

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 12th November 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr Philip Carrigan
Cllr Jill McNally
Cllr John Taylor
Cllr John Zarczynski
Cllr S Edwards
Cllr N Macve
Cllr R Hanratty

St Paul's Ward

Cllr Henry Brown (Chairman)
Cllr Terry Darrant
Cllr Caroline Kolek
Cllr Roy Coombs
Cllr Mike Jones
Cllr D Jefferson
Cllr Duncan Sheridan-Shaw
Cllr V Howard

In attendance

Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
14 members of the public
2 members of the press
PSO R Shelton
Cllr P Twiss DCC/EDDC
Cllr D Barrow EDDC

PART A

18/750 The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.

18/751 To receive apologies for absence

None received

18/752 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

Cllr Edwards – Member of the Honiton Community Complex charity.

18/753 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

None were made.

The meeting went out of session at 7.04pm

18/754 Public question time on items on the agenda

Di Virgin spoke with regards to item 19 Community Use Building. She runs the toddler group who meet at the CUB and who have been using the CUB for over 25 years. The toddler group need a large, dry, and clear space to continue meeting in. There is nowhere else in Honiton where they could meet and if the CUB goes then the toddler group will go with it. She asked Councillors to keep the building.

Mary Brazier also spoke with regards to item 19 Community Use Building. She wanted to know why the Council did not see the CUB as a necessity and instead as a privilege which could now be taken away.

Cllr Kolek responded by saying that she agreed that the CUB was a necessity, and this was seconded by Cllr Brown.

Mary Brazier went on to confirm that she attends the toddler group with her granddaughter and that it is essential for the under-fives. It is their first taste of learning how to share, and other key skills.

Di Virgin confirmed that she has over 50 families registered and that they have 20/30 attendees each week. The families come when they can.

Zoe Allars also spoke with regards to item 19 Community Use Building. She is the chair of the 7-9 club which is a registered local charity. The club is a social club for adults with learning disabilities and they have over 60 attendees each Monday who come from a wide geographical radius including Sidmouth and Axminster. The CUB is vital to the members of the club. Without this facility there would be a huge impact. It is a valuable service which has been going for 30 years and often the club is only means of escape for members. There is no other such facility available in Honiton. The building is safe, and sound and the club is happy to help the Town Council in any way it can. If the CUB goes Honiton will lose another charity.

Cllr Kolek responded by querying whether Zoe was saying that the building only needed cosmetic work and that it was structurally sound? The building is shabby but there are funding options such as crowdfunding – e.g. DIY SOS. The Council needs to use social media to garner the support of local trades such as builders, carpenters etc. Cllr Kolek confirmed that she fully supported the user groups.

Cllr Jones thanked all the members of the public at the meeting and the user groups of the CUB for their work.

Cllr Zarczynski stated that he was sure there were no councillors at the meeting who did not believe in the necessity of the building and that the Council must maintain services and therefore find the money to keep things going. However, it is not a question of whether they want to do this but if they can afford to do it. Honiton is a small council and it will be tax payer's money which will fund the CUB if it is taken on. Honiton Town Council were able to raise £2million for the Beehive – could they do the same over at the CUB? Rather than putting a sticking plaster on should the building be demolished and rebuilt? He understood why the user groups could not use the Beehive and fully supports and admires the volunteers.

Cllr Kolek advised that with a growing population of over 12,000, why should the Council be restricted to one building. Why can Honiton not have two community buildings?

Cllr McNally advised that whilst all wanted the same thing, the Council had to look at the finance and this is sometimes unpopular. It is not enough to look at need, you also have to look at the costs.

Ken Smith spoke about with regards to item 19 Community Use Building. He used to be the chair of the 7-9 club and confirmed that the users adored it and it would be a massive loss if it stopped. There is nothing in Honiton to replace it. The CUB is very important to all groups and is vital.

Marjorie-Anne Howe acknowledged the comments made by Cllrs Zarczynski and McNally. Whilst there is desperate need for the building and the users need continuity of venue, the reports issued do not make it clear whether the Council believes that the building is in a safe condition. Surely the Council need a full feasibility study and a costing study as public safety is the priority. She is nervous about HTC signing up to a project where the costs are uncertain. Whilst she welcomed the news that HTC may be able to recoup £5,000 in rates, there is also the Council's dispute with the Baily Partnership and whilst the detail is in Part B, anything which involves lawyers cost money. She urged the Council not to offer to take on the CUB if the costs are unknown.

Cllr Jones confirmed that the surveys proposed would establish the costs involved.

Cllr Taylor suggested that the surveys, once obtained should be made public and this was seconded by Cllr Zarczynski and Cllr Kolek. Cllr Kolek was of the view that it should not be just a yes or no to funding the CUB but that creative thinking was needed to see if the CUB could be funding by others means and not just by the TC.

Cllr Hanratty asked if Cllr Kolek could investigate the crowdfunding possibilities and bring a report to Council setting out how viable this would be for the CUB.

Cllr McNally suggested that in view of all the discussions that item 19 be brought forward.

The meeting went back into session at 7.20 pm

18/755 The Mayor's announcements

Cllr Brown advised that he would be sending out an email regarding his announcements.

18/756 To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8th October 2018.

Copies of the minutes of the meetings had been circulated in advance.

Members **RESOLVED** to confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8th October 2018.

Proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by a majority of 14 with 1 abstention.

18/757 Reports from District and County Councillors

The following report was received from Cllr Barrow:

Cllr Barrow advised that he did not have anything to report per se as he was currently involved with budget setting at EDDC but was here to answer any questions. He advised that EDDC do have funds available for projects, some of which involve part funding by the applicant. EDDC do also have crowdfunding available of up to £50,000 and there is crowdfunding available from the Police and Crime Commissioner in association with Devon County Council of up to £250,000.

Cllr Jones asked Cllr Barrow about rubbish being blown around the streets due to the green lids of bins being lost. Could residents apply for a free bin lid? Cllr Barrow advised that replacement bins could be purchased from EDDC at a cost of £7.50. He will speak to the finance department about whether it is possible to purchase just a lid and if so at what cost. If a resident has never had a bin, they are eligible for a bin at no cost.

Cllr Hanratty asked Cllr Barrow how easy it is to apply for the funds he has mentioned and how much is available. Cllr Barrow confirmed that there is the Communities Building Fund which has £20k where the applicant needs to contribute 2/3rds of the cost of the project. There is also the Communities Together Fund where you have to apply with other parishes. There is £200,000 available with a maximum of £30,000 per project and the applicants have to provide 20% of the funding. The timeline for this is short as the cut off is mid-January. EDDC also have the crowdfunding discussed.

Cllr Barrow confirmed that the Council could only apply for one project per year.

The following report was received from Cllr Twiss:

Healthcare

As the DCC appointed Governor on the R, D & E NHS Hospital Trust we will consider this Friday the 9th of November the recent detail of the long term (10-year plan) which will have significant impact right across the health and care sector affecting people of all ages.

The plan will have a strong emphasis on getting to a place of financial stability and demonstrating that the large-scale funding recently announced by Government will lead to improvements in NHS performance. In clinical care treatment there will be a focus on the following priorities.

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular and respiratory
- Learning disability and Autism
- Mental Health, particularly Dementia

In terms of the R, D & E there are a number of areas that Governors will need to consider, not least improved performance against defined targets, further efficiency savings or increased productivity, local care systems (including Healthcare hubs) that would provide a more seamless and joined up services via expected integration of the delivery of them.

An example of this is working in Honiton is that cancer charity FORCE are now providing chemotherapy treatments at Honiton Hospital, rather than the trek in to Exeter, struggling to get transport or car parking space, treatment and then back to home, adding to the stress of treatment.

Other news

The devil is inevitably in the detail of the recent Budget where numbers quoted are significant, but put in to context the £200m nationally to improve rural Broadband connectivity sounds a lot, but considering £90m was spent on CDS phase one our share is going to have to stretch a long way to speed up delivery in communities including surprisingly parts of Honiton!

I am naturally keen to see how much of the extra £420m potholes and road damage actually filters down to the Feniton & Honiton County Division as while things are improving, we definitely need a lot more doing.

Having recently been out with social workers to see clients in their Homes and visited care Homes and Mill Water School, (now at Bicton) the extra £410m is desperately needed and again it will be interesting to see how much filters down to Devon

- An additional £240 million in 2018/19 and £240 million in 2019/20 for adult social care. The Budget provides a further £410 million in 2019/20 for adults and children's social care.
- £420 million for local authorities to tackle potholes, repair damaged roads and invest in keeping bridges open and safe.
- A £675 million Future High Streets Fund.
- A £84 million fund spread over five years for up to 20 local authorities to help more children to stay at home safely with their families.

In addition to the written report submitted by Cllr Twiss above, Cllr Twiss spoken regarding the CUB. He advised that the CUB was now surplus to requirements and as such DCC had offered the building to HTC. There are many funding opportunities available and he offered to meet with the Town Clerk in the next few days to discuss these. DCC and the Police and Crime Commissioner were very keen to assist with crowdfunding opportunities.

Cllr Taylor asked whether DCC has thought about using the Dragon patching machine to save money on surveys. Cllr Twiss confirming that there was only one machine which has to be manually operated.

Cllr Kolek expressed concern regarding youth social misbehaviour and her support for the crowdfunding options available with the Police and Crime Commissioner. In his report Cllr Twiss advised that there would be a focus on learning difficulties in clinical care treatment. Cllr Kolek suggested that this is part of social care. Cllr Twiss advised that it was part of the joined-up thinking between the two.

Cllr Coombs asked when the gullies would be jetted in the High Street. Cllr Twiss advised that there was going to be a meeting regarding this in January. It was an ongoing process, but it was not as easy as jetting the gullies as some have collapsed and as such it is a major task which will cost a lot. There is an ongoing conversation about this in the budget, so he is not sure when it will be done. However, Honiton may wish to give some thought to employing a lengthsman as other Councils have now done.

Cllrs Twiss and Barrow then left the meeting.

18/758 Reports from the Police (recorded crimes and logs)

PSO Rich Shelton presented the October figures.

Cllr Kolek queried the reason for the large increase. PSO Shelton advised that there are months when there are a spate of incidents and this month there have been an increase in youth anti-social behaviour. He confirmed that the youths in question were known to the police.

Cllr Zarczynski queried what responsibility the parents were taking. PSO Shelton advised that there is a procedure which is followed which includes offers of support from police, school and social services. As a last resort legal action is taken.

PSO Shelton also advised that it is likely that the numbers of PCSO's in Devon and Cornwall will be reduced from 370 to 200. There are currently 8 PCSO's in East Devon but this may be cut to 5 from next year onwards.

PSO Shelton was thanked for his time and then left the meeting.

18/759 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

Cllr Sheridan-Shaw confirmed that his report consisted of a transcript of the Chairman's report presented at the HCC AGM.

There were no questions regarding this item.

18/760 Update Report

The Town Clerk presented the report which was noted. He confirmed that he would be contacting EDDC regarding the reimbursement of the rates paid.

Cllr Zarczynski queried the delay regarding the carpark. The Town Clerk advised that he was due to meet with EDDC but that there had been delay due to him being off sick and being tied up on other matters.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

18/761 To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on the 16th and 30th October 2018.

Members noted the minutes.

18/762 To receive the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 29th October 2018.

Members noted the minutes.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to bring forward item 19 Community Use Building.

Proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Kolek

18/763 Community Use Building

Cllr Jones presented his report and confirmed that he would answer any questions. He has provided further details by email since writing his report to Councillors and was asked to summarise these which he did as follows.

All the asbestos has now been removed by DCC in all public areas. This did not include ceiling voids or under floors but in his opinion DCC have done what is necessary to make the building safe. If subsequently it is decided to knock a wall down, then an asbestos survey might be needed for that particular wall. However, there is no need for a further asbestos survey at this stage. It is currently not known what changes to the building will be done.

The electrics were tripping out so DCC have replaced the ring main and have done extensive works on the emergency lighting.

He has now been contacted by other potential users of the building to include the charity Men in Sheds via Vernon Whitlock who also wants to use the back garden and the University of the Third Age who organise tea dances etc. That enquiry was made via DCC.

The following points were discussed:

- If HTC does take possession of the CUB it will need to be 2012 Disability Act compliant re disabled access which may involve a lift being installed. HTC should do the survey and keep the communications going with the clubs.

- There are great opportunities to raise money and there would be funds available to make the building equality act compliant.
- What was the hiring costs to the groups?

Cllr Jones confirmed that this was £11 per hour and that the projected income for the CUB was £27,000 per year. This however is based on term time use only. If it was used for 51 weeks of the year the income would rise to £29,000.

- The groups would need to commit to using the building as was required when the Beehive was being built. In depth reports are now needed re costs involved. Money may need to be raised to make it disable friendly and the costs could be considerable and these need to be calculated.
- What was the likely cost of the surveys? The Town Clerk advised that the total cost could be up to £10,000. The cost of an asbestos survey could be between £800 - £1200 per day with a time estimate of 2-4 days. The cost of a structural survey could be similar, so the reports could cost between £4,800 and £9,600 depending on what negotiating can be done and what access to the building is required.
- As most of the user groups are charities, they would be able to raise funds towards the costs involved.
- Will the Council be constrained by Health and Safety with regards to people working on the building? Can the surveys be done before HTC needs to give DCC a response?

The Town Clerk confirmed that as the Council's RFO he needs to ensure that the Town Council can fund the costs not just today but in the future.

- Could the user groups could be given a copy of the offer letter from DCC which is very vague and leaves issues wide open.

The Town Clerk whilst acknowledging that the terms of the offer had been leaked, the letter is still confidential, and he would not wish to exacerbate the situation. Negotiations are still ongoing, so he refused the request.

- Honiton is a growing town and user groups needed room to operate from. Could the Council ask DCC for help with the cost of the surveys?

The Town Clerk confirmed that DCC had advised that they would not provide any money towards the cost of the surveys.

- DCC's offer had conditions attached to it but these conditions had not been set out. DCC should set out these conditions clearly.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the offer was for an "as is" condition transfer.

- Did the Council have the funds to carry out the surveys.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this would come from the £15,000.00 youth budget.

- What would happen if the surveys were detrimental to proceeding – what will DCC do then?

The Town Clerk advised that as far as he is aware DCC do not have another plan.

- Can the Town Council afford to run the building under the current precept levels?

The Town Clerk suggested not. The figures show that income will not cover expenditure. In his view the figures from Cllr Jones are not accurate and he believes it will cost between £35,000 and £40,000 to run the building but until the Council has a clear management plan it is difficult to know. The figures from DCC are higher and you need to take into account staffing costs.

Cllr Jones responded by advising that the figures provided by the school are nothing like those suggested by the Town Clerk and instead are in the region of £15,000 per year.

- Concerns were raised about the “as is” condition part of the offer. The offer may be a bargain but why has DCC given up on the young people of Honiton and Devon and left them to the town and parish councils.
- Concerns were also raised about the long-term funding of the building especially in view of other projects which the Council wished to undertake.
- DCC’s view that the building was surplus to requirements is an example of DCC trying to minimise their statutory responsibilities.
- There was a responsibility towards the youth of Honiton and alternatives needed to be looked at if the building could not be taken on, such as the Beehive. Running costs should include the cost of a caretaker and if the Beehive is running at a loss then this calls into question the viability of the CUB.
- DCC were devolving their responsibilities and that this was often a false economy as it leads to further expense.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to commission a full building survey and intrusive asbestos survey on the site to determine the condition and potential costs to repair

Proposed by Cllr Kolek and seconded by Cllr Taylor

It was then proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Macve that the meeting go into confidential session as a specialist advisor relating to item 24 had arrived.

This was **RESOLVED** by a majority vote of 13 with 2 against.

The meeting went into confidential session at 8.45 p.m.

PART B

18/764 Bailey Partnership Update

The report was received and noted. The options contained in the report were noted and discussed.

At 9pm Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting for 30 minutes

Proposed by Cllr McNally and seconded by Cllr Howard.

Members **RESOLVED** by a majority of 13 for, 1 against and 1 abstention to proceed with Option 3 of Foot Anstey's legal advice and delegate authority to the Town Clerk to authorise two experts to provide evidence ahead of HTC deciding whether or not to move onto Option 4 of the Foot Anstey's legal advice.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to move the meeting back into Part A.

Proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Edwards.

The meeting went back into Part A at 9.20pm

18/765 Closure of the Church of Honiton St Michael

The Town Clerk presented his report which was noted.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to respond to the proposed closure of the Church of Honiton St Michael in line with the previous letter sent on the 28th February 2018.

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

18/766 Blackdown Hills AONB Draft Management Plan 2019-2024 Consultation

Cllr Brown proposed that in view of the limited time available, Members vote on the Resolution proposed:

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to delegate officers to collate individual responses and thoughts about this and to provide a summary of concerns on behalf of the Council. Individual responses should be received by Friday 23rd November.

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

18/767 Land at Glen View

Cllr Brown proposed that in view of the limited time available, Members vote on the Resolution proposed:

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to submit a further application for Land at Glen View previously registered as a community asset to be re-registered.

Proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Taylor.

18/768 Members resolved by a majority of 13 for, with 1 against and 1 abstention to adjourn the meeting and to reconvene on Monday 19th November at 7pm.

Proposed by Cllr Howard and seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw

18/769 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 9.30 pm.