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# DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

# MONDAY 8TH MARCH 2021 AT 6.30PM – HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM

**Present:** Councillors E Price (Chair), C Allford, J Hodgson, C Luker, B Piper (joined the meeting at 6.40pm) and V Trow (joined at 6.50pm).

**Apologies:** Cllr M Adams and P Paine.

## In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk) and C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Committee.**

Cllr Price read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted, recorded and live streamed on social media.

The apologies were accepted.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

*The Committee reconvened.*

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**To approve the minutes of 8th February 2021 and update on any matters arising**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings. There were no matters arising.

## 3. PUBLIC REALM AND CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

**To note the minutes of and consider any recommendations from the Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group held on 10th February 2021.**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the principle of allocating more land for allotments in Castle Meadow is agreed subject to further work and discussion to define the precise area, any archaeological restrictions and practicalities of the arrangement (ground clearance, fencing, etc).

Cllr Hodgson suggested that a clause could be considered to protect the land in future years that if 50 percent of the allotments are unkept and vacant then the land could be reclaimed by the Council.

For the Cemetery It was **AGREED** that:

* After one cut at the beginning of the year the grass around the Chapel is left to grow long this year to see what wildflowers come up and how the area looks visually, before a cut in late September.
* The current Garden of Rest does not extend beyond rows currently in use to enable full burials in the remaining ground.
* A new Garden of Rest, potentially including a garden for scattering ashes be created at the back of the Extension (section L).
* There is no increase to fees until the 2022 annual review.
* The request from a family to plant a memorial tree. Possible location to be confirmed at a site meeting.
* A memorandum of understanding is agreed with Incredible Edibles.

On wayfinding in the town, it was **AGREED** that a simplified brief is given to the consultants and request three options of signage.

## 4. ARTS WORKING GROUP

**To note the minutes of and consider any recommendations from the Arts Working Group held on 25th February 2021.**

It was **AGREED** to set up a Town Lights and Decorations Task and Finish Group comprised of TTC Councillors and Chamber of Commerce and other invited stakeholders, to be self-administered. The Group will:

* Be tasked with investigating what condition the rigging is in and determine what lights are functional and what can be repaired and reused.  Also discuss what other areas we can focus on in Totnes i.e. the Market Square, St. Mary’s Church, the Rotherfold.  Look at lighting up trees in The Plains, Shady Garden and the Market Square.
* Come back with information/recommendations within a certain time period, directly to Council Matters. These suggestions must be costed.
* Determine what needs to be done/recommendations for 2021 as a one off solution, and then a longer term partnership arrangement from 2022 onwards.
* Consider where the approx. £2,000+ expected cost for 2021 lights, insurance, installation, tree should be budgeted from.

## 5. TREE PLANTING

**To consider a proposal to plant a tree along each parish boundary.**

It was **AGREED** to support year one of the proposal to be led by Incredible Edibles, that five oak trees will be planted on the boundaries with existing parishes along. The longer-term proposals for years 2-5 will be kept under review.

## 6. MAYORAL CHOOSING AND ANNUAL MEETING POLICY

**To consider the dates for Mayoral Choosing and the annual Town Meeting, changes to the May Full Council date and an additional Extraordinary meeting date for Full Council on 1st April 2021.**

**• 1st April at 6.30pm (public time) and 7pm start, Extraordinary Full Council on Road Closures/Covid-19 town centre measures. Via Zoom.**

**• Monday 10th May Full Council moved to ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday 5th May 2021 at the same time to accommodate the potential change to virtual meeting legislation. This meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting of the Town Council where the Mayor is elected. It may be worth considering a resolution to allow the previously appointed Chairs and Deputies of Committees to roll forwards for continuity. Via Zoom.**

**• Thursday 24th June at 7pm – Town Meeting in the Civic Hall, assuming Covid regulations allow.**

The Clerk corrected that the Annual meeting would be on Wednesday (not Thursday) 5th May 2021 before the existing legislation expires on 6th May which currently enables virtual meetings to be held.

## 7. IN PERSON MEETINGS

**To consider the practicalities of the resumption of in person meetings once the emergency legislation permitting virtual meetings ceases in May 2021.**

The Clerk updated that basic equipment is being investigated to enable Council meetings to be live streamed going forward whether they are held in the Civic Hall or Guildhall.

## 8. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

## To review the Financial Regulations.

The policy was reviewed and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

## 9. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

**To consider the draft Communications Strategy from 2021-24.**

The strategy was reviewed and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption, with the addition of a summary of key messages at the beginning of the document.

## 10. PAY POLICY

**To review the Pay Policy.**

The policy was reviewed and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

## 11. TRAINING

**To consider the training requirements of Councillors and officers for 2021.**

It was **AGREED** to:

* Organise a social media training course for Councillors.
* Organise a half day training to explain Council’s roles and responsibilities in a Town Council context.
* Send out a quarterly email listing training opportunities available to Councillors.

The Clerk confirmed that training for Officers is set out as part of the appraisal process.

## 12. RECRUITMENT

**To consider the recruitment timelines for the administrator posts and the job description for the Administrator 1 position.**

The recruitment timeline, job description and advert were **AGREED**, and the interview panels would comprise Cllr Price, the Clerk and the relevant line manager.

## 13. PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

**To note the protocols that the Town Council will observe on the death of a senior national figure.**

Noted.

## 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 19th April 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to* ***RESOLVE*** *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. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

**15. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)**

**To consider the bank statements and reconciliations.**

These were unanimously **AGREED**.

**16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEWS**

**To note the outcomes of the officer performance management reviews for 2020.**

Noted.

**17. STAFFING UPDATE (Standing Item)**

**For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors.**

None.

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk