

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

9th March 2015

At the Guildhall, Dartmouth

Present

*The Town Mayor (Councillor R M Lyon) - Chairman

*The Deputy Mayor (Councillor R W I Cooke) - Vice-Chairman

*Cllr P F Allen

#Cllr A C Carter

*Cllr D J Cawley

*Cllr R E Chilcott

*Cllr A J C Fyson

*Cllr T de Galleani

*Cllr D M Gent

*Cllr F J Hawke

#Cllr C B Smith

*Cllr S Smith

*Cllr R Springett

Cllr O B Suarez

*County Cllr J Hawkins

#District Cllr H Bastone

District Cllr B S Cooper

#District Cllr M Stone

*Denotes attendance

#Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance 11 members of the public.

197. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

198. REPORTS.

Police Report.

Inspector Tomlinson gave a report on the crime figures for Dartmouth for the month of February 2015. Following a question from Cllr Chilcott, Inspector Tomlinson agreed to issue a press release to ask dog owners to clear up after their pets.

District and County Councillors' Reports.

In his absence Cllr Bastone's report had been laid round the table:-

Cllr Bastone reported that at its meeting on 12th February 2015, the District Council had agreed a nil increase in Council Tax for 2015/16 and the District Council had therefore accepted a one-off Council Tax Freeze Grant from Central Government.

The District Council had arranged a Prospective Candidate Evening for anyone considering standing to be a District Councillor on Wednesday, 11th March 2015 at 6.30pm at Follaton House.

The District Council had also agreed to send a letter of representation to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) expressing concern regarding the complexity of the Government's new arrangements for Parish Council audits, which will place a much greater burden on Parish Councils and their Clerks.

In respect of future Leisure Services provision, the District Council had agreed the objectives for future leisure services delivery and to offer leisure services as a joint contract for up to 25 years with West Devon Borough Council.

The timetable for the District Council's 'Our Plan' had been extended. By extending the timetable, there would be more opportunities for people to shape the future content of 'Our Plan'. The revised timetable could be found on the District Council website.

Following approval at Member meetings across South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon, all three councils had resolved to the preparation of a detailed business case concerning the future delivery model of the Devon Building Control Partnership.

Cllr Hawkins congratulated the Town Council on flying the Commonwealth flag that day and he thanked the Town Council for all their support over the last 4 years.

He had recently attended the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the Flavel Centre and was pleased to see that it was going from strength to strength.

Cllr Hawkins would be attending a meeting at Townstal Community Hall with Cllr S Smith to discuss the 90B and 93 Sunday service and the £4,500 - £5,000 subsidy received by South Hams District Council on behalf of Devon County Council. Cllr Hawkins noted that at the end of March 2015 the 18 bus service would be lost by Dartmouth and Kingswear as part of the withdrawal of all subsidised bus services by Torbay.

Cllr Hawkins reported that bollards had been installed along the South Embankment to prevent parking and work to install new lighting on the North Embankment was continuing, however work to replace paving in Duke Street would now be delayed until the autumn.

Cllr Hawkins had met with Cllr Chilcott and South Hams District Council's only Dog Warden Tracey Weaver to discuss the problem of dog fouling in Dartmouth.

The District Council Executive had recently discussed options for the future of the Lower Ferry. Cllr Hawkins told the meeting that he would do all he could to keep the Lower Ferry under the ownership of the District Council as it had made £100,000 profit this year. He believed if the Lower Ferry or the Park and Ride were to cease being run by the District Council they should be passed back to the Town Council.

Cllr Hawkins listed grants made from his locality fund in 2014/2015:-

- £1,000 to Dartmouth Amateur Rowing Club for a new safety boat.
- £2,000 to Dartmouth Green Partnerships for composting.
- £700 to Dartmouth Yacht Club for sailing bursaries.
- £500 to Dartmouth Outdoor Swimming Pool.
- £1,000 to Dartmouth Caring.
- £500 to Dartmouth Food Bank.
- £2,500 to the Tourist Information Centre.
- £1,000 to Townstal Community Hall.
- £1,000 to Dartmouth Museum.

There had been an extra £10,000 (total £20,000) available in 2014/2015 from the sale of Exeter Airport; only £10,000 would be available in 2015/2016.

Cllr Gent commented that the passenger ferry was little used in the evenings and asked Cllr Hawkins if one dog warden was sufficient for the whole of the South Hams.

Following a question from Cllr Fyson, Cllr Hawkins confirmed that the profitability figures for the Lower Ferry did take into account usage of the Higher Ferry. Cllr S Smith enquired if a decision would be taken on the future of the Lower Ferry before the elections in May; Cllr Hawkins confirmed that this would not be the case as discussions were on-going.

Cllr Cooke questioned the 25 year proposed length of the leisure services delivery contract; Cllr Bastone would be contacted for details.

Cllr S Smith asked Cllr Hawkins if there was any news of the West Dart development progressing. Cllr Hawkins had recently spoken to Dave Kenyon the Planning Officer who was waiting for Millwood Homes to reply concerning the requested increase in the number of affordable homes.

199. PRESENTATION ON THE DARTMOUTH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BY FRANCESCA JOHNSON AND NIGEL WAY M.B.E.

Francesca Johnson and Nigel Way gave a presentation on the Dartmouth Business Improvement District, its business plan and the budget for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016; copies of the business plan had been distributed at the meeting.

Mr Way stressed the need for everyone in the Town to work together and added that it would have been a mistake for Dartmouth not to have a BID. He went on to explain that the BID had been in place for 8 months since June 2014 and Francesca Johnson explained that she had stepped in as Business Manager when Phil Scoble had left and that the BID was hoping to develop a new management board with additional members.

The BID was starting to build a marketing database for Dartmouth and would shortly be launching a new website and a trade local campaign, as well as running a trade event at the Guildhall in April. There were also group buying schemes being organised to save levy payers money. The BID team had also worked with others to keep Dartmouth's Park and Ride scheme running.

Cllr Cawley commented that a professional line of communication was needed with the BID Team and he went on to ask 6 questions.

1. The BID budget for 2014/2015 included an amount for creative work, what was this for?
2. What was included in the figure of £24,043?
3. £2,000 per month including google ad-words had been listed in the original budget and yet on a google search Dartmouth Everytime was only listed on the 7th page.
4. In the new budget there was no provision at all for national advertising, would this not take place?
5. Why was there no reference to high tech business in Dartmouth in the BID documents?
6. Was it true that following the service of summonses on 100 businesses that had not paid their BID levy, it was planned to serve summonses on another 100 Dartmouth businesses?

Francesca Johnson explained that:-

1. The creative work budget was for the redesign of the Dartmouth Everytime website in conjunction with the TIC.
2. £24,043 was for a combination of google adwords, facebook ads and search engine optimization.
3. The £2,000 had not been spent but Francesca Johnson would check the search for Dartmouth Everytime.
4. Nothing was set in stone, there was a £6,000 contingency if later in the year it was decided that national advertising was needed.
5. Francesca Johnson assured the meeting that online businesses were part of the plan; they needed to be persuaded to engage with the BID board.
6. It would be necessary to summons all the businesses that had not paid their BID levy but the board members were keen to meet with anyone who needed further clarification of the BID's plans before making payment.

Following a question from Cllr Springett, Francesca Johnson explained that she would be meeting with an app provider to increase communication.

Cllr Allen commented that it was good news for the Town that the BID had set a precedent and were funding community groups but he reminded the BID that the Town Council was not a business, they were elected. He added that the Town Council was developing its own marketing of the Market and the Guildhall.

Cllr Hawke sought clarification of the payment of BID levies by charitable organisations such as the Flavel. Francesca Johnson confirmed that those with charitable status and not for profit organisations did not have to pay a BID levy. Nigel Way confirmed that none of the BID board would profit from the BID.

Several members agreed that despite their reservations now the BID was in place they would work with the board members to ensure the best benefit for the Town.

Mr C Griffiths spoke to the meeting and stated that he felt there had been no proper debate on a BID for Dartmouth; he did not believe that

Dartmouth needed advertising and suggested that there should be a vote of no confidence in the BID.

Mr Rendle suggested that it was important for all groups in the Town to work through the elected members.

Paul Reach, a past BID Chairman gave a short history of the BID's formation and Peter Bailey Chairman of the Business Forum added that he felt that the potential business assets of the Town were unrepresented on the BID.

Members suggested a vote of support for the BID be put to a future Town Council meeting.

200. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR.

Mr Boughton asked the Mayor if following reports that the Lower Ferry may be sold and also that the Town Council may be offered the business, if he had thought of the required capital investment that would be required; Mr Boughton believed this was potentially £4m. The Mayor replied that the Town Council would consider options for funding should this be offered to them by South Hams District Council.

Mr Boughton stated that he had recently been told that officers at South Hams District Council were no longer answering questions concerning the proposed West Dart development and asked the Mayor if the Town Council had received any communication on this point. Through the Mayor, Cllr Fyson replied that he had been assured by officers in the planning department of the District Council that dialogue was continuing with Millwood Homes. The Mayor added that the Town Council was very supportive of the new development and as many affordable homes as possible should be provided.

201. URGENT BUSINESS.

There was one item of urgent business to be taken in committee at the end of the meeting.

202. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES.

Proposed: Cllr D J Cawley

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2nd February 2015, be confirmed and signed as a true record.

203. CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) An email request had been received from Helen Dobby at South Hams District Council for the Town Council to give its views by the end of March 2015 on a proposed pilot scheme for pay on entry, for the toilets in the Royal Avenue Gardens, Dartmouth.

Proposed: Cllr D J Cawley

Seconded: Cllr T de Galleani

Recommended: That the Town Council support the introduction of a 20p pilot pay on entry scheme in the toilets in the Royal Avenue Gardens by South Hams District Council.

- b) A letter had been received from Dartmouth Food Festival requesting use of the Market, the Community Corner, part of the Market car park and the Amenity Hut in the Royal Avenue Gardens during 23rd – 25th October 2015. The Clerk would ask Devon County Council Highways to ensure that the repairs to the pavements in Duke Street now scheduled for the autumn did not clash with the Food Festival.

Proposed: Cllr D J Cawley

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the requests of Dartmouth Food Festival to use the Market, Community Corner and Royal Avenue Gardens Amenity Hut for the festival in October 2015 be granted on the same terms and charges as in 2014.

- c) An email request had been received from Dartmouth Green Partnerships, who were applying to become a charity and requested the Town Council's permission to use the Guildhall as their official address with the Charity Commission.

Proposed: Cllr F J Hawke
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Town Council grant permission for Dartmouth Green Partnerships to use the Guildhall as their official address with the Charity Commission.

- d) A request had been received from the Friends of Dartmouth Orchard to hold a Community Event at the Orchard on Saturday 20th June 2015 to raise funds for future events. Members supported this initiative but requested that no food be sold on a casual basis.

Proposed: Cllr D J Cawley
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Town Council fully support this event and make a nominal charge of £25.00 for the use of the Orchard.

- e) An invitation had been received for all Councillors to attend the AGM of Dartmouth Green Partnerships on Friday 20th March 2015 at 7.30 pm at the Guildhall.

- f) An email had been received from the elections office at South Hams District Council enquiring if the Town Council would wish to request separate poll cards for the Town Council election. The Clerk would clarify the costs with South Hams District Council.

Proposed: Cllr D J Cawley
Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the Town Council request separate poll cards be sent out for the Town Council election.

204. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

a) Planning Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th February 2015 were reviewed.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent

Seconded: Cllr P F Allen

Resolved: That the Report and Recommendations of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th February 2015, be received, approved and adopted.

b) Finance Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 26th February 2015 were reviewed.

Proposed: Cllr R E Chilcott

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the Report and Recommendations of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 26th February 2015, be received, approved and adopted.

205. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

The Clerk presented a report on payments made under Standing Order No. 56 (b).

Proposed: Cllr F J Hawke

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the Clerk's actions in paying accounts totaling £38,727.17 for the month of February 2015 under Standing Order No. 56 (b) be endorsed.

206. REPORTS.

Representatives on Public Bodies and Associations.

On behalf of Dartmouth Green Partnerships Cllr de Galleani reported that the Gardener's Question Time recording at the Guildhall had gone well, with everyone delighted by Dartmouth.

Cllr Gent reported that the Friends of Ivy Lane were not yet ready to run the Youth Service but did have a constitution. They were waiting for a meeting with a legal adviser concerning charitable status and would present a business plan to the Town Council as soon as possible. Cllr Gent was to carry out an equipment survey of the Ivy Lane premises.

Cllr Allen sought clarification concerning the status of the Town Council representative on the BID, it was noted that the Town Council representative did not automatically become a director of the BID.

207. REFURBISHMENT OF FLAT 8A, THE BUTTERWALK.

The Mayor reported that he had visited Flat 8A, The Butterwalk and suggested that the Town Council's Maintenance Manager could carry out the majority of the work with sub-contractors to be hired for the plumbing and electrical work. Members agreed that electric panel heaters would be installed.

Proposed: Cllr R Springett

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That Flat 8A, The Butterwalk be refurbished using the Town Council's Maintenance Manager and contractors for the electrics and plumbing under the supervision of Cllr Cawley.

208. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FUNDRAISING.

Cllr Chilcott had met with lighting contractors that week. The group that had fundraised for Christmas lights in 2014 would again be holding events in 2015 such as a concert by the Dart Rock Choir and an event in Café Al Fresco's. Cllr Chilcott would be taking part in a 500 mile sponsored walk across Spain to raise funds for the Christmas lights in Dartmouth and welcomed any fundraising ideas from members.

Proposed: Cllr R Springett

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the Town Council acknowledges Cllr Chilcott's fundraising efforts and endorses his endeavours.

209. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR.

Cllr Hawke asked the Mayor if the Town Council could write to South Hams District Council to state that should they consider disposing of the Lower Ferry, would they please consult the Town Council who would be interested in running this service.

Cllr Gent suggested that the Clerk register the Lower Ferry as an Asset of Community Value.

The Mayor replied that a letter would be sent.

Proposed: Cllr F J Hawke

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw.

210. BUILDING WORKS FOR THE GUILDHALL LIFT AND KITCHEN.

The Mayor explained that the brickwork for the lift shaft would need to be completed to fine tolerances prior to the installation of the lift in the Guildhall; he would write a specification and obtain prices for the work.

Proposed: Cllr R Springett

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That Cllr Lyon draw up a specification for the building works for the Guildhall lift and obtain prices.

211. PERSONNEL MATTERS.

The Mayor informed members that following a telephone call of resignation on 4th March 2015 he had today received a letter of resignation from the Finance and Administration Officer.

Proposed: Cllr F J Hawke

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That Standing Orders be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue after 9.30 pm.

Proposed: Cllr S Smith

Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Town Council accept the resignation of the Finance and Administration Officer; her final day in the office to be 25th March 2015.