

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

7th December 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 M Baillie

*Cllr L M Barnes

*Cllr G B F Coles

*Cllr A J C Fyson

*Cllr T de Galleani

*Cllr D M Gent

*Cllr F J Hawke

*Cllr I A Pritchard

*Cllr R F Rendle

*Cllr S Smith

*Cllr R Springett

*Cllr S Thomson

*County Cllr J Hawkins

*District Cllr H Bastone

#District Cllr R Rowe

*Denotes attendance

#Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance 7 members of the public, and 1 member of the press.

152. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Gent declared a personal interest in agenda item 3 – Dartmouth Pre-school.

Cllr de Galleani declared a personal interest in agenda item 18 - Vacant Unit in Dartmouth Market.

153. PRESENTATION BY DARTMOUTH PRE-SCHOOL ON THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHFORD ROAD SCHOOLROOMS.

Julian Distin and Pam Reeves gave a presentation on the refurbishment of Dartmouth Pre-school premises in the Southford Road Schoolrooms. Amanda Liscombe the Chairman of the preschool had been unable to attend and gave her apologies.

Pam Reeves explained that Dartmouth Pre-school had been founded in 1961 and was thought to be the oldest preschool in Britain. They were a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance and had been registered with OFSTED since 1992, with a level of provision that was consistently rated as “good”. The Pre-school served all of Dartmouth including Townstal and the Lower Town and was pleased to promote and value diversity. They played an important role in recognizing learning difficulties and provided support for the whole family. There was a well-qualified and experienced staff team and they were pleased to assist students from South Devon College and Dartmouth Academy in their training.

The new build would provide premises mainly on the lower level with free access to the garden. Mrs Reeves thanked the Town Council for providing a temporary home for the pre-school at the Ivy Lane Centre whilst the building works took place.

Mr Distin circulated photos of the building works to members at the meeting. There were currently 20 children in attendance and the pre-school also provided a holiday club in the school holidays.

Mr Distin explained that the Parochial Church Council (PCC) the owners of the building had always striven to maintain the Southford Road Schoolrooms to the best of its ability but the building had now

reached the stage where it required major repairs. The PCC had decided to make better use of the whole building and had obtained planning permission for a scheme which would place the preschool on the lower ground floor with 2 flats above. The cost of the refurbishment of the preschool area was £200,000, £100,000 of which had already been raised.

The on-going building work was funded by the PCC; the PCC would grant a long secure lease to the preschool and was aware that the rent should be kept at an affordable level.

Mr Distin added that the Southford Road Pre-school was not a private nursery and operated on a not for profit basis, he asked that the Town Council make a grant towards the capital costs of the playgroup refurbishment.

Following a question from Cllr Allen, Mrs Reeves confirmed that the pre-school took children from ages 2-5 from all over Dartmouth; the toddler group was free.

The pre-school liaised with Devon County Council, Dartmouth Academy, the Health Visitors at the Children's Centre and local paediatricians. Mrs Reeves also detailed the charges for members and added that the new living wage legislation would have an effect on the playgroup's costs; she would provide further information after the meeting on the running costs. The pre-school had 20 children at present but would be able to register for 30 when in their new building.

The Mayor thanked Mr Distin and Mrs Reeves for their presentation; this grant request would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

154. REPORTS.

Police and District and County Councillors' Reports.

In the absence of Inspector Tomlinson, Sergeant Ian Simons reported on the crime figures for Dartmouth for the month of November 2015. Cllr Springett asked if one of the PCSO's could visit a future Town Council meeting; Sergeant Simons would arrange this. He also agreed to check on cars "racing" in the Park and Ride car park each evening. Following the meeting the District Councillors arranged for the gate to the Park and Ride overflow to be locked when not in use.

In her absence Cllr Rowe's report had been laid round the table. Devon County Council had to make Tough Choices for the 2016/17 budget and members of the public could have their say in the Consultation Process on the Devon County Council website. Budgets seemed to get harder year on year and choices had to be made as there were services that were mandatory and had to be done. The County Council was then left to decide what they would like to see done.

The Devon & Cornwall Police had been having a considerable problem with their budget, however the Police & Crime Commissioner questioned the way that Central Government arrived at the figures which were given and there was now a much larger amount available than was first thought.

The Devon & Somerset County Councils and all the districts within the two Counties, Torbay & Plymouth Unitary along with the two National Parks had placed a bid to Central government for Devolution. This could give the area more power over its own budgets and spending power.

Cllr Hawkins reported that the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) would be meeting to consider a new Traffic order for Dartmouth in February and March 2016; the County Council would be making a South Hams District wide Traffic Order. Cllr Hawkins suggested a meeting with Town Councillors before the next Full Town Council meeting on 4th January 2016 to discuss items for inclusion in the order. He also suggested that this might be an opportunity to change the winter parking times on the North Embankment.

Cllr Hawkins would be meeting with Highways Officers on the North Embankment on 9th December 2015 to discuss improvements to the concrete paving.

Cllr Hawkins would be organizing a Dartmouth Public Transport group meeting before the middle of January 2016 and would ask Devon County Council officers and Stagecoach representatives to attend.

Cllr Bastone reported that the new planning and IT systems had now gone live on the District Council website (www.southhams.gov.uk). Changes to the systems would be phased and, initially, there would be a 3 week transition from old systems to new and then the new pages would be seen on the website.

Cllr Bastone also reported that the deadline for TAP Fund applications (to be sent to community@swdevon.gov.uk) was 12 noon on Friday, 18th December 2015. To enable Town and Parish councils to set their precepts accordingly, applications would be determined by local Devon County Council and South Hams District Council members on Thursday, 14th January 2016.

At a Special meeting of the District Council on 5th November 2015, members considered a report on 'Our Plan: South Hams' and resolved to work with other authorities within the 'Housing Market Area' to demonstrate conclusively that all had complied with the Duty to Co-operate.

At its meeting on 10th December 2015, the District Council was to consider an agenda item related to Devolution which ultimately proposed to central government that a single investment programme be created to underpin funding which was to be devolved to the heart of the South West.

The formal South Hams District Council Budget Setting process for 2016/17 was to commence at the Executive meeting on 10th December 2015 and would culminate with a set of Budget proposals being presented to the full District Council meeting on 11th February 2016.

Cllr Barnes asked the District Councillors why the work to re-instate Coronation Park had not yet taken place as previously promised at the beginning of November 2015. Following the meeting Cllr Hawkins advised that this work would be undertaken by a local farmer.

Cllr Hawke asked Cllr Hawkins what plans were in place for the town bus service during the pavement repairs to Duke Street in January 2016. Cllr Hawkins replied that Devon County Council would be discussing this with the local bus companies and a route would be issued shortly.

155. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR.

Mr Harris asked the Mayor if there was any progress on the nativity scene for Dartmouth.

Through the Mayor, Cllr Gent replied that there would be a lit scene in St Saviour's Churchyard.

Mr Harris asked the Mayor if the playing surface on Coronation Park would be re-instated in time for the next cricket season.

The Mayor replied that he hoped this would be the case.

Mr Boughton asked the Mayor for his thoughts on how far the process of decentralization had reached in the South West.

The Mayor replied he would find out and let Mr Boughton know.

156. URGENT BUSINESS.

There was none.

157. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

Members reviewed the minutes of 2nd November 2015 and Cllr Barnes asked that changes be made to minute 143. Election of a Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Proposed: Cllr R Springett

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That Minute 143 now read "Following the death of Cllr Chilcott members discussed the appointment of a new Chairman of the Finance Committee. Cllr Barnes proposed Cllr Rendle and this was seconded by Cllr Pritchard. This was a second proposal following the one below. There were 5 votes for each candidate and Cllrs Hawke, Lyon, Rendle and Thomson abstained. Cllr Rendle stood down as a candidate and Cllr Thomson was elected. There was a heated discussion. Cllr Barnes and Cllr Baillie left the meeting at 8.20pm".

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr S E Thomson

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

158. CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) A letter had been received from Sue Pudduck concerning the restarting of the Dart Harbour Non-Beneficiaries group which had not met for 3 years. The letter sought a representative from Dartmouth Town Council so that a future meeting could be called. It was noted that the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority had issued their Strategic Plan and would be holding their AGM that same day. The Mayor had received an email from the DHNA confirming that their 2016 AGM would not clash with the December Town Council meeting.

Proposed: Cllr R M Lyon
Seconded: Cllr R W I Cooke

Resolved: That Cllr R F Rendle be nominated as the Town Council's representative to the River Dart Non-Beneficiary Group.

- b) An email had been received from the Dartmouth United Charities asking that a replacement trustee from the Town Council be nominated to replace Cllr Chilcott. The current Trustees were:-
Cllr R W I Cooke
Cllr T de Galleani
Cllr D M Gent
Cllr F J Hawke
Cllr R M Lyon
Cllr R Springett
Cllr S Thomson

No Council representative was nominated at this meeting.

- c) A letter had been received from the Secretary of the Mayflower 400 group thanking the Town Council for putting funds in their budget for 2016/2017 so that the project could be launched.
- d) An email had been received from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit on behalf of English Heritage who were about to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Dartmouth Castle and wished for a Town Council representative(s) to join the stakeholder group.

Proposed: Cllr R M Lyon

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Proposed: That Cllr R W I Cooke be nominated as the Town Council's representative to the Conservation Management Plan group for Dartmouth Castle.

- e) An email had been received from Dartmouth Food Festival giving the dates for the Food Festival in 2016 i.e. Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd December 2016. This would be discussed at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

159. REPORTS.

a) Finance Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 4th November 2015 were reviewed.

Cllr Springett requested that the office monitor the use of the franking machine to keep down postage costs and report back to the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

Members asked that "Chris Brook at South Hams District Council had declined the Town Council's suggestion that they take over the ownership of the building" be removed from item 2 Correspondence – TIC grant application.

Item 3 – Clerk's Authority to spend – the working party to review Standing Orders would consist of Cllrs Baillie, Gent, Hawke and Thomson.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Report and Recommendations of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 4th November 2015, as amended, be received, approved and adopted.

b) Planning Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th November 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 November 2015, be received, approved and adopted.

c) General Purposes Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19th November 2015 were reviewed. It was agreed that item 2, Civic Evening 2016, be referred back to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 21st January 2016.

Proposed: Cllr T de Galleani
Seconded: Cllr I A Pritchard

Resolved: That the Report and Recommendations of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19th November 2015, as amended, be received, approved and adopted.

160. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

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

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Clerk's actions in paying accounts totaling £52,297.44 for the month of November 2015 under Standing Order No. 56 (b) be endorsed.

161. REPORTS.

Representatives on Public Bodies and Associations.

Cllr de Galleani informed the meeting that Dartmouth Green Partnerships had now achieved charitable status which would aid their raising funds for the new greenhouse.

Cllr Allen informed the meeting that St Petrox Trust were maintaining and repairing their properties to the best of their abilities.

Cllr Gent informed the meeting that the Youth group in Ivy Lane would be holding their Christmas disco in February 2016. Crash mats had been ordered for the Youth Club.

162. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR.

Cllr de Galleani asked the Mayor if he could remind members that if they were more polite to each other they would all get on better. The Mayor replied that he would do this.

163. DISTRICT COUNCIL POLICY OF CHARGING FOR PARKING PERMITS ON THE SOUTH EMBANKMENT.

The meeting discussed the proposal by South Hams District Council to charge for the issue of permits to park on the South Embankment.

All members agreed that the South Embankment was the “shop window” of Dartmouth and should be reserved for pedestrians only, any permitted parking on the South Embankment needed enforcement; this would be the responsibility of the South Hams District Council parking attendants. Cllr Bastone assured the Town Council that any parking permits would be restricted to those who had a fishing or marine related need.

Proposed: Cllr R F Rendle

Seconded: Cllr D M Gent

Resolved: That the Town Council express its disappointment to the District Council that there had been no consultation on this matter and state that the Town Council do not want any cars or vehicles parked on the embankment at any cost.

164. SETTING OF THE PRECEPT FOR 2016/2017.

Proposed: Cllr S E Thomson

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That the budget be accepted and that application be made to South Hams District Council, being the charging authority for the District including the Parish of Dartmouth, for payment of the sum of £188,094 being the amount due under precept to meet the General Expenses of the said Parish for the financial year 2016/17.

165. CHRISTMAS CLOSING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES.

The Clerk advised that South Hams District Council offices were closing on 24th December 2015 and would remain closed until 3rd January 2016 inclusive.

Proposed: Cllr P F Allen
Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That the Town Council offices be closed from Thursday 24th December 2015 to Sunday 3rd January 2016 inclusive.

166. CO-OPTION OF A CANDIDATE TO FILL THE VACANCY IN DARTMOUTH TOWNSTAL WARD.

Completed questionnaires from 3 candidates for the Townstal Ward vacancy had been distributed to members. Mr Brian Harris, Mr Martin McGowan-Scanlon and Mr Fred Pritchard-Tagg all gave a brief resume and stated why they wished to be considered for co-option to Dartmouth Town Council. Members voted via ballot papers. Mr Brian Harris was elected by a clear majority.

Proposed: Cllr P F Allen
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.

**167. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN THE VACANT UNIT
DARTMOUTH MARKET.**

Members considered 4 expressions of interest for the vacant unit in Dartmouth Market.

Proposed: Cllr G B F Coles
Seconded: Cllr I A Pritchard

Resolved: That the unit be offered to Mr Simon Phelps of Sound Advice Records.

**168. NEWCOMEN ENGINE MAINTENANCE AND GRANTS TO
DARTMOUTH T.I.C.**

Members discussed an additional grant to Dartmouth Tourist Information Centre. Concerns were raised over the costs of running the centre and the need for more detailed accounts from the last 3 years together with a breakdown by item of the changes that were to be made. Members also felt that funding should be sought from the business community and the BID and they stressed the need to ensure that the Newcomen Engine was properly maintained and suggested that a charge be made to view the engine.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

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

All members were keen to support tourism in the Town and agreed that this matter needed further consideration.

The Mayor informed the meeting that as custodians of the Newcomen Engine the Town Council was responsible for its maintenance and a visit by an electrician had identified 2 faults in the electrics. A hydraulics engineer had detected problems with the pump mechanism, parts for which had been ordered.

The Clerk would investigate a sign for the engine noting that it was owned by the Newcomen Society and was on loan to Dartmouth.

169. PERSONNEL MATTERS.

The Clerk read out a letter she had written to the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel concerning an incidence of bullying by a Councillor and she reminded members of the Code of Conduct particularly 5 (c) –

“5. You must not:

(c) bully any person (bullying may be characterised as any single act or pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse or misuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine or coerce or has the effect of undermining or coercing an individual or group of individuals by gradually eroding their confidence or capability which may cause them to suffer stress or fear);”

Members agreed that all would be vigilant to ensure that no single Councillor would cause distress to any member of the Council’s staff.