

**Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report January 2024**

For Council Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

1. Key Dates for all Councillors’ diaries;

Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Strategic Plan Meeting (please note change of date)
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Civic Ball 2024
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 (please note change of date)	Grants Presentation Evening (Grants Panel members only)

2. Civic Service

Following on from the previous update, please be advised that £150 was raised for the Mayor’s Charity, The Memory Café, at the Civic Service.

3. Co-options

As previously agreed, the two Councillor vacancies (North and South East Wards) are being advertised in the local press, on the Council’s website and on social media, with the intention of raising awareness. The deadline for the submission of applications is Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2024. Please pass this information on to those you think might be interested.

Eligible applications will be brought forward to the Council Meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2024.

4. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG

CIVIC YEAR 2023-2024

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND  <i>N.B. Councillors’ names in italics indicate that these were a ‘no show’</i>
Booked 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Cyber Awareness Training	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding – Cllr Ms M Ewings  N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking
Booked 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Personal Safety Essentials	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding - Cllr Ms M Ewings

				N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024 6pm – 8pm	Chairing Council Meetings	Virtual	DALC	None
N/a	Introduction to Local Councils	(E-learning)	Via DALC	None
N/a	Standards in Public Life	(E-learning)	Via DALC	None
29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 4pm – 7pm	Planning Training for Town & Parish Councils	Virtual	WDBC	Councillors S Hipsey, Mrs A Johnson, B Smith, P Squire, A Venning and P Ward plus  ATTC and ADSO

#### 5. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024:

- 12 non-chargeable meetings (internal meetings, or a TTC representative attending on behalf of TTC, partner organisations or Mayoral events)
- 0 chargeable meeting/training session
- 0 training sessions (non-chargeable)

#### 6. Property Units Update

Residential – there is currently one vacant residential property:

- 1 Market Road – as previously reported, this property is currently being used as a welfare facility during the Town Hall works period. It is anticipated that this will continue to extend somewhat into the New Year, in view of the additional works being undertaken on the Town Hall.

However, notice has been received on the following property:

- 2 Market Road – the premises will come vacant on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024.  
Note - As agreed at the Budget & Policy Committee Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024, a Councillor visit to the two properties above will be arranged by the Works Department, once they are both accessible.

Commercial –

- Duke Street – we are aware that the tenant in one unit does not plan to renew their Lease when it expires in June 2024. Therefore, marketing of this unit will start shortly;
- 15 Duke Street - as previously reported, the property became vacant on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The unit is being actively marketed, with expressions of interest having been received and progressed by the Council's Surveyor.  
Note – any further information of a more specific nature as might relate to particular

tenants will need to be picked up under the relevant part of the next section (confidential) of the Agenda.

7. General including ongoing activities in the Admin Office

The Office continues to support the organisation across the range of Civic, administrative, financial and corporate activities. By way of trial the Council will be taking up Associate Membership of the LGA for 2024-2025, which is discounted through NALC. Also, notification has now been received from West Devon Borough Council in connection with the toilet cleaning costs for the annual contribution to the running of the Guildhall toilets, which is being progressed.

Further to recent discussions regarding the Police and related updates, an invitation has been extended to attend and present at the Annual Town Meeting.

8. Website & Accessibility update

Booking forms/schedules of charges for various Council activities and other postings are assessed on an ongoing basis and will be updated, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the regulations. Overall site compliance is reviewed annually.

The Council has been advised that the current host platform service for our website is being upgraded in January, 2025. Therefore, we have transferred our service to JISC Domain Services in anticipation of this change and will be actively tendering website replacement prior to then.

9. Legal Services

In the early part of 2024 arrangements will be made to either re-tender or renegotiate legal services for the Council, in view of the timeframe for current arrangements. A review of present arrangements, including with our provider, will be undertaken in the New Year to help inform next steps.

10. Lettable Properties and Energy Performance

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and Display Performance Certificates (DPC's) are in certain circumstances a requirement for the letting of properties. However, the position lacks clarity regarding certain classes of Listed premises. Further information is being sought prior to upcoming changes in minimum thresholds for eligible premises in light of recent Government announcements.

Report prepared by  
Jan Smallcombe (Assistant to the Town Clerk)