



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020 HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM

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

Absent: Councillors P Paine.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk), District Councillor Birch, and 6 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 D.Cllr Sweett.

Cllr Collinson declared an interest in agenda item 8 as Chair of Inclusive Totnes.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

Reports from County and District Councillors.

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

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

b. D.Cllr Birch provided a written report. Cllr Collinson asked what the relationship would be between the Climate Change and Biodiversity Community Board and the Climate Change Working Group. D.Cllr Birch advised that the Board is a Forum to put forward ideas to the Council and to the Working Group to help formulate policies. Cllr Allen enquired whether there was any news regarding the Atmos site. D.Cllr Birch advised that the pre-application process is confidential and although Cllr in the relevant area are allowed to see the pre-application documents they are not allowed to make any of the information public. Cllr Trow asked how the Green Homes funding will be allocated out. D.Cllr Birch advised it would be based on the properties EPC rating. Cllr Webberley asked if the TC's Green Travel Co-ordinator could join the Community Board which D.Cllr Birch suggested the Town Council puts forward to the Board. She also asked if SHDC have a strategy for building affordable or

social housing. D.Cllr Birch confirmed the Council are aiming to launch their housing strategy in December and open it up for consultation in January and February. Cllr Webberley identified that we still do not have a designated traveller site and asked how it could be progressed. D.Cllr Birch referred the question to D.Cllr Hodgson who has more involvement in this issue. Cllr Collinson enquired about whether the disability funding would be protected. D.Cllr Birch feels the Council will have significant financial issues as a result of COVID and it was a concern that all funding allocated for specific areas needs to be protected. Cllr Matthews asked what SHDC intends to do about empty properties. D.Cllr Birch offered to investigate further and e-mail Cllr Matthews with a response on how it will be included in the Housing Strategy.

c. D.Cllr Rose provided a written report. D Cllr Rose was unhappy that the Task & Finish Group to create community consultation and engagement was allocate very little time and resources but the officers have been very good and he is hopeful that the strategy being developed will improve the value placed on the community opinion so far. SHDC has now received a schedule of works for Malt Mill and issues rated as dangerous will be fixed within 3 months. With regards to the Community Board, the expressions of interest period has now closed so it is not possible now for anyone else to join the Board. There was discontent that the consultation on who should be invited to join the Board was not published widely and officers commented that this was due to time pressure for setting up the Board and arrange the first meeting. At a later stage they will review the membership and consult more widely. There is a possibility of creating a wider Forum that could include more of the people who expressed an interest in joining the Board. There were 84 expressions of interest to join the Community Board and only 20 people will be able to join. SHDC are looking into the Preston model. SHDC officer has found a potential travellers site.

d. D.Cllr Sweett has not submitted a report.

a. C.Cllr Hodgson sent out a written report today. DCC are intending to invest £6m in the next few years in the COVID recovery and response plan. Aiming to support small and medium sized enterprises with £1.5m, improving skills with £1.5m, opportunities for green recovery with £1.5m, towns and hardest hit places with around £1m, and the remainder for capacity building and resilience. To work with communities from the bottom up. Residents parking is going to suffer with SHDC proposal to increase parking charges and C.Cllr Hodgson is suggesting some of the additional income from the increase in parking charges should go towards funding more residents parking zones. Good to see local authorities making strong responses to central government about the proposed changes to the planning laws. Green Travel Co-ordinator started in post and will be working with the Totnes and District Traffic & Transport Forum and the Traffic & Transport Strategy. Climate Emergency making good progress with DCC and SHDC coming up with plans. TTC Climate Emergency Group met last week and people went away with actions to progress. Aiming to provide a report and draft plan to Full Council next month. Issues with seagulls have been raised. C.Cllr Hodgson feels one site for travellers is not enough and that both transit and permanent site are needed. Cllr Piper clarified that the Green Travel Co-ordinator role is being paid for from s106 money from Baltic Wharf. C.Cllr Hodgson confirmed this and that it is a 2 year part-time contract. Cllr Piper also enquired whether there has been any progress on the suggestion that travellers may be allowed to buy land to live on without encountering the issues of planning permission. C.Cllr Hodgson believes DCC are looking at larger sites. Cllr Webberley asked that the Green Travel Co-ordinator try to secure a

subsidised direct bus link from Totnes to Torbay Hospital as it is currently a very limited service. Also pressure is needed to get the Totnes MIU re-opened.

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 5th October 2020 – document enclosed.
- b. Council Matters Committee 12th October 2020 – document enclosed.
- c. Planning Committee 19th October 2020 – document enclosed.

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

- a. Full Council 5th October 2020.
- b. Council Matters Committee 12th October 2020.
- c. Planning Committee 19th October 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 5th October 2020 – document enclosed.
- b. Council Matters Committee 12th October 2020 – document enclosed.
- c. Planning Committee 19th October 2020 – document enclosed.

- a. Full Council 5th October 2020.

None

- b. Council Matters Committee 12th October 2020.

None

- c. Planning Committee 19th October 2020.

None

5. TOWN CENTRE SURVEY

To note the Devon Communities survey for circulation to all members of the community.

Issued last Tuesday. Re-issued on Thursday following feedback from the community with an amendment to include the question whether the road closure was considered necessary. Cllr Luker raised concerns that it was agreed at the September Full Council meeting that the brief for the survey would go to Town Matters Committee but this was not recorded in the minutes and it did not come up as an item on the Town Matters Committee agenda. The Clerk explained that she understood the resolution was for the brief to go to the Mayors & Chairs group and apologised if there had been an oversight. The brief did go to the Mayors & Chairs group and the Clerk was given delegated authority to progress it as it was urgent. Cllr Piper advised that it was a highly dynamic situation and it was widely consulted on.

Cllr Allford raised the point that the Chamber of Commerce were advised they would see the survey questions before they went out and this did not happen. Cllr Piper clarified that he and the Clerk met

with the Chair of the CoC and her partner to discuss the questions prior to it going live. Cllr Hodgson advised that the comments from that meeting were taken into consideration but the final decision was based on what was best for all elements of the community. The questions were drafted by Devon Communities, not the Town Council.

It is live until the end of December and is available on the Council's website and Facebook page. It is going out in hardcopy in the Totnes Directory and is being hand delivered to businesses around the town.

6. ROAD CLOSURE

As per the Standing Orders to reconsider a previous recommendation of Full Council in September 2020 (Formally requested by Cllrs C Allford, P Allford and Luker).

That Totnes Town Council RECOMMENDS to Devon County Council that the temporary closure of upper Fore Street (from the access only signage opposite the King William) and the High Street and the Narrows to traffic for 4 hours on Saturday mornings be continued whilst Government social distancing guidelines remain in place to enable social distancing, pedestrian safety and accessibility during the COVID pandemic.

Cllr Hodgson wishes to make the following amendment to the proposal:

That in the light of the very recent announcement by the government that a second full lockdown to reduce the incidence and transmission of COVID will commence this Thursday until 2nd December at least, that this Council agrees to

- a) suspend the 4 hr Saturday morning road closure during the lockdown, and
- b) defer reconsideration of the 4 hr road closure until at least the December Full Council meeting when Councillors can be informed by the interim outcomes of the independent survey currently consulting on the impact and views of the closure.

Cllr Adams asked for a further amendment that the road closure is suspended until after the 1st January to encourage trade in the run up to Christmas and to await the results of the independent survey. Seconded by Cllr Allford.

Cllr Luker believes that the road closure has failed in achieving social distancing. He proposed the following amendment: To immediately cease the road closures on a permanent basis. Seconded by Cllr Adams.

Cllrs discussed the amended proposal.

It was agreed that the Clerk should make enquiries with SHDC about the possibility of free parking during the lockdown to assist the essential shops that are able to stay open and to ask DCC about coning areas outside those shops to keep the footpaths clear.

A vote was taken on Cllr Luker's amendment and it was not carried.

A vote was taken on Cllr Adam's amendment. Cllr Adams requested a recorded vote. For – Cllr Adams, Cllr Luker, Cllr C Allford, Cllr Matthews, Cllr Galvin, Cllr P Allford. Against – Cllr Piper, Cllr Price, Cllr Allen, Cllr Hendriksen, Cllr Trow, Cllr Hodgson, Cllr Collinson, Cllr Skinner. Abstaining – Cllr Webberley. The amendment was not carried.

Cllr Hodgson's amendment was seconded by Cllr Collinson. A vote was taken to confirm that Cllrs want both parts a) & b) of the amendment to be included in the one proposal amendment which received a majority vote.

A vote was taken on Cllr Hodgson's amendment and it was carried.

A vote on that as the substantive motion was taken and it was carried.

Cllr Adams left the meeting.

7. TOTNES CAR PARKING TARIFFS

To consider the South Hams District Council proposed increase in car parking tariffs from April 2021. Documents enclosed.

Cllr Trow believes the charges will deter people from shopping in Totnes. Cllr Luker suggested charges should be reduced or parking made free at the current time with the pandemic. Cllr Piper commented that Kingsbridge & Dartmouth have 20 minutes free parking on their High Streets, and noted that the original legislation for charging for parking was to reduce restrictions on traffic flow rather than as a revenue source. Cllr Collinson commented that shopping during lockdown should be encouraged and parking should be free. It disproportionately benefits Morrisons as their parking is free.

The Clerk will e-mail DCC to ask them to suspend on-street parking charges during this lockdown to encourage pop-and-shop as they did in the last lockdown. Also to request that Totnes also has the 20 minute free parking on the High Street like there is in Kingsbridge & Dartmouth.

An e-mail will also be sent to SHDC object to the increase in car park tariffs.

8. PAVEMENT PARKING CONSULTATION

To consider the Government consultation 'Pavement Parking: options for change', and to make any recommendation to Full Council in how to respond. Document enclosed. See

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change>

Cllr Piper feels it is a bad idea to fine people for putting wheels on the pavement unless they are obstructing pedestrians in using the pavement. Cllr Collinson has personally experienced problems with vehicle parked partially on the pavement and therefore agrees it is an issue. Cllr Luker advised that it was discussed at the Planning Committee meeting where it was agreed it should be a local decision and not a national law because local circumstances vary (Option 2). Cllr Collinson raised concerns about how well District Councils would enforce it. Cllr Matthews raised the issue of other items causing obstructions on the pavements like wheelie bins and overhanging trees. Cllr Hodgson felt that leaving it to local rules could make it ambiguous.

It was proposed that the Planning Committee clerk respond to the consultation in favour of option 2.

A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** to agree the proposal.

9. NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting date of Monday 7th December 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.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)

To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature (staffing/legal/commercial sensitivity) from the Council Matters Committee. No document.

A verbal update was given by the Town Clerk on general staffing matters and progress on the restructure. The Clerk has been given delegated authority to manage the process and the detail is being considered by Council Matters as per the remit of that committee. The final ratification will take place at the December 2020 Full Council meeting.

11. LEGAL MATTER

To consider an update on an ongoing legal issue. Documents enclosed.

The information attached to the agenda was considered and noted. The latest cost estimate for legal support was considered and agreed as reasonable. Link Councillors were asked to engage with the organisation and feedback to all Councillors.

Jacqi Hodgson

Mayor