



Minutes of the Seaton Town Council Meeting on Friday 20 March 2020

Present:

Chair: Cllr K Beer

Councillors: J Rowland, D Haggerty, J Russell and A Singh

Officers: Town Clerk

Public: EDDC Councillor Marcus Hartnell (leaving after Public Question Time)
and one member of the public

228. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Shaw & Ledger

229. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Rowland declared a personal interest as a Councillor with East Devon District Council (EDDC)

230. Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2020 (moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Haggerty)

231. Public Question Time

In light of the cancellation of the upcoming election, due to the ongoing public health pandemic, Cllr Hartnell made a statement commending the immediate co-option to the Town Council of the two electoral candidates (himself and Eric Bowman). Both had demonstrated their commitment to the Seaton community. He added that, in light of the evolving crisis, and the likelihood that further self-isolation may be necessary, coupled with the fact that the Council currently had several vacancies, it would be helpful to increase the number of Councillors as soon as possible to ensure it could continue to perform its duties to the local community. Cllr Beer asked if they were both able and willing to stand and they confirmed that they were.

232. COVID-19 - Operation of the Town Council

The Council expressed thanks to Ben Tucker of Seaton Baptist Church for all his hard work in co-ordinating an effective response to the public health situation so quickly.

To enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents during any period of restricted activity due to the Covid-19 virus, Members **RESOLVED** to:



1. extend the existing 'Delegation of Powers to the Town Clerk' (December 2019) to enable the Clerk, in consultation with two of either the Chair, Vice Chair or Chair of Finance & General Purposes, to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decision cannot, in the Clerk's view, be reasonably deferred to a meeting of the Council or one of its constituent Committees. All Members will be kept informed of any decisions made, which will be formally ratified at the first possible properly convened meeting of the Council thereafter.
2. postpone all Artisan Markets and not organise further art or other events, until further notice
3. postpone the Town Meeting on 16 April, until further notice
4. cancel existing bookings of the function room at Marshlands and accept no further bookings, until further notice
5. close the Council offices to the public, until further notice
6. subject to completion of the appropriate declarations, to co-opt Marcus Hartnell and Eric Bowman to Seaton Town Council and postpone the co-option process for the three remaining vacancies, until further notice
7. to cancel all currently scheduled meetings of the Council and its Committees, until further notice
8. to respond to all consultations on planning applications from EDDC by email

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Haggerty)

233. Any other items that the Chairman considers necessary

Members discussed briefly matters that had arisen since the agenda had been published and were affected by the current public health crisis, including the date of the town's planned VE Day event, the print run of the Town Guide 2020 and video conferencing during the pandemic. Cllr Singh confirmed video conferencing would be possible and Cllr Rowland confirmed that trials had been carried out at EDDC. The Clerk advised that, until the emergency legislation had been passed meetings could not be held via this means, but she would keep Members updated as matters evolved.

Furthermore, the Clerk sought authorisation to make two payments to HMRC & Devon Pension Fund via internet banking rather than cheque, which exceeded her internet banking authorisation limit.

In light of the fact that Cllr Beer had previously indicated that he would be stepping down as Mayor & Chairman of Seaton Town Council in May, and meetings of the Council would be cancelled until further notice, Cllr Rowland gave thanks to Cllr Beer for his willingness to step up into the role of Mayor & Chairman at a difficult time and for all his hard work during his appointment. Cllr Beer responded with his own vote of thanks to Cllr. Rowland for all his advice and support in his role as Vice Chairman.



Members **RESOLVED** to:

- support the postponement of the VE Day event to the date of VJ Day in August 2020, or any subsequent later date as may be appropriate
- reduce the print run of the Town Guide from 20,000 to 5,000 copies
- authorise the Clerk to make the two payments discussed, following the usual authorisation by two Councillors

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Haggerty)

Confidential Items

The Chairman moved that in accordance with the Council's Standing Order 3 (d) press and public will be excluded from the meeting during the discussions of item 07 on this agenda as there is likely to be disclosure of personal information.

234. Staffing Matters

Members **RESOLVED** to:

- approve the appointment of Stephanie Hidson-Jones to the post of Administrative & Events Officer as from April 2020
- approve the increase in hours of Phil Tuckley as Town Maintenance Person from part time (32 hours) to full time (37 hours) from 1 April 2020, with funding from general reserves
- note that the recruitment for a Deputy Town Clerk would be postponed temporarily and proceeded with as soon as practicable, depending on how the public health situation evolved

(moved Cllr Rowland; seconded Cllr Haggerty)

Meeting closed at 10.55am

Signed: _____

K Beer

Dated: _____

6/5/2020

