



WINCANTON TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 14TH MARCH 2022 AT THE TOWN HALL

Present: Councillors Anderson, Atherton, Cole, Ellard, Hix, Greening (from 19:02), Power, Ralph, Shelbourn-Barrow (Chair), Smith, Thomas, Tudgay and Vagg.

Also present: District Councillor Winder

Locum Clerk: Zöe Godden

There were two members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

The meeting started at 19:01.

The Chair welcomed everyone and asked Councillors to confirm that they had received the supporting papers before the meeting. All Councillors had received the supporting papers.

19:02 – The Chair allowed a public open session

A member of the public asked three questions, which would be answered in writing at a future time.

There followed a discussion about the treatment of certain historical confidential matters and some confidential items on the agenda. Councillor Ralph stated that all confidential matters would be dealt with in the same way and that, as such, confidential information would not be discussed while the press or public were present.

19:13 – The Chair brought the public open session to a close.

169-22 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Waters.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Vagg, seconded by Councillor Smith, and unanimously agreed to approve the reason for absence as reported.

Councillor Ellard said that Councillor Old had also given her apologies but these had not been received by the Chair.

170-22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

171-22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To resolve that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24th January 2022 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Ralph, and agreed to approve the minutes as presented. Twelve votes in favour; one abstention. Motion carried.

Councillor Ellard raised a point of order and **PROPOSED** that items five and eight should be struck from the agenda because, in his opinion, they dealt with matters outside the jurisdiction of the Town Council. This proposal was **SECONDED** by Councillor Atherton. **Two votes in favour; Nine votes against; One abstention. Motion not carried.**

172-22 TO CONSIDER AN EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That pursuant to the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to consider a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following reason: to discuss confidential matters.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Hix, seconded by Councillor Vagg, and agreed to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting. Eight votes in favour; Two votes against; Two abstentions. Motion carried.

19:19 – District Councillor Winder and two members of the public left the meeting.

173-22 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – COMPLAINT

To receive feedback from a recent grievance panel that considered a complaint from a member of staff about a councillor's behaviour. To consider if certain actions and remedies are supported by full council, that include a letter of apology, encouragement to attend training, and a reminder that the Nolan Principles within the Code of Conduct must be adhered to.

Following advice from SSDC's Monitoring Officer, the Locum Clerk recommended that this matter should be brought before a future Full Council meeting to consider referring the issue to SSDC's Monitoring Officer for investigation.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Councillor Atherton, seconded by Councillor Anderson, and agreed that this matter would be brought before a future Full Council meeting to consider referring the issue to SSDC's Monitoring Officer for investigation. Ten votes in favour – Councillors Atherton, Anderson, Ellard, Hix, Greening, Power, Ralph, Shelbourn-Barrow, Smith, Thomas and Vagg; One vote against – Councillor Ellard; One abstention – Councillor Cole. Motion carried.

174-22 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – RESIGNATION

To note and address some of the issues raised in the recent resignation of the Responsible Financial Officer

In response to a question from the Chair, the locum Clerk advised that, assuming the Council was happy with the current staffing structure, the next step would be to advertise for a new Responsible Financial Officer.

There followed a discussion about the reasons for the resignation of the previous Responsible Financial Officer and the importance of ensuring that all staff feel valued and supported. It was further noted that Wincanton Town Council should wish to be a good employer and that all members should conduct themselves in such a way as to ensure this is the case going forward. This would improve staff morale and retention.

The Chair **PROPOSED** that a review of the Responsible Financial Officer job description, funding associated with the role and the recruitment and appointment process be delegated to the Personnel Committee.

Councillor Ellard made a **COUNTER-PROPOSAL**, to delegate responsibility for all recruitment activity to the Personnel Committee but requiring the final decision over who should be appointed to the Responsible Financial Officer post to be made by the Full Council.

Councillor Atherton made a **COUNTER-PROPOSAL**, allowing all recruitment activity to be delegated to the Personnel Committee but requiring an explanatory report to be presented to the Full Council before the successful applicant was informed of their appointment.

The Chair asked for votes on Councillor Ellard's counter-proposal, which was seconded by Councillor Anderson, to be taken first. **Two votes in favour; Nine votes against; Two abstentions. Motion not carried.**

Next, the Chair asked for votes on Councillor Atherton's counter-proposal, which was seconded by Councillor Cole. **Eight votes in favour; Four votes against; One abstention. Motion carried.**

Finally, the Chair took votes on her original proposal, which was seconded by Councillor Tudgay. **Four votes in favour; Eight votes against; One abstention. Motion not carried.**

There followed some discussion about the wording of Councillor Atherton's proposal and it was suggested that the wording should be amended. However, Councillor Tudgay asked for his strong objection to this course of action to be recorded in the minutes. The locum Clerk advised that, as the motion had received a majority vote, it should stand.

175-22 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – COMPLAINT

To note and address some of the issues raised in a recent complaint in relation to the behaviour of a councillor and how the council responds

Councillor Ralph reported that this complaint was of a similar nature as that dealt with at item 173-22 and, as such, should be dealt with in the same way.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Ralph, and agreed that this matter would be brought before a future Full Council meeting to consider referring the issue to SSDC's Monitoring Officer for investigation. Eight votes in favour; Four votes against; One abstention.

176-22 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – CODE OF CONDUCT IN RELATION TO STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

To consider if the council wishes to submit a formal complaint to the Monitoring Officer at South Somerset District Council in relation to the above, and whether the council wishes to make a statement in relation to its disappointment that this is an ongoing and unresolved matter.

RESOLVED: It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Thomas, and agreed to submit a formal complaint to SSDC's Monitoring Officer relating to the complaints discussed at items 173-22 and 175-22. Ten votes in favour – Councillors Anderson, Cole, Greening, Hix, Ralph, Shelbourn-Barrow, Smith, Thomas and Tudgay; One vote against – Councillor Ellard; Two abstentions – Councillors Atherton and Power.

177-22 MINUTES FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 21ST FEBRUARY 2022

To receive the minutes from the personnel committee and to note the actions being undertaken.

Noted.

178-22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next full council meeting will be held on Monday 28th March 2022 at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 20:17.

DRAFT