



Tiverton Town Council

Town Hall, St Andrew Street, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6PG

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Minutes of the Meeting of a Special Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 6:15pm.

Cllrs: W Burke (Mayor), L Cruwys (Deputy Mayor), V Bagatelas, S Beard, C Berry, T Bridger, D Broom, S Bush, R Clarke, A Cuddy, N Davey, B Fish, J Frost, D Garcia- Parejo, S Griggs, P Hill, B Holdman, L Kennedy, J Lejeune, K Lejeune, T Wheeler, D Wulff.

In attendance: Mr J Vanderwolfe (Town Clerk), Mrs J Hubbard (Assistant to the Town Clerk), one member of press.

420	<p>Apologies for Absence Cllrs, M Farrell (work), N Senik (work) Resolved to accept these apologies.</p>
421	<p>Declaration of Interest: Cllr’s L Kennedy, B Holdman and D Wulff, all declared interests in item 4 of the agenda.</p>
422	<p>Committees: To propose the re-structuring of committees. Cllr P Hill suggested an amendment to the Agenda, he said that before any decision on committees could be undertaken, a discussion should take place on what the council does and what the aims and objectives would be. New councillors would then achieve a better understanding of the different functions carried out by the town council. The Town Clerk addressed the Mayor Cllr W Burke to ask if he could show the members what the committees were first. This was agreed. The current number of committees stood at 7, this would be reduced to 5. The Town Clerk then proceeded with a power point presentation which listed the current committees, and gave a brief overview of what each one did. The Town Clerk informed the members that the town council had more committees than other comparable councils in the South West. The current committees were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, Finance & General Purpose, Amenities, Climate Change, Community Resilience, Civic & Ceremonial, and Staffing. <p>The suggested new committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Licensing, Finance, Heritage & Amenities, Environment & Welfare, Personnel. <p>The Town Clerk felt that some of the current committees were oversubscribed, whilst others lacked members and struggled to be quorate at times. There was a need for more balance. Therefore cutting the committees from 7 to 5 would, he felt, help achieve this. He also suggested that all committees host evening meetings in order to give all members a chance to attend. Currently Amenities and Community Resilience were held during the day which excluded any working members. It was agreed that if required, sub-committees could be formed, or working parties for specific projects if needed. This would be trialled and reviewed after a term of 12 months.</p>

	<p>Some members were not in favour of using the title Heritage & Amenities and preferred the title Events & Amenities. Equally it was felt that Environment & Welfare was outdated so the suggestion was to use the title Climate Change & Resilience.</p> <p>A vote by show of hands was carried out with 23 members in favour of the new committees and 1 against as listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Licensing • Finance • Events & Amenities • Climate Change & Resilience • Personnel <p>It was resolved to accept the new committee structure along with the amended title suggestions.</p>
423	<p>Part Two: <i>the Town Clerk recommends that item 4 of the agenda is taken in private under the Admission to Meetings Act 1960, and that the public, including the press, are excluded because of the nature of the discussions in this item.</i></p> <p>The Town Clerk requested item 4 be taken into Part Two as he wanted to discuss the prospect of taking on some of the district council assets. He went on to explain that the figures provided by the district council were only approximate at this stage.</p> <p>Cllr T Bridger objected to the Part Two request, he said that information regarding district assets was already in the public domain. He felt that for transparency, item 4 should not be hidden. The Town Clerk responded to say that he would need to divulge potential precept figures and questioned whether this should be public at this stage.</p> <p>Cllr J Frost agreed with Cllr Bridger and proposed that item 4 be carried out in public, this was seconded by Cllr L Cruwys. A vote by a show of hands was carried out with the majority against taking item 4 into part two, with 3 abstentions.</p>
424	<p>Mid Devon District Council Asset Transfers: to discuss the possible transfer of a number of assets presently owned and run by the district council.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed the members of the assets up for debate, these were as follows; The Pannier Market, Tiverton Bus Station, Westexe Park and People’s Park.</p> <p>The funding for potential assets could come from raising the council’s precept demand. The Town Clerk explained to the members that currently Tiverton had a low precept D rate at £67.15 in comparison to Cullompton and Crediton. Cullompton being £138.00 and Crediton £138.31. Parish councils were in the unique position, he explained, of being able to raise their precepts without a cap, whereas the district council were not. The district council was now seeking support from the parish councils for some of the discretionary services they currently provided.</p> <p>The pannier market currently had a large number of additional internal running charges, therefore it was debateable on whether this facility was managing to break even. The Town Clerk felt that the town council could look at ways of making the market more self-sufficient if it decided to take this asset on. He went on to say that the bus station might be a good asset to take on, he expressed his concerns over the loss of several bus stations in Devon and Somerset, and loss of services to the community.</p> <p>The two town parks, Westexe Recreation Ground and the People’s Park were assets that the town clerk felt could be improved upon. The current toilet facility sited at the Westexe park was currently closed due to being not fit to use. This caused problems, particularly whilst the children’s paddling pool was in use during the summer months. Currently the district council due to budget constraints, lacked the funding to restore or put in a new</p>

	<p>toilet facility.</p> <p>The Mayor Cllr W Burke was keen to see the town council take on the park assets completely. He felt the town council could improve these facilities, and provide a higher level of service.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman said that the People’s Park was currently a trust, with district councillors as trustees, there would he said, be legal ramifications to work around first.</p> <p>Cllr P Hill said he would be interested in finding out more on the income and expenditure for the Pannier Market and the Bus Station.</p> <p>Cllr C Berry said he would be in favour of the town council taking on the full assets.</p> <p>Cllr N Davey said that if the town council took on assets they should be wholly transferred from the district rather than leased out.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed the members that he was due to meet with district council officers to discuss options on the assets. He would then report back to members on his findings.</p>
425	<p>Council Strategy: <i>The vision of the council for the next four years.</i></p> <p>The Town Clerk welcomed ideas and suggestions for the council for the next four years.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman said he would be keen for the town council to collaborate with the new district climate change committee in order to achieve net zero. Cllr Bush also expressed his keenness for this.</p> <p>He went on to say that his vision was to create a more vibrant town with a regular programme of events for the centre. Working with the Town Centre Partnership and other like-minded groups with the aim of bringing more people into the town.</p> <p>The Town Clerk acknowledged that there were many possibilities including revitalising empty buildings, if the town council were to take on the Pannier Market for example.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman suggested holding a follow up meeting in 6 months.</p> <p>Cllr S Beard suggested inviting the Town Centre Coordinator Ms S Gray along as she was already working on a new vision for the town centre and had ideas for more town events. This was agreed.</p>
426	<p>Training dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Induction Tuesday 30th May 2023 at 6pm • Planning Training Wednesday 7th June 2023 at 6pm • Finance Training Wednesday 14th June 2023 at 6pm <p>Cllr L Cruwys requested that the training session times be amended from 6pm to 6.15pm, the Town Clerk agreed to do this.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed the members that if they wished to be on the Planning & Licensing Committee or the Finance Committee, there would be a need to attend the appropriate training session for this committee. All he said should attend the Council Induction. Following this meeting, forms would be sent to all members in order for them to select which committees they wanted to be on.</p> <p>The meeting concluded.</p>