

Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report November 2024

For Council Meeting 26th November 2024

1. Key Dates for all Councillors’ diaries for this Civic Year;

Monday 16 th December 2024	Mayor’s Christmas Event
Friday 11 th April 2025	Civic Ball 2025
Monday 28 th April 2025	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Thursday 8 th May 2025	80 th Anniversary of VE Day Beacon
Thursday 15 th May 2025	Grants Presentation Evening

2. Civic Service

As previously reported, the 2024 Civic Service took place on Sunday 20th October 2024. As in previous years, the Collection will be split 50/50 between the Mayor’s Charity (The New Tavistock Youth Café) and Church funds. This year, £ 142.40 was received from the collection for the Mayor’s Charity.

3. Jessie Ann Alford Charity

The 2024 Jessie Ann Alford Charity period was initiated in early November, with a deadline for applications of Friday 29th November 2024.

Application forms are available at the Council Offices, as well as at Tavistock Foodbank, Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) and Tavistock Food Hub.

The distribution of funds will take place before Christmas, once liaison with the Charity Trustees has been undertaken to agree the successful applicants.

4. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

From 26 October 2024, legislation requires employers must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers, including by third parties.

Employers will be under a new statutory duty to take “reasonable steps” to prevent sexual harassment. Failure to comply with this duty could lead to enforcement action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and any employee succeeding in a sexual harassment claim could have their compensation increased by up to 25% if it can be seen that the employer did not have the necessary Policy in place.

A new HR Policy is being drafted to meet the guidance provided, which once adopted by the Town Council, will form part of the Staff Handbook alongside any other necessary measures.

5. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG

CIVIC YEAR 2024-2025

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 29th October- 25th November 2024;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND
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				<i>N.B. Councillors' names in italics indicate that these were a 'no show'</i>
N/a	Introduction to Local Councils	(E-learning)	Via DALC	Cllr R Poppe
N/a	Standards in Public Life	(E-learning)	Via DALC	Cllr R Poppe
2024 – 2025 Civic Year				
4 th November 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 2 'Powers, Duties & the Precept'	Virtual	DALC	Cllr Mrs J Hughes
18 th November 2024 6.00pm – 8.15pm	An Introduction to Planning	Virtual	DALC	Cllr Mrs J Hughes Cllr R Poppe
20 th November 2024 12.00pm – 1.15pm	The Quest for Devolution in Local Governance	Virtual	NALC	Cllr P Ward
25 th November 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 3 'Local Council Meetings'	Virtual	DALC	None

6. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 29th October – 25th November 2024:

- 11 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)

7. Property Units Update

Residential – there are currently two vacant residential properties:

- 1 Market Road – as previously reported, this property was previously being used as a welfare facility during the Town Hall works period and was subject of a recent report (see below).
- 2 Market Road – this unit became vacant on 24th March 2024.

As previously reported, refurbishment works would be required to both properties, which will be completed by the Works Department, who are scheduling arrangements for completion before the end of the Financial Year.

The properties will then be 'let', via SeaMoor Lettings, in accordance with the Council's previous decision.

Commercial –

- 9 Duke Street – as previously reported, this unit became vacant on 10th June 2024; The above unit is being actively marketed by the Council's Surveyor.
- 12 Duke Street – as separately reported, this property has now returned to the Council's possession.
- 15 Duke Street - as previously reported, the property became vacant on 31st January 2024. New tenants are expected to move in shortly.

Note – any further information of a more specific nature as might relate to any particular tenant(s) will need to be picked up under the relevant part of the next section (confidential) of the Agenda.

8. 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.
9. 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.

As agreed at Council on 11th June 2024, the Council's updated website will be provided by the existing Company, Cosmic. This is now being progressed.

10. Legal Services
In 2024/25 arrangements will be made, if necessary, 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 to help inform next steps.
11. 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.
12. Staff Handbook
The Staff Handbook is currently being reviewed to ensure that various sections continue to represent current legal and other relevant standards. This will be undertaken on a modular basis, with an initial focus on those areas where most change is anticipated.

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