



WINCANTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON MONDAY 24th JANUARY 2022 AT THE TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Shelbourn-Barrow (Chairman), Anderson, Atherton, Cole, Ellard, Hix, Old, Power, Ralph, Smith, Tudgay (Vice Chairman), Vagg and Walters.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: 6

MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL PRESS IN ATTENDANCE: 1

PROPER OFFICER IN ATTENDANCE: Charlotte Starkie, Locum Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS CONTAINED AT APPENDIX A.

- 154-22 **APOLOGIES**
Resolved that apologies and their reasons were accepted from Councillors Thomas and Greening. Proposed by Cllr Atherton and seconded by Cllr Tudgay with all in favour.
- 155-22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 156-22 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman (subject to some minor typos).
Proposed by Cllr Hix and seconded by Cllr Ralph, with the majority in favour. Cllrs Old, Ellard, Atherton and Power abstained from the vote.
- 157-22 **REPORT FROM THE MAYOR**
The Mayor provided the meeting with an update of recent celebrations and news worthy items as well as looking forward to a High Street Regeneration and Jubilee celebrations in 2022.
- 158-22 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**
Councillor Nic Colbert reported on the recent misconduct report that had been centred on senior staff at South Somerset District Council. He stated that the planned expenditure on regeneration in Wincanton had diminished and that there was still an appetite to obtain the health centre via compulsory purchase.
The footpath in the cemetery was subject to a planning obligation to remain as a footpath, but that there were currently trees on the footpath.
- 159-22 **REPORTS FROM WINCANTON TOWN COUNCILLORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**
Councillor Walters reported that she has attended the SS MHA and that it was up and running again, after a very quiet period.

160-22

RECRUITMENT AND STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Councillors were requested to note that a new Responsible Financial Officer, Kathy McCarthy, had been recruited on a part time permanent basis. Charlotte Starkie was operating as the Proper Officer on a temporary locum basis. Tracy Lamb was operating in the capacity of Locum Deputy Clerk to assist with the transition and that the closing date for applications for the Town Clerk has passed and interviews had been arranged.

The Locum Clerk was asked to confirm to councillors the process for recruiting both a town clerk and other members of staff and to provide an up-to-date staff structure.

161-22

BUDGET 2022/2023

The Locum Clerk explained the process for arriving at the proposed budget and precept. Councillor Cole proposed the following budget and precept figures, which was seconded by Councillor Hix:

The precept for 2022/23 as £392,734 and the operating budget as £419,316 and that £10,000 be moved from General Reserves into the revenue budget for the year 2022/23

A recorded vote was requested.

In favour of a budget of precept of £392,734 and an operating budget of £419,316:
Councillors Cole, Walters, Vagg, Ralph, Smith, Power, Hix, Tudgay, Shelbourn-Barrow

Against the above proposal:
Councillors Ellard, Old, Atherton and Anderson

There were no abstentions.

Resolved that the precept for 2022/23 be £392,734 and the operating budget be £419,316 and that authority be delegated to the RFO to make the demand for the precept on South Somerset District Council

162-22

FINANCES – NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2021

Resolved that the finances for months eight and nine, including payments, receipts, summaries against budget and bank balances were noted.

163-22

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Locum Clerk explained that it was necessary, as part of the governance process, that Full Council receive the internal audit report, but that a more detailed report be provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration and ongoing action, as per the committee's Terms of Reference.

Some questions and comments were put to the meeting in relation to the need for Full Council to have oversight of the work to be done, and not the Finance and General Purposes Committee, whether the recruitment processes of the council are unlawful, why the Scribe Software was not deemed adequate to meet the council's needs, why the figures in the AGAR are defective, why the Finance and General Purposes Committee was not doing more to rectify the concerns, and why internal emails were not being responded to.

Other comments stated that they welcomed a robust report that highlighted some issues for the council to now resolve and that this created an opportunity to develop a long-term strategic plan and put in place new internal procedures that strengthened good governance and used the experience of the staff to make improvements.

Resolved that the internal audit report has been noted and that an action plan be presented to the Finance and General-Purpose Committee for further consideration

164-22

LOCAL COUNCIL NETWORKS

It was noted that the Local Council Network has been formed and that the survey results would be collated and shared in due course. The LCN created an opportunity for a variety of stakeholders to get more involved in considering and improving wellbeing.

Resolved that the update be noted.

165-22

ADOPTION OF A PRE-ELECTION POLICY

The Locum Clerk presented the draft policy and answered questions. The policy related to both the council as well as individual councillors and that its title would be amended to reflect this. It was proposed by Councillor Tudgay and seconded by Councillor Ellard, that the policy be adopted, with a change in the title to reflect that it applies to both council and councillors.

Resolved that the Pre-election Policy be adopted.

166-22

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR APIRL 2022 TO MAY 2023

After a brief discussion the schedule for 2022 to 2023 was agreed.

There was a brief discussion about the process for full council to note decisions made at committee meetings when noting the minutes of meetings in full council meetings and not being given the opportunity to discuss in any detail. This was at odds with how committee decisions should be discussed, according to written practice.

The Locum Clerk proposed that the Annual Town Meeting take place on Monday 4th April 2022 and asked councillors if they preferred a particular format. It was suggested that groups in receipt of a council grant be invited to attend and give a presentation well as provide a written report on how funds have been used. For the Locum Clerk to ask councillors to make other suggestions, but that the theme of the meeting to be wellbeing and nature and concentrate on organisations that were charitable in nature.

Resolved that the proposed schedule of meeting dates be agreed and adopted and communicated to stakeholders and that the Annual Town Meeting take place on Monday 4th April 2022.

167-22

LOCUM CLERK'S UPDATE

Resolved that the Clerk's report was noted.

168-22

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Full Council meeting will be held on Monday 28th February 2022.

The meeting closed at 2033hrs.

Signed

Date

APPENDIX A

1. A member of the public raised concerns about speeding traffic in the vicinity of Bridge Motors and that residents had raised earlier concerns with the County Highways Team via a petition but had not heard anything.

Response: The Town Clerk will be in touch to give an update.

2. A member of the public raised the issue that reports to support the agenda for this meeting were not readily available.

Response: There is currently a charge for members of the public to obtain council information but that this will be looked into so that information is more readily available,

3. A member of the public asked the council to consider a range of events and activities that appealed to a much wider demographic in town than just focussing on those in need or vulnerable or elderly or with children.

Response: The town council will continue to strive to offer a range of events and activities that are aimed at as many people as possible.

4. A councillor asked for clarification on the reporting of expenditure over the £500 threshold.

Response. In accordance with the Transparency Guidelines, expenditure over £500 is to be published on the council's website. A report will be prepared for a future council meeting.

5. A councillor asked for clarification on the appointment of permanent members of staff, especially as the Personnel Committee had not met since November 2021.

Response: The recruitment panel responsible for the recruitment of the Responsible Financial Officer had been under delegated authority to complete the recruitment process, which includes offering the appointment. The Personnel Committee will be meeting on 14th February 2022.

6. A councillor asked for an update on the grant process for groups that had applied for funds from the council.

Response: Applications were being screened by officers and a report will be brought to a council or committee meeting (as appropriate) for consideration.

7. A councillor asked for clarification on why the council charges members of public for public information

Response: The Town Clerk will investigate this and report back at the next meeting

8. A councillor asked for a staffing structure to be circulated to all councillors