

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
THURSDAY 30th JUNE 2016 AT THE GUILDHALL TOTNES

Present: Councillors Paine, Hendriksen, Hodgson, Westacott, Cohen, R. Adams, Vint, Whitty and Simms

Apologies: Councillors Piper, Sermon, M. Adams

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Town Clerk), Catherine Marlton (Deputy Town Clerk), Peter Bethel (Town Sergeant), District Councillor Green, 50 members of the public, 1 member of the press

| No | Subject | Comments |
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| | | <p>The Mayor read out a statement in response to letters received from members of the public about the closure of the TIC.</p> <p>Councillor Westacott, Chair of the TIC Working Group, read out a statement in which she explained the process that the Council had gone through to make the decisions about the TIC. She reiterated that tourism services are not statutory functions of the Council but said that councillors were conscious of how well appreciated the TIC service has been.</p> |
| 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 | To receive an update about the draft arrangements for the new visitor information services. | The Deputy Clerk gave a presentation to the Council (see Enclosure 1) |
| 4 | <p><i>The Council will adjourn for the following items:</i></p> <p><u>Public Question Time:</u> A period of 30 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.</p> | <p>The Council adjourned to allow members of the public to ask questions. The following points were made:</p> <p>Resident – the function of the TIC is not to make a profit but to provide a service. Austerity is unnecessary – money does exist. Why have current staff been give notice?</p> <p>Resident – the TIC is not for profit. What is the cost of running the Town Council offices and how has this changed in the last 5 years.</p> <p>Local B&B owner – there should be level access for the TIC and the Totnes Bookshop is not level access and there is no car parking there.</p> <p>Resident – Concerns that the job description for the Destination Manager (DM) was unrealistic, that one person cannot do all of this and that we have a team who could do this now.</p> <p>Resident (ex B&B owner) – asked what is Travel Counsellor and expressed concern about the Visitor Information Point (VIP) because it would not be the principle business of the bookshop. He wondered what would be the professionalism of people running it. He once visited a VIP in Brighton and it was not very good.</p> <p>Resident – The essential and desirable qualities for the DM Person Spec raised questions about why they had to have management experience but might not know Totnes.</p> <p>Resident- How will the staff in the Totnes Bookshop cope with the extra work and find space in the shop?</p> <p>Business Owner – Thanked Catherine for the detailed report, which she acknowledged must have taken a lot of time. Read out from Maureen McAllister’s report and questioned the following:</p> |

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| | <p>Only 9% of visitors to Totnes visit the TIC</p> <p>How has tourism infrastructure support changed?</p> <p>The positive political support for tourism in the form of the £5m pot – she thinks this money has been spent.</p> <p>She agreed that we need clarity on how/where investment is focused.</p> <p>TIC staff were apparently told not to talk in too much detail about their jobs when they met with Maureen McAllister to form the report.</p> <p>We do not need any more event/festivals. The biggest events in are Proud2Be and Wild Swim.</p> <p>Torquay has the biggest TIC with 3 staff.</p> <p>Resident – always found TIC to be helpful and fulfilling, the criteria outlined in the report. Not sure what service will be provided by the bookshop. Will the DM be stationed in the bookshop?</p> <p>At this point the Deputy Town Clerk explained the how the bookshop will be set up with a station for information and leaflets. Staff will be able to assist. She reassured people that a member of Bookshop staff was there when the Town Council met with the Manager.</p> <p>B&B owner – has advertised in Totnes Guide for many years and has valued this. The TIC has made referrals and matches people with proper accommodation for them. Staff visited the accommodation and knew what was suitable. Concerned there is no consideration for accommodation referrals in future plans.</p> <p>Resident – Could the new Information Boards include one at the railway station because it can be bewildering to arrive there and have no information? The TIC is only open during the day so cannot be accessed by people arriving later.</p> <p>Resident – We’ve talked about the need for one central place but our proposal <u>splits up</u> the functions.</p> <p>Resident – We are going to save £63K pa, having just put up the precept, so we are only really saving £12.5K?</p> <p>Resident – Why are the councillors not allowed to speak? They want to hear the councillors’ views.</p> <p>The Mayor explained that the Town Council had told everyone everything it can at the moment.</p> <p>Resident – Placing the VIP on the Civic Square seems illogical because people don’t get to the top of town.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk explained that if you signpost and give the information clearly to locals and visitors then people will find the services. She has researched this and taken advice and this is what she has found out.</p> <p>Resident – lots of people come in by bus so not everyone can get up the hill.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the DM needs to look into shop mobility and accessibility and how we help those people get from the bottom to the top of town.</p> <p>Resident – Bob the Bus will go up the High Street, 4 times per hour.</p> <p>Business Owner – Questioned why this had not been debated until after the budget had been set.</p> <p>Resident – There are strong feelings in the town, the Council has received many letters and the result of vote at Annual Meeting. The Minutes from that meeting have not yet been resubmitted. There is an appetite for local tourism. She felt that the TIC is in the right place and providing the right service; the Town Council is held in low esteem. The Maureen McAllister report doesn’t suggest closing the TIC so it is surprising that that the Town Council has done this.</p> <p>Resident – What will happen to the Town Mill when we move out?</p> |
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| | <i>The Council convened for the following items:</i> | |
| 5 | To approve and sign the Minutes of the following Meetings: a. Full Council 6 th June 2016 | It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes. |
| 6 | To consider any matters arising from the Minutes. | <p>The following matters arose:</p> <p>Is the Carnival route confirmed as the same as last year? It will not be using Steamer Quay car park but an alternative private site near the Steam Packet from where it will head up St. Katherine's Way and then the same route as last year.</p> <p>The Police FOI report has not yet been received.</p> <p>The Grove School Crossing does not have an exact date for completion but it will be very soon. The Wales and West work won't now affect the crossing and some preparation has begun.</p> <p>The Welcome to Totnes sign has been found and will be re-installed.</p> |
| 7 | To approve: The Annual Governance Statement for the Town Council accounts for the Year End 2016/17. The Town Council Accounts for the Year End 2016/17. | <p>It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement for the Town Council accounts for the Year End 2016/17.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to approve the Town Council accounts for the Year End 2016/17.</p> |
| 8 | To note the date of the next meeting on Monday 4th July 2016 at 7pm in the Guildhall. | This was noted. |

END

MAYOR