**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 7th NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE GUILDHALL TOTNES**

Present: Councillors Cohen (Chair), Westacott MBE, Whitty, Vint, M Adams, R Adams, Barker, Elliot-Smith, Hart-Williams, Paine, Piper, Sermon, Sweett, Hodgson and Simms

Apologies: Councillor Hendriksen

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Town Clerk), Peter Bethel (Town Sergeant), 2 members of the press, 5 members of the public and District Councillors Green and Birch

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| No | Subject | Comments |
|  | Before the meeting the Council will receive the following presentations:  An update from the Destination Manager about tourism support in the town. | An update was received from the Destination Manager in which she outlined her overall aim to start marketing Totnes to a wider audience. See attached briefing notes. |
| 1 | To receive apologies. | It was **RESOLVED** to receive the apologies. |
| 2 | The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have made any amendments necessary to their Declaration of Interests, if appropriate. | There were no amendments. |
| 3 | *The Council will adjourn for the following items:*  Public Questions: A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Council or other items that affect Totnes.  Reports from County and District Councillors  *The Council will convene.* | Members of the public spoke about the following items:  A member of an adjoining parish spoke about the Totnes Hospital League of Friends 60th anniversary celebration in the church, which was attended by many local groups. He understood that an invitation had been sent to all town councillors and was dismayed to find that only one attended. He believes that the invitation was to all councillors and not just the mayor and wanted to know why this invitation was not passed on.  He also spoke about the Mayor’s attendance at a performance of Handel’s Messiah in Exeter cathedral. He considered that this music contains Christian content and that the Mayor should therefore rethink her position on church attendance and attend the church service for Remembrance Sunday.  *The Mayor replied and explained firstly that the invitation had been sent simply to the Town Council and that it was unclear that all councillors were invited. The Mayor’s PA did also phone to check to whom it was addressed and again it was not specified that it was for all councillors. Secondly, the Mayor explained that she sees music such as Handel’s Messiah as a work of art to be appreciated for that reason and not for its connection to religion. She declined to comment on her attendance at church.*  A resident who had previously expressed concern about SHDC allegedly holding discussions in secret about developments in the town asked that members of the community be allowed to attend such alleged meetings because these developments are so important and we should not be shut out from financial discussions.  He also asked about the ATMOS referendum and was referred to the SHDC website for information because the Town Council was not able to comment during Purdah.  A resident spoke about the traffic in Fore St and High St. He considers that, in the event of a serious emergency, vehicles would not be able to get through and he showed photographs of a particular day and time as evidence.  A member of an adjoining parish asked about the Cemetery Chapel and why it could not be used for non-denominational funerals. She considered that this would be a good use of the Chapel and stated that she was previously told that there was no capacity in the office to manage such an arrangement.  *The Town Clerk replied and explained that the decision not to proceed with such an arrangement was not to do with capacity but that, having met with local funeral directors, it was clear that there was no market for a non-denominational chapel in this area.*  County Councillor Vint  He has met with the head of Highways and has suggested key changes to procurement policy. Cllr Piper asked about this because he thinks Highways maintenance contract is a very confusing document particularly with reference to monopoly. He asked if the arrangements would be under scrutiny and not result in similar situations to the ten year wait for a crossing at the Grove school. Councillor Vint took the points for action.  Councillor Vint has asked DCC to set up a system across the whole county showing how S106 money is spent and making things more transparent.  Councillor Hodgson asked about the cycle racks which have been removed from the Civic Square and which need to be reinstated. The racks belong to the District Council and will be relocated following discussions with the cycling group on TTTF.  Councillor Hodgson asked about the issue of Shared Space and when it will come up again on the HATOC agenda. Although the Town Council wants to discuss this, DCC has indicated that there are no funds for this at present.  Electric vehicle charging points – Councillor Vint is trying to revive a project from a few years ago to identify charging points within the town.  District Councillor Vint  Removal of pay phones: one on Plymouth Rd opposite the Cemetery; and one near Westonfields. The former was used 83 times and the latter 6 in the last year. He has asked for more info about whether or not they were use at night for emergencies before making a decision.  District Councillor Green  The date for the next draft of the Joint Local Plan has been put back to 6th March 2017 but with the intention still to adopt the Plan by winter 2017. It was agreed that Totnes needs to adopt its NP before then.  There will be a consultation in the spring on the devolution plans. This will focus on the combined authority section and governance arrangements rather than the economic element of the deal. There could be a link between devolution and the proposed Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC): if the South West achieves a devolution deal, this could lead to the creation of more unitary authorities, in which case the LACC could be providing the services for that unitary authority.  If the LACC goes ahead as planned there would be an arms-length company and councillors would have far less control over things like scrutiny. The Board of Directors could also be from outside the authority.  There will be 3 Atmos briefing sessions for anyone wanting to find out more about the referendum.  Councillor Green apologised on behalf of SHDC about the phone and email problems and hopes the situation will improve.  District Councillor Birch  SHDC Cllr Hicks has released a video explaining why T3 should stay in the local plan and he also read out a statement to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Birch was very disappointed that other councillors were not allowed to ask any questions about this at the time.  There will be Members’ sessions about the JLP on 10th and 16th November which are not open to the public: our district cllrs will emphasise the T3 issues.  An abandoned vehicle on the bridge advertising a garage which is not even in Totnes is now with the SHDC Enforcement team and action will be taken to remove it.  A question was asked about present employees taking up positions in a new LACC: they would be subject to TUPE regulations and their employment rights retained for a specified period. The SHDC pension deficit is a concern and they are taking legal advice on this.  Charitable events and charges for use of areas owned by SHDC: the original WG which produced a document proposing the charges has been disbanded and the process is starting again. Councillor Birch is on the new Committee and he will propose that there is no charge for charitable events. |
| 4 | To approve and sign the Minutes of the following Meetings :   1. Full Council 3rd October 2016 2. Operations Committee 6th October 2016 3. People Committee 19th October and 1st November 2016 4. Planning Committee 22nd September and 13th October 2016 5. Personnel Committee 17th October 2016 | It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the following meetings:  a. Full Council 3rd October 2016  b. Operations Committee 6th October 2016  c. People Committee 19th October and 1st November 2016  d. Planning Committee 22nd September and 13th October 2016  e. Personnel Committee 17th October 2016 |
| 5 | To consider any matters arising from the Minutes. | The following matters arose:  Full Council  Item 5  Cllr Hodgson wanted more information about the statement given by the Mayor in response to a query about the present wage bill. She questioned the figures presented for the 2009 wage bill and said that she did not think they were accurate. The Town Clerk explained that the figures were taken from the 2009 wage file, in which all payments to staff are recorded using official reports. Councillor Hodgson was invited to look for herself at this file.  Operations Committee  Item 2  It was **RESOLVED** to get quotations for memorial safety testing.  Item 3  Eastgate Clock Lease  Councillors M Adams, Westacott MBE and Whitty declared an interest as members of the Museum Trust and did not vote.  It was **RESOLVED** to advise the Costume Museum that we need a sub-lease for them for 5 years at £1 per year.  It was **RESOLVED** to offer the Museum Trust a 5 year renewal on their lease at £1 per annum. The space will be shared with the Costume Museum and the Town Council and the Museum will be requested to tidy up and reduce unnecessary holdings in the space.  Item 9  It was **RESOLVED** to hold two budget training sessions for all councillors. The Town Clerk will arrange these.  It was **RESOLVED** to summons a Full Council meeting on 30th January 2017 in order to agree and set the budget.  People Committee 1st November 2016  Item 4  Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:   * Write to the Sec of State for Health and NHS England asking for the NHS Success Regime project for Devon to be cancelled due to the flawed and misleading consultation process * Write to the CCG rejecting the proposed cuts and asking for adequate funds to be invested in local services and local hospitals * Support local community services and voluntary groups who look after the health and wellbeing of Totnes residents.   Item 5  Councillor Whitty explained that there were no financial implications for the Open Space Policy until the NP had been adopted. The Plan is necessary so that SHDC knows how to spend S106 money.  It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Neighbourhood Planning Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy.  It was **RESOLVED** to support the application for Leechwell Garden to be listed as a local green space.  Councillor Whitty was thanked for his very detailed piece of work.  Item 6  It was **RESOLVED** to fund the Christmas Family Fun nights in the Civic Hall at a cost of £500.  Item 7  It was **RESOLVED** to make the People Committee meetings monthly rather than bi-monthly. |
| 6 | To receive the following proposal from Cllr Hodgson: “That in light of the public concern regarding the future of the town centre site (known as T3), Totnes Town Council formally requests South Hams District Council to remove this controversial site from the Joint Local Plan with the provision that Totnes Neighbourhood Plan group is allowed to propose how appropriate areas or zones of this site should be redeveloped further to their public consultation processes.” | This was received and discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to support the proposal with a slight amendment as follows:  In the light of the public concern regarding the future of the town centre site (known as T3), Totnes Town Council formally requests SHDC to remove this controversial site from the Joint Local Plan with the provision that Totnes Neighbourhood Plan group is allowed to propose how appropriate areas or zones of this site could be redeveloped further to their public consultation processes. |
| 7 | To receive the following proposal from Cllr Hodgson: “That Totnes Town Council will support the designation of the civic square / market area and Leechwell Gardens as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and investigate transferring the ownership of these areas together with the car parks within the T3 site from South Hams District Council to Totnes Town Council.” | This was received and, following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to support the proposal with the following amendment:  Totnes Town Council will support the designation of the Civic Square/market area and Heath’s Garden as an Asset of Community Value and will investigate leasing or transferring the ownership of these areas together with the car parks within the T3 site from SHDC to Totnes Town Council subject to budget being made available.  This item will also be placed on the next Operations Committee agenda to consider the financial implications of such a decision. |
| 8 | To receive a request from the Totnes Trust. | This was received and the following points were made during the discussion:  Councillor Vint declared a personal interest as a member of the Totnes Trust.  The Image Bank is very important for the town and we should help and encourage them to find a new home. Councillor Hodgson would like the Mansion to be considered as an option.  It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the installation of a lock on the glass front door; to agree to the use of the ground floor by Totnes Caring; and to assist in any way that we are able with relocating the Image Bank. |
|  |  | *It was* ***RESOLVED*** *to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.* |
|  |  | The following confidential matters arose:  Personnel Committee 17th October 2016  Item 9  Councillor Hodgson expressed concerns over previous recruitment processes because she did not think she was properly involved. Councillor Westacott MBE stated that all members of the Council and Personnel Committee had been involved correctly. The Town Clerk explained that the two recent appointments of a Destination Manager and Arts Officer were contracts rather than staff and subject to different regulations in terms of recruitment.  Operations Committee  Item 2  It was **RESOLVED** to revise the terms of the grounds maintenance contract and tender for the new arrangements.  It was **RESOLVED** to write to the Bearns family and establish whether or not they have any interest in taking on the Chapel. If they do not, then it was **RESOLVED** to seek pre-planning advice to inform our options for future use of the building. |
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| 9 | To note the date of the next meeting on **Monday 5th December 2016 at 7pm** in the Guildhall. On completion of the meeting, there will be Christmas drinks in the Guildhall. | This was noted and the meeting ended at 9.45pm. |

END

MAYOR