

**HONITON TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 16 July 2018 at 7.00 pm**

**Present**

**St Michael's Ward**

Cllr Jill McNally  
Cllr John Taylor  
Cllr John Zarczynski  
Cllr Philip Carrigan

**St Paul's Ward**

Cllr Henry Brown (Chairman)  
Cllr Terry Darrant  
Cllr Vera Howard  
Cllr Daniel Jefferson  
Cllr Mike Jones  
Cllr Caroline Kolek  
Cllr Duncan Sheridan-Shaw  
Cllr Roy Coombs  
Cllr R Hanratty

**In attendance**

Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk  
2 members of the press

**PART A**

**18/693** The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.

**18/694 To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr S Edwards – Personal reasons

**18/695 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda**

None Declared

**18/696 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 7.01pm*

**18/697 Public question time on items on the agenda**

No questions were asked

*The meeting went back into session at 7.02 pm*

## PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

### 18/698 Auction of Land at Merryfield, Roundball Lane, Honiton, Devon, EX14 9TS

The clerk outlined the rationale behind the report commenting that he had been informed by Cllr Taylor that the site would yield between potentially 20 to 22 allotments. Cllr Taylor confirmed this adding that the land at Battishorne way required roads and parking that would not be required at Merryfield. He also felt that it would possibly allow for 22/23 half plots.

There was then much discussion over the practicalities and suitability of the land being used for allotments with members contributing various points. These included:

- Some trees may need clearing but relatively few
- Need to cut back hedges
- Trees in middle fairly “scrubby” and not anything that needs protecting
- Easily accessible and fairly flat
- Point was raised that the allotments list was quite old and that many on it many now not want a plot or may even be dead. Was there a demand?
- Honiton Allotments Association had now disbanded but research has indicated in local towns that there was a demand for allotments, Cullompton and Axminster given as examples
- Hedges need cutting back and not cutting down
- Land that comes up in Honiton that is suitable for allotments is extremely rare
- Concerns raised on what would happen for plans to develop the Community Use Building (CUB) if the land was purchased – the town clerk confirmed it would be a major issue and would preclude any ability to continue with it should Devon make any offer
- It was suggested that all the CUB was fit for was knocking down as it would cost too much to make it fit for purpose
- The CUB building has recently undergone works on the electrical system, a new ring main and consumer unit. It was stated that it was misguided to make comments regarding its condition until a structural survey had been carried out
- The land being offered by Combe Estates was on a 25 Year lease and whilst very welcome it was felt important that the council owned its own land as well
- Nothing to stop the planned allotments being taken back after the 25 year lease period
- The council would be meeting its statutory requirement in providing allotments at Combe Estate and as such the council should be focusing on other things
- Would the allotments be self sustaining
- Should plough the land and leave for 12 months
- Was there any risk of the land flooding, this was felt unlikely
- There should be a fact finding task carried out to find out just what the demand is for allotments and that the CUB should be a priority
- Concerns that the needs of developing the High Street were being ignored and the money should be invested in this and not the allotments at this time
- That the Council had no robust Tourism plan
- There was no social media and no town plan

- Council has a statutory duty to provide allotments but there is no minimum number attached to this obligation
- Opportunity has come at the wrong time when we are trying to help hundreds of people at the CUB

Members discussed all the above points.

Cllr V Howard proposed and Cllr Darrant seconded that Members **Resolved** to bid for land at Merryfield, Roundball Lane, Honiton, EX14 9TS

Those in favour were; Cllr's Taylor, McNally, Zarczynski, Coombs, Carrigan, Hanratty, Darrant and Howard.

Those who voted against were; Cllr's Brown, Sheridan-Shaw, Jones, Jefferson, Macve.

Cllr Kolek abstained.

The motion was Passed with 8 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention

It was then proposed to move the meeting into exempt business so that details of the bid could be discussed in private session. This was Proposed by Cllr McNally and Seconded by Cllr Sheridan-Shaw.

Cllr Kolek left the meeting at 8-15pm

*The meeting went into confidential session at 8-15 p.m.*

## **PART B**

### **18/699 Land Purchase bid**

The town clerk informed members that what ever the bid limit agreed by the council was, it should be agreed with a close consideration of what the impact would be on the overall reserves and that consideration would need to take into account the costs involved of preparing and setting up the land for allotments.

Members agreed that there needed to be a realistic bid put forward and that the final figure would impact upon the reserves. After discussion over the figure it was proposed that the guide price plus £2,000 be set and that the auction fees would be paid on top of the maximum bid agreed.

Cllr McNally proposed and Cllr Howard seconded that members **resolve** to offer up to £32,000 plus auction fees.

The motion was carried with 7 in favour and 6 against.

**18/700** To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 8.25 pm.