



## **MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL** **MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL**

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Cummings, D Peters, A Presswell, N Roberts and M Trant.

Apologies: Cllrs J Hannam, J Hodgson, E Price, T Robshaw and L Smallridge, and District Cllr Birch.

In Attendance: Members of the public, District Cllr Allen, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and P Bethel (Town Sergeant).

### **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.**

The apologies were received and accepted. There were no amendments to declarations of interest.

It should be noted that there was repeated disruption of the meeting from a gathering outside the Guildhall. [*Post-meeting note from the Town Clerk: in the event of future disturbances, the Chair should suspend the meeting and contact the Police.*]

***The Committee will adjourn for the following items:***

#### **Reports from County and District Councillors.**

- a. County Cllr Hodgson
- b. District Cllr Allen
- c. District Cllr Birch
- d. District Cllr Presswell

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

- a. County Cllr (C Cllr) Hodgson was not present and had not submitted a report.
- b. District Cllr Allen was present and had not submitted a report but gave a verbal update on a devolution briefing given at South Hams District Council (SHDC) following the Government's announcement of the English Devolution White Paper. Discussion on the devolution issue included: the feasibility of having such a large authority to cover all Devon and the distance between this level of local government and local residents; questions on the local MP's involvement in the White Paper process and their views; concerns about inadequate time for Town Council engagement; concerns about district council service delivery, as well as retention and recruitment of staff; potential delays

to County Council elections due to be held in May 2025; the impact on the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, and the Plymouth and South Devon freeport. District Councillors were asked to update the Town Council with any further information at the February meeting.

- c. District Cllr Birch was not present and had not submitted a report.
- d. District Cllr Presswell was present and answered questions on her written report, including: expenditure on waste vehicles given uncertainty over the future of the District Council (District Cllrs Presswell and Allen agreed to get full costs and the budgets the expenditure will come from at SHDC); the car parking proposals – impact on local businesses, limited consultation period, the lack of accessible consultation options, and limited information provided (District Cllrs Presswell and Allen agreed to raise these issues at SHDC); how the Council can respond to the devolution plans; and the potential threat to Devon County Council funding of libraries.

*The Council reconvened.*

### **3. CLERK'S REPORT**

**To note the Clerk's Report for November and December 2024 (general updates and correspondence).**

Noted.

### **4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:**

***(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)***

**a. Full Council 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes.

**b. Extraordinary Full Council 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes.

**To note the following minutes:**

**c. Council Matters Committee 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

Noted.

**d. Planning Committee 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

Noted.

### **5. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.**

No matters arising.

**b. Extraordinary Full Council 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

No matters arising.

**c. Council Matters Committee 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Item 4 – Draft 2025/26 Budget. See agenda item 7.

Item 5 – Burial and Cremation Consultation. See agenda item 9.

Item 6 – Payments to Councillors. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the Payments to Councillors Policy. The annual allowance for elected members has increased to £487.50 per annum, subject to PAYE and attendance requirements as outlined.

Item 7 – Asset Transfer Policy. This item was deferred until legal advice has been received on the draft policy (as previously agreed by Committee).

**d. Planning Committee 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

No recommendations.

**6. TAX BASE FOR 2025/26**

**To note the tax base for financial year 2025/26.**

Noted.

**7. PRECEPT SETTING**

**To consider the Council Matters Committee recommendation for the precept for financial year 2025/26.**

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept a 5 percent increase to the precept as detailed below:

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>Current</b>	<b>5% increase to precept</b>
Tax base (no second homes uplift)	3000.38	3025.34
Second Homes premium tax base	N/A	53.49
Total tax base	3000.38	3078.83
Precept amount for Second Homes premium	£0.00	£11,967.26
Precept amount without Second homes premium	£656,022.00	£676,855.84
<b>Precept TOTAL</b>	<b>£656,022.00</b>	<b>£688,823.10</b>
Band D rate	£218.65	£223.73
£ change per year to Band D	N/A	£5.08
Percentage change per year to Band D	N/A	2.32%

**8. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS**

**To consider any emergency funding to community groups supporting the most vulnerable in Totnes.**

It was **RESOLVED** to allocate £15K from the Strategic Priorities budget to support community groups.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Community Working Group and to allocate this £15K of funding as follows:

- £3.5K for Citizens Advice.
- £10K for Totnes Caring, with the following requests: to pursue strategic meetings with the NHS on funding; to focus to spend on Community Transport users within the Totnes parish boundary; to provide further data about the proportion of users inside and outside the Totnes

parish boundary; and to approach parish councils in surrounding villages who benefit from the service for a financial contribution.

- £1.5K for Caring Town to provide a smaller emergency funding pot for projects specifically linked to food security and fuel poverty.

#### **9. BURIAL AND CREMATION CONSULTATION**

**To consider the Law Commission's consultation on 'Burial and Cremation' in relation to Totnes Cemetery and make any recommendation to Full Council (deadline 9th January).**

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council responds to the consultation as drafted in the papers.

#### **10. LIST OF MEETING DATES AND COMMUNICATIONS POINTS**

**To note a list of upcoming meeting dates, Council communications points and link Councillor/Councillor representatives on outside bodies updates.**

Noted.

#### **11. NEXT MEETING**

**To note the next meeting date of Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

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*The Council 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.*

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#### **12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)**

**To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature: Council Matters Committee item 12 (legal).**

None.

#### **13. ELMHIRST PROJECT (Standing Item)**

**To consider an update on the Elmhirst project and the delegation of costs associated with the bid process (commercially sensitive).**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

CLlr Tim Bennett  
Deputy Chair