

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 8th
January 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr J Brown
Cllr J Fotheringham
Cllr N Ingham
Cllr L Passmore-Smart
Cllr C Maunder
Cllr T McCollum (Chair)
Cllr R Sexton
Cllr S Thorne
Cllr L Wakefield

St Paul's Ward

Cllr A Pearsall
Cllr S Craddock
Cllr D Hulin
Cllr C Kolek
Cllr S Sexton
Cllr K Cloke (until 7.15pm)

In attendance

Stephen Hill, Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
6 members of the public /4 members of the public (zoom)

Cllr T McCollum thanked Ms Helen Hurford and Mr Steve Keene (in attendance) for their contribution to Honiton Town Council during their time in office.

23/246 Election of the Town Council Chairman

Cllr K Cloke resigned from the Council with immediate effect and left the meeting.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to elect Cllr McCollum as Town Council Chairman for the remainder of 2023/24

Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Hulin.

Members RESOLVED to elect Cllr McCollum as Town Mayor for the remainder of 2023/24.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Pearsall.

For 13; Against 0; Abstentions 1.

23/247 Election of the Town Council Deputy Chairman

Members RESOLVED to elect Cllr S Sexton as Deputy Chairman (also to be known as the Deputy Town Mayor) for the remainder of 2023/24.

Proposed by Cllr Passmore-Smart and seconded by Cllr Wakefield.

For 11; Against 1; Abstentions 2

23/248 Apologies for absence

Cllr R Coombs (personal)
Cllr P Twiss (DCC)

23/249 Declarations of Interests

Cllr McCollum – Personal Interest (Item 23/265)

Cllr Ingham – Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/261)
Cllr Fotheringham - Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/261)
Cllr S Thorne - Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/265)
Cllr J Brown – Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/262, 23/263, and 23/264).
Cllr S Sexton – Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/262, 23/263 and 23/264).
Personal Interest (Item 23/265)
Cllr R Sexton – Pecuniary Interest (Items 23/256, 23/262, 23/263, 23/264
and 23/268).
Cllr Wakefield – Pecuniary Interest (Item 23/265)

23/250 Dispensations

The Clerk confirmed that he had granted either one of Cllrs Brown, R Sexton and S Sexton a dispensation in relation to items 23/262, 23/263 and 23/264 which allowed one of them to remain in the meeting whilst the agenda items were being discussed, to debate the items but would prevent him/her from voting.

23/251 Public Question Time for items on the agenda

Question from Mr P Carrigan – [see attached](#)
Question from Mr J Zarczynski – [see attached](#)

23/252 Exempt Business

Members RESOLVED to take items 23/265 into exempt business.

Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Kolek

For 11; Against 3; Abstentions 0

23/253 Reports from District and County Councillors

The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Twiss had sent in the [attached report](#).

Cllr J Brown provided the [attached report](#) and added the following:

- EDDC has received some negative feedback re their car parking strategy in that some residents have complained about not being able to park in EDDC carparks. EDDC will therefore be holding a workshop in February 2024 to discuss this. One option is to limit the parking to ½ day.
- SWW has received extensive media coverage recently. The Chairman of SWW has been invited to attend EDDC's Scrutiny Committee on 1st February 2024.

Cllr Kolek expressed her disappointment that once again no other EDDC Ward member was in attendance and Cllr Brown confirmed that she would relay this to the other EDDC Honiton Ward Councillors.

23/254 Reports from Honiton Town Council Members with Special Responsibilities and/or on Outside Bodies

Cllr R Sexton provided the [attached report](#) on the Chamber of Commerce

Cllr S Sexton advised as follows:

- She had attended a TRIP meeting earlier in the day with Cllr McCollum. TRIP are looking at taking on a lease for the old pharmacy next to Honiton Surgery.
- She thanked all those involved in Operation Rudolph which she attended with other councillors but especially Cllr Thorne for a very successful event.

Cllr Thorne confirmed that she had sent in a letter of thanks to the Town Council for its support – [see attached](#) and that the event had been a group effort.

Cllr McCollum advised as follows:

- Unfortunately, he had had missed the Christmas Tree Lights Switch on for the first time in 14 years due to illness.
- There had been a reduced display of Christmas Lights in Honiton this year due to ongoing gas works and some light failures.
- He has passed on to Mark Regan, the new HTC maintenance employee the responsibility for the Christmas Lights.
- He had attended in December a paving slab inspection with Cllr Twiss (DCC) where 140 loose paving slabs were identified and over 200 reinstated incorrectly. DCC's report was now awaited.
- DCC's parking meters survey had now concluded and DCC's response was awaited. The issue had received some TV coverage.

23/255 Reports and Recommendations from Working Groups and Meetings.

The Town Clerk confirmed that no reports had been received from any Working Groups and that any Committee recommendations were already on the Agenda separately.

23/256 Correspondence: 6th December 2023 – 2nd January 2024

Members **NOTED** the correspondence received.

23/257 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 11th December 2023.

Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 11 December 2023

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 11, Against 0, Abstentions 3.

23/258 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Planning Committee 12 December 2023; Finance & Policy Committee 18 December 2023 and Town Management Committee 4 December 2023.

23/259 Membership of Committees and Working Groups

Cllr S Sexton resigned from the Strategy Committee.

Cllrs Ingham, Thorne and Fotheringham resigned as Council representatives on the IRF Coast to Country Project.

Cllr Brown volunteered to be the Council representative on the IRF Coast to Country Project.

Cllr Hulin resigned as Council representative on the Fair-Trade Honiton Steering Group.

Mr S Keene was proposed as a member of the Market Working Group

Cllrs Wakefield, Pearsall and Kolek joined the Green and Open Spaces Committee.

Cllr Fotheringham resigned from the Finance & Policy Committee.

Cllrs McCollum and R Sexton were nominated as points of contact for HTC's Emergency Plan.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the above changes.

Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Pearsall

23/260 South Western Railway's Annual Stakeholder Survey

Members RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk to provide a response to SWR's survey on behalf of the Town Council.

Proposed by Cllr McCollum and seconded by Cllr Brown.

For 12, Against 0, Abstentions 2

Cllrs Ingham and Fotheringham left the meeting at 19.50pm

23/261 Council Office phones for Sale

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the sale of 5no. redundant office phones to Magellan Systems Ltd at £100.00 total.

Proposed by Cllr McCollum and seconded by Cllr Passmore-Smart

Cllrs Ingham and Fotheringham returned to the meeting at 19.52pm

Cllrs S and R Sexton left the meeting at 19.52pm

23/262 Budget for Honiton Community Complex 23/24

Members RESOLVED to accept the Recommendations of the Finance & Policy Committee to transfer by virement £40k Budgets 23/24 towards financial support of Honiton Community Complex and (if necessary) from Earmarked Reserves.

Proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 8, Against 1, Abstention 3.

23/263 Earmarked Reserves

Members RESOLVED

a) To approve the current EMR

Proposed by Cllr Fotheringham and seconded by Cllr Pearsall

For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 3

b) To propose EMR to a future Full Council (after closedown of accounts 23/24)

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Hulin

For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 3.

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to paragraph 17 of his report where he advised that there was a risk that Honiton Town Council had insufficient reserves to cover 6 months operating costs or 3-month running costs plus additional emerging costs. Whilst Members were not being asked to make decisions regarding this at the meeting, the Town Clerk would report further after the annual close down. This was not new news as the Clerk had reported previously on several occasions that Honiton Town Council's reserves were low with borrowing very high.

Cllr McCollum suggested that Members bear the above in mind during the rest of the financial year.

Cllrs R and S Sexton returned to the meeting at 19.59pm

23/264 Budget 24/25

Members discussed the proposed budget 2024/25 omitting the budget lines relating to the Beehive and HCC.

- Freezing the budget year on year has a detrimental effect on the Council's finances in that this leads to high increases. It is better to have yearly increases. Is a 31% increase of the precept for 24/25 sufficient to fund the projects planned?
- Cost of living crisis has led to increases across the board – HTC has no choice but to increase the precept.

Members RESOLVED to approve the Budget 24/25.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Passmore-Smart

For; 12, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Cllrs R and S Sexton left the meeting at 20.05pm

Members discussed the budget lines relating to the Beehive/Honiton Community Complex:

4405 Room hire	£6500
4410 Service Charge/Underwriting	£11,000
Beehive	£60,000
4460 HCC Underwriting	£0
Total	£77,500

Cllr Ingham queried whether the budget line "Beehive" at £60k was for lease/tender/marketing/dilapidations costs for the Beehive or Underwriting?

The Town Clerk confirmed that the £60,000 budget line was for the Beehive building and would cover whatever costs were required for the running of the building which could include underwriting of Honiton Community Complex. Budget line 3355 Beehive Strategy would cover any legal/tender fees. HTC and HCC have not yet agreed an underwriting agreement for April 2024 to March 2025 but Finance & Policy Committee did identify a proposal to budget for underwriting of £60,000. He expects HCC to contact HTC with regards to a new underwriting agreement for April 2024 onwards. The Beehive budget line is further to a recommendation from the Finance & Policy Committee and it is for Full Council to decide whether to accept that recommendation. However, a budget does need to be set at the meeting.

Cllr McCollum suggested that it would be better to have a budget line for any possible underwriting rather than having to take funds out of reserves.

Cllr Wakefield advised that HCC were working very hard and making improvements and as such a budget of £5,000 per month was a sound amount to propose.

Cllr Pearsall advised that a budget line was required as otherwise the community would be let down on other projects.

Members RESOLVED to approve the Budget lines 24/25 relating to HCC/The Beehive.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Wakefield

For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1.

Cllrs R and S Sexton returned to the meeting at 8.10pm

Members discussed the proposed Precept at £595,225.

The Town Clerk reiterated that the proposed Precept was low compared to other Councils.

Cllr R Sexton noted that other Council had higher non precept receipts and queried how Honiton Town Council could increase its non-precept income.

Cllr McCollum advised that unfortunately this would be difficult at HTC had no assets apart from the market and the Battishorne Way Allotments.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Precept 24/25 at £595,225.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Fotheringham.

The following item 23/265 was taken into exempt business at 8.20pm

23/265 Grants 23/24

Members RESOLVED to provide Allhallows Museum with a grant of up to £5000.00 subject to the repair costs not being covered in full or in part by one or more of the grant applications submitted to the Battishorne Trust, Honiton Lions and Allhallows Charity.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Kolek

For 12; Against 0; Abstentions 2

Members RESOLVED not to accept any grant applications received after a grant deadline had expired.

Proposed by Cllr McCollum and seconded by Cllr Pearsall

For: 13; Against 0; Abstentions 1.

Cllr Thorne left the meeting at 21.07pm

Members RESOLVED to provide a grant of £5,000 to the CUB.

Proposed by Cllr Kolek and seconded by Cllr Ingham.

For 8; Against 2; Abstentions 3.

Cllr Thorne returned to the meeting which resumed in public session at 21.11pm

23/266 Extension of meeting

Members RESOLVED unanimously to extend the meeting until 9.30pm

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

23/267 Bank Signatories

Members RESOLVED unanimously to appoint Cllrs Andrew Pearsall and Lucy Wakefield as additional bank signatories for the Unity Trust Bank Accounts.

Proposed by Cllr McCollum and seconded by Cllr Passmore-Smart

23/268 Accounts

Members RESOLVED to approve the schedule of accounts for December 2023 payments.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Thorne

For 12; Against 0; Abstentions 3.

23/269 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.