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# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

# MONDAY 17TH JANUARY 2022 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

**Present:** Councillors E Price (Chair), J Hodgson, P Paine, B Piper (joined at 6.35pm) and V Trow.

**Apologies:** Cllr M Adams (who will observe via Zoom).

**Not Present**: Cllr N Stopp.

## In Attendance: One member of the public, C Marlton (Town Clerk) & 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 and recorded.

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.

A member of the public spoke on behalf of TRESOC – the Totnes Renewable Energy Society – inviting the Town Council to form a partnership as it believes the Town Council has local knowledge to approach property owners to assist with furthering renewable projects. TRESOC is suggesting a local co-operation agreement, and the Committee **AGREED** that this is a matter for Full Council consideration and a paper should be produced to set out the proposal.

*The Committee reconvened.*

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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

The minutes included in the papers are incorrect – there was no December Committee formally held. The minutes for 8th November were distributed and were unanimously **AGREED** as an accurate record of proceedings.

## 3. BUDGET MONITOR

**To consider the Budget Monitor.**

The Clerk highlighted changes to the budget forecast which sees a predicted increase in underspend this financial year, which will increase the reserves held going into financial year 2022/23. It was unanimously **AGREED** to accept the budget monitor.

## 4. STANDING ORDERS

**To consider a revision to Standing Orders in relation to Committees and Working Groups and make a recommendation to Full Council.**

The Clerk set out the proposed changes of: reducing the number of working groups and frequency of meetings in order to help improve attendance; Town Matters to move to bi-monthly meetings; and for Chairs of committees to have undertaking training.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the proposed revision of Standing Orders is adopted, and that the working group structure is reviewed as required, and that the Traffic and Transport Forum is held every 3 months with the Steering Group held monthly as required.

## 5. CEMETERY PROCEDURE

**To consider the administrative procedure for the scattering of ashes in Totnes Cemetery and the levelling of a fee.**

The following charges were **AGREED** unanimously: for scattering of ashes in the common area £50 for resident and £75 for non-residents, ashes scattered on an existing grave £25.

## 6. PROCEDURAL NOTE

**To note the advice note on procedure relating to expenses and expenditure from the budget (document attached) and:**

**a. Consider the payment of a mileage claim as an exemption.**

Cllr Hodgson declared an interest and left the room.

The Clerk explained the approved spend associated with COPNes events in October, and a subsequent mileage claim from a Councillor in support of these activities which had not been approved in advance – the payment of such a claim is an exception to the ‘Payments to Councillor’ policy. It was **AGREED** by majority to pay this claim as an exception to the policy, and the Committee stressed that Councillors must get approval in advance of an event for any activities for which they intend to claim outside of the Councillor allowance payment scheme.

Cllr Hodgson returned to the meeting.

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## 7. COUNCIL CHAMBER AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT

**To consider projection and screen options for the Council chamber.**

It was **AGREED** to get specialist IT advice on the options identified to ensure operability with laptops and mobile devices. The Committee asked the Clerk to investigate a screen that could be hung over the railings in the Guildhall main chamber.

## 8. DRAFT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**To consider a draft Safeguarding policy for the Council.**

To was unanimously **AGREED** to adopt the policy.

## 9. PUBLIC REALM AND CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

**To note the minutes of the Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group held on 10th November.**

Noted.

## 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 14th February 2022 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)*

**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.**

A verbal update was noted, no decisions were required.

**13. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN**

**To consider a Visit Totnes outdoor advertising campaign and possible commercial service provider (commercially sensitive).**

It was unanimously **AGREED** to proceed with the campaign. This expenditure falls within the existing marketing budget.

**14. STAFF ATTENDANCE**

**To note sickness and overtime balances.**

Noted.