

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices,
The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Tuesday 2nd January at 7.00pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr Sheila Edwards
Cllr John Taylor
Cllr John Zarczynski (Chairman)
Cllr Nicolette Macve
Cllr Philip Carrigan

St Paul's Ward

Cllr Henry Brown
Cllr Terry Darrant
Cllr Vera Howard
Cllr Daniel Jefferson
Cllr Mike Jones
Cllr Caroline Kolek
Cllr Martyn Linsdell
Cllr Duncan Sheridan-Shaw
Cllr Roy Coombs

In attendance

Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk
Cllr Phil Twiss EDDC/DCC
Carmel Wilkinson, Locum Deputy Clerk
Three members of the public

PART A

18/550 The Chairman welcomed Councillors, including recently co-opted councillors Nicolette Macve and Philip Carrigan. Also welcomed to the meeting were Cllr Phil Twiss (EDDC and DCC), members of the public and the recently appointed Town Clerk Mark Tredwin.

18/551 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Jill McNally (personal reasons)
Cllr Dean Barrow (EDDC)

18/552 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

Cllr Coombs knows the applicant re item 18.
Cllr Brown – item 26 – trustee of charity Open Arms East Devon
Cllr Edwards – item 15 – member of the Honiton Community Complex charity

18/553 To receive and resolve as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27th November 2017

A copy of the minutes of the meeting had been circulated in advance. The minutes were **approved unanimously** and signed as a correct record.
Proposed by Cllr Brown; seconded by Cllr Kolek

The meeting went out of session at 7.03pm

Signed Chair

27th February 2018

18/554 Public question time on items on the agenda

- A member of the public, spoke to item 15 on the agenda, referring to a document previously circulated to HTC Councillors via the Town Clerk regarding non-payment of Honiton Community Complex invoices. The correspondence is on file and can viewed during office hours at HTC offices.

The Mayor responded saying that if appropriate a written response could be provided once the matter had been discussed in Part B of this meeting; also, following discussion with HCC and consultation with the Town Clerk.

- A member of the public raised concern regarding item **17/543** in the minutes of 27th November 2017 Full Council meeting. A £2,755 'anomaly' from the then Mayor's charity had been found by Councillor Taylor in the reserves of the previous financial year after an investigation into the matter. There was a discussion about the process of checking the accounts prior to 'discovery' of the monies in question. Grave concern was expressed about potential damage to the previous Mayor's reputation. The current Mayor reiterated an apology to the previous Mayor.

The meeting went back into session at 7.16 pm

18/555 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor visited the Beehive's Christmas Day lunch for fifty-six Honiton senior citizens who otherwise might be alone over the festive period, and was deeply impressed and moved by the commitment of Mr and Mrs Whitlock and other volunteers who organised and ran this event. The Mayor will be in touch with Mr Whitlock to be more involved in Christmas 2018.

18/556 To receive reports from District and County Councillors**Cllr Twiss**

- Cllr Twiss offered to take questions on EDDC matters at the end of his report.
- Cllr Twiss referred to a letter from the Rector of St Michael's regarding a proposal to 'close' the churchyard. EDDC's offer to get the churchyard into better shape was declined, though this decision will be reviewed in 2018. HTC was encouraged to respond to correspondence on this matter (no. 23 in the list of correspondence). Part of the churchyard is full and therefore closed.
- Highways – Dowell Street traffic lights work commences 8 Jan, hopes for improvement to traffic flows when work is completed.
- Cllr Twiss has a £31,000 budget allocated for pothole repairs. Lower Brand Lane needs urgent attention and will be a priority.
- National government is pressurising District and County Councils to use their reserves - £31 million in Devon whose turnover is £600 million p.a.. If a bad winter requires extra work to mitigate flooding that budget would soon be used up.

- Health pressures in winter: Public health providers' priority is prevention of ill health. Acute Care is provided by the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital. Cllr Twiss is concerned about lack of join up between social care and acute care services and has a meeting with Tim Gold on 3rd of Jan to discuss these concerns. There is a meeting of DCC's Health Scrutiny Committee on 18th January to which NHS representatives have been invited to provide an update on how the new model of care is working. Will update HTC re the outcome of these meetings.
- Cllr Twiss commended to the meeting a very useful APP developed for Smartphones, called NHS Quicker. It provides information about waiting times at local hospitals, and the number of people waiting to be seen.
- EDDC is half way through relocation to Exmouth and Honiton. Both moves are on time and on budget. Go-live is first or second week of December 2018.

The District Councillor was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7.30pm

18/557 Report from the Police (recorded crimes and logs 01/10/2017 to 31/10/2017)

No report was provided.

18/558 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

- Councillor Coombs: Content of a report on the public rights of way condition survey for 2017/18, which is supporting evidence for a further bid for Parish Paths Partnership funding was noted. Cllr. Darrant, Taylor and McNally carried out inspections for 2017/18. Items from 15/16 and 16/17 have been given to acting deputy clerk.
- Councillor Edwards: Noted reports regarding: Health & Wellbeing Community Conversation initiative, Honiton's Health Matters - Looking forward together and Devon Association of Local Councils AGM and Conference, 10th October 2017.

Councillors are invited to the Honiton's Health Matters day on 18th January 2018.

DALC meeting minutes of 16th November to be circulated via the councillors' briefing.

After a short discussion it was proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Taylor and carried unanimously that item 15 on the agenda should be discussed in Part B of the meeting.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

18/559 It was **Resolved** that “where Correspondence is so prolific and incomprehensible as to be vexatious, it will be screened for relevant content, but will only be actioned if the request can be understood and is reasonable and proportionate. Otherwise, the correspondent will receive an acknowledgement and be informed that no further action will be taken.”

Proposed: Cllr Kolek

Seconded: Cllr Brown

Carried by majority (one abstention)

It was noted that correspondence is seen by officers and held on a file in the office. It is available to councillors during office hours. Items are marked to indicate when a response has been provided.

18/560 It was noted that student awards will be at Full Council in March 2018, after the half term holiday. Students are nominated by the head teacher.

18/561 It was **Resolved** to mandate the allotments working group to agree and sign a lease with the Combe Estate.

Proposed: Cllr Kolek

Seconded: Cllr Edwards

Three councillors on the working group abstained from voting.

18/562 It was **Resolved** to accept Western Power’s quotation of £2,620.27 to connect CCTV at 109 High Street.

Proposed: Cllr Darrant

Seconded: Cllr Brown

Carried unanimously.

18/563 Councillors discussed EDDC’s Council Licensing Department consultation regarding an application from Pizza Buona to grant a street trading consent for Tuesday evenings between 17:00 and 20:00 throughout the year. Issues of noise and litter including single use plastic were raised, and a motion was proposed to support the application subject to there not being any issues with highway safety.

It was **Resolved** to support this application.

Proposed: Cllr Macve

Seconded: Cllr Edwards

Carried by majority (one against)

18/564 This item was discussed under Part B

18/565 Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on 13th December 2017 were received.

18/566 It was **Resolved** to sign Devon County Council’s Road Warden agreement re Chapter 8 training.

Proposed: Cllr Kolek

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Carried unanimously

18/567 It was **Resolved** to sign off Honiton Beehive Community Gardeners' sign.

Proposed: Cllr Brown

Seconded: Cllr Kolek

Carried by majority with three abstentions.

18/568 Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 5th December 2017 were received.

18/569 Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 13th December 2017 were received. The committee has reduced some budget lines and increased others in an effort to resist a possible twenty-six percent increase in the precept, which councillors felt would be unacceptable. The precept will be increased by nine percent.

There was a discussion about financial pressures including costs associated with the allocation for the town's Christmas lights, including buying, storing, erecting and taking down. HTC is not solely responsible for the Christmas lights – if local businesses feel strongly about Christmas light they could opt to join the Chamber of Commerce. Representations were heard from the Chamber of Commerce who want to work with HTC to resolve this issue but have concerns about lack of funds to meet next year's deficit. It was noted that the amount being spent on the lights exceeded the whole grant budget allocated to local groups and organisations.

Concern was expressed about diverting funds from projects and organisations which HTC wants to support because they are providing services for young people and mental health locally. HTC appreciates that the lights are important, and feel that a conversation between the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Honiton Town Council might be helpful.

It was **Resolved** approve the proposed budget and precept request for 2018/19.

Proposed: Cllr Jefferson

Seconded: Cllr Howard

Carried with three abstentions.

18/570 It was **Resolved** to approve payments in accordance with the schedule list of payments.

Proposed: Cllr Brown

Seconded: Cllr Darrant

Carried unanimously

Councillor Motions- To receive reports and motions from Councillors.

18/571 Councillor Taylor: Proposed a motion to review car parking charges at the Beehive.

The discussion covered matters such as:

Public concern about loss of parking when the Beehive was built.

EDDC donated the car park as a revenue stream to assist with mortgage payments for the Beehive. This is set out in the land transfer and covenant.

The covenant requires spaces to be provided for coaches.
 HTC has paid in excess of £1,000 for the hedge surrounding the car park to be cut.

It was remarked that the covenant requires the land to be used as a public car park but does not specify a paid public car park.

EDDC policy is that public buildings and other assets will be maximised.

It was **Resolved** that “Cllrs Taylor, Jones and Coombs produce a full, non-partisan report setting out pros and cons that can be debated by Full Council meeting to be held in February.

Proposed: Cllr Taylor

Seconded: Cllr Darrant

Passed by majority with one against.

18/572 Councillor Kolek: Updated the meeting on progress of the Parishes Together tourism project.

Cllr Kolek has met with Task and Time to discuss their proposal in more detail.

The town guide was considered to need updating – proposal is a downloadable PDF guide.

Motion to cover the costs of the project until grant funding can be claimed was supported subject to an amendment to remove the word ‘bankroll’ from the motion.

Proposed (with amended wording): Cllr Taylor

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Passed unanimously

18/573 Councillor Taylor: Proposed to apply for Parishes Together funding jointly with Farway Parish Council.

Cllr Taylor agreed to develop the proposal further and make an application in due course, before 8th February deadline.

18/574 Councillor Coombs: Raised concerns about visibility being obscured during the growing season by HTC’s planter on the High Street refuge.

HTC to arrange for planter to be moved.

18/575 Councillor Jones: It was **Resolved** that Cllr Jones assists Hannah Reynolds of Action East Devon to update the community and voluntary groups register.

Proposed: Cllr Kolek

Seconded: Cllr Brown

Passed unanimously

Reports for noting

18/576 Councillors noted the training needs of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk on Rialtas accounting software. The Clerk explained the format that should be used for future report writing if items are to be considered by committees.

Correspondence

18/576 Correspondence was discussed and noted that it is available to be viewed during office hours.

21 - Cllr Coombs raised issue re blocked highway drains on High Street, which Devon Highways have declined to clear.

Cllr Edwards informed the meeting of a NALC survey regarding retention of business rates, including the formula that will be used from 2019, which needs to be brought to the attention of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee Chairman and Deputy agreed to check this.

The meeting went into confidential session at 8.48 p.m.

PART B

18/577 Quotations received for internal audit services were reviewed. Proposed by Cllr Coombs and Seconded by Cllr Kolek it was **resolved** to appoint IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as Honiton Town Council's internal auditor. Motion carried by a majority with one member voting against.

18/564 Report of the Beehive Overview Committee meeting on 11th December 2017 was presented by Cllr Jones and the following proposals were discussed:

Payment for room hire was discussed, and it was established that HTC had originally agreed to pay a maximum of £50 for room hire. It was stated the Valuation Officer originally set room hire charge at £50, maximum.

Proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Darrant it was **resolved** that "all room hire invoices submitted by Honiton Community Complex from April 2017 be rejected. Honiton Community Complex should then be asked to resubmit invoices for the period from April 2017 that reflect the room hire rates of up to £50.00 per room: This motion was carried by a majority with five abstentions.

Discussion commenced regarding a fact-finding meeting with representatives of the Beehive Committee to resolve charging and payment issues.

As landlord, HTC is entitled to see all invoices and corroborative evidence within a reasonable timescale. Various configurations were considered, and, after due consideration, a motion was proposed as set out in the agenda.

Proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Howard it was **resolved** that "the town clerk, Councillor Jefferson and Councillor Taylor arrange a meeting with a representative of the Honiton Community Complex to identify The Beehive's running costs, and to establish their expectations". This motion was carried by a majority with one abstention.

Meeting was closed at 9.25 pm