

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
OF DARTMOUTH GUILDHALL ON MONDAY 16TH DECEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Cllrs: N Bodinnar; C Campos; D Case; G Evans (Chair);
S Hibbert; R Rendle; G Webb; D Wells (Vice Chair); Cllr Yardy.

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: C Pritchard-Williams; Finance Officer: A McGrigor;
Dartmouth Visitor Centre: K Perrow & District: Cllr H Bastone;
Dartmouth Chronicle: Emily Baker and one representative from the
Dartmouth Business Club: Alan Depledge

PART 1 - Open to the Public

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Baillie

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

57. TO CONSIDER A PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND (PSDF) FROM CCLA AND APPROVE A WAY FORWARD

There was a general discussion on this investment, it was noted that a lot of other Parish, Town and District Councils including South Hams District Council (SHDC), have invested in this deposit fund.

The Chairman said that although it wasn't a great return on the Council's finances, it was safe and the funds were easily accessible.

Cllr Webb agreed that the terms seemed more favourable than others.

Cllr Campos said she felt this was a sound investment and that although it wasn't very lucrative it was safe as houses.

Proposed: Cllr Evans

Seconded: Cllr Yardy

Resolved: All Cllrs were in favour of recommending to Full Council that the Council set up a Public Sector Deposit Fund account with CCLA, invest the minimum amount as an interim, but with the idea to invest more of the Council's finances in the future.

58. TO CONSIDER THE DARTMOUTH AIR QUALITY GRANT AND APPROVE A WAY FORWARD

The Chairman said that this grant had been brought to the October Finance Committee meeting but had been refused, however Cllr Edsall at the November Full Council meeting had asked for this to be further discussed at a future meeting. The Chairman invited Alan Depledge from the Dartmouth Business Club to speak about this.

Alan Depledge then spoke about the benefits of one of these machines.

- The Dartmouth Business Club would be able to monitor it themselves and not relying on South Hams District Council carrying out these checks.

- Regular results could be published as well as brought back to Dartmouth Town Council.
- Hotspots could be quickly identified in the town and then flagged to SHDC and Devon County Council (DCC)
- It could be identified if the lack of parking is adding to pollution with people driving round looking for parking.

Alan Depledge also identified that potentially Dartmouth residents are more at risk because of the layout of the town, it has very narrow pavements, so you are nearer to the traffic.

Cllr Hibbert asked if we could have one from SHDC and Cllr Bastone said that he had arranged about 6/7 years ago to have one placed in Duke Street to monitor air pollution and the results were below the legal limit. He added that SHDC can place one in Dartmouth on a one-off basis but a hand held monitor would be better.

Cllr Evans highlighted that ultimately any results would need to be flagged with Devon County Council (DCC) to do something about it, and asked if they had asked for a portable monitor from DCC and Alan Depledge said that he hadn't because his concern is with this town and that it was important that we understand the situation here and if there were pollution hotspots that DCC could be a mouthpiece to take this forward.

Cllr Campos said she thought considering the price was less than £200 that it was a good idea, it fits in with Climate Change issues and she would be willing to take any issues forward to DCC.

Proposed: Cllr Evans

Seconded: Cllr Campos

Resolved: Eight Cllrs agreed to recommend to Full Council that Dartmouth Town Council pay £90 towards this grant application with the idea that the Dartmouth Business Club pay £91 and own the hardware, this would be subject to the minor details being ironed out in terms of monitoring the results and publishing the information.

One Cllr objected

59. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE REVIEW BY SW COUNCILS AND APPROVE A WAY FORWARD.

Cllr Case said the Personnel Committee met twice last week, firstly informally with SW Councils to receive their recommendations and secondly to have a Personnel Committee meeting to then agree a recommendation to the Finance Committee for the budget for next year.

Cllr Case said that they had taken the recommendations on board, tweaked it slightly and were recommending an amount to go into the budget for next year similar to Option 1.

Cllr Case said that all five members who attended the Personnel Committee had all agreed that this amount be approved.

The finance officer had tweaked the budget to incorporate this recommendation as well as the recommendation from NALC of the National Joint Council pay scales which incorporates the cost of living which will be announced early next year.

Proposed: Cllr Case

Seconded: Cllr Evans

Resolved: All Cllrs agreed that this recommendation be put into the budget for 2020 - 2021

60. TO CONSIDER BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGREE THE BUDGET AND THE PRECEPT FOR 2020-2021

Members discussed the proposed budget and it was identified that the money allocated into the s137 cost code needed to be removed as was agreed at the last meeting.

There was further discussion on the deficit and about the contingency left in the bank account.

Cllr Evans said that the Council needed to look at every money-making opportunity so that the Council can increase its income.

Cllr Wells spoke about money making ideas on Coronation Park that he'd been discussing with the office and about promoting the Guildhall more.

It was agreed that marketing ideas could be discussed with the Finance Committee either informally or formally.

Cllr Case spoke about looking into the Council assets and working out which assets are worth investing in.

Cllr Campos said that it would be good to look into getting a cut from the big events that take place in the gardens and the parks.

There was a discussion on the precept and members spoke about raising the precepts to between 9% - 10%. Last year's increase was 9% which was an increase of 16p a week for a band D property.

[edited: last year's increase was 8%]

Cllr Campos suggested that 10% would give us a little bit of contingency.

Proposed: Cllr Campos

Seconded: Cllr Case

Resolved: All Cllrs agreed that an increase of 10% on our precept be added to the January Full Council agenda for approval.

The precept for 2020-2021 will be £359,604, which makes the Band D parish rate (Dartmouth Town Council's share of the Council Tax) £131.83 per annum, this is an increase of £14.28 per annum which equates to 27p per week.

61. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Hibbert

Seconded: Cllr Case

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.

PART 2 – Confidential

62. TO NOTE THE SITUATION WITH THE PREVIOUS CONTRACT FOR THE FIRE ALARMS

Cllr Evans spoke about the general situation with our previous contractor for the fire alarms, and the action that the Mayor and himself along with the Clerk and the Finance Officer had taken.

There was a brief discussion and this situation has now been resolved.

Meeting finished at 19:40

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence it will be proposed by the Chairman that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended, excluding the press and public.