

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Town Council on
Monday 14th April 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr M Baldock
Cllr J Fotheringham
Cllr T McCollum (Chair)
Cllr R Sexton
Cllr M Sheen
Cllr S Thorne
Cllr L Wakefield

St Paul's Ward

Cllr S Craddock
Cllr D Hayler
Cllr C McCollum
Cllr S Sexton
Cllr H Turner
Cllr A Pearsall

In attendance

Stephen Hill, Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr P Twiss DCC
Cllr R Collins EDDC – via Zoom
Cllr R Coombs – via Zoom
2 Members of the public – via Zoom
1 Member of the public

Cllr McCollum welcomed Cllr C McCollum as Councillor for St Paul's Ward.

24/320 Re-ordering of the Agenda

Members RESOLVED unanimously to re-order items 24/334 and 24/335 to be debated after item 24/333.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr S Sexton.

24/321 Apologies for absence

Cllr J Brown (personal)
Cllr R Coombs (personal)
Cllr C Kolek (personal)

24/322 Declarations of Interests

Cllr R Sexton - Pecuniary Interest Items 24/336, 24/337, 24/335, 24/339 and 24/340
Cllr S Sexton - Pecuniary Interest Items 24/336, 24/337, 24/335, 24/339 and 24/340
Cllr T McCollum – Personal Interest Item 24/333.

24/323 Dispensations

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had granted either Cllr R Sexton or Cllr S Sexton a dispensation in relation to items 24/336, 24/337, 24/335, 24/339 and 24/340 which allowed one of them to

remain in the meeting whilst these agenda items were being discussed, contributing to the debate but would prevent them from voting.

24/324 Public Question Time for items on the agenda

The Town Clerk read out the attached questions received from [Mrs Jill McNally](#). Cllr McCollum advised that this item was on the agenda to discuss at item 24/337.

24/325 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr P Twiss welcomed Cllr C McCollum to Honiton Town Council. The attached report was received from [Cllr P Twiss](#).

Cllr P Twiss left the meeting at 7.10pm

The attached report was received from [Cllr McCollum \(EDDC\)](#).

Cllr R Sexton advised as follows:

- He had attended: Police Awards where local policemen had been honoured and Police Advocates meeting. Honiton Town Council does not have a nominated Cllr.
- Honiton Town Council does not receive regular crime statistics.

It was suggested that crime statistics for Honiton could be collated from the Police UK website.

The Town Clerk confirmed that whilst Honiton Town Council had two Councillors with special responsibilities for Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour, Honiton Town Council could nominate a Councillor to attend the Police Advocates meetings at the Annual Council meeting in May.

24/326 Reports from Honiton Town Council Members with Special Responsibilities and/or on Outside Bodies

Cllr H Turner reported that The Den now had 17 regular attendees. The Trustees were currently opening a new bank account and were calling for more volunteers.

Cllr S Thorne had attended the Citizens Advice meeting. The Honiton office is closing due to the high rental cost of £22k per annum. Citizens Advice will continue to have a presence in Honiton via surgeries. There have been trustee changes and there will be redundancies. CA has recruited 10-15 new volunteers, but they take time and cost to train. Cllr Thorne will forward the reports provided by CA. These show that over £100k has been put back into the town of which 85% is estimated as being spent in Honiton.

Cllr McCollum advised that he and the Town Crier had had the pleasure of attending Adelaide Lodge on Saturday 22nd March 2025 to wish one of their residents a Happy 107th Birthday.

24/327 Correspondence: 6th March 2025 – 9th April 2025

Members **NOTED** the correspondence received. Cllr Craddock confirmed that similar graffiti had been found at Honiton Train Station.

24/328 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10th March 2025

Cllr Fotheringham pointed out that minute 24/309 related to a discussion about the St Paul's Surgery on 10th April 2025. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that at item 24/295 the correct planning reference was 23/1897/MOUT.

Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 10 March 2025

Proposed by Cllr Baldock and seconded by Cllr S Sexton.

For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 3

24/329 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Members **NOTED** the item.

24/330 Membership of Committees and Working Groups

Cllr Pearsall volunteered to join the Town Management Committee. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Strategy Committee had resolved that the Tourism and Economy Working Group end and that Strategy Committee encompass Strategy, Tourism and Economy.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the above changes

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

24/331 Annual Town Meeting

Members RESOLVED unanimously to have an Annual Town Meeting on Monday 28 April 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Thorne and seconded by Cllr Wakefield

24/332 Project Implementation Plans (PIPs)

Cllr Wakefield queried the absence of the PIPs completed for Pride event, Youth Council and Flowerpot competition. The Town Clerk confirmed that these would be on the Agenda in May for approval. Cllr Thorne noted that the Totally Local PIP referred to the Chamber of Commerce (now disbanded). Cllr McCollum confirmed that this would be amended.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the PIPs for Youth Support, Town Centre Management, Verges and Roundabout, Dangerous Parking, High St/New St Safety Improvements, Totally Local, Community Engagement and Quality Award.

Proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr Hayler.

24/333 Allocation of S106 Funds: Sports Facilities

Cllr Fotheringham queried whether the works would impact on the Charter Day event. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would make enquiries.

Members RESOLVED unanimously the preferred allocation of S106 funds.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Craddock

24/334 Devon Local Government Re-organisation (LGR)

Cllr Fotheringham queried whether realistically some of the services such as waste collection and recycling, planning and housing were likely to be devolved to HTC.

Cllr R Sexton conceded that some of the listed services were likely to remain with any new Unitary Authority.

Cllr Thorne suggested that the changes were an opportunity for Honiton Town Council to provide input and powers which would assist the community.

Members NOTED the Government's English Devolution White Paper (December 2024), East Devon District Council's and Devon County Council's responses; Cllr R Sexton's draft paper (Planning for Unitary Authorities) and RESOLVED to delegate to the Strategy Committee the consideration of the Planning for Unitary Authorities paper and its circulation to DALC, EDDC and DCC.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

For 11; Against 2; Abstentions 0.

24/335 Accounts

Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve all payments except HTC 21089, HTC 21096 and HTC 21098.

Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Fotheringham

Cllrs R Sexton left the meeting at 19.41pm

Members RESOLVED to approve payments HTC 21089, HTC 21096 and HTC 21098

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Wakefield
For 10; Against 1; Abstentions 1

24/336 Draft Beehive Lease and Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The Town Clerk confirmed that Heads of Terms and draft lease and SLA had been received from the Council's solicitor and had been considered by the Beehive Working Group whose comments have been sent to the solicitor. Those comments are not included in the draft lease and SLA currently provided. Cllr Fotheringham confirmed that the proposed changes related to some formatting and typing errors, the SMART targets and responsibility for external maintenance.

No comments had yet been received from HCC, but HCC has advised that it is consulting with its Charity Members and seeking legal advice on the consultation.

Cllr S Sexton queried the simultaneous reference to disputes being dealt with through Arbitration and by the Secretary of State for Health and advised that it was unlikely that HCC would agree to paragraphs 3.5, 3.6 and 4.1 of the SLA.

The Town Clerk advised that paragraph 4.1 (b) was unlawful as written and would be amended. Paragraph 3.5 may be amended following the consultation with HCC.

Cllr S Sexton advised that HCC's solicitor was waiting for both documents to be finalised prior to commenting and that the Charity Members will be considering all matters at a meeting in June 2025.

Cllr Fotheringham noted that the Beehive Working Group had been negotiating with the HCC Directors in good faith as HCC had made it clear that a new lease was a priority to remove the uncertainty from staff members and that it was disconcerting to hear that the Charity Members now had to be consulted. Do the Charity Members have a right to vote on the lease and SLA?

Cllr S Sexton confirmed that the HCC Directors had also been negotiating in good faith but that their authority to do so had been challenged by a Charity member. HCC was therefore seeking legal advice to ensure that any decision would not be challenged subsequently. Due to the time constraints and notice requirements the meeting could not be held sooner than in June 2025.

Cllr Craddock queried whether the Charity members could vote against signing the draft lease/SLA.

Cllr S Sexton confirmed that this would depend on the advice received from the solicitor. It was unfortunate that the challenge from the Charity member had arrived so late.

The Town Clerk confirmed that with the current lease ending in September 2025 an agreement was needed as soon as possible and that the closer the parties got to September 2025 the higher the risk that no lease would be in place. This was worrying. Cllr Thorne queried whether Honiton Town Council still had a Plan B, and this was confirmed by the Town Clerk.

Members RESOLVED

a. The comments above on the new long-term Lease of the Beehive

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Pearsall
For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1

b. The comments above on the new Service Level Agreement (supplemental to the Lease) of the Beehive

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Craddock
For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1

c. To dispose of the Beehive via a long lease for use as a community venue

Proposed by Cllr Fotheringham and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1

d. To Delegate to the Town Clerk to amend the draft Lease and Service Level Agreement (in consultation with the Beehive Working Group) to make a final draft

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Wakefield
For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1

e. That the final draft Lease and Service Level Agreement be provided to Honiton Community Complex for its agreement.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Pearsall
For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 1

24/337 Changing Places

Members discussed the proposal and made the following points:

- The Changing Places was a vital resource for the town and the lack of usage relates to lack of knowledge as to its existence, publicity regarding opening hours, incorrect information on Changing Places website.
- Grants may be available for the repair works required.
- The Changing Places facility at the LED centre is for users only.
- The Newholme facility has closed.
- Could the new proposed lease/SLA contain a maintenance clause?

- Alternative provision could be provided by the disabled toilet at the rear of the building although this may not provide a hoist or table.
- The existing Changing Places room was a large space which could be better used for storage.
- HCC had made it clear at the HCC/HTC review meetings that additional storage space was desperately needed.
- Did the Honiton 55+ have a facility for which HTC could provide a grant to enable wider usage?
- HCC has not provided sufficient detail as to the alternative facilities to be provided in the disabled toilet.
- HCC has not addressed safeguarding issues posed by the access to the disabled toilet

Cllr Pearsall proposed to approve the alteration of the Changing Places room to provide storage (and the improvement to the backstage disabled toilet facility). This was seconded by Cllr Wakefield.

For 2; Against 7; Abstentions 3.

The motion failed.

24/338 Exempt Business

Members RESOLVED unanimously to take the following items into exempt business.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

24/339 Underwriting of Honiton Community Complex (HCC) Costs

Cllr Pearsall advised that the last review meeting had been on 5th March 2025 and as such he had nothing to report.

Members RESOLVED to agree to underwrite total contribution to HCC of £5000.00 for January 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 9, Against 2, Abstentions 1.

24/340 Formal Response to External Auditor: Challenge to AGAR 23/24

Members RESOLVED to approve its formal response to the External Auditor regarding an accepted for consideration challenge from members of public to AGAR 23/24.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Wakefield

For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 2.

24/341 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.