedestrian barrier had been removed between the Lace Walk car park and Dowell Street.

It was suggested that the Dowell Street corner could have a barrier to make the area safer.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Gittisham Forge had quoted £50 to unbolt and repair the A35 bench and he has agreed to this as a management decision.

Members **RESOLVED** by 8 votes for, 3 against and 1 abstention that the benches at the A35 and the A375 be relocated to Dowell Street, subject to the installation of a barrier.

Proposed by Cllr Macve and seconded by Cllr Coombs.

19/1002 External Auditor Report

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Auditors comments for the year 2018-2019.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Gilson.

19/1003 Internal Auditor Report

The Town Clerk presented the report

Cllr Coombs queried item 5. The Town Clerk confirmed that all Councillors had been kept informed of legal costs to date and that the solicitors' client care letters had been sent to Kevin Rose. He was currently waiting for a response.

Cllr Taylor queried the need for new market cash receipt books.

Cllr Carrigan asked over what period the VAT was being reclaimed. The Town Clerk confirmed that it was from January 2019 onwards

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to note the report and the clerk's intended actions following the audit.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Zarczynski.

19/1004 Budget Planning Report

The Town Clerk presented the report.

Cllr Zarczynski reminded all Councillors to contact the Town Clerk to discuss funding for any projects considered as the budget would need to be finalised next month.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there were currently 3 projects which are being considered and these would increase the budget by £14,000.00. If the precept is to be increased, Councillors need to justify the increase. If the Council wishes to move projects forward, they need to consider what funding is required for these especially if the funding is to be carried on for 4 to 5 years, which is why the Clerk is recommending the need for a corporate plan.

Cllr Taylor noted that when the Council moved offices to the Beehive, £12,000.00 was allocated in the budget for costs involved. That £12,000.00 has remained in the

budget every year since. As such if Councillors include in the budget a one-off cost for a project, should it then be removed the following year? Otherwise the monies roll over into general reserves each year.

Cllr Zarczynski accepted the argument, but reserves are needed as there can be unexpected expenditure which cannot be included in the budget.

Cllr Taylor advised that increasing the precept by £14,000 would equate to a 5% increase and queried the need for a 5% increase in the precept as inflation is only 3.2%.

The Town Clerk confirmed that if the precept were increased by £14,000.00 this was to cover the cost of specific projects.

The report was noted.

19/1005 Meetings Calendar 2020

The Town Clerk presented the report.

Cllr Coombs queried the proposal to hold planning meetings in the Council's middle office. The recent Green and Open Spaces Committee meeting was only attended by 3 Councillors, 1 member of the public and 1 officer which is a lower attendance number than planning meetings. The small meeting room can become oppressive and he had concerns that this would give the impression that the Council did not want members of the public to attend.

Cllr Zarczynski confirmed that this was only a proposal and that it would be discussed further.

Cllr Taylor advised that it was possible to predict which planning applications were contentious, requiring the need for a bigger room.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the provisional calendar of meetings as put forward at the 9th December meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Wyatt and seconded by Cllr Jason Hannay.

19/1006 Gate to Plate Report

Cllr Taylor suggested that the resolution should allow for up to £5000.00 being proposed as a contribution towards the costs.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to allocate up to £5000.00 within the Town Council's Budget to partly fund in conjunction with EDDC a potential third Gate to Plate in 2020.

Proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Carrigan.

19/1007 Honiton Artwork report

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw presented the report and added that the project could lead to revenue possibilities in the form of tea towels, fridge magnets etc for sale.

Cllr McNally supports the proposal but queried how the figure of £5000 had been reached?

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that this had been agreed following discussions with the artist and that a breakdown of the figure could be provided.

Cllr Coombs suggested that any street map should include the whole of Honiton Parish and not just the Town Centre.

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that the map was phase 2 of the project and that Cllr Coombs was welcome to attend the next meeting with the artist to discuss this further.

Cllr Wyatt queried who would own the copyright to the posters. Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that this would be the Town Council.

Cllr Taylor queried whether planning permission would be needed for some of the proposed locations. This would be checked.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to allocate a budget of £5000.00 to enable the first phase of a Public Artworks Project around Honiton.

Proposed by Cllr McNally and seconded by Cllr Jason Hannay.

19/1008 HCC Update Report

The Town Clerk presented the report.

Cllr Zarczynski stated that he was very unhappy about the contents of the HCC AGM report and made the following points:

- The Council had agreed a settlement which was in excess of what the Council owed.
- He had hoped that a way forward had been reached to work with HCC in the future.
- The AGM report is misleading and includes selective accounting. The report accuses HTC of forcing HCC to accept an offer that they did not want to accept and labels the monies sought by HCC as a bad debt.
- HCC have use of a state-of-the-art building for a rent of £1.
- He was very disappointed and sad that the AGM report which slated HTC had been made public when HTC had done everything it could to resolve the claim regarding invoices which should have been checked years ago.

Mrs Serena Sexton who was present was given permission to respond and did so as follows:

- She was present at the meeting between HCC and HTC and both parties had agreed to move forwards.
- Further meetings were now scheduled, and she is fully committed to making the Beehive a success and to work with HTC to ensure that it has a sustainable future.

The following points were raised by Councillors:

- The Council's outstanding legal liabilities and responsibilities have been settled by the agreement reached.
- The volunteers deserve better.
- HCC needs sponsorship but the AGM report is bad for all parties and will put off third parties from helping HCC.
- What other funding avenues are HCC looking at apart from obtaining monies from HTC?
- HTC had agreed to defer HCC's payment of the insurance due until April 2020.
- The Beehive is an asset to the town.
- Did all the Board members approve the AGM report before it was published?
- The original trading company was set up under the General Power of Competence. It then became a charity on the basis that it would be able to apply for funding.
- Questions had been raised in 2014 regarding the running of the Beehive.
- HTC has no obligation to raise funds for the Beehive but will assist HCC as much as it can under the terms of the lease.
- The Localism Act prevents councils from giving subsidies to private companies.

Cllr Howard advised that she had not received a copy of the HCC AGM report.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this had been posted to her but would check this with the Administrative officers.

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that HCC's AGM had been frayed at times and passionate. HCC's members and volunteers have organised meetings to try and find a way forward and the community has started to listen. There is a crowdfunding meeting at the Beehive tomorrow. As a charity HCC will always need funding but needs to find new sources.

Members noted the report.

19/1009 Part B items

It was proposed to take item 18 into Part B of the meeting that deals with exempt business. This was **RESOLVED** by a majority vote of 10 for with 2 against.

Proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Gilson.

It was proposed to extend the meeting to 9.15pm and this was **RESOLVED** unanimously.

Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Taylor.

The meeting went into confidential session at 8.55pm

PART B

19/1010 Bailey Partnership Dispute

The report was noted.

19/1011 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm.