



MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY 5th OCTOBER 2020 HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM

Present: Councillors J Hodgson (Chair), P Paine, V Trow, M Adams, E Price, C Allford, D Matthews, G Allen, C Luker, S Collinson, P Allford, A Galvin, B Piper, S Skinner and L Webberley.

Apologies: Councillors R Henriksen.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk), District Councillor Birch, and 12 members of the public.

1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have completed or made any necessary amendments to their Declaration of Interests.

Apologies were received from Cllr R Hendriksen. The reason for the absence was given by the Clerk and accepted by the Chair.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

Reports from County and District Councillors.

- a. County Cllr Hodgson – no documents.
- b. District Cllr Birch – documents enclosed.
- c. District Cllr Rose – no documents.
- d. District Cllr Sweett – no documents.

*It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders.*

b. D.Cllr Birch provided a written report. With regards to the Morrisons appeal, the appeal was due to be heard in February but this will now not take place until April-June because their barrister is not available in February. In relation to the governments planning proposals in the report, SHDC have lodged an objection with the government ministry a copy of which D.Cllr Birch will send to the Clerk to circulate. Also to note is that waste collections days have changed for some residents and questions have been raised about why the new recycling system is not starting until next spring. This is due to the COVID crisis impacting on the manufacture of equipment but it should be in place by next March/April. Cllr Allen enquired about the Churchill Retirement Home appeal. D.Cllr Birch advised that in addition to the appeal Churchill are also lodging a revised application that has an amended design and addresses the issues that caused the refusal on the original application. Cllr

Allen also advised that she will be attending a Zoom meeting which Devon's MPs will be attending to discuss the planning proposals. Cllr Collinson asked what will happen next as a result of the Climate Change & Biodiversity Working Group proposals being turned down at the South Hams District Council (SHDC) Full Council meeting. D.Cllr Birch advised that £400k was put in the budget for climate change action and so far no proposals for spending the money have been put forward. He believes the proposals that were put forward by the Working Group were turned down because it was felt the funds may be needed to cover a shortfall in the Council's budget next year. Subsequent to that meeting it appears that stance has changed slightly and the Devon Climate Change Working Group will be bringing forward proposals.

c. D.Cllr Rose sent out a written report today.

Cllr Paine suggested this and other County and District Councillors reports should not be considered if they are not issued 3 days before the meeting as he has not seen the e-mail containing the reports. Cllr Adams confirmed she has also not seen the e-mails.

a. C.Cllr Hodgson sent out a written report today. C.Cllr Hodgson reported on a Black Lives Matter motion that was brought at the SHDC Full Council meeting last week on which there was a long debate and she has provided a link to the amendments that were eventually agreed. She is also a member of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee which discussed 5G mobile phone masts at the latest meeting. The Committee resolved to ask the Government for evidence that the masts are safe for the public and wildlife. To note is the fact that Devon County Council (DCC) estimate they will have an overspend of £4.5 million in the 4th month of the financial year due to the COVID crisis which they expect to be around £1.5 million at the year end. C.Cllr Hodgson also advised that the minutes of the latest Traffic & Transport Forum meeting are at the end of her report and they will be posted on the website.

d. D.Cllr Sweett sent out a written report today. She has met with the SHDC Outdoor Spaces Officer and raised the concerns relating to the Skatepark but can also arrange a site visit if the young people can put together a specific list of issues. The new Skatepark is being delayed because the Lottery Grant process has been put on hold due to COVID and also planning permission is required before the Lottery Grant can proceed. The former Dairy Crest site is in poor condition which the new leaseholders are aware of and are doing daily patrols. A planning application for the site is almost ready for submission. With regards to the road closures, businesses already have the worry of Brexit and the road closures are also impacting on businesses even though they are only half a day. Half a day is a significant amount of time for businesses. Which day the road closure takes place on needs to be discussed in order to move it to a quieter day.

The Council reconvened.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meetings:

(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

- a. Full Council 7th September 2020 – document enclosed.
- b. Council Matters Committee 17th September 2020 – document enclosed.
- c. Planning Committee 21st September 2020 – document enclosed.
- d. Town Matters Committee 21st September 2020 – document enclosed.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the Minutes of the following meetings:

- a. Full Council 7th September 2020.
- b. Council Matters Committee 17th September 2020.
- c. Planning Committee 21st September 2020.
- d. Town Matters Committee 21st September 2020.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING

To consider any matters arising from the Minutes and to approve any recommendations from Committees:
(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

- a. Full Council 7th September 2020 – document enclosed.
- b. Council Matters Committee 17th September 2020 – document enclosed.
- c. Planning Committee 21st September 2020 – document enclosed.
- d. Town Matters Committee 21st September 2020 – document enclosed.

- a. Full Council 7th September 2020.

Item 7 - Cllr Paine raised concerns that he was confused about what he was voting for. The Town Clerk explained that the motion and context had been reiterated at the meeting and Cllr Paine had confirmed he understood and his vote. Cllr Adams asked for it to be recorded that she believes it is wrong that the wording for Cllr Collinson's motion was not provided in advance of the meeting with the agenda. The Clerk explained the Standing Order section relating to this.

Item 12 – Cllr Luker noted that this item should be on the meeting agenda for this month. The Clerk advised that it had been omitted in error and would be on the agenda for a future meeting instead. Cllr Hodgson advised that the Climate Emergency Group meeting had been interrupted by a failure in the broadband service in Totnes. The next meeting will be held on 20th October when items that were not completed at the last meeting can be discussed.

- b. Council Matters Committee 17th September 2020.

Item 14 – see Part II minutes.

- c. Planning Committee 21st September 2020.

Public Question Time – Cllr Trow advised that this issue is covered in D.Cllr Rose's report. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 5 – Cllr Allen referred to the letter she has drafted and sent round to the other Councillors for comment. Cllr Collinson raised concerns that air quality pollution is not covered in it. Cllr Luker advised that he wrote to the Officer about this omission and the latest version of the letter does have it in. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the letter in principle and to send a copy to SHDC, the local MP and neighbouring towns and villages for information.

Item 6 – Cllr Adams requested that we investigate who is responsible for closing the flood gates. The Clerk advised that the last correspondence she received on the matter stated that it would be investigated if volunteers from local community groups could be insured to take on this responsibility and if not then an Environment Agency Officer would be responsible. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 7 – Cllr Hodgson advised that DCC notified her that resurfacing work will not take place until the beginning of the next financial year. As it is very dangerous she has requested that some of the re-surfacing is done while the road closures are in place for the Ash die-back works that are planned.

d. Town Matters Committee 21st September 2020.

Item 6 – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 8 – Amend wording in recommendation to “To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Town Council writes to South Hams District Council and the Steamer Quay Caravan and Camper Van Club (Head Office) to encourage them to negotiate a long lease with South Hams District Council which would attract investment and all year round use, which the Town Council is supportive of. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the amended recommendation.

5. STANDING ORDERS AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

To consider a revision to Standing Orders and a revised Committee structure for implementation from 1st January 2021.

Cllr Luker asked that the Council Strategy Group detailed in paragraph 28 of the Standing Orders should be expanded to include at least 2 other councillors. The Clerk explained that she needs that group to be small so that it can be responsive and to be consistent with the same members. Members need to be aware that much of what is discussed at the meetings of that group is confidential issues relating to staff where the Clerk can seek advice to help operational decision making (that the Clerk has delegated authority for) and that the group itself is not a decision making body.

It was suggested that the name of the group was misleading and therefore it was proposed that it is re-named to Operational Support Group and that membership be extended to include the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Chairs of the Committees. It was **RESOLVED** to agree this proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the revised Standing Orders and Committee structure to be implemented from the 1st January 2021.

6. CORONAVIRUS

To note the update from Devon County Council regarding recent local case increases.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/coronavirus-data/>

Noted.

7. ROAD CLOSURE

To consider the decision of Devon County Council for a four-week temporary road closure on Saturday mornings until 10th October 2020. Verbal update Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk advised that DCC have agreed 4 more weeks but our request, as agreed at the last Full Council meeting, was for the road closures to continue until social distancing stops. That decision cannot be re-visited for 6 months unless 3 councillors write to the Clerk prior to the agenda going out to request a review of a decision. DCC are considering whether to extend the 4 week period and the Clerk will reiterate the Council’s recommendation from September, but the decision on any extension of the road closures will be made by DCC.

Cllr C Allford asked that the business database is used to inform all businesses about the Council’s decision.

Cllr C Allford and Cllr P Allford asked for it to be recorded that they both object to any further road closures.

Cllr Adams also asked to be recorded as objecting to any further road closures.

Cllr Collinson wanted to highlight that there is no underlying agenda to pedestrianize the town centre. The measures are for the emergency situation with COVID to enable social distancing.

Cllr Matthews raised the issue that there are too many vehicles on the road and Cllr Allen suggested that she could include this in the letter responding to the planning changes proposal.

8. SOCIAL DISTANCING IN TOTNES

To note the concerns raised about social distancing enforcement in the town centre. Verbal update Town Clerk.

The Clerk reported that there have been a number of complaints from members of the public that social distancing is not being enforced in the town. Some retail outlets are not insisting on masks being worn but there is no requirement for them to enforce it. The Clerk has raised it with the Police but enforcement is difficult.

9. LICENSE APPLICATION APPEAL BY MORRISONS

To note the appeal by Morrisons in relation to alcohol sales at the supermarket and petrol station and nominate a representative of the Town Council to attend.

Cllr Hodgson has asked the Police to send in a comment.

Noted.

10. ELECTION OF MAYOR AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

To note that the election of the Mayor, Deputy and Chairs of Committee will be held during the December Full Council meeting on Zoom.

The intention is for the new post-holders to take up their roles in January when the new committee structure begins. Councillors were asked to consider what they would like to stand for in advance if possible.

11. NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting date of Monday 2nd November 2020, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting.

Noted.

*The Council **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.*

12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing item)

To discuss any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature (staffing/legal/commercial sensitivity).

Council Matters Committee 17th September 2020

Item 14 (b) – The detailed staffing proposals and structure was provided to all Councillors. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendations as below:

1. Delegated authority to the Town Clerk to administer the restructure process as outlined.
2. Agreement of the proposed structure, timeline and process.
3. Agreement of spend on professional HR support to advise during said process (if required)

Jacqi Hodgson

Mayor