

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Mackarness Hall, High Street, Honiton on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr Sheila Edwards
Cllr Jill McNally
Cllr John Taylor
Cllr John Zarczynski (Chairman)
Cllr Philip Carrigan
Cllr N Macve

St Paul's Ward

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

In attendance

Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow Deputy Town Clerk
Sonia Hawkins Town Clerk's Assistant
Four members of the public

PART A

18/584 The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.

18/585 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr P Twiss – EDDC & DCC
Cllr J O'Leary – EDDC
Cllr J Brown - EDDC

18/586 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest

18/587 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

The meeting went out of session at 7.05pm

18/588 Public question time on items on the agenda

- **Mr J Burgess** raised two general points as follows:
 - i) All town councillors now had email addresses except Cllrs Howard and Taylor. Could these two Councillors explain why they had not provided email addresses for members of the public to use.

Cllr Zarczynski advised that both Councillors did not use email for health reasons but that both Councillors could be contacted by telephone or through the town council offices. This was confirmed by both Cllrs Howard and Taylor.

ii) There was no reason for the Council to hold their meeting at the Mackarness Hall due to licensing issues. In the minutes of the first Council's policy meeting in May 2014 at the Beehive it was agreed that the Council could use the premises for their meetings as long as no alcohol was being served. Both Cllr Zarczynski and Taylor agreed to this at the meeting. DALC provided advice and at the full Council meeting that following Cllrs Zarczynski, Taylor, Brown, Kolek and Coombs raised no issues with meetings being held at the Beehive.

Prior to the Council meeting on Monday 26th February Cllr Taylor advised that further action would be taken if the meeting took place at the Beehive. Could Cllr Taylor explain what further action he was referring to?

Referring to item 12 on the Agenda, the Town Council has yet to pay the service charges which now amount to over £11,000.00. The lease advises that the Council shall pay the service charge in 4 equal instalments. The Tenant is to provide a certificate for the inspection of the accounts after the term.

Cllr Zarczynski at that point advised that Mr Burgess had overrun his 3 minutes. He responded to the questions as follows:

The Beehive Overview Sub-Committee was set up as a result of HCC introducing increased charges of an additional £16 per room hire without consulting the Town Council. HCC had introduced this additional charge 1 year in advance. The Town Council advised HCC before Christmas that they would be reviewing the service charge agreement. The Town Council refused to accept a credit note for the increased charges and on receipt of the revised invoices these had been paid. The Council are of the view that there are discrepancies in respect of the claim for the service charge and has a responsibility to protect public money. The Town Council needs to see the invoices and asked to see these before Christmas. If these invoices are then validated the Town Council will pay. However, the Town Council will not pay invoices which they have not seen or validated. It is understood that these invoices are now available and will be inspected by an independent person and not by a member of the Council.

As regards the licensing of the Beehive, in 2014 it was only proposed that the cafeteria/bar area should have a licence. The Town Council was not aware until recently that the whole building was licensed. When this was raised as a potential issue the Council sought advice from the Monitoring Officer at EDDC and from NALC. The Council has a duty to act within the law and a majority of Councillors voted not to hold the meeting at the Beehive.

Cllr Taylor advised that in 2014 it was understood that the Beehive would apply for event licences and not to licence the whole building.

Had the meeting taken place a number of persons/bodies including HCC could have taken legal action against the Council.

Cllr Kolek raised the issue of email communication. Whilst she supports emails as a great way of communication and welcomes emails from other councillors and members of the public she had concerns as to the abuse of emails. Since last Monday she had received over 20 emails from one member of the public and these emails had also been sent to all Councillors and members of staff. Cllr Kolek had concerns regarding staff welfare with regards to this. Can the Town Clerk advise on whether Councillors are expected to respond to out of hours emails? How should the Council manage the relentless number of emails sent by one member of the public?

Cllr Zarczynski responded saying that the Council cannot stop members of the public from emailing Councillors or the office. It is however for Councillors to decide whether they choose to open the email and or respond. He accepted that it was sometimes very frustrating and that at times he felt compelled to respond. It was unfair Councillors to be bombarded with emails.

The Town Clerk advised that there was no expectation on Councillors to respond to detailed emails received at the weekend. The Town Council office deals with emails during office hours of 10am – 1pm. Individual Councillors should use their discretion. There is no specific policy regarding this, but he will look at the matter in detail over the next 12-18 months.

Cllr Kolek reiterated that she is not against receiving emails from the public.

The Town Clerk reminded members of resolution 18/559 when 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.

The meeting went back into session at 7.20 pm

18/589 The Mayor’s announcements

None.

18/590 To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 2 January 2018 and the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 23 January 2018

A copy of the minutes of the meetings had been circulated in advance. The minutes

were approved unanimously and signed as a correct record subject to a typing correction at item 18/583 where the word Road was corrected to Room.

18/591 Reports from District and County Councillors

The report from Cllr Twiss had been circulated in advance. Councillors were advised to contact Cllr Twiss with any questions.

18/592 Reports from the Police (recorded crimes and logs)

Members noted the December and January figures.

It was asked whether the police would be attending the meetings in the future. Apologies had been received from the new PSCO who was unable to attend due to a prior engagement

18/593 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

Cllr Kolek advised that the Parishes Together Tourism project with Exmouth was now back on track. It had been made clear from further investigation that there was no need for a Committee and that this had therefore been disbanded. Cllr Kolek would be working with the Deputy Clerk to progress the project.

Cllr Kolek advised that she was still working towards providing defibrillators in the town and would update the Council of progress over the next few months.

Cllr Kolek had received good positive feedback from the correspondence sent regarding single use plastics.

Cllr Edwards advised that she had attended the DALC meeting on the 16th February. She highlighted the proposed urban development plan for Exeter and was of the view that this should be taken into account by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

18/594 Update Report

The report was noted

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

18/595 To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held on the 9th January 2018, 23rd January 2018, and 6th February 2018.

Cllr Coombs reported that there was a possibility that the riverside walk would be extended as a result of the Foundry Yard application. He expressed concerns as to the affordable housing element of the Hayne Lane development.

The minutes were received and noted.

18/596 Beehive Overview Sub-Committee

The Town Clerk advised that since the report for this item had been written an internal auditor had been appointed to look at the Council's accounts and invoices. Members had previously expressed a need for there to be a forensic examination of

the invoices and accounts. Mr Kevin Rose, the appointed internal auditor has offered to carry out the investigation on the Council's behalf. This would involve 2 days, one of which would be in the office. He would look at the invoices relating to the Service Level Agreement with the Beehive and those requested by the external auditor. As such the recommendations in the attached report have been superseded by this offer should Councillors so wish.

Cllrs were supportive of the proposal and it was confirmed that the cost would be £350 plus VAT per day plus mileage. It was also agreed that the Council needed a representative going forward to examine invoices. The Town Clerk suggested that as the RFO he should be appointed to this role.

It was noted that if any Council member had queries to raise of the internal auditor once he had concluded his report, there would be the opportunity to raise these queries.

Members **RESOLVED** to employ Mr Rose to carry out a forensic investigation of the account. Proposed by Cllr McNally, seconded by Cllr Jones and resolved by majority with one against.

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Honiton Town Council's RFO or Deputy RFO as Honiton Town Council's representative as per the Service Level Agreement dated 9th December 2015 (Section 4.1(b)). Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Jones and unanimously agreed.

18/597 Five Year Financial Investigation Working Group

In the light of the decision to obtain an independent investigation of the accounts, this item was not discussed.

18/598 To receive minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on 31st January 2018

The minutes were received and noted.

Reports

18/599 – Cllr Taylor presented his report on the introduction of carpark charges at the Beehive. Matters discussed included:

- Charges needed to be introduced to fund maintenance work.
- Charges would benefit the whole of Honiton.
- EDDC donated the car park to HTC in lieu of support grant in the sum of £23,000.00 annually and whether as such the income from the car park should be for the benefit of the Beehive.
- A feasibility study should take place before any decision is made, as there are no costings available and no traffic surveys have been undertaken. Decision should be based on empirical evidence.

- There are various options available regarding the implementation of a fee-paying carpark.
- Council would be maximising its assets by introducing car parking charges.
- If principle of charging agreed, matters such as time limited free car parking, coach parking and charges etc would be looked at.
- Had the Beehive been located on its original site, the Lace Walk carpark, there would have been no free car parking from the start.
- A free car park benefits the community of Honiton.
- Any income received from the car park could be channelled to the community by way of extra grant money or used to pay off the second works board loan.

It was **RESOLVED** to develop the Beehive carpark into a paying facility and to instruct officers to bring a proposal for consideration to a full Council meeting later this year. Proposed by Cllr Jefferson and seconded by Cllr Brown – resolved by majority with 2 against and 2 abstentions.

18/600 Closure of the church of Honiton St Michael

The Town Clerk presented his report of the item above. Matters discussed included:

- What would happen to the commemorative boards and other important furnishings?
- What would happen to the Allhallows items in the Church.
- What will happen to the monies given to the Church to look after the fabric of the church by the charity linked to Allhallows?
- How will the Church be maintained if it closed? Will it be given to the Churches Conservation Trust as it is a listed building?
- Will the cemetery remain open and if so, who will be responsible for its maintenance?
- Is it still intended to set up a “Friends of St Michael’s” association?
- What will happen to the car park if the church is closed and then sold?
- Previously St Leonards in Exeter had offered to take over the church. Had this offer been withdrawn or been refused and if so, why?

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk would respond to Reverend Hough on behalf of the Town Council with the points raised above and expressing their regret at the proposal to close the Church.

Proposed by Cllr Darrant and seconded by Cllr Taylor – agreed unanimously.

18/601 Honiton Health Matters.

Cllr Edwards presented her report. It was **RESOLVED** to accept her recommendation as follows:

That members of Honiton Town Council be committed to continuing to support community conversations to discuss challenges and collaborative working to improve the health and wellbeing of all the people in our communities and facilitate the hire of rooms expressly for this purpose. The next meeting will be held on 6th March 2018.

Proposed by Cllr Edwards and seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed unanimously.

18/602 List of payments

The following schedule of payments was approved:

Schedule of payments at 31st January 2018

Invoice date	Payee	Description	Amount inc. VAT	Cheque no / DD
04/12/2017	EE & T-Mobile	Market mobile	20.90	DD
06/12/2017	1064 Squadron ATC	Grant towards residential	500.00	7077
06/12/2017	Open Arms East Devon	Grant for ICT equipment	940.93	7078
06/12/2017	Mike Harding Lighting Solution	Christmas Lights installation	2814.00	7079
06/12/2017	Imagin Products	Cllr name badges	113.04	7080
06/12/2017	Devon Communities Together	Devon Communities Together	2814.00	BACS
06/12/2017	BT	Phone and Broadband	287.05	DD
06/12/2017	A Dimond & Co	Stamps and copier paper	133.60	BACS
06/12/2017	Tony Benger Landscaping	Dowell Street car park landscaping	987.60	BACS
06/12/2017	LRGC	Interim Clerk services	8906.27	BACS
13/12/2017	Viridor	Market waste	110.80	7083
13/12/2017	EDDC	Nov Payroll	9586.82	7084
13/12/2017	Mrs C Bowles	Mileage	5.25	7085
13/12/2017	Top to Bottom cleaning	Cleaning lost cheque	324	7082B
17/12/2017	Top to Bottom cleaning	Cleaning	275.40	7082
21/12/2017	Cllr Zarczynski	Members allowance	305.00	BACS
28/12/2017	Lloyds Bank	Lloyds Service charges	39.54	DD
31/12/2017	Unity Trust Bank	Service charge	19.35	DD
01/01/2018	HCC	Room rental Inv1392	50.00	BACS
02/01/2018	Cllr M Linsdell	Members allowance re-issued	305.00	BACS
10/01/2018	BT	Phones and Broadband	315.21	DD
29/01/2018	Metcalfe Allen	CCTV reinstatement	54.00	BACS

Signed Chair

19th March 2018

29/01/2018	Archant	Clerk Job advert	310.00	BACS
29/01/2018	A Dimond & Co	Talk of Town News	100.00	BACS
29/01/2018	The Sunday Independent	Assistant Clerk	105.00	BACS
29/01/2018	The Sunday Independent	Assistant Clerk	105.00	BACS
29/01/2018	SLCC	Clerk Magazine	30.00	BACS
29/01/2018	M Tredwin	Land registry search	27.00	BACS
29/01/2018	Archant	Clerk Advert	238.50	BACS
29/01/2018	HCC	Tirard Room Finance	50.00	BACS
29/01/2018	D J Retter	Strimmer guard and frame	65.00	30001
30/01/2018	A Dimond & Co	Stationary	55.15	BACS
30/01/2018	Core Office	IT Support	277.32	BACS
30/01/2018	Core Office	Core Office	281.52	BACS
30/01/2018	HCC	Room hire 02/01/18	50.00	BACS
30/01/2018	Top to Bottom Cleaning	Cleaning	97.20	BACS
30/01/2018	Viridor	Market Waste	121.30	BACS
30/01/2018	LRGC	Interim Clerk Services	6266.44	BACS
30/01/2018	HCC	Room hire 09/01/18	50.00	BACS
30/01/2018	Metcalfe Allen	Reset CCTV 14.12.17	108.00	BACS
30/01/2018	Ricoh	Photocopier	285.99	BACS
30/01/2018	HCC	Room hire 18/01/18	50.00	BACS
30/01/2018	A Dimond & Co x 3	Stationary	26.08	BACS
30/01/2018	Mrs C Bowles	Coffee	2.99	30002
30/01/2018	EDDC	January Payroll	10,850.92	BACS
31/01/2018	HCC X 26	Room Hire	1350.00	BACS

18/603 Parishes Together Funding 2017-2018

The report was noted.

18/604 Twinning event

The report was noted.

18/605 Membership of committees, Special Responsibilities and representation on Outside Bodies

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Sheridan-Shaw to have special responsibility for liaison with respect to Crime.

Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed unanimously.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Kolek to represent the Council at Honiton Hospice care activities and meetings.

Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr McNally and agreed unanimously.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr MacVe to the Planning Committee.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr McNally and agreed unanimously.

PART B

**INFORMATION TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO COUNCILLORS ONLY
REFERS TO ITEMS 17 (18/605) AND 18 (18/606) ON THE AGENDA**

18/605 Telephone and broadband contract provider

The report was received, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to implement a replacement telephone system at the earliest opportunity.

Proposed by Cllr Darrant and seconded by Cllr Jones and agreed unanimously.

18/606 Baileys Partnership Report

The report was received, and it was **RESOLVED** to send a further letter requesting final payment.

During the discussion Cllr Henry Brown left the meeting at 9.05pm

Proposed by Cllr McNally and seconded by Cllr Darrant and agreed unanimously.

18/607 To close the meeting

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chairman welcomed recently appointed Town Clerk's assistant Sonia Hawkins.

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm.