

**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 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 7.00pm (postponed from 29<sup>th</sup> February).

**Members present****St Michael's Ward**

Cllr K Hopkins  
Cllr D Perkins

**St Paul's Ward**

Cllr P Halse (Chairman)  
Cllr C Kolek  
Cllr J Lake  
Cllr A Mountjoy  
Cllr G Smith

**In Attendance**

Cllr R Coombs  
Cllr J Taylor  
Cllr J McNally

Chetna Jones – Town Clerk

*The meeting commenced at 7.02pm.*

**16/01 To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr S Edwards (P), Cllr C Melbourne (P), Cllr J Wadsworth (P), Cllr K Smith (P); (members)

**16/02 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of request for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda**

Cllr Perkins – Director of The Beehive (P)

**16/03 Confidential / exempt items**

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

*The Chairman declared the meeting out of session*

**16/04 Public Question Time on items on the agenda**

There were no public questions.

*The Chairman declared the meeting back in session*

**Part A matters for decision**

- 16/05** To agree to recommend to the Town Council at it's meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March to set up a Town Floral Display Working Group and that the group be given delegated power to define the terms of reference and ability to authorise work up to the budgeted amount.

Cllr Kolek proposed that the Policy Committee recommends that a Town Floral working group be set up to review and oversee the floral (in the broad sense) requirements and to be given delegated power to define the Terms of Reference and ability to authorise work up to the agreed budget of £6,000. This was seconded by Cllr Mountjoy and the motion was carried unanimously.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>That a Town Floral Working Group be set up to review and oversee the floral (in the broad sense) requirements and to be given delegated power to define the terms of reference and ability to authorize work up to the agreed budget of £6,000.</b>

Cllr Kolek confirmed that this was in direct response to the request by a number of local people when asked what they would like to see in their town.

**16/06 To review the Clerk’s report on the need for a [Community Engagement Forum](#) and to agree to recommend to the Town Council to set up the forum with the Terms of Reference and membership as specified in the report and any amendments proposed by the Committee.**

A copy of the Clerk’s report including draft Terms of Reference and potential membership details had been circulated in advance. Cllr Hopkins proposed that the Community Engagement Forum with the Terms of Reference and membership as specified in the report be recommended to the Town Council. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith.

Cllr Kolek asked that an amendment be included in the Terms of Reference to enable the forum to set up “sub-forums” such as a youth forum and the younger generation may find it easier to speak in this kind of arrangement. Cllr Hopkins and Cllr G Smith agreed for this amendment to be included in the Terms of Reference.

A vote was carried out and the motion was carried unanimously.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>That a Community Engagement Forum be set up with the Terms of Reference and membership as specified in the report with an amendment to include the ability to define “sub-forums”.</b>

**16/07 To review Honiton Town Council’s [Action Plan](#) and to agree to recommend that the Town Council adopts the plan and any amendments proposed by the Committee.**

A copy of the Action Plan had been circulated in advance. Cllr Perkins suggested that the Forward Plan be updated and linked accordingly.

Cllr Perkins proposed that the Action Plan be recommended to the Town Council. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith and the motion was carried unanimously.

**16/08 To agree to recommend that the Town Council submits an application for Quality Award status in the new Local Council Award Scheme.**

The Town Clerk confirmed the benefits of applying for this award and that it was envisaged that this would be a requirement to continue processing advertisement applications on behalf of EDDC. Cllr Hopkins proposed that the Policy Committee recommends that the Town Council submits an application for Quality Status. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith and the motion was carried unanimously.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>That the Town Council submits an application for Quality Award status in the new Local Council Award Scheme.</b>

**16/09 To review the [Preparation of Minutes Policy](#) and to recommend approval by the Town Council.**

A copy of the policy on Preparation of Minutes had been circulated in advance.

Concerns were raised about the questions asked by members of the public during public question time and through correspondence. Whilst this was not relevant to the policy the Town Clerk agreed that a reminder be given to all Councillors that it was their responsibility to ensure they have read the correspondence and are aware of concerns being raised by members of the public.

Concerns were also raised about the minutes not including the debate and the reasons why a decision was made. The Town Clerk confirmed that the requirement for taking minutes was to record decisions and actions and not what each individual said at the meeting.

Cllr Mountjoy proposed that the policy be recommended for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Hopkins and the motion was carried unanimously.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>That the Policy on Preparation of Minutes be approved.</b>

### **16/10 To review the Report on Sanctions and non-member participation**

Cllr Taylor declared a pecuniary interest on this matter as he was directly involved in a claim about the sanctions being unlawful and left the meeting.

A copy of the report had been previously circulated.

Concern was raised about using the word “rescind” as it could prevent the Town Council from resolving future sanctions. However it was agreed that this wording was necessary as the problem would remain if amended in any other way.

Cllr Kolek proposed the following:

- That the Policy Committee recommends to the Town Council that the resolution dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (minute ref 15/190) to approve the Code of Conduct – Sanctions report including its recommendations be rescinded, and
- That any sanctions imposed subsequently as a result of the approval of the Code of Conduct – Sanctions report be withdrawn

This was seconded by Cllr Hopkins and the motion was carried unanimously.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8.10 pm for a short comfort break and resumed at 8.14pm.*

A lengthy debate with pros and cons on each took place about:

- The merits of committee structures
- The ability for Councillors who were non-members to be able to speak and not felt they were being silenced
- Members and non-members sitting at the table and participating equally
- Working efficiently
- Trust being given to Councillors to get on with the role as a member of a committee
- The number of members on committees being limited
- De-personalising debate
- Committees doing the ground work and providing the information and recommendations to the Town Council in order that informed decisions can be made

*Cllr Kolek left the meeting towards the end of the debate.*

Cllr Hopkins proposed that the Policy Committee define their own recommendations rather than using those specified in the report. This was seconded Cllr Mountjoy and was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Perkins proposed that Councillors who are non-members of Committees must advise the Chairman prior to the meeting on which items of the agenda that they wish to speak for and be given a period of 3 minutes to speak. This was seconded by Cllr Hopkins and the motion was carried unanimously.

Cllr Mountjoy proposed that the formal right of members of the public to speak at Town Council meetings and Planning Committee meetings be extended to include the Policy Committee and Finance Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Perkins and the motion was carried unanimously.

Cllr Mountjoy proposed that Councillors who are non-members of committees, sub-committees and working groups may submit concerns and questions to the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting beforehand in order for those matters to be considered at the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Hopkins and the motion was carried unanimously.

Cllr Hopkins proposed that where there is no public right to attend and/or speak at a meeting, (where the public have been excluded – Part B), participation by a Councillor who is a non-member of the committee shall be at the discretion of the Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith and the motion was carried unanimously.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>That Councillors who are non-members of Committees must advise the Chairman prior to the meeting on which items of the agenda that they wish to speak for and be given a period of 3 minutes to speak.</b></li> <li>2. <b>That the formal right of members of the public to speak at Town Council meetings and Planning Committee meetings be extended to include the Policy Committee and Finance Committee.</b></li> <li>3. <b>That Councillors who are non-members of committees, sub-committees and working groups may submit concerns and questions to the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting beforehand in order for those matters to be considered at the meeting.</b></li> <li>4. <b>That where there is no public right to attend and/or speak at a meeting, (where the public have been excluded – Part B), participation by a Councillor who is a non-member of the committee shall be at the discretion of the Chairman.</b></li> </ol>

#### **16/11 To close the meeting**

The meeting was closed at 9.20pm.