

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices,
The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 10th February 2020 at 7.00 pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr M Pollington
Cllr J Taylor
Cllr J Zarczynski (Chairman)
Cllr D Sheridan-Shaw
Cllr J Hannay
Cllr J McNally
Cllr N Macve

St Paul's Ward

Cllr C Hattle-Spence
Cllr V Howard
Cllr C Kolek
Cllr P Carrigan
Cllr C Gilson
Cllr T Darrant
Cllr R Coombs
Cllr R Hanratty

In attendance

Mark Tredwin, Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr D Barrow EDDC
Cllr T McCollum EDDC
9 members of the public
2 members of the press

PART A

20/23 The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public.

20/24 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr J Wyatt (personal reasons)
Cllr N Hannay (personal reasons)
Cllr P Twiss DCC/EDDC

20/25 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

None received

20/26 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

None were made.

20/27 Public question time on items on the agenda

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had received public questions from Mr J Burgess and would respond to these in writing.

Cllr Kolek requested that the questions be read out. The Town Clerk read out the following questions:

With reference to the Extraordinary council meeting of 21st of January.

The Agenda for this meeting had one line:

To notify members of an update from Foot Anstey and confirm the time-line for arbitration.

But no time-line was reported in the minutes. Can you please therefore let me know:

1. When will the Bailey's arbitration hearing take place and when is the judgment likely?
2. Can the council confirm that over £55,000 has already been spent on this dispute and say how much has been set aside to cover the arbitration process?

Also, with reference to the council's spending:

3. Why is the council not following its own Financial regulations by publishing its monthly expenditure for approval by the council meetings? It has not done so since October last year. The last expenditure approved was for September 2019
4. Why is the Finance Committee not meeting – last minutes were for February 2019?

20/28 Mayor's announcements

The Mayor confirmed that he had attended the following events:

- The Police Awards
- Open Arms Exhibition
- Local Action Group (LAG)
- Honiton Family Church
- Honiton Community Church

20/29 To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13th January 2020 and the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting on 21st January 2020.

A copy of the minutes of the meetings had been circulated in advance and were approved by a majority vote of 14 for with 1 abstention.

20/30 Reports from District and County Councillors

The following report was received from Cllr P Twiss:

A more general report this month where the winter rain is certainly testing our Highways Teams and putting back repairs, including potholes; however as you may have seen from recent media reports the long awaited 'dragon patchers' (so called because it uses flames to dry out potholes in cold or wet weather and also cleans the surface with compressed air, sealing the pothole with a stone mix and hot bitumen emulsion) will be arriving in our area which will make the process of repair much quicker and more efficient.

Highways

There are various capital and revenue pots of money in the DCC Highways overall budget and the Traffic management budget is showing an overall increase of £2.585m, including the addition of £1m to assist in dealing with **some** of the drainage issues that have been highlighted by this exceptionally wet winter.

There is a saving of £200k shown against winter operations, but this is not a service cut, simply a review of the allocated budget based on the costs of the last 3 winters and milder winters. Within the statistics for the service, there have however been increases due primarily to the adoption of new roads and structures.

The planned increase in grass cutting should not cost any more money but deal with grass in a more efficient manner, i.e. regular verges that have been cut for safety reasons when they become 'defects' will now be dealt with routinely in a more cost effective manner.

Infrastructure

There is good news for those who commute and visit Exeter relating to infrastructure to the east of the City

Park and Change Science Park

Following DCC cabinet approval this scheme will be completed by February next year. The £2.2m scheme will provide 300 parking spaces, secure bike lockers, co bikes, co cars and electric charging points.

The site seeks to reduce congestion on the A30 Honiton road and Moor Lane.

Funding is from National Productivity Investment Fund and Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone.

Moor Lane Roundabout Upgrade

Work has started on this scheme to increase capacity on the roundabout, most of the work is off the road but for safety reasons temporary traffic lights are in use. There will be some overnight closures.

The initial phase will be completed by May. In the summer work will continue to provide an additional lane on the southern approach, from Sowton Industrial estate. The scheme is expected to be completed by the Autumn.

DCC Budget 2020/21

The figures involved in the preparation of the budget each year at DCC are very significant, but in terms of the Net Revenue Budget the total was £493,850,000 and over £1bn for the Gross (e.g. including Education) in 2019/20 and likely to be around £498,097,000 for 2020/21 once final figures from Central Government are known in the near future.

The Net budget breaks down into a number of service areas as below, with Adult Care & Health using around three quarters of the total.

<u>DCC Revenue budget 2019/20</u>	<u>£000</u>
Adult Care & Health	£232,599
Children's Services	£135,153
Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity	£ 38,577
Corporate Services	£ 32,974
Highways, Infrastructure Development & Waste	£ 54,547
<u>Total Service Budgets</u>	<u>£493,850</u>

A couple of variables that can make big differences to services delivered are that whilst DCC holds reserves of £111,172,000, most of this is allocated and with a working balance of £14,757,000 this equates to roughly 4.5 days of the Councils expenditure, so little margin for error in terms of any unforeseen and unplanned emergencies.

DCC has certain legal obligations to all residents and with little way of predicting increased demand, 3% of people account for 70% of the Adult and Children's budget which has had a huge impact on finances in recent years; with demand only going upwards this needs Government intervention to address with utmost urgency.

Police matters

One of the frequent comments I hear at Town and Parish Council meetings is either the lack of a Police report or a representative attending, largely due to reduced resources. I have now met with Inspector Lee Groves who looks after the East Devon with regard to a more meaningful system of reporting to you all and more regular engagement with him, along the lines of a Group event and I will update you as this progresses.

Cllr D Barrow provided a verbal report and made the following points:

- He is currently involved in the EDDC budget setting process and will be happy if it is approved at the next Council meeting.
- He attended the recent Open Arms event and commended the work carried out by the Thelma Hulbert Gallery who support such groups.
- EDDC have a customer survey out called "careful choices" on their website. In view of the budget constraints EDDC are looking for feedback from the local community and he would encourage all to engage with this.

Cllr T McCollum provided the following report:

1. Crowdfunding East Devon, still have about £75,000 available in the pot.

EDDC are running three free workshops sessions,

- a) Introduction to Crowdfunding – Tuesday 18th February 5pm to 6.30pm at Blackdown House in Honiton.
- b) How to create a video for your crowdfunding project – Thursday 27th February 3.30pm to 6.30pm at Blackdown House in Honiton.
- c) Introduction to Crowdfunding – Thursday 5th March 4.30 to 6pm at Exmouth Town Hall.

Anyone requiring more information please contact
crowdfund@eastdevon.gov.uk

2. My surgery at end of last month was very successful and I had several constituents attend.

At my next surgery I will also have attending our local PCSO.

3. Due to the recent increase in vandalism I am waiting for response from our local police on what action can be taken to increase patrols and deal with the culprits.
4. I have expressed my concerns to Andrew Hancock at EDDC about the state of lace walk car park public toilets. These are in desperate need of refurbishment and we have agreed to catch up to discuss possibilities.

Cllr D Barrow left the meeting at 7.20pm

20/31 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

None were received.

20/32 Update Report

There was no report.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION

20/33 Planning Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on the 26th November 2019, 7th January 2020 and 21st January 2020.

20/34 To consider the co-option of a new member to Honiton Town Council

The Clerk confirmed that the prospective candidates who were in attendance would be asked to wait in the Council's meeting room. They will then be called in alphabetical order to give their presentations and answer four questions which have been set by Members, but which will be read out by the Town Clerk.

The prospective candidates gave their presentations and answered the questions raised in the following order:

Mr Luke Dolby
Mr Stephen Keene
Mr Andy Wilkins

All Members were then given ballot papers which were then collected, and the votes were counted by the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk announced that no one candidate has received the requisite number of votes to be co-opted onto Honiton Town Council. In line with the Council's co-option policy, the candidate with the lowest number of votes would now be eliminated from the next round and the Town Clerk confirmed that this was Mr Andy Wilkins.

A second round of voting took place and the votes were counted by the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

The Mayor then announced that Mr Luke Dolby had received the requisite number of votes to be co-opted to the Council. He thanked both Mr Stephen Keene and Mr Andy Wilkins for their applications and that they should not hesitate to re-apply in the future.

20/35 Honiton Community Charity's Chairman Update

Mrs S Sexton advised that she had taken over as HCC Chair from Barry Simmonds who had stepped down due to ill health with immediate effect approximately 3 weeks prior. She paid tribute to the Town Clerk and the Deputy Mayor for all their recent assistance and confirmed that she had recently had a positive meeting with the Mayor which meant that already there was a different feel to the future relationship between HTC and HCC.

She made the following points:

- HCC appreciate that HTC has budget constraints and that HCC cannot keep asking HTC for more funding.
- As a result HCC are putting together a strategic plan which they hope will mean that HCC becomes more self-sufficient.
- Bar prices have now been increased and room hire charges for users apart from those on the community rate who are exempt, will increase from 1st April by £3.00.
- A part-time employee has been made redundant from 2nd March.
- Employees will not be having a pay increase.
- HCC only receive 30p for every £1 of ticket sales as a booking fee.
- The strategic approach is to look short/medium and long term and they are approaching local businesses for sponsorship offering platinum, gold and silver packages.
- HCC is looking at grants but it is difficult to obtain a grant for operating costs rather than capital costs.

- HCC have pushed their charity membership at a recent meeting and were able to increase the numbers.
- They attended a crowdfunding training session which was very good but which does not suit their current need for funding.
- They are talking to the Charities Aid Foundation with a view to setting up an online donation scheme whereby members of the public can donate on a monthly basis.
- HCC want to engage with HTC in respect of the Service Level Agreement and move forward to ensure that there is no further dispute regarding invoices.

Cllr Zarczynski congratulated Mrs Sexton on her appointment as Chairman of HCC.

Mrs Sexton was asked if it would assist for Councillors to form a working group to assist HCC. Mrs Sexton thanked Councillors for the offer but declined it for the time being.

Cllr Taylor suggested that the terms of the SLA should be replaced by a lump sum payment model each year rather than agreeing invoices. Mrs Sexton confirmed that there was merit in both schemes. Currently it is essential that HCC are made aware of what is disputed by HTC. She agreed that the parties could work towards a lump sum payment model but as the SLA was a contract, any alternative agreement would need to be outside the SLA.

Cllr Gilson queried whether donations could be made by direct debit and Mrs Sexton confirmed that this was being proposed as part of the CAF registration.

20/36 To consider the election of a further Councillor to the Board of Honiton Community Complex

The Town Clerk presented his report.

Cllr Taylor advised that he had never received any written communication regarding his meeting with HCC in January and that in his opinion a Honiton Town Councillor could not be a director of HCC as there would be a conflict of interest for that Councillor. He had received advice from the Monitoring Officer confirming this. Any Honiton Town Councillor who is also a Director of HCC could not vote on any items relating to HCC. HCC has 11 Trustees but if 7 or less attend a meeting then as HTC's vote cannot exceed 20% only 1 HTC Director would be able to vote at such a meeting.

Two Councillors had expressed an interest in the position, Cllr Hanratty and Cllr Jason Hannay.

Cllr Hanratty withdrew from the process.

Members **RESOLVED** by a majority vote of 14 for with 1 abstention that Cllr Jason Hannay be appointed to the Board of Honiton Community Complex (HCC) subject to HCC's agreement.

Proposed by Cllr Hanratty and seconded by Cllr Zarczynski.

20/37 To consider the composition of committees

Cllr Zarczynski opened the item stating that he had not been aware of this agenda item prior to the meeting. His understanding of the item was for Cllr Gilson's application to join the Planning Committee to be approved.

Members unanimously RESOLVED to approve Cllr Gilson's request to join the Planning Committee.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr McNally.

Cllr Zarczynski confirmed that in May the Council would have the opportunity to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor and it is then that Councillors usually put themselves forward for Committees.

Cllr Taylor stated that any Councillor who wished to join a Committee had to have their application approved by Full Council.

Cllr Kolek asked whether Councillors could join or withdraw from a Committee at any time and this was confirmed.

Cllr Jason Hannay queried the composition of Committees and stated that he had contacted the Town Clerk with concerns.

Cllr Kolek asked whether the HR Committee had met earlier that day?

Cllr Zarczynski confirmed that it had with Cllr Kolek querying whether the meeting had been legal.

Cllr Zarczynski advised that he was not prepared to allow this discussion to continue.

The Town Clerk advised that he had received legal advice which stated that the HR meeting which had taken place earlier that day had been ultra vires and that if a Councillor wished to discuss the composition of a committee he or she could do so under this item.

Cllr Zarczynski stated that he did not agree. The agenda item had been put onto the Agenda without his knowledge.

Cllr Hattle-Spence suggested that item 13 be delayed to the end of the meeting.

Cllr Zarczynski advised that he has sought advice from DALC and there was clearly a conflict of interpretation regarding the legality of the HR meeting. This item is not suitable for any complaint against the HR Committee – that would be a separate item which should be considered at the next Full Council meeting when it could be discussed fully. It would be inappropriate to discuss any complaints tonight.

Cllr Howard stated that her understanding was that item 13 was limited to Cllr Gilson's application to join the Planning Committee and not for Councillors to discuss joining or withdrawing from other Committees.

Cllr Hanratty queried whether the HR Committee had operated outside its remit and if so this called into question the membership of the Committee. He put forward a motion that the HR Committee be disbanded which was seconded by Cllr Pollington.

Cllr Zarczynski refused to accept the motion and made a statement alleging that the Town Clerk had deliberately put the item onto the Agenda without his knowledge. This was disputed by the Town Clerk who announced that he had that day been signed off work by his doctor due to stress.

The Town Clerk left the meeting, following by Cllr Kolek, Cllr Jason Hannay, Cllr Sheridan-Shaw and Cllr Pollington.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20pm

20/38 Youth Grant applications from Honiton Scout Group and Honiton Air Training Corps

20/39 Honiton Town Council to consider being a Fair Trade Council

20/40 Gate2Plate

20/41 VE/VJ Day Commemorations

20/42 Allotments report

20/43 Bailey Partnership Update

20/44 Data Access Request

20/45 Emails from Cllr Carrigan

20/46 To close the meeting