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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

# MONDAY 14TH JUNE 2021 AT 6.30PM IN THE CIVIC HALL

**Present:** Councillors E Price (Chair), M Adams, C Allford, J Hodgson, C Luker, P Paine, B Piper and Trow.

**Apologies:** None.

## In Attendance: A member of the public, 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 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.

Cllr Adams raised the issue of graffiti in the town.

*The Committee reconvened.*

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**To approve the minutes of 17th May 2021 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

## 3. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL TENDER

**To consider the responses to the tender for the Christmas Festival nights.**

The Clerk updated that one expression of interest has been received for tendering for the Christmas Festival nights. With uncertainty about social distancing restrictions going forward it was **AGREED** that the matter should go back to the Arts Working Group to review and amend the tender to consider a smaller scale event which may be able to go ahead.

## 4. COUNCIL MEETING VENUE

**To consider the venues of where council meetings are held from 21st June based on current Government social distancing requirements.**

The Clerk explained that social distancing restrictions had been extended until 19th July. Committee meetings could be held in the lower Guildhall and Full Council held in the Civic Hall.

Cllr Luker raised the issue of holding in person meetings in the Guildhall given the extension of social distancing restrictions. He asked for meetings to return to being held virtually. The Town Clerk advised that due to a sunset clause in the Covid legislation it is not lawful to hold statutory public meetings of the Town Council virtually, despite the sector lobbying for an extension. Subject to advice from DALC it was **AGREED**:

1. That Full Council will be held outside if possible, on 5th July (and recording/live streaming may not therefore be technically doable). Alternatively, it could be held in the downstairs of the Guildhall with all doors and windows open with Councillors only attending if they feel safe to do so.
2. All formal decision making from Committees would be delegated to the Clerk (as set out in the scheme of delegation), with informal meetings with Councillors held to inform these urgent decisions.
3. Non-urgent business will be deferred until September 2021 when it is hoped to resume normal ‘in person’ meetings.

## 5. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

**To consider a scheme of delegation for the Town Clerk to cover any limitations to public meetings due to changes in Covid social distancing requirements.**

The scheme of delegation was reviewed and **AGREED**.

## 6. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

**To consider a revision to the Financial Regulations to enable members of the management team to authorise payments.**

The revision to the Financial Regulations was reviewed and is **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

## 7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

**To review the Council’s Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.**

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

## 8. INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

**To review the Council’s Information and Data Protection Policy.**

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

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 14th June 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Noted – the date should read 12th July 2021 however this committee meeting will not be held as per the decision taken under item 4 of this meeting.

*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)*

**10. COMMUNITY CHARTER FACILITATION**

**To consider whether to commission a facilitator for a Community Charter to support the Totnes Futures Forum.**

It was **AGREED** to invite the suggested facilitator to speak to Totnes Future Forum members and all Councillors on 13th July 2021 at 6.30pm on Zoom. The Committee expressed support for finding funds for an external coordinator for this group in principle but perhaps not limited to looking at a community charter but with a broader remit. The Totnes Future Forum were asked to make a recommendation to Council Matters or Full Council regarding the support needed and costs associated, after having heard the proposal on the 13th July.

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

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

These were reviewed and **AGREED** unanimously.

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

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

1. Informal updates were received from the Town Clerk regarding members of the team. No decisions were required.
2. It was **AGREED** unanimously that the Town Clerk should temporarily reduce her hours to be treated for and recover from a chest infection. The Town Clerk indicated she would use up any TOIL balance for this purpose.

**13. LEGAL MATTERS**

**To:**

1. **Consider legal advice required for submission of an Asset of Community Value application.**

It was **AGREED** to hold off on progressing this given the meeting being called by KEVICC.

1. **Note an update from the Town Clerk. Verbal update Town Clerk.**

The update and confirmation that the insurance covers the legal costs was noted.