

**Honiton Town Council
Policy Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 26th September 2016

Members present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr S Edwards (Chairman)
Cllr D Perkins
Cllr J Taylor
Cllr J Wadsworth

St Paul's Ward

Cllr C Kolek
Cllr J Lake
Cllr A Mountjoy
Cllr K Smith

In Attendance

Cllr R Coombs
Cllr K Hopkins
Cllr G Smith

Chetna Jones - Town Clerk

Meeting commenced at 7.03pm

16/50 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr P Halse (P), Cllr Delasalle (S) and Cllr K Smith (P).

16/51 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of request for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

Cllr Perkins – Director of Beehive Companies

16/52 Confidential / exempt items

There were no items to be dealt with in this way.

The Chairman declared the meeting out of session

16/53 Public Question Time on items on the agenda

The Town Clerk confirmed there were no public question.

Part A matters for decisions

16/54 Review of format, structure and frequency of Town Council meetings to reduce the length of time of each meeting and agree recommendations to the Town council for approval

The chairman invited all members to comment on this matter. All members were in agreement to find a way to be more effective and efficient and avoid the Town Council meetings continuing beyond 10pm.

There was concern that the first part of the meeting was taking too long and that often part b matters were not being addressed until late in the evening.

It was felt that consideration should be given to no longer inviting guest speakers to give presentations, not having a police or fire report and limiting time to ward members in order to spend more time on part b matters.

The Mayor stressed that debate should be limited to 3 minutes as per Standing Orders and unless a members needed to add clarification or additional relevant information the debate should not need to be any longer and members should move to a vote.

Members were not in favour of increasing the frequency of Town Council meetings.

The Clerk reminded members of their role and the role of the Town Council and that each councillor had a duty to serve the public. The public were interested in knowing about the crime rate and safety issues. Members of the public were also keen to hear from their District and County Councillors. The Town Council also had a duty to ensure that any consultations were given their full attention and that public concerns with regards to the town were taken into consideration.

Although the agenda was the Town Clerk's responsibility to put together, members agreed that other Town Council agendas should be reviewed.

Town Council Meetings behind closed doors should be limited. The bulk of the work, if done outside of Town Council meetings through committees and working groups, would mean that the amount of time spent in making important decisions in part b would be reduced.

Members agreed that other Town Council agendas should be reviewed.

The Chairman, Cllr Edwards proposed that a sub-committee of this Committee be set up to come up with tangible suggestions for agendas working more effectively and efficiently. This was seconded by Cllr Perkins.

Concerns was raised that members that were not part of the Committee were being excluded. Members were reminded that all councillors were able to contribute in a meeting as long as they informed the committee or group beforehand. If they were unable to attend they would always be able to raise their concerns with the Chairman directly prior to the meeting.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Following the vote, Cllr Taylor, confused as to whether it was a sub-committee or working group being set up wanted to withdraw his vote.

The Committee agreed the following members to the sub-committee:
Cllr Edwards, Cllr Kolek, Cllr Perkins and Cllr Taylor.

It was agreed that all councillors will be informed and asked to provide suggestions and be informed of the date of the meeting.

16/55 Review of the Consultation on Council Tax Referendum for Parish/Town Councils including comments from County and National Associations for Local Councils.

The Chairman having reviewed the consultation paper prior to the meeting stated that many of the proposals were not applicable to the Town Council at the moment. However, going forward if prevented from increasing the precept by more than 2% the Town Council could face needing to cut back or lose services currently being delivered including giving out grants

The Chairman advised that it would be prudent for all councillors to be involved on an individual basis in addition to a general response from the Town Council.

Cllr Taylor proposed that the Town Council agrees that a few nominated councillors be asked to respond by completing the questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council, taking into account that the Town Council would not support the proposal for referendums and if imposed, the Government should confirm who would pay for the it

This was seconded by Cllr Perkins and was unanimously agreed.

Recommendation

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the Town Council agrees that a few nominated councillors be asked to respond by completing the questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council• That the Town Council would not support the proposal for referendums and if imposed, the Government should be asked to confirm who would pay for the it. |
|--|

16/56 To review and determine projects to be considered for inclusion in the 2017/18 budget

The Town Clerk confirmed that all councillors and committees have been advised to submit project proposals.

The Committee were keen to ensure the Tourist Information Service project is included in the budget in order to ensure this service is provided.

16/57 To note the Community Engagement Forum meeting notes for the meeting held on 15th September

Cllr Mountjoy confirmed that the meeting was positively received with all members engaged and keen to take part.

It was confirmed that some additional members as identified in a previous Policy meeting had responded and attended the meeting including the youth group, Community Church and Leisure East Devon.

Concern and disappointment was raised about the Community Action Group needing £2,000 to continue operating the Foodbank and that the Town Council were not in a position to help financially. Cllr Mountjoy confirmed that the Ukulele group will be donating £160.

Concern was also raised about the closure of hospital beds at Honiton Hospital.

Cllr Taylor declared an interest as a member of RD&E Trust.

16/58 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 7.42pm.