

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Council Offices,
The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Monday 13th January 2020 at 7.00 pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

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

St Paul's Ward

Cllr C Hattle-Spence
Cllr V Howard
Cllr C Kolek
Cllr P Carrigan
Cllr C Gilson

In attendance

Cllr P Twiss DCC/EDDC
Cllr D Barrow EDDC
Cllr T McCollum EDDC
Mark Tredwin, Honiton Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
10 members of the public
1 member of the press

PART A

20/01 The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public and offered on behalf of the Council congratulations to Heather Penwarden and Helen Reddy in relation to their inclusion in the New Year's Honours List and confirmed that a letter of congratulations would be sent to both of them on behalf of the Council.

20/02 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr T Darrant (personal reasons)
Cllr R Coombs (personal reasons)
Cllr R Hanratty (personal reasons)
Cllr J Wyatt (personal reasons)
Cllr Mike Allen EDDC

20/03 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of requests for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

Cllr C Gilson – Has applied for a grant (Agenda item 12)
Cllr J Zarczynski – Chairman of Honiton 55+ CIC who have applied for a grant (Agenda item 12)

20/04 To note the grant of dispensations made by the Town Clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

None were made.

20/05 Public question time on items on the agenda

Mr Tim Bridger spoke from the Citizens Advice to provide Councillors with an update. He made the following points:

- The Honiton office has recently been completely refurbished and was closed for a month last year.
- The re-opened office opens 4 days a week, 6 hours a day.
- In 2018 they welcomed 3,500 clients, in 2019 they welcomed 4,500 clients and are on target to welcome 5,500 clients in 2020.
- All their advisers are fully trained and accredited.
- As regards outcomes, in 2019 they achieved £800,000 for their clients and are on track to achieve £1.7million in 2020 in East Devon.
- This equates to £9.20 being generated for every £1 spent.
- CA have submitted a grant application and any grant awarded will be very welcome and appreciated.
- Any Councillors is always welcome to contact him with any questions they have, and the Town Clerk has his email address.

Cllr Taylor queried Honiton's percentage of the figures which appears to be 50% of those for the whole of East Devon.

Mr Bridger confirmed that Honiton did account for about 50% of the numbers of visitors but also the amount achieved and credited this to no-one who visits the CA going away without receiving help. He confirmed that the CA has moved to new premises in Exmouth and that they were looking for larger premises in Honiton.

Cllr Gilson confirmed that as part of her charity work, she recommends the CA and they do a wonderful job and obtain very good results for their clients.

Cllr Zarczynski thanked Mr Bridger and the CA for all their work on behalf of Honiton Town Council.

20/06 Mayor's announcements

The Mayor confirmed that he had attended the following events:

- The Beehive Christmas mulled wine and mince pies reception.
- Honiton Gymnastics Christmas displays.

20/07 To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th December 2019.

A copy of the minutes of the meetings had been circulated in advance and were approved by a majority vote of 9 for with 4 abstentions.

20/08 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr T McCollum presented the following report:

1. Management of Dowell Street, car park has been approved by East Devon Council (Cabinet)

2. EDDC Car Parks, possible increase in parking Charges, The Taff committee (Car Parking Task and Finish Forum) are still going through options, Honiton has not come up yet but will be sometime in the next two meetings
3. Graffiti Problem around Honiton, we need a register of effected areas, so can arrange removal, we can use the East Devon React team, if we don't more will appear.
4. I will be holding a drop-in surgery on the last Friday of each month as from this month at the Honiton council meeting room 5-7pm also by appointment at Black down House Monday to Friday.

Cllr D Barrow presented the following report:

His main focus is on the EDDC budget where EDDC need to find ways to spend less money over the 5 years. He is also involved in a governance review looking at how EDDC is organised and its structures such as possible changes to its Cabinet. EDDC have looked at adapting their housing stock in line with climate change targets and this would cost £25,000 per unit which would equate to a total cost of £105 million.

Cllr Taylor asked if EDDC were still paying back the loan they took out to buy the housing stock they have from National Government and Cllr Barrow confirmed that they were. How does EDDC pay for the measures to go carbon neutral – the interest rates for PLWB loans is increasing making such funding more expensive.

Cllr Kolek suggested that in time technology may be invented which would bring the costs down.

Cllr N Hannay asked what was the current deadline for the proposed works to the housing stock?

Cllr Barrow advised that there was no set deadline. EDDC however wish to address the issue as quickly as possible and agreed that new technology could assist in the future. However, there were measures that could be taken now and the public wish to see EDDC act now.

Cllr Macve confirmed that the planning committee were of the view that environmentally friendly measures such as solar panels and water harvesting equipment should be part of any new build planning application. Whilst Cllr Barrow agreed, planning applications are determined according to national planning policy and if EDDC insisted on such measures there would be no new housing in East Devon.

It was confirmed that if Councillors wished to discuss this further with Cllr Barrow

they could contact him directly.

Cllr P Twiss presented the following report:

A Good New and hopefully prosperous New Year to you all and please find below my first report of the new decade.

HMRC & other telephone Scams

The issue of telephone scams is highlighted at this time of year with tax returns for many due by the 31st of January. DCC staff have been picking up reports of scam calls where people impersonating HM Revenue and Customs staff and usually state that sum of money is owed to HMRC and requesting personal and Bank details.

Do not give any details of this type out to people over the phone and if in any doubt terminate the call and contact HMRC yourself and the advice is to treat calls of a similar nature requesting your confidential information in the same way.

Economy

With the General election done and dusted and whatever your view of the outcome we clearly need to move on from a period of stagnation where much important 'day to day' legislation potentially has been sat on the back burner and this needs to be addressed.

The Chancellor has confirmed March 11th as the date for a tax-and-spend Budget designed to begin a promised "levelling up" of economic performance across the UK. It is understood that Sajid Javid will announce a shake-up of the way the Treasury allocates investment in an attempt to even up spending between the regions, with northern England and the Midlands expected to benefit.

While it is nice to slice up the National 'cake' a little more fairly, individually as County Councillors and collectively as Devon County Council we will be lobbying our M.P.'s throughout Devon and the wider South West at every opportunity to make sure that we get a more proportionate amount of it, particularly in the areas of Adult social care and children's services.

A small fraction of the infrastructure money amount being mooted for other parts of England would fund a massive amount of pothole repairs, carriageway resurfacing, better funding for schools and our infrastructure needs for starters!

A railway passing loop to the west of Exeter enabling a half hourly service on the Exeter-Waterloo line would bring huge economic benefit to the wider Greater Exeter sub-region and reduce carbon emissions at the same time.

2020/21 budget

While DCC waits to hear the delayed announcement on the financial settlement from Government for the next financial year, the DCC Cabinet recently agreed a draft budget which will include inflation busting increases on spending for vital services,

where there will be a rise of 6.4 per cent in spending on children's services, adult care and roads across the County, meaning an extra £16 million for adult care, £9 million for children's services and £1.7million for Highways.

This means that the councils spending will rise by £31.8 million from £498 million in 2019/20 to nearly £530 million in 2020/21. Clearly with rising demand for all services there is no room for any complacency that this increase will solve all of the challenges faced by DCC and why more funding from central Government is needed and I am optimistic about this.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service have published its recommendations on how its services should be delivered in the future, following a public consultation exercise last year.

The changes that the Service is recommending for approval by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority thankfully have no local impact for us in terms of our fire stations with the key recommendations below have now been approved by them.

- a) Defer the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union, including roving appliances, before the end of the 19/20 financial year.
- b) Close Budleigh Salterton fire station and allow affected firefighters to respond from Exmouth fire station.
- c) Relocate Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters (Clyst St George) and relocate one of the fire engines to Middlemoor fire station (both fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor).
- d) Remove the third fire engines from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil.
- e) Remove the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes.
- f) Introduce variable fire engine availability dependent on risk.

Cllr Twiss added that having regard to the climate change discussions, he recently attended a meeting with STRATA when cloud computing was discussed as this is not as environmentally friendly as some may think.

Cllr Taylor queried whether the Government would be increasing the payment per pupil funding. Cllr Twiss confirmed that DCC are lobbying hard for this to happen.

Cllr P Twiss left the meeting at 7.30pm

20/09 Reports from Councillors with Special Responsibilities

Cllr Kolek confirmed that following the recent public meeting, a report from herself and Cllr Wyatt regarding this would be brought to Full Council in February and apologised for the delay.

20/10 Update Report

The Town Clerk presented the report which was noted.

PART A MATTERS FOR DECISION**20/11 Planning Committee Minutes**

Members received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 10th December 2019.

20/12 Honiton Community Charity's Chairman update

Mr B Simmonds as Chair of HCC thanked the Town Council for the invite and presented his report and made the following points:

- The Board is looking at a new business model which puts more emphasis on fund raising.
- Fundraising is required for projects but also operational costs.
- The Board has identified a need for £85k of fundraising in addition to revenue anticipated to include payments by HTC under the SLA.
- The cause of the shortfall is mainly as a result of increased staffing costs. The existing paid staff already work many hours of overtime free and this needs to be rectified.
- Mr David Perkins has resigned as Chief Financial Officer and a replacement is currently being sought.
- The Board is aware that there is a need for fundraising for short term financial need and long-term financial need.
- The Board is looking to bring in someone to develop fundraising opportunities.
- The Board and all the volunteers are working very hard and with a lot of enthusiasm to achieve the fundraising needed.
- The Board has looked at the following 5 streams of funding opportunities:
 1. Users - the Board will be slowly increasing its prices and hope to raise +£20k but is keen to limit the increases to a level which will not lead to a fall in the number of users.
 2. Third party funding such as Lottery grants. Most of these are long-term funding solutions and only having 5 years left on the lease means that they do not qualify for some funding pots. If the building was renamed as an Arts Centre as well as a Community Centre this could lead to Arts Council funding.
 3. Commercial via local companies. Whilst East Devon does not have any large employers, they hope to obtain pledges from smaller local businesses.
 4. Individuals – crowd funding, patrons.
 5. Local Authorities – EDDC (match funding), HTC – the Board will need to have further discussions regarding the SLA and there is a need to understand what the Council is proposing regarding the lease.
- The Board is looking at the feasibility of all the above over the next two months, at which point it will review its position. There is a clear need for stability and continuity plans in order to secure bookings.

Cllr Zarczynski thanked Mr Simmonds for his report on behalf of the Council.

20/13 Budget Planning report

The Town Clerk presented the report and advised that there was a need to increase the precept to deliver Council projects and an increase in grant funding. Currently Honiton has one of the lowest precepts in East Devon.

Cllr Zarczynski supported raising the precept as the increase was to fund projects which would benefit the town.

Cllr Taylor queried the increase and the % information provided by the Town Clerk in the report.

Cllr Jason Hannay was of the view that Honiton had been left somewhat behind other towns and supported an increase in the precept if this will help the town from the young to the elderly.

Cllr McNally supported this minimal increase but would not support a higher figure. Cllr Kolek queried the extra payment per year per household and the Town Clerk confirmed that this would equate to an average of £2.29 per year.

Cllr Kolek queried the budget for legal fees as this only provided £1500 for legal fees which will be insufficient.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there was currently £31,000.00 in legal fees which will need to be allocated by the end of the financial year. This will either need to be taken from ear marked reserves or general reserves. Alternatively, there are two budget headings which the monies could be taken from namely allotments and neighbourhood plan. A decision regarding the allocation of these monies will need to be made by March and those costs should not impact on the new projects proposed or services to be provided in 2020/21.

Cllr Kolek stressed the need to ensure that it is clear that the proposed increase in the precept is not to cover legal fees incurred/to be incurred by the Council.

Members **RESOLVED** by a majority vote of 12 for with 1 against to approve the budget as prepared for and amended as the meeting on the 13th January 2020.

Proposed by Cllr McNally and seconded by Cllr Howard.

Members **RESOLVED** by a majority vote of 12 for with 1 against to increase the Precept from £277,637 to £299.660 for the financial year 2020-2021.

20/14 Grants awards 2019-20

The Town Clerk thanked Carolyn Bowles for the work and her report, and Sonia Hawkins for her assistance. All policy compliant applicants' applications fall within

the grant budget, including the application from Citizens Advice as they have now provided the necessary paperwork.

The Council's agreed policy allows for an audit trail. The applicants who are not policy compliant are mainly those who have not yet been set up and the Town Clerk will help them as much as possible, but it would not be prudent to provide grants to those applicants who are not policy compliant. As an example, Joe Gilson Mobility Scheme could be assisted by the Council purchasing the tables and containers required and then loaning them out to the organisation. The Offwell Recreation Ground and Village Hall Charity Play Park project could be assisted through S106 monies.

All applicants who are not successful with their grant application will receive a letter explaining why they have been unsuccessful and inviting them to re-apply in June/July when there will be a second round of grant funding.

The Town Clerk confirmed that all Councillors were at liberty also to contact grant applicants directly and offer their assistance.

Cllr Taylor queried what CA were included in the grant applications as theirs was an automatic grant.

Members **RESOLVED** by 11 votes for with 2 abstentions to approve the grant applications along with the recommended amounts.

Proposed by Cllr McNally and seconded by Cllr Hattle-Spence.

Members **RESOLVED** by 12 votes for with 1 abstention that the Mayor and the Town Clerk would discuss with Cllr Gilson how best to obtain the equipment needed which can then be loaned out.

Proposed by Cllr Zarczynski and seconded by Cllr Kolek.

20/15 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 8.25pm.