

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

6th March 2017

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 G B F Coles

*Cllr A J C Fyson

*Cllr T de Galleani

*Cllr D M Gent

*Cllr B T Harriss

*Cllr F J Hawke

*Cllr I A Pritchard

*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 3 members of the public, and 1 member of the press.

197. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

198. REPORTS.

Police and District and County Councillors' Reports.

Sergeant Iain Simons gave a report on the crime figures for Dartmouth for the month of February 2017.

Cllr Smith asked Sergeant Simons if he was concerned about the level of crime in a small town like Dartmouth, particularly with the planned phasing out of PCSO cover.

Sergeant Simons replied that the Police provided the best cover they could with the resources available. The PCSO numbers would be reducing by half and Dartmouth would probably lose one of its 3 PCSO's; at present there were 3 Police Officers and 3 PCSO's.

Cllr Gent asked if there were still problems with vandalism by young people at the Park and Ride area, Sergeant Simons confirmed that this had reduced following increased Police interaction with schools.

Cllr Springett was pleased that the vandalism levels were down but had read the Devon Policing report and expressed concerns that the reduction in PCSO's took away the basis of community policing. Sergeant Simons explained that the Police and Crime Commissioner had been tasked to look at policing resources and the current initiative was a result of this.

County Councillor Jonathan Hawkins reported that Devon County Council had set their budget for 2017/2018 in the last month with a planned increase of just under 5%. They were prioritising adult and child care and education budgets for the coming year. The Highways budget was also a priority and would be protected as much as possible.

South West Highways had failed to gain the contract for work on Devon's roads for 2017/2018. A new company had been appointed

from 1st April 2017, with the £1.9m saving being kept in the Highways budget.

Cllr Hawkins was arranging a meeting with Neil Oxton from Devon County Council to discuss traffic calming in Victoria Road; he would inform the Town Council of the date.

Cllr Hawkins had attended a successful meeting concerning a new bus shelter for Riverview; Cllrs Smith and Springett would talk to residents about the positioning of the new shelter.

Cllr Hawkins told the meeting that he had grave concerns regarding the provision of care in Dartmouth by Social Services following the change in health care facilities in the Town. He believed Social Services were not able to look after people properly in their own homes and he would be following this up in the months ahead.

Cllr Hawkins reported that he had attended several meetings with Dartmouth Green Partnerships and residents in Bayards Cove to look at improving this area for the future. The beds in the Castle Estate had been cleared and the planting of hydrangeas, camellias and rhododendrons would take place.

Cllr Allen asked Cllr Hawkins if he was aware that one of the new bollards outside the post office sorting office in Victoria Road had already been demolished. Cllr Hawkins explained that a team from Devon Highways was in Dartmouth at present repairing pavements but he would report this.

Cllr de Galleani asked Cllr Hawkins if he would chase the work required to move the hanging basket stanchions at Bayards Cove and she asked Cllr Hawkins to also ask the Highways department to make repairs to Townstal Road. Cllr Smith agreed and added that the repairs were most needed in the section between the junction of Britannia Avenue and the junction with York Road.

Cllr Fyson asked Cllr Hawkins when the yellow lines were to be added in Above Town; Cllr Hawkins explained this would take place after the March meeting of the Devon County Council Highways and Traffic Orders Committee.

Cllr Fyson told the meeting that the A381 at Halwell was disintegrating and was badly in need of repair; Cllr Hawkins reported that this was in the Highways budget for 2017/2018.

Cllr Hawke told the meeting that he supported Cllr Hawkins with his concerns regarding care in the community and told members that he felt it could not be provided under the current system. Nothing had been put in place ready to be up and running prior to the hospital closing. Cllr Hawkins agreed and added that he believed that a ring-fenced tax was needed for the NHS.

Cllr Pritchard supported Cllr Hawkins concerning care in the community and felt that the problems being experienced should be taken very seriously, the service was being completely undermined.

Cllr Hawkins reported that Devon County Council gave each County Councillor a budget of £39,000 to help with potholes in their wards.

Cllr de Galleani told the meeting that she believed the road repairs on the Townstal Road had not been completed properly when originally done; monies needed to be spent on mending roads properly.

Cllr Harriss asked Cllr Hawkins who owned the flagpole in Bayards Cove, as the flag needed replacing. Cllr Hawkins explained that the flagpole was the property of South Hams District Council but the flag was the property of a local resident.

In her absence Cllr Rowe's report was laid round the table. Cllr Rowe reported that the Joint Local Plan had been passed by the District Council and would now go to Regulation 19 consultation before being put before the examiners later this year. The Local Authority Controlled Company had been rejected; instead other ways of increasing funding would be looked at for meeting the budget gap from 2020.

The District Council had agreed in principle to setting up a Heart of the South West joint committee to look at Devolution as from 1st September 2017.

Cllr Bastone reported that the District Council had considered their Budget Proposals for 2017/18 and the Local Authority Controlled Company Business Case but this had been deferred; the District Council would look to find different ways of raising revenue.

At a Special District Council meeting on 2nd March 2017 South Hams District Council had discussed the Joint Local Plan, the Local Authority Controlled Company Business Case and Joint Services Group Terms of Reference, the Heart of the South West Devolution Update and an appointments report.

The District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 23rd February 2017 had discussed the Devon and Cornwall Housing - Annual Update, the Empty Homes Strategy, a Street Naming and Numbering Briefing Paper and Task and Finish Group Updates on

- a) Dartmouth Lower Ferry
- b) Waste and Recycling
- c) Events Policy.

Cllr Bastone commended the presentation from Devon and Cornwall Housing (DCH) to the Town Council. The Clerk would arrange for the presentation to be given to the Town Council at a later date.

Cllr Smith asked Cllr Bastone if the presentation by Devon and Cornwall Housing included investment in Dartmouth. Cllr Bastone explained that DCH were open to investment in any community.

Cllr de Galleani asked Cllr Bastone to confirm that the District Council part of the Council Tax would rise by £5 per annum on a Band D property; Cllr Bastone confirmed this.

Cllr Allen asked Cllr Bastone if part of the curtilage of Coronation Park extended into the river, as the Town Council would be considering the transfer of Coronation Park from the District Council later in the meeting. Cllr Allen believed that the Mayor had spoken to the Harbour Master concerning the possible uses of the mud flats in this area. Cllr Bastone confirmed that this area was owned by the District Council but was not included in the proposed asset transfer to the Town Council.

Cllr Gent thanked Cllr Bastone for arranging the meeting of the Town Council with Patrick Whymer, the District Council's Head of Planning, this had been very informative.

Cllr Springett informed the meeting that he had emailed Rob Sekula at the District Council concerning arrangements for the installation and dedication of the American Battle Monuments Commission monument in the Royal Avenue Gardens on 6th June 2017.

199. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

Mr Barnes told the meeting that he was in favour of Devolved Services but was very concerned that the Town Council was rushing into the transfer of assets from South Hams District Council; rumours were that the District Council was going to cease to exist, would it not be prudent to wait for this to happen. He asked that the Town Council put off voting on this subject until later in the year.

The Mayor replied that at a recent meeting with representatives from the District Council no fixed time had been set for the transfer and it would probably take place towards the end of the summer, as there were still details to be resolved.

200. URGENT BUSINESS.

There was none.

201. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES.

Members reviewed the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th February 2017.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th February 2017, be confirmed and signed as a true record.

202. CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) The Clerk notified members that a Skip day had been arranged for Townstal Community Hall on Saturday 18th March 2017; a skip would not be placed in the Market due to a lack of volunteers to man the skip. Cllr Smith explained that the skip was now to be sited at Dartmouth Academy as there was an event planned for that day at Townstal Community Hall. The Clerk would arrange the skip accordingly.
- b) Cllr Smith had informed the Town Council offices that our MP, Dr Sarah Wollaston would be at the Townstal Community Hall to attend a public question and answer session together with senior members of the Clinical Care Group on Wednesday 12th April 2017 at 7pm.
- c) An email had been received from the Project Manager from the Dartmoor National Park Public Arts Initiative called Moor Otters. 100 painted Otter sculptures would be placed in the area from 1st June to 15th September 2017 to form an Otter trail. Dartmouth was invited to have an Otter placed in the Town for £500.00 plus vat as sponsorship. All proceeds would be used to undertake conservation projects within the National Park. The Clerk had forwarded the email to the Dartmouth and District Chamber of Trade.
- d) A letter had been received from the Dartmouth Town Crier requesting an honorarium of £250.00 for the forthcoming year. This would be considered by the next meeting of the Town Council Finance Committee.
- e) A copy of the South Hams District Council Dog Control and Public Space Protection Order consultation had been received from South Hams District Council and circulated to members. Comments were required by Monday 27th March 2017. This would be considered by the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 23rd March 2017.
- f) The final payment of the Public Purposes Share of the Dartmouth Trust monies for their year to 30th September 2016 had been received; this was £48,441.00 and took the payment for the year to £77307.67.
- g) A letter had been received from Superintendent Hawley the local Policing Commander for South Devon giving details of a reduction in PCSO's to 150 over the next 4 years; details had been circulated to members.

203. REPORTS.

a) Planning Committee

The Report and Recommendations of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th February 2017 were reviewed. The Chairman informed members that application 4182/16/FUL/MB for erection of 2 dwellings with associated parking and gardens, land at SX 861 510, Seymour Drive had been rejected by the District Council as they had agreed with the Town Council Planning Committee that the site was amenity land.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent
Seconded: Cllr R Springett

Resolved: That the Report and Recommendations of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th February 2017, be received, approved and adopted.

204. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

The Clerk gave 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 £31,288.81 for the month of February 2017 under Standing Order No. 56 (b) be endorsed.

205. REPORTS.

Representatives on Public Bodies and Associations.

Cllr Allen reported that the Vice-Chairman of Regatta had stepped down due to illness and there was a potential for Marquee events not to take place. Cllr Bastone explained that the Marquee events would still take place but Regatta did need more volunteers.

Cllr Gent reported that Jonathan Oliverio had moved on to other Youth work and Michelle Fascione was now leading the Youth group at Ivy Lane.

Cllr de Galleani informed the meeting that Dartmouth Green Partnerships (DGP) was pleased to report that planting had started in front of the dinghy park on Coronation Park. DGP did need tools as members had to use their own. Work had started on the temporary greenhouse while funding was sought for the permanent pyramid greenhouse. Stevie Rogers would be giving a rose pruning lesson on Wednesday 8th March 2017 in the Royal Avenue Gardens.

206. CONFIRMATION OF THE STATUS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DARTMOUTH AND DISTRICT GUIDE LTD AND THE TOWN COUNCIL.

Cllr Hawke told the meeting that following the appointment of directors (Cllrs Coles and Hawke and Dr Fiona Ward) by the Town Council on 7th November 2016 to the Dartmouth and District Guide Ltd., and Cllr Bastone agreeing to stay on as a Director to provide continuity, the Tourist Information Centre would be run by the Directors as an autonomous company.

The Directors would report back to the Town Council at monthly meetings and would provide financial information as requested by the Town Council. Dartmouth and District Guide Ltd. would be owned by the Town Council once the transfer had taken place but would not be subject to its standing orders and would not be a Town Council Committee.

Cllr Bastone confirmed that the actual transfer had yet to take place. The TIC's accountant had promised to do this as soon as possible.

Cllr Allen welcomed the statement that the TIC was an autonomous body as he had grave concerns regarding the recent appointment of the TIC Manager without the position being advertised.

Cllr Coles, as a Director of the Dartmouth and District Guide Ltd told the meeting that the appointed candidate was perfect for the job and she had been very pleased to receive the application for the post. Cllr

Coles had previously worked with the new manager and therefore knew her credentials for the post. The new manager was extremely positive and enthusiastic about the town and the future of the visitor centre.

Cllr Allen told members that this statement had only confirmed his concerns, as Cllr Coles previous association with the new manager could mean that she was biased when making the appointment.

207. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DARTMOUTH UNITED CHARITIES TRUSTEE.

Following Cllr Rendle's resignation, members considered the election of a new Town Council Trustee to Dartmouth United Charities. As there were no candidates from the Town Council to fill the vacancy the Clerk would ask Mr Rendle if he wished to continue as the Town Council's representative to Dartmouth United Charities.

Proposed: Cllr A J C Fyson

Seconded: Cllr G B F Coles

Resolved: That Mr Rendle be asked to continue as the Town Council's representative to Dartmouth United Charities.

208. TRANSFER OF ASSETS FROM SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Cllr Fyson told the meeting that as Chairman of Finance he had attended the meeting between the Town Council and the District Council concerning the transfer of assets on 27th February 2017. This meeting had strengthened his confidence that the Town Council should now proceed with confirmation of the arrangements for the transfer of assets.

He explained that he understood the hesitations of some members who felt that some details were yet to be resolved and that these should hold the Town Council back from taking a decision at this time.

Cllr Fyson felt that many of the relevant questions raised had now been satisfactorily addressed and it was clear that the District Council

believed that any issues of detail that might still need to be definitively resolved could be dealt with during the forthcoming period of legal discussions given a flexible and cooperative approach on both sides. This period was expected to last at least six months so extra delay had to be avoided if at all possible. South Hams District Council need to respond to central government's budgetary pressure by relinquishing what functions it could, while he felt the Town Council must find a way of reversing the decline of the public open spaces in the Town. Cllr Fyson was sure that the Finance Committee would monitor this initiative every step of the way and that the Town Council would be capable of tailoring their activities to their resources while providing effective services in the interests of Dartmouth.

Cllr Thomson told the meeting that she had concerns regarding the transfer of assets from the District Council as members had yet to see a drafted proposal from South Hams District Council; this proposal could not be accepted without asking for the facts and she believed that the Town Council could not afford to take these assets on.

Cllr Smith told the meeting that he had opposed this transfer from day one and was concerned about the legal costs of the transfer.

Cllr Allen was also concerned that sufficient information had not been given to members on the transfer and he requested that under Standing Order 68 all paperwork on this matter should be given to members and he told the meeting he would make a Freedom of Information request if necessary.

The Mayor assured members that all the information received had been circulated to members.

Cllr Pritchard told the meeting that she could agree with the transfer of assets but only at the right time. All members should have all the information on this. Cllr Pritchard felt that this could leave an unfortunate legacy for future Councillors.

Cllr Hawke told the meeting that he had the reports on the transfer and he believed that the transfer could take up to 9 months to go through. The Old Dartmothians were currently repairing the shelter on Coronation Park and Dartmouth Green Partnerships were carrying out work around the Town and he felt that if the Town Council worked

with local groups then the transfer would be a very positive experience for the Town. Dartmouth relied on tourism and he felt that the Town Council must insure that the parks and open spaces were kept in a good condition.

Cllr de Galleani was in favour of the transfer and agreed with Cllr Hawke; the town only had a tourism industry left and there were very few independent businesses. Dartmouth was a beautiful place which the Town Council must take care of.

Cllr Allen requested a recorded vote.

Proposed: Cllr A J C Fyson

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That the Town Council confirms the transfer of assets from South Hams District Council, to include Coronation Park, Royal Avenue Gardens, the Castle Estate and verges in the Townstal Road and all buildings and structures thereon.

For the motion

**Cllr D M Gent
Cllr R Springett
Cllr G B F Coles
Cllr B T Harriss
Cllr T de Galleani
Cllr A J C Fyson
Cllr R W I Cooke
Cllr F J Hawke
Cllr R M Lyon**

Against

**Cllr P F Allen
Cllr S Smith
Cllr I A Pritchard
Cllr S E Thomson
Cllr M Baillie**

Abstentions

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That the Town Council approves the appointment of solicitors to act on the Town Council's behalf and for the Personnel Committee to consider a staffing structure for the maintenance and upkeep of the new and existing assets.

Cllr Allen again requested a recorded vote and this was identical to that recorded above.

209. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR.

Cllr Thomson left the meeting at 8.35 pm

Cllr Springett asked the Mayor if following the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary's proposal to reduce the number of PCSO's could the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable be invited to a future Council meeting to explain how they were going to Police the Town.

The Mayor replied that the Town Clerk would write to the Police and Crime Commissioner requesting a meeting.

Cllr Coles asked the Mayor if crime in Dartmouth was increasing as Sergeant Simons reports seemed to include more crime.

Through the Mayor, the Clerk explained that all the Police reports for the last few years were available in the Council offices and she would pass these to Cllr Coles.

Cllr Coles asked the Mayor if the Mayflower 400 group were still going ahead with plans to build an extension on the rear of Dartmouth Museum and she asked the Mayor if a letter could be sent to the group to put these proposals in abeyance.

The Mayor replied that all the Mayflower groups in Britain were putting in a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the next 2 months for £5m to be shared between the trail towns; the Museum extension was only a proposal at present.

Cllr Thomson returned to the meeting at 8.40 pm

Cllr Fyson explained for members that 2 letters had been sent to the Dartmouth Mayflower 400 group, one to give support for their Heritage Lottery bid and one to encourage the group to cost their individual projects.

Cllr Cooke told the meeting that Dartmouth Museum would shortly be putting outline plans for their proposed extension at the Butterwalk to the Town Council; these had been discussed with English Heritage.

Proposed: Cllr D M Gent

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

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. QUOTATIONS FOR DAMP PROOFING IN THE VACANT UNIT IN DARTMOUTH MARKET (FORMERLY THE SHOE BOX).

Details of 3 quotations for damp proofing of the vacant unit in Dartmouth Market (formerly the Shoe Box) were laid round the table. The Mayor explained the three proposed methods of damp proofing for members.

Proposed: Cllr R Springett

Seconded: Cllr F J Hawke

Resolved: That quotation 3 for £2,235.00 plus vat be accepted for the damp proofing at Unit 1, Centre Building, Dartmouth Market.