

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL** held on **TUESDAY 21st JUNE, 2022 at 5.33pm** at **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT Councillor P Ward (Mayor)
Councillor J Ellis (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors Ms L Crawford, Ms T Eperon, Ms M Ewings, A Fey, A Hutton, Mrs A Johnson, A Lewis, Mrs U Mann, J Moody, B Smith, H Smith, P Squire, P Williamson.

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting there were a few moments of Quiet Reflection led by Pastor Stephen Miller of Tavistock Free Presbyterian Church.

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor A Venning.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following representations were made:

- a) Councillor H Smith made a brief personal statement under Standing Order 1.0 (iv) in respect of Minute No. 71 (Budget & Policy Committee of 14th June, 2022 refers) indicating no canvassing of opinion had been undertaken.
- b) Councillor P Williamson stated that, in view of the tabled items, and in all the circumstances, he would not be in attendance for the remainder of the meeting and left.

82. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of Tavistock Town Council held on Tuesday 24th May, 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

83. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

The following written question, accompanied by a short representation of support, had been received from a member of the public, Ms H Brignall of Fitzford Cottages:

"On behalf of the Tavi Pride team, I would like to ask why Tavistock Town Council does not simply adopt the same flag flying policy which has been set out by our national government (and adopted by other local councils) which specifically names the rainbow flag as not needing consent, thereby eliminating the possibility of setting a precedent to other groups?"

The Mayor thanked the questioner for the question and advised that it would be addressed at a later point in debate at the Meeting when the appropriate item arose.

Noted That Councillor Ms M Ewings declared an interest in the above both by virtue of occupying an adjoining property to the petitioner, and association (as Vice Chairman) of Tavistock Youth Cafe.

ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION

84. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

i) The Council considered in-year financial reporting and assurance arrangements and received, considered and endorsed the Tavistock Town Council:

- Year End Internal Audit Observations and Internal Audit Summary 2021-22 (Report of the Internal Auditor) (Appendix 2);
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2021-22 (Appendix 3);

which indicated that the internal control objectives had been met.

ii) The Council then proceeded to review the Annual Governance Statement (section 1) (Appendix 4) section by section and, in relation to the System of Internal Control including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2022, arising from which it was:

RESOLVED THAT

- a) with regard to the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022, the answers to the questions listed in Section 1 of the Annual Return be as follows: questions 1-8 (yes), question 9 (n/a) and the Statement be endorsed;
- b) The Clerk and Mayor be authorised to sign same on behalf of the Council.

85. ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- i) The Council considered the relevant section of the "Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and Other Smaller Authorities, Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22 for the year ended 31st March 2022". More specifically the Accounting Statements 2021-22 (Section 2) (Appendix 5).

RESOLVED THAT

- a) the Accounting Statements 2021-22 listed in Section 2 of the Annual Return be received and adopted as a reasonable statement of the activities of the Council;
- b) the Mayor be authorised to sign same on behalf of the Council.

With regard to the Unaudited Financial Statements of the Council (Appendix 6) it was further:

RESOLVED THAT the Unaudited Financial Statements of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2022 be received and noted.

- ii) In view of the requirements associated with the timeframe for the period for the exercise of public rights it was further:

RESOLVED THAT the period for the exercise of public rights of inspection in connection with the foregoing be 27th June 2022 – 5th August 2022.

86. GENERAL FINANCE

The Council considered the following:-

- a) Schedule of Payments

The Council received and considered a copy of the monthly accounts as at 30th April, 2022 (Appendix 7) as listed on the Council website;

b) Budget Monitoring Report

The Council received and considered a copy of the Budget Monitoring Report (Appendix 8) as at 30th April, 2022.

87. BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE

The Council considered the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee (Appendix 9) held on Tuesday 14th June, 2022, the recommendations being reported by rote.

RESOLVED THAT subject to the separate treatment of Minute No 71 (see below), and to consideration of Minute No's 76 - 79 being deferred to a later point in the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the recommendations included in the foregoing report of the Committee, (Minute No's 68 – 70 and 72-75) be approved and adopted, including adoption of the Organisational Risk Register, as amended, (Minute No 72 refers).

Noted That

- the consultation plan dates associated with the Corporate Service Plan be amended to reflect the 2022-23 financial year;
- in response to a question the arrangements for budget setting 2023-24 were outlined.

Minute No. 71 – Flags on Council Buildings

The Council considered the recommendation as set out and duly moved. It was however noted that an alternative course of action had been mooted, accordingly, and to facilitate the informed conduct of the business of the meeting it was:

RESOLVED THAT Standing Order No 1 be suspended insofar as necessary to enable a prospective future motion to be considered alongside the motion as proposed and seconded in accordance with that set out in Minute No 71.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to:

- a) The existing policy for the flying of flags by the Council, together with an application received from a local community group

- (Tavistock Pride) that was not within the current scope of the policy;
- b) The basis of the recommendation as made by the Budget and Policy Committee;
 - c) Support given by the Council to the applicant organisation including through use of premises without charge, professional advice, advertising/promotion, symbolic lighting of the Town Hall etc;
 - d) The nature of flags, and what they represented together with practices elsewhere;
 - e) Government planning guidelines and the views of the College of Arms;
 - f) The extent to which a change to existing policy was/was not needed, alternative arrangements and associated issues;
 - g) Issues of location, visibility and perception;
 - h) A presentation received previously;
 - i) The basis for consideration that should/not appropriately be given to other recognised groupings;
 - j) Support for, and options best tailored to achieve, principles of community inclusivity and non-exclusion;
 - k) Various historical precedents for different courses of action;
 - l) The detail of a potential alternative proposal.

Arising from the foregoing it was:

RESOLVED THAT Standing Order No 1 be reinstated.

The Council proceeded to consider the recommendation as set out in the report of the Budget and Policy Committee, which was defeated, arising from which it was:

RESOLVED THAT Tavistock Town Council amend the current arrangements for the flying of flags from the town flagpole to:

1. Add provision to fly the Rainbow flag in recognition of support for the local LGBTQ+ community on 28th June 2022 and subsequently on June 28th each year unless that is the last Saturday in June when the flag will instead be flown on June 27th; and
2. Add provision to fly the Armed Forces flag in recognition of support for the men and women who make up the Armed

Forces community on June 25th 2022, and subsequently on the last Saturday of June each year

3. Furthermore, in order to better facilitate requests for flags to be flown from the town flagpole:
 - (a) where other non-national, non-municipal flags are requested to be flown from the town flagpole, delegate that decision to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and immediate past Mayor and, if that decision is not unanimous, then the decision to be presented as a recommendation to Council to be decided by full Council
 - (b) any decision as to whether or not to agree to fly another non-national, non-municipal flag should be made with reference to:
 1. Planning group (a) and (b) guidance as published in Flying flags: a plain English guide;
 2. Precedent set by flying of the flag over buildings representing Her Majesty's government; and
 3. Recommendations from The College of Arms, the official heraldic authority for England

Noted That

- i) The views of an absent Member were reported to the meeting;
- ii) Councillor Mrs M Ewings declared an interest in the above item by virtue of property occupation and personal association (Minute No 83 refers);
- iii) Armed Forces Day might fall on a different date in future years (i.e. it falls on the last Saturday in June annually), therefore the date of flying would vary on an annual basis. Pride Day always fell on 28th June.

88. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Council considered the following: -

- i) Development Management & Licensing Committee - Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 6th June, 2022 (Appendix 10) (Minute No's 58 - 67 inclusive) the recommendations being reported by rote:

RESOLVED THAT subject to the inclusion of the names of the Chairman and Vice Chairman in the list of those present the

recommendations included in the foregoing reports of the Committee be approved.

89. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

- a) Budget & Policy Committee - the Council considered the appointment of a Councillor to the Budget & Policy Committee, following the resignation of Councillor Mrs U Mann from the Committee.

A nomination, which was duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor B Smith.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor B Smith be appointed to the Budget & Policy Committee.

- b) Peninsula Rail Group - it had previously been reported that Councillor Mrs A Johnson (the Council's representative on the Oke Rail Forum) had been approached to attend the meetings of the Peninsula Rail Group which was seeking to bring the railway back to Tavistock.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor Mrs A Johnson be appointed as the Council's representative on the Peninsula Rail Group and any such successor organisation as may be constituted from it for equivalent or broadly comparable purpose(s).

Noted That it was anticipated that the name of the Group would be changed to 'Tavistock Rail Group', in due course.

90. CASUAL VACANCY

The Council was advised that the Returning Officer had confirmed that no request had been received for an election to fill the vacant seat in the South West Ward. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED THAT the Council agree arrangements for the casual vacancy arising by means of advertisement in the Tavistock Times, on the Council's website and social media for a period of 6 weeks. Note each interested candidate to complete the standard application form and be prepared, if required, to attend for interview.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

91. SERVICE REPORTS

The Council received, for information, the reports of the General Manager, Pannier Market/Town Hall/Butchers' Hall and Works Department (Appendices 11-13).

Noted That;

- Appreciation was expressed to the outgoing Works Department Support Officer for service to the Town Council and best wishes extended for the future;
- appreciation was conveyed to Council staff for the successful delivery of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon and for the support Council staff had provided to other partnership events over the Jubilee weekend, also to Councillor Mrs U Mann, for her contribution in connection with the Jubilee;
- reference was made to Goose Fair – including the extensive, positive and ongoing development of the offer by the Council with a wide range of stakeholders, contrary to a recent media report, and the significance of the event to the local community.

92. FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS

The Council received, for information, the following: -

- a) Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 14)
- b) Updates
 - i. From Representatives on outside bodies; Peninsula Rail Group – matters regarding nomenclature, terms of reference, support and upcoming events.

Devon Communities Together – two Tavistock Members had attended the recent Flood Resilience Training.

- ii. From Members who had attended training sessions – no feedback brought forward.

93. COMMUNICATIONS OR REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor brought forward the following:

- a) Grenofen Urban Gateway – concerns regarding configuration as recently reported by a Member of the Public to the Highway Authority were noted.

b) Vandalism in The Meadows and the Sensory Garden

The Council received, with disappointment and concern, reports of damage caused in the Meadows and, most recently, the area demised to the Sensory Garden Trust.

This was appropriately a matter for review by Tavistock Matters (to be raised by Council representatives on same), alongside other inter-agency approaches. To assist the General Manager would explore the possibility of reconstituting the stakeholder group previously in situ.

Noted That: Councillor H Smith Declared an Interest in item (b) above by virtue of being the Vice Chairman of the Trustees of the Sensory Garden.

c) Closure of Barclays Bank, Tavistock – which would take place in September 2022. Concerns were expressed in connection with same which would be subject to a report to a future meeting.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

94. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was: -

RESOLVED THAT the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION

95. BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE (CONT'D)

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Council received and considered Minute No's 76 – 79 of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee (Appendix 9 refers) held on Tuesday 14th June 2022, the recommendations being reported by rote.

Minute No. 77 – Tavistock Guildhall

It was reported that a meeting had taken place that day, and whilst granular information had been provided it was not in a suitable

reporting format to compare income and spend, identify variances against budget etc. A smaller meeting would be convened shortly for both parties to work together on the matter. More appropriate information would be required by September 2022, in preparation for the budget-setting round.

RESOLVED THAT the recommendations included in the foregoing reports of the Committee be approved and adopted.

96. PROPERTY, LEGAL & FINANCE MATTERS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

i. DEBTORS

The Council considered and noted a list (Appendix 15) of all those with debts to the Council dating from earlier than the last quarter day and received updates accordingly.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

97. PROPERTY, LEGAL & FINANCE MATTERS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the personal or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

Pursuant to a question (Minute No. 91 above refers) – in connection with the re-letting of one of the Council’s residential properties it was confirmed that a report would be brought to a future Meeting in accordance with the provisions on Minute no 73(f).

The Press and Public were re-admitted to the Meeting.

The Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN