

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING OF DARTMOUTH TOWN
COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2019 at 6PM

PRESENT: Cllrs: N Bodinnar; S Hibbert (Deputy Mayor); D Shepherd; G Webb (Mayor); L Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: Administrator: R Searle; Cllr R Rendle; Cllr C Campos
Reporter for the Dartmouth Chronicle: E Baker

PART 1 - Open to the Public

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: A Edsall; G Yardy

15. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared

16. SECOND HOMES – NO USUAL RESIDENTS: - TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A RESOLUTION ON THE WAY FORWARD.

Following a presentation on an earlier occasion, a member of the public had presented his findings on the number of second homes in Dartmouth of no usual residence, that were claiming Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) in Dartmouth, who it appeared were not actually being operated as a business and not contributing to the tax system. The loss of Council tax revenue to SHDC was quite a considerable amount. **(Appendix A)**

Cllr Williams suggested that a way of “flushing out” the non-business properties who were claiming SBRR was for the district council to write to all the registered business owners, asking them how they were disposing of their waste and why they didn’t have a trade waste account. Cllr Williams suggested that her rough calculation of the approximate amount of lost revenue was in the region of £450,000 and said that this issue could potentially have a huge effect throughout the South Hams. Cllr Williams also suggested that we contact the District Councillors to take this forward if the committee were mindful to open dialogue and present the Town Council suggestion. The survey had also highlighted the increase in numbers in recent years.

Proposed: Cllr Bodinnar

Seconded: Cllr Williams

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that Cllr Bodinnar prepares a Resolution on Second Homes – No Usual Residents to be presented to Full Council

17. USE OF THE TOWN CREST: -

- **TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE REQUEST BY YOUTH GENESIS TO USE THE TOWN CREST ON THEIR POSTERS TO ADVERTISE THE YOUTH GROUP.**

A request had been received from Youth Genesis to use the Town Crest on their posters. Cllr Rendle, who was in the public gallery, was asked for information in view of his knowledge of Dartmouth Town Council regalia and history. Cllr Rendle advised that there were two very similar examples,

one being the Town Crest and the other being the Town Seal and that the old crest with the Lions facing the other way, should be used for worthy causes in Dartmouth.

Proposed: Cllr Bodinnar

Seconded: Cllr Hibbert

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that Youth Genesis be allowed to use the old Town Crest on their posters and advertising material.

- **TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE REQUEST FROM DART ENGRAVING TO USE THE TOWN CREST ON THEIR MERCHANDISE.**

The tenant from Dart Engraving had asked for permission to use the Town Crest in her merchandise. An email with details had been circulated to members of the committee. Cllr Rendle once again gave his opinion that he could see no problem as long as the old Town crest and not the Town Seal was used on the merchandise.

Proposed: Cllr Bodinnar

Seconded: Cllr Williams

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that permission be given to Dart Engraving to use the old Town Crest on their merchandise and not the Town Seal.

18. TO DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE POLICY OF ALLOWING BANNERS ON THE BOATFLOAT RAILINGS.

Clarification on the existing policy for charging organisations to place banners on the Boatfloat Railings had been called for. This was in view of the increase of requests being received from bigger commercial organisations.

Cllr Rendle was asked for his input into the discussion. He felt that the Council should be mindful of time limits to have banners displayed. Cllr Webb thought that it was a good idea for local organisations to advertise and not bigger commercial ones. Cllr Williams suggested that only banners advertising local events should be allowed and then removed once the event was over.

Proposed: Cllr Bodinnar

Seconded: Cllr Williams

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that the current policy for allowing banners to be displayed on the Boatfloat Railings be modified to only allow local organisations to use them for a maximum of two weeks at a charge of £10 per week.

19. TO DISCUSS AND AGREE METHOD AND PERIOD FOR ARCHIVING MEETING AGENDA/MINUTES.

Cllr Campos said that in view of recent events, she felt that there was a need for all minutes and agendas to be archived so that a sitting council could access documents from previous years and be kept for seven years, similar to how people keep papers for HMRC. The Administrator said that all minutes and agendas were kept and then each year sent to the bookbinders to make into a book to be kept for reference. She also advised that the books for the last twenty years were in the office and that the older ones had gone to the archives in Exeter. Cllr Campos said that she was thinking

more on the lines of digital copies on the website. Cllr Williams said that Totnes Council have the audio recordings of the meetings on the website for anyone to listen to, except for Personnel.

Proposed: Cllr Bodinnar

Seconded: Cllr Williams

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that the Council investigate keeping audio and electronic copies of records of meetings on the website for seven years and bring back to the next General Purposes meeting.

20. TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE COMMUNICATION PLAN AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DOCUMENTS –

Cllr Campos corrected part of the heading and advised that it was actually the Community Engagement Policy. **(Appendix B)**

All councillors had received copies of the documents.

Cllr Campos gave a brief overview of the Communication Plan that she and the Communications Working Group had been working on as she was keen for the Council to communicate in a clear way using a range of mediums and was keen to have a regular weekly slot on Facebook for Councillor updates to show residents what the councillors were achieving on their behalf. The only negative to this was that it may show some councillors doing more work than others, but this shouldn't be an issue. Cllr Campos was also keen for regular postings on Facebook via the Properties Administrator. Another way to get people to engage with the Council was for councillors to have a live Q&A session on Facebook which would possibly encourage younger people to become engaged.

With regards to the Dartmouth Town Council website, Cllr Campos wanted to see more news pages on the site, but this was down to every councillor to be proactive and generate the news. Links to the videos of Council meetings should be posted on Facebook and the website Cllr Campos said that the meeting in May had attracted 803 views so was worthwhile. Contributions from non-councillors should be encouraged e.g. the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Sergeant and the Town Crier. This would help broaden the content. Important to work with the Dartmouth Chronicle as not everybody in Dartmouth uses computers. The Chronicle had expressed interest in having a regular councillor column, but Cllr Campos said that there should be a couple of caveats i.e. it should not be used to publicise Council activities as they would need to be fact checked and verified, so would be more of an opinion piece with a rider underneath saying that this article was solely the opinion of a certain councillor and did not represent the views of the Town Council as a whole. All councillors would be able to make contributions to the column but that the final decision to publish would be with the Chronicle. There should also be briefing meetings with the Chronicle to ensure that both electronic and print news broke simultaneously.

Noticeboards although old school, were important but should be kept up to date and used for Council agendas and the Councillor diary together with the calendar for rubbish collections.

A Suggestion Box was another idea to have in the Guildhall for people to make comment.

Cllr Campos felt that it was important for residents to have the information to know which councillor dealt with which subject so that residents knew who to contact for advice.

Cllr Webb asked if there were any other figures available in reference to hits on recordings. Cllr Campos advised that the last one attracted 300 hits.

Proposed: Cllr Williams

Seconded: Cllr Shepherd

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council that the Communication Plan be adopted.

[Amended: The decision was not upheld at the Full Council meeting on 04/11/2019 due to it also being on the agenda as a separate item]

It was agreed that the Community Engagement Policy needed more additions and would be brought back to the next General Purposes Committee.

21. FILMING FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS: - TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR CAMPOS FOLLOWING HER VISIT TO DARTMOUTH ACADEMY AND DISCUSS -

Cllr Campos reported that she and the Properties Administrator had visited the Dartmouth Academy and had had a meeting with one of the media teachers. The Academy were interested in the idea but as yet there had been no arrangements made to take this further.

22. TO DISCUSS AND AGREE PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR FILMING COUNCIL MEETINGS –

Cllr Campos suggested that the Council purchase their own equipment and record their own meeting for uploading on to the website.

Proposed: Cllr Williams

Seconded: Cllr Shepherd

Resolved: That the proposal that future Town Council audio recordings are zip filed and uploaded on to the website be put on the next Full Council Agenda for discussion.

23. TO DISCUSS THE LACK OF FIRST RESPONDERS IN DARTMOUTH

In view of the lack of information available at the time, this item was referred to the next General Purposes Committee meeting.

Cllr Rendle suggested that this was not a Council responsibility, but that support should be offered to the Fire Brigade and RNLI who both offer a First Responder service and support to the Patients Participation Group. Cllr Shepherd said that there was also St John's Ambulance. Cllr Hibbert advised that St John's Ambulance would be attending her Youth meeting on 24th October and she would ask them as to what service they offered. Cllr Rendle asked for the Committee's permission to offer the Council's support at the next PPG meeting he was due to attend. All councillors present agreed.

24. TO DISCUSS 5 G

Cllr Webb had asked for this to be brought to the attention of the Council as they were concerned about pollution and the danger to health. Cllr Webb asked for permission to set up a working group, but it was agreed that he would bring further information to the committee.

This item was referred to the next General Purposes Committee meeting

25. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: -

There were no suggestions for further items

PART 2 – CONFIDENTIAL

None

Meeting finished at 19.35