

AGENDA ITEM No 3(a)

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY 2nd JUNE, 2015** at **6:45pm**

PRESENT Councillor Mrs S Bailey (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs M Ewings (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors T Gibbins, Mrs A Johnson, J Moody, P Sanders, J Sheldon, H Smith, Mrs J Whitcomb.

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

Note - Prior to the commencement of the Meeting Members of the Council endorsed the continuation of arrangements for receipt of a "Borough Councillor Report" prior to meetings of the Council. They also received a question seeking the support of the Council in connection with altered signage arrangements relating to a planning application. An apology for absence had been received from County Councillor Mrs D Sellis.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor E Sanders.

The Mayor reported the recent resignation of former Councillor B Trew from membership of the Council.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

Members of Council were reminded that the statutory deadline for completion of the Register of Interests for all Members returned at the May 2015 election was 3rd June, 2015.

17. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Tavistock Town Council held on Tuesday 19th May, 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL RETURN 2014/15

The Council's Accountant introduced the Financial Statements (Appendix 1) and Annual Return (Appendix 2) for the Town Council for the year ended 31st March, 2015 and, in particular, drew attention to:-

- A reduction in rent receivable;
- An increase over planned expenditure attributable to the works to the Guildhall;
- Changes in the net operating surplus arising from the acquisition of the Guildhall and two Market Road properties from Earmarked Reserves;
- With regard to the treatment of loan monies received (as identified by the Internal Auditor on his last visit) the necessary difference between normal accounting treatment and that required for the completion of the Annual Return.

In summary the Council was considered to be in good financial health.

Arising from a question, the treatment of depreciation in the accounts was outlined together with the accounting treatment of capital projects (ie a call upon capital being reflected in the budget once approved with any unspent balance being rolled over into the following year).

a) Tavistock Town Council – Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st March, 2015

RESOLVED THAT

- i) The Tavistock Town Council Financial Statements for the Financial year ended 31st March, 2015 be received and adopted as a reasonable statement of the activities of the Council;
- ii) The Mayor and Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer be authorised to sign same on behalf of the Council.

b) Tavistock Town Council Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March, 2015

RESOLVED THAT with regard to the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March, 2015

- i) The Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer be authorised to sign section 1 of the Annual Return
- ii) The answers to the questions listed in section 2 be as follows: questions 1-8 (yes), question 9 (N/A)
- iii) The Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement reflecting the above responses.

19. ELECTORAL MATTERS

a) **Co-Option of Councillor to the South West Ward of Tavistock Town Council**

The Council received a presentation from a candidate who had expressed an interest in being considered for co-option to the Council – Mr A Venning. Following a vote by ballot it was

RESOLVED THAT Mr A Venning be co-opted to serve as Councillor for the South West Ward of Tavistock Town Council

Noted That the public left the meeting for consideration of the above item.

b) **Resignations**

The Council noted the resignations of former Councillors D Whitcomb (Tavistock North) and B Trew (Tavistock South East).

RESOLVED THAT the necessary arrangements for the advertisement of the vacancies be put in place.

Noted That the threshold for the Council to maintain the General Power of Competence was 12 eligible members.

20. GUILDHALL CAR PARK

The Council considered a request for use by the Spooners and West Dartmoor Hunt (Appendix 3) of the Guildhall Car Park on Boxing Day 2015.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to past practice and possible issues associated with opening/closing the car park at that time of year.

In view of the matters raised it was

RESOLVED THAT Devon County Council, as landowner, be invited to consider whether or not it would be minded to permit the use of Bedford Square for the annual Boxing Day Hunt gathering.

21. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

The Council considered a schedule (Appendix 4) of applications for Planning Permission arising from which it was

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) Application 00442/2015 – a neutral view be expressed
- b) Application 00438/2015 – the Council support this application

Noted That Councillor P Sanders declared an interest in the above application by virtue of serving as Governor on the body concerned

- c) Application 00502/2015 – the Council support this application
- d) Application 00503/2015 – the Council write to the Borough Council to express its disappointment that the proposal did not include signage arrangements as previously consulted on and understood to have been agreed with other occupiers of the estate
- e) Application 00443/2015 – this application be referred to the Conservation Officer for consideration
- f) Applications in respect of trees – 00447/2015; 00463/2015; 00449/2015; 00479/2015; 00480/2015; 00504/2015 – the foregoing applications be referred for consideration by the West Devon Borough Council Tree Officer

Noted That Councillor Mrs A Johnson declared an interest in application no. 00479/2015 by virtue of an employment interest

g) Application 00514/2015 – a neutral view

h) Application 00514/2015 – the Council support this application.

22. GENERAL FINANCE

a) Schedule of Payments

The Council considered the monthly accounts as a 31st March, 2015 and 30th April, 2015 (Appendix 5)

b) Budget Monitoring Report

The Council received and considered a copy of the report as at 31st March, 2015 and 30th April, 2015 (Appendix 6)

Noted That arising from consideration of the above it was reported that an amendment would be made to the THI Monitoring Report to reflect overall project duration

c) Internal Audit 2014/15

The Council received and endorsed the report of the Internal Auditor (Appendix 7) following his recent visit regarding the financial year 2014/15.

Noted That reference was made, in particular, to the position regarding the play park budget and related matters

d) Parish Basic Allowance Scheme

The Council considered a Scheme for the payment of Basic Allowances to (elected) Members of Tavistock Town Council (Appendix 8)

RESOLVED THAT subject to the amendment of the Scheme to refer to the "parish basic allowance" where appropriate and the deletion of references to suspension relating to the Local Government Act 2000 the submitted Scheme for payment of a parish basic allowance to elected Members of Tavistock Town Council be endorsed and adopted.

e) Applications for Financial Assistance

i) Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS)

The Council considered correspondence (Appendix 9) in connection with a project for the acquisition of a vehicle.

RESOLVED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and support the project entitled "Access for All" for the provision of a single wheelchair accessible vehicle

ii) Junior Life Skills

The Council considered an application for financial assistance from Junior Life Skills (Appendix 10)

RESOLVED THAT the grant in the sum of £300 be made for the identified purpose.

23. OTHER MATTERS

a) Office Staffing

The Council considered the report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 11) setting out options in respect of the administration of office staffing.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to the opportunity to provide increased capacity, improved efficiency and the opportunity for more effective working arrangements to deliver against increasing administrative demands. It was recognised that, as the Council developed its service offer (including through future relocation) it would be appropriate to consider staffing arrangements again with a view to the possibility of moving to 2 full time equivalent administrative assistant roles. At the present time it was:

RESOLVED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and approve the option of increasing administrative hours as identified from 49 hours per week to 60.5 hours per week.

b) Media Protocol and Advice

The Council considered the report (Appendix 12) of the Working Group constituted to identify a way forward and associated recommendations in connection with the above.

RESOLVED THAT subject to the amendment in the 5th bullet point on page 4 from “distorting” to read “disturbing” the Tavistock Town Council Media Protocol and Advice be endorsed and adopted.

24 ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

a) Service Reports

The Council received and noted the reports of the General Manager, Works Department, Town Hall and Pannier Market (Appendices 13-16 refer)

b) Tavistock Guildhall

This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of a former Councillor (B Trew) in order to discuss disabled access. Arising from consideration of same Council confirmed that it proposed extensive efforts to provide appropriate disabled access to the facility.

c) Plans

A schedule (Appendix 17) outlining decisions recently made by the local planning authority was noted

d) Councillor ICT

This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of Councillor J Sheldon. Consideration was invited as to whether Council wished to extend the existing ICT offer to Members (for a laptop) to include an iPad if such could be sourced on the same terms from West Devon Borough Council.

This approach was endorsed by Members present and an item including additional information would be brought to the next Meeting of Council.

Noted That continuation of the present Scheme for Council ICT would be dependent on Council recovering its General Power of Competence.

e) Other Matters

- i) Chamber of Commerce – Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th April, 2015 (Appendix 18)

- ii) Town Team – Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th April, 2015 (Appendix 19)
- iii) Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 20)
- iv) Bermuda Town Criers’ Competition 2015 (Appendix 21)
Noted That arising from consideration of the above the Council recorded its thanks to the Town Crier and his wife for representing the Town in the Town Criers’ competition 2015.
- v) Southern Links – Notes of the Meeting held on 26th March, 2015 (Appendix 22)
- vi) Tavistock BID Co – Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th March, 2015 (Appendix 23)
- vii) Townscape Heritage Partnership – Notes of the Meeting held on 30th April, 2015 (Appendix 24)
- viii) Minutes of the Meeting of the NALC Larger Councils’ Group held on 28th April, 2015 (Appendix 25)
- ix) THI Progress Report (Appendix 26)

25 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.

26 ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION

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

i) Legal Matters

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to commercially sensitive information)

The Council considered the report of the Town Clerk in respect of the above arising from which it was

RESOLVED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) Endorse the application of a charging order on the residential premises of the former tenants of the identified property in respect of the outstanding monies arising from the tenancy

- b) Pursue a claim for dilapidations
- c) Proceed with an order for sale of the residential premises in recovery of the debt owed
- d) Make an offer in respect of dilapidations in a sum in the region of £15,000 (final amount to be determined following reference to the Council's Surveyor)
Noted That Council Solicitors would be asked to identify other charges on the property

ii) Debtors

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to commercially sensitive information and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Council considered and noted the lists of all those with debts to the Council dated from earlier than the last quarter day and received updates, where appropriate in respect of same. It was further advised that, in future, a list of Town Hall debtors would be incorporated in the Schedules.

Noted That in particular further consideration be given to debtor "c" at the next meeting, in addition a copy of the debt recovery process would be circulated to all Members.

The Press and Public were readmitted to the meeting.

27. COUNCIL SEAL

RESOLVED THAT - The Council Seal be affixed to the various deeds and documents to be made or entered into for the carrying into effect of those decisions or matters approved by the Council this day.

The Meeting closed at 8.43pm.

Chairman _____

Date _____