

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL** held on **TUESDAY 19th DECEMBER, 2023 at 6.30pm** at **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor A Hutton (Mayor)
Councillor P Ward (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors S Hipsey, Mrs A Johnson, A Lewis, U Mann, N Martin, Mrs B Moody, J Moody, T Munro, B Smith.

IN ATTENDANCE General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting there was opportunity at **6.00pm** - for Members to receive an informal briefing, on behalf of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, on the Group's emerging Policies and Green Spaces Initiative; and at **6.25pm** – for a few moments of Quiet Reflection led by the Mayor.

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

253. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ms M Ewings, J Irvine, P Squire and A Venning.

254. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting, however please see Minute Nos. 258(i) and 264 below.

255. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of Tavistock Town Council held on Tuesday 7th November, 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

Noted That in response to a question, and associated matters (Minute No. 259 also refers), criteria applicable for the confirmation of Minutes were outlined.

256. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS & QUESTIONS

No public representations or questions had been received prior to the Meeting.

ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION

257. GENERAL FINANCE

The Council considered the following:-

i) Schedule of Payments

The Council received and considered copies of the monthly accounts as at 31st October and 30th November, 2023 (Appendix 2) as listed on the Council website;

ii) Budget Monitoring Report

The Council received and considered a copy of the Budget Monitoring Report (Appendix 3) as at 30th November, 2023.

Noted That it was reported:

- that the annual subscription to the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) would increase from iro £1,386 to £1,721 which was noted and endorsed;
- that the Council Meeting previously scheduled for 30th January 2024 would be deferred to 6th February 2024, as previously agreed, in order that the 2024–2025 Budget could be approved pursuant to the Council Tax Base figures being received.

258. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & LICENSING COMMITTEE (DM&L)

The Council considered the following: -

- i) Development Management & Licensing Committee - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 28th November, 2023 (Appendix 4) (Minute No's 242 - 252 inclusive) the recommendations being reported by rote.

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

Noted That Councillor Mrs A Johnson Declared an Interest in Planning Application No. 3394/23/HHO by virtue of a close family relationship with the applicant.

259. ON-STREET PARKING

An oral update was provided on the current position, alongside reference, variously, to:

- communications as between the Town and Borough Council in connection with the above, and differing views on the legal

status of same, together with associated potential interpretations;

- the interpretation of various items of correspondence and the extent to which they did/did not represent a settled policy position of the Borough Council;
- the role of 'twin hat' Members;
- the nature and scope of delegation arrangements;
- inter-authority relationships and associated communication arrangements;
- prior correspondence from a Town Councillor;
- that the local MP had conveyed the Council's concerns over the administrative process in respect of the proposed charges for on-street parking, with Devon County Council;
- that a solicitor's letter had been sent on the previous day on behalf of Tavistock Town Council, to Devon County Council, on 18th December, 2023 which would be circulated to all Councillors;
- the proposals solely related to areas of the Highway owned and managed by DCC;
- that Tavistock BID Company had produced a leaflet to be widely distributed in the local area, circulation/promotion of which would be welcomed.

An update was received from those serving on both (Town and Borough) Councils advising further:-

- that West Devon Borough Council, at its Council Meeting earlier that day, had resolved to 'object' to the proposal due to the lack of evidence provided, and that the Lead Councillor for 'People and Communities' would write to Devon County Council to that effect;
- that West Devon Borough Council would also write to the County Council asking for a meeting to take place, in order that the County Council could provide its business case for putting forward the proposal in its current form.
- that all Members of West Devon Borough Council had subscribed to a letter, which would be sent to the Tavistock Times and Okehampton Times, encouraging residents to complete DCC's Consultation Survey;
- the positive intervention of the Borough Council was welcomed.

Arising from the foregoing it was further agreed that various aspects of the above item should appropriately be held in the Confidential section of the Meeting in view of the nature of same.

Noted That: in response to a question the County Councillor's view was reported, including that it was understood neither the County Archaeologist, nor West Devon Borough Council's Heritage Officer, had raised any concerns with regard to the installation of parking meters in Tavistock. Arising therefrom it was suggested that it would be beneficial to receive confirmation of the above, in writing, from those Officers.

Addendum – subsequent to the Meeting the foregoing Officers clarified to the County Councillor, in the alternative, that they had been unable to comment on the consultation in view of the Highway Authority's failure, to date, to provide the required evidence and analysis of the proposal and its heritage impacts.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

260. SERVICE REPORTS

The Council received, for information, the reports of the General Manager, Pannier Market/Town Hall/Butchers' Hall and Works Department (Appendices 5 - 8).

i. General Manager's Report

Noted That:

- a report would be brought to the next Council Meeting which would request that unused funding from the Guildhall Toilet project to be used towards other property works which were necessary, but currently unfunded, as the Property Maintenance Budget for this financial year was currently fully allocated;
- following a query raised, it was confirmed that no response had yet been received following the recent Historic England Grant application (Betsy Grimbal's Tower refers) by Tavistock Heritage Trust.
- Appreciation was conveyed to the General Manager for works recently undertaken in the town in respect of Market Road and the Town Hall frontage.

ii. Pannier Market Report;

- iii. Works Department Report;
Noted That appreciation was conveyed to:
 - the Works Manager for assistance in connection with pest control issues around the town;
 - Works Department staff for assistance with the Christmas Tree Festival and clearing of gutters at the Dartmoor Search & Rescue Group building.
- iv. Town Hall & Butchers' Hall Report.

261. FINANCE & OTHER MATTERS

The Council received, for information, the following:-

a) Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 9)

Noted That:

- Members were advised that due to the change of date of the next Council Meeting, the Strategic Plan session planned for 6th February 2024 would need to be re-arranged. A new date would be advised as soon as available;
- Reservations were expressed regarding Civic Events attendance by Councillors, as contained within the Report.

b) Notes of the Meetings of the Town Hall & Markets Consultative Group held on;

- 20th September, 2023 (Appendix 10);
- 12th December, 2023 (Appendix 11); attention was drawn to a correction to the figures, as recorded in relation to the BID Company's parking survey which should have read that 35% of vehicles stayed for less than 10 minutes, and 65% of vehicles stayed for less than 30 minutes;

c) West Devon Borough Councillor Report – Report from Borough Councillor A Bridgewater (Appendix 12);

d) The following updates or feedback were brought forward.

- i. Representatives on outside bodies;
 - a) the Council's DALC representative reported that;
 - at the Larger Councils' Committee the parking issue was raised across a group of Councils, together with a discussion around bus services;
 - DALC was trying to encourage improved relationships between Town/Parish Councils and the County Council following the DALC Conference, when the new CEO of the County Council had been in attendance and had confirmed her desire for that to happen;

- DALC organised events (such as the County Council Leader’s sessions) were an opportunity for Councillors to interact and communicate with the County Council in a professional and collegiate manner;
 - Members were encouraged to attend the DALC Annual Conference and AGM in 2024, to both receive information and explore sector-based networking opportunities.
- b) Kingdon House – the Council’s representative reported that:
- the Scrapstore had recently moved out of the building, so a new tenant was being sought for the now vacant area on the ground floor;
 - the Art Group would be moving to Bedford Chambers, so again space would be coming available for use by community groups’
- ii. Feedback from Members following attendance at any training sessions – none brought forward
- iii. Devon County Councillor Report – the County Councillor was invited to provide a brief oral update on this occasion (no written report having been submitted for consideration). Attention was drawn, in particular, to inter-council relations and arrangements for the exchange of information.

Arising from the foregoing Councillors noted, with disappointment, the discontinuation of periodic DCC Officer attendance at Council Meetings and associated updates. Also of the diminution of the primary multi-agency consultation forum (Links Committees), delays in undertaking roadworks (Drake Statue and line marking), arrangements for representation at Council meetings and the conduct of what appeared to be lower priority works elsewhere in the Town.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

262. 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 CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

263. PROPERTY, LEGAL & FINANCE MATTERS

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

i. DEBTORS' REPORT

The Council considered and noted a list (Appendix 13) of all those with debts to the Council dating from earlier than the last Quarter Day and received updates accordingly.

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A verbal update was provided on:

- The Molly Owen Centre a request had been received from a current short-term Licensee to extend the Licence to occupy the property for a further 12 months.

It was reported that Officers were minded to accede to this request, however the tenant would be advised that no further extension would be granted after 31st December 2024. Should the occupants require a property after that date an alternative, permanent location/arrangement would be required.

Noted That:

- In response to a query the General Manager reported that the future usage of both the Molly Owen Centre, and the residential property adjoining it, would need to be considered during 2024 as part of a review of the operation of the asset(s);
- Councillor P Ward Declared an Interest by virtue of being a volunteer with the organisation concerned.

It was agreed that this matter should be brought back to Council in 6 months' time to review future plans.

- Duke Street Property – it was reported that a tenant in one of the Duke Street properties had issued Licences to Occupy to two other companies for the property, which breached the terms of the Lease.

This matter was being progressed via the Council's Solicitors, further updates would be brought forward as matters progressed.

Noted That immediately prior to the conclusion of the Meeting a discussion took place in connection with Minute No. 259 with particular reference to arrangements in connection with consultation, delegation, communication and associated matters.

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

The Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN