

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee Meeting held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell street, Honiton on Wednesday 28th August 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr S Edwards (Chair)
Cllr J Taylor
Cllr P Carrigan

St Paul's Ward

Cllr V Howard
Cllr D Sheridan-Shaw
Cllr R Coombs

In attendance

Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk

PART A

POC18/1 To elect a Chair of the Policy Committee

Cllr Coombs proposed Cllr Taylor and this was seconded by Cllr Carrigan .

Cllr Howard proposed Cllr Edwards and this was seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw.

After a 3:3 vote the Chair used their casting Vote and Cllr Edwards was re-elected Chair.

POC 18/2 To elect a Vice-Chair of the Policy Committee

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw proposed Cllr Taylor and this was seconded by Cllr Howard.

There were no other nominations. Cllr Taylor was elected unanimously as Vice-Chair.

POC 18/3 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Brown sent apologies (Personal)

POC 18/4 To receive declarations of interest

No pecuniary interests were declared.

POC 18/5 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

None were made.

POC 18/6 Public question time on items on the agenda

There were no members of the public.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

POC 18/7 Honiton Town Council Standing Orders

A great deal of discussion centring on NALC's amendments to the model standing orders took place reflecting the changes to GDPR and other financial aspects.

A discussion ensued looking at who should decide whether the order of agenda items could be amended at the start of a meeting. Members agreed that the chair or Officer would normally ask if there were any objections from members to moving any agenda items forward in a meeting agenda.

It was proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw that item 1a in the Standing Orders would remain as written. The motion was passed 4:2.

Cllr Taylor raised the issue of recording the number of votes on a motion. This was part of **3 t**. He asked if we should have the number of people who have voted in a particular way included in minutes. It is currently up to the minute taker and the clerk confirmed that officers would do this as a matter of standing practice rather than include it in the Standing Orders.

Section **7 a** was discussed and it was agreed that an amendment to standing orders would be carried out **".....requires written notice by at least 50% of the sitting councillors to be given to the Proper officer....."**. This was because of an anomaly when a council does not have a full compliment of councillors.

It was agreed that when a seal is used to confirm a document that it should be recorded in the seals book. This has been added as **23 c** in the standing orders.

Standing order 25 a i and ii were discussed at some length and whether or not a room could be checked. It was noted that the key aspect of this was centred on the right to "Inspect" and that it had been included so as to protect Councillors from accusations of acting without the councils permission.

It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the amended Standing Orders should be adopted for use by Honiton Town Council. This was Proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and was unanimously agreed.

POC 18/8 To consider a new Social Media Policy

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw drew attention to the need to have a good understanding of the trouble some people have in differentiating between councillor's private lives and their council lives. It is important that all who use social media should be aware of the potential pitfalls when using social media.

It was also pointed out by the town clerk that posting to social media during a meeting could be seen in a negative way by the general public.

Councillor Edwards asked the clerk what action could be taken if a councillor posted something inappropriate. It was explained that sanctions are currently somewhat limited and that there would be a need to turn to the Council's own Code of Conduct. It would only be officers who initiate a post on the council's social accounts in an official manner. Cllr Sheridan-Shaw did point out that there could still be an issue with councillors responding in their own name as the public's perception still might be a problem.

It was agreed to add to the policy at 6.7, **“Councillors should always be mindful that they are subject to the council's code of conduct and must include a disclaimer whenever possible.”**

It was suggested that a link to the councils Social Media Policy could be put at the top of the Facebook page for people to access.

It was proposed by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and seconded by Cllr Taylor that the committee recommend to Full Council that the Social Media Policy be adopted. This was agreed unanimously.

POC 18/9 To review EDDC Gambling Policy

Cllr Edwards pointed out the legislation and comments on safeguarding within the policy. It was suggested that current licence holders should acknowledge in a positive manner the changes that have been implemented in the new policy.

Cllr Taylor suggested that there may be members who might like to make a comment on the policy. It was suggested that an email should be sent to all members drawing attention to the changes. The clerk proposed sending an email to members asking them to note the changes so members could make comment in the September meeting and then the clerk could draft a letter for consideration at the October meeting.

Cllr Coombs pointed out the number of betting shops that are present in Honiton and was amazed at the amount of advertising on the television. The comment was made that betting shops are probably going to be a dying enterprise as betting moves even more online.

It was proposed that the Town Clerk would email all councillors the link to the EDDC policy and ask them to provide comments on the policy in order that a letter be put together for sending on behalf of the full Council.

Proposed by Cllr Edwards seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and agreed unanimously.

Meeting closed at 8-30pm.