



MINUTES FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 29TH MAY 2024 AT 5.00PM IN THE CIVIC HALL

Present: Councillors E Price (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, T Cooper, J Hannam, J Hodgson, D Peters, A Presswell and N Roberts.

In Attendance: Members of the public, L Eames (South Hams District Council Place and Enterprise Project Officer), C Marlton (Town Clerk) and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF TOTNES

The Mayor welcomed those present and explained how the new Council is working and how decisions are made on a collective basis.

2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 17TH MAY 2023.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

3. MAYOR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

Cllr Price set out how the Council has been looking at how it operates and what it is doing in the town, which has culminated in the Strategic Plan and identifying three themes, each with its own priorities, which she asked the councillor-leads to say a few words on: Cllr Peters spoke about the Community strand of work; Cllr Hodgson spoke about the Environment and Public Realm strand; and Cllr Roberts spoke about Economy strand.

4. CLERK REPORT

The Clerk set out that there is a strong group of Councillors and officers to support them. Over the past year the Council has supported the voluntary sector in the town through the community grant process which can act as seed funding or help with match funding, and by contracting groups such as Totnes Gardens to maintain public spaces. Changes have been made to the Civic Hall with new fire doors to increase capacity and to provide more events in the town. In the coming year Councillors hope to set up a business forum – we know that businesses struggle to engage as they are busy running their business but we hope that they will participate and continue to work on the Strategic Plan aspirations.

5. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PLAN

The SHDC Place and Enterprise Officer explained the Community Economic Plan process, how it looks to engage the community, business and young people in determining what the town wishes to look like and achieve for the future. It is hoped that work on the Totnes project will start in the autumn.

6. COMMUNITY AWARDS PRESENTATION

The Mayor announced that the decision on the awards this year was close, with so many worthy nominees. The winner of the 2024 Totnes Community Individual Award was Jo Yeo who launched "Food For Children Totnes" in January 2023 which provides free meal kits during school holidays to low-income families with children who attend local schools. A special Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Sue Holmes

who for over 25 years has dedicated countless hours as a leading volunteer member of the Leechwell Gardens Association.

Other nominees for the award were: Kathy Alexander for her exceptional work in developing the pub into a hub at the heart of the creative community in Totnes; Claire Allford who has, for many years, given time and energy to a variety of committees, initiatives, and events to improve the town; Steve Dyer for many years keeping the streets of Totnes clean; Maggie Hawkyard who has volunteered as a coach at Dart Amateur Rowing Club for many years and has worked tirelessly to fundraise for new premises and equipment; and Lisa Smallridge for heading the save the field campaign to make sure that future generations of the community have a safe green space. Diana Cusack for her work with Totnes Gardens; Dave Mitchell who has been involved in the Leechwell Garden Association since its inception; Ben Reynolds who volunteered to be the Group Scout Leader for the 3rd Totnes Scouts; Louise Spencer - for her Community Charity Work on behalf of the Poppy Appeal; Kit Stevens for her work with Stepping Stones Food Bank; Graham Walker for his fundraising for charities in the town; and Liz Waterson for her work as a Street Pastor.

There were joint winners of the 2024 Totnes Community Group Award - 3rd Totnes Scout Group Leaders and Sharpham Park Run. 3rd Totnes Scout Group Leaders have reestablished the scouts group in Totnes welcoming over 50 young people each week aged between 6-14, having successfully set up Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts groups. Sharpham Park Run have established a local, free run as part of the national Park Run group, organised by a team of volunteers and attracting over 4600 participants to date.

Other nominees for the award were: The Mansion Volunteers, Stepping Stones Food Bank, Totnes Caring.

7. OPEN FORUM

The following questions and points were made in the open forum (Cllr/officer responses in *italics*):

- Uplift of the Civic Square. *Complicated as SHDC own the space and there is a funding challenge but the Town Council will work with SHDC on the potential options for improvement.*
- Idea of a tourist tax. *This has come up at SHDC – watch this space.*
- Traffic in the High Street – the levels are dangerous. *This topic is a cause of division in the town and the decision doesn't rest with the Town Council, ultimately it sits with Devon Highways.*
- How does the Community Economic Plan work with the Neighbourhood plan? *The Community Economic Plan would take the economic aspirations of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan and ask the community if they are still relevant and/or if anything new should be included.*
- Funding for an upgrade at the Leisure Centre. *SHDC own the building which Fusion run – investment is expected.*
- Dartington Trust charging in the car park for school drop off. *Outside of Totnes Town Council parish remit but Cllr Hodgson will investigate as District and County Cllr.*
- Provision for heritage facilities in the town and their long term future in terms of buildings – need a holistic solution to preserve them for the future. *Agree.*
- The recent passing of Judy Westacott and the gap this will leave. *It was agreed that Judy will be much missed and that a civic funeral will be held for her.*

The meeting closed at 17.50.

Cllr Emily Price
Mayor