



Minutes of the Seaton Town Council Meeting on Monday 2 March 2020

Present:

Chair: Cllr K Beer

Councillors: J Rowland, D Ledger, D Haggerty, M Shaw, J Russell and A Singh

Officers: Town Clerk

Public: EDDC Councillor Marcus Hartnell

211. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence

212. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Ledger & Rowland declared a personal interest as a Councillor with East Devon District Council (EDDC)

Cllr Shaw declared a personal interest as a Councillor with Devon County Council (DCC)

213. Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 3rd February 2020

214. Chairman's Report

Members noted the Chairman's Report
(moved Cllr Beer)

215. Public Question Time

There were no public questions

216. Police Report

The Police report was noted.

217. County Councillor Report

Cllr Shaw presented his reports for March 2020 and highlighted the issues arising from:

- Primary schools shake-up - A recent OFSTED report had found Colyton Primary School to be in adequate. As such, it had been proposed by the Governors to dissolve the local Axe Beacon Foundation and Seaton Primary School would now become freestanding, possibly in partnership with the Fort Foundation (a small federation with a Christian ethos). Concern had been expressed by



teachers about a lack of consultation, Cllr. Shaw was meeting with the Axe Beacon Chair of Governors and others to discuss the situation in early March).

- Covid-19 Planning – Cllr. Shaw stated that in light of recent events a more serious outbreak was likely and Members noted that it was a fast moving situation that was constantly evolving. Central Government would be issuing advice imminently by which we could be guided. The Town Council may need to operate in a different manner going forward, particularly in light of the ageing demographic of the area who were potentially more vulnerable than others. Cllr Rowland would also raise the subject at upcoming meetings.

Members **RESOLVED** to note Cllr Shaw's report. (proposed Cllr Haggerty; seconded Cllr Rowland)

Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing Orders were suspended and the agenda briefly paused when the recipients of grants arrived. Cllr Beer presented cheques to representatives of the following organisations. These grants had been previously agreed at a meeting of the full Council on 3 February 2020:

- *Seaton and District Garden Club*
- *Seaton Majorettes*
- *Free Spirit Taekwondo*

218. District Councillor Reports

Written reports were provided by EDDC Cllrs Rowland and Hartnell.

Cllr Beer questioned whether EDDC could agree a budget with a deficit. Cllr Rowland replied that there was a need for the budget to be balanced but the worry was looking to future funding gaps in light of the withdrawal of Government funding and EDDC were therefore looking at commercial opportunities to fill the gap, such as ready-made outlets, for example retail spaces. Cllr Russell commented that many Councils that had invested in out of town retail parks had faced drops in income when shops closed and, as a result the capital value of the premises also falls. Cllr. Shaw stated that it was for this reason that the Leader of DCC had made a point of saying that the County Council would not be going down this route.

As regards the outstanding taxi rank issue, Cllr Rowland confirmed that this had now been resolved with Highways and it was now for EDDC to consult on this. Cllr Rowland was not aware of the time frames but would find out from the Licensing Officer.

Cllr Beer thanked Cllr Hartnell for highlighting Seaton focused matters in his report. Cllr Hartnell replied that EDDC was particularly committed to the Seaton Wetlands project



which would hopefully increase visitor numbers and have the knock-on effect of increasing visitors to the town generally.

Members noted the District Councillors' reports

219. Reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies

Seaton Area Health Matters There was a comprehensive report from Cllr. Rowland on 'Seaton Area Health Matters'. Cllr. Rowland expressed frustration that, whilst all agreed that the concept was a good idea, agreement had to be reached on how to finance it. The messages from Central Government still conflicted with those received from NHS Property Services and this had to be resolved. Cllr. Rowland hoped to have more information later in the week.

Members noted the report.

220. Town Clerk Report including, where appropriate, recommendations:

- Update on Council's 2019/20 priorities
 - Progress on Seafront Enhancement Scheme
Cllr Rowland confirmed that he was in discussion with two members of the public - Heather Sanham and Stephen Read – about the possibility of working with him and Cllrs. Shaw & Beer as part of the Seafront Enhancement Working Group, as both had been involved in in this project when they were Councillors. Discussions were positive. The Town Clerk asked that she be kept informed of progress and agreed to attend any meetings as required.
 - Painting of lamp posts
Cllr. Rowland would be taking part in a walkabout with Andrew Hancock from EDDC on Friday 13th March to establish works required in the town and the lamp posts would form part of this discussion. The Clerk would also attend.
 - Maintenance contracts for Town Hall and Marshlands Centre
The Clerk advised that this would be dealt with in a confidential item later on the Agenda.
 - To increase the number of hirers of facilities and office space at Marshlands
The office was still having difficulties in obtaining quotations from plumbers to dismantle the existing pipework, but enquiries were ongoing. Three quotations had been sought regarding the replacement of the window in the First Aid Room, which was now let to an existing tenant, who had transferred to there from another room; two quotations had been received. Whilst this could be dealt with under the scheme of delegation, as they had been received prior to the meeting the quotations were bought to Members attention and it was decided to instruct Regency Windows to carry out the installation of a new window.



- Ensure staffing levels are adequate to deliver the service expected and that Council websites and social media outlets are kept up to date
The Clerk advised that this would be dealt with in a confidential item later on the Agenda.

Cllr Ledger suggested that a new set of priorities for 2020/21 be agreed and this could be considered at the next Council meeting.

Elections & Co-options of New Councillors

The Clerk advised Members that an election would take place on 26 March 2020 in respect of one casual vacancy. There had been two nominations. Cllr Rowland questioned whether an applicant could still withdraw. The Clerk advised that she did not believe this was possible after the date for withdrawal had passed (ie 28 February 2020 at 4pm) but had an outstanding enquiry with EDDC to check the position. The final date for an election to be called for the last of the four other vacancies was 16 March 2020. Thereafter, subject to any further election being called, applications for co-option would be sought for the remaining vacancies.

Members noted the Town Clerk's Report.

221. Committee meeting minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of:

- Community & Open Spaces Committee for 28 October 2019 and 17 January 2020
- Planning Committee of 3 and 17 February 2020

Under this item Cllr Shaw raised a question over the withdrawal of the community gazebos for use at the Artisan Markets and asked what would happen to them. Cllr Beer explained that they would be retained and stored by the Council to available to community groups for events within the town but, as regards the markets, the ongoing practical difficulties of the setting up and dismantling of the gazebos safely and at a reasonable cost remained. This was attested to by Cllr Rowland, who had been involved in the set up on a previous occasion and, unfortunately, injured himself. It was for these reasons that the Communities & Open Spaces Committee had reached the decision to stop providing gazebos for the Artisan Markets. Cllr Haggerty advised that, following discussions at the most recent 'Promote Seaton' meeting he was investigating other available options regarding artisan and art in the garden type events and



had asked that this be added to the next Council Agenda for discussion. This explanation and other comments were noted by Members.

(proposed Cllr Shaw; seconded Cllr Singh)

222. Risk Review

Members considered the annual review of risk and **RESOLVED** to adopt the Risk Assessment and Management Register, as drafted

(proposed Cllr Ledger; seconded Cllr Singh)

223. Data Protection Update

Members considered and **RESOLVED** to adopt the proposed Data Breach Policy and Report Form (March 2020)

(proposed Cllr Beer; seconded Cllr Singh)

224. Donation for Seaton Museum for VE Day Exhibition

Members noted the request from the Axe Valley Heritage Association and unanimously supported the Chairman's decision to make a donation of £200 from his Chairman's Allowance.

225. Annual Town Meeting

Members noted that this would take place on Thursday 16 April at 7pm and asked that the Clerk approach James Chubb to establish whether he was available to give a presentation on the work of the Seaton Wetlands.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Chairman moved that in accordance with the Council's Standing Order 3 (d) press and public would be excluded from the meeting during the discussions of item 11 on this agenda as there was likely to be disclosure of information as matters were being discussed which were commercially sensitive and which could lead to disclosure of personal data.

226. Marshlands

Cllr Rowland presented the outcome of a meeting of the Council's Marshlands Working Group held in January when the fabric of the building was discussed and the likely costs of ongoing maintenance and repairs in light of the age of the building.



It was **RESOLVED** that the 'Marshlands Working Group' would be renamed the 'Assets Working Group' and membership was confirmed as Cllrs. Rowland, Beer, Russell and Ledger. This Working Group would look at the ongoing maintenance requirements of the Town Hall, as well as the future direction and management of the Marshlands site.

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Haggerty)

227. Staffing Matters

The Council noted the report on staffing and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of the Personnel Committee and approve the updated staff structure, salary and pension arrangements, salary increases as from 1 April 2020 and authorised the Town Clerk to set the process in motion to recruit to vacant posts.

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Shaw)

The Town Clerk declared an interest and left the meeting when the terms of her employment were discussed and this item was minuted by Cllr Beer.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to confirm the permanent appointment of Julia Mutlow as Seaton Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, as from 7 April 2020 and to a salary adjustment, in accordance with her contract of employment, to reflect this.

Furthermore, in light of the exceptional workload of recent months (and this was not to form any precedent whatsoever for future years) Members **RESOLVED** to authorise payment in lieu of any untaken holiday entitlement that could not be reasonably taken by the Town Clerk by 31 March 2020.

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Ledger)

Meeting closed at 9.10pm