



Minutes of the Seaton Town Council Annual Meeting
Thursday 19th April 2018

Present

In the Chair Cllr Jack Rowland

Councillors Cllr. P Burrows, Cllr. C Chadwick, Cllr. M Hartnell,
Cllr. R Webster

In attendance: 10 Members of the Community
PC Speers
Town Clerk

18TM/01 Welcome and report from the Town Mayor / Chairman: Cllr. J Rowland

Cllr. J Rowland welcomed all attending to the meeting and read his report

Top priorities for Seaton Town Council in the financial year 2017/18

In July last year I wanted the Council to agree the top priorities to either complete in the financial year or demonstrate that progress was being made. The agreed priorities were:

- Agree a 5 year financial plan.
- Agree what would happen with the Events and Marketing Contract as that contract was coming to the end of the 3 year arrangement.
- Complete the remedial work at Marshlands and market the remaining space.
- Improve the appearance of the Town Centre including improved signage.
- Progress the seafront enhancement scheme.
- Improve the methods of communicating with Seaton residents

5 year Financial Plan.

This has been agreed and formed part of the budget planning exercise for the new financial year. Having this plan does not mean that the future plans for the remaining years are set in stone, but will help with the budget planning process for those years by acting as a blueprint.

Events & Marketing Contract

The contract that was in place this time last year was coming to an end in November last year. Karin Frewin was the contractor and deserves our thanks for all the results she achieved over the 3 years. Councillors discussed and agreed that in view of the requirements over the next 3 years that one contract covering delivering events and marketing should be split without affecting the agreed budget for this year.

As a result a marketing contract was advertised for tender and the post of an events officer was advertised based on being paid for 10 hours per week, but with an understanding that the jobholder may need to work 30 hours in some weeks and zero in others for example.

After shortlisting exercises and interviews One Voice were awarded the marketing contract and Juliette Williams accepted the events officer role.

Marshlands Centre – remedial work and marketing space for rent

The remedial work in this financial year has focussed on the seafront facing building and has involved replacement soffits and fascias, new double glazing, new carpeting where required and interior painting. This was to bring the offices in this location up to an acceptable standard to enable an agent to market the offices for rent.

We have been partially successful as we have had tenants, but due to other issues affecting those businesses we currently have none in the offices on the 1st floor. Agents tell us that the commercial letting market is difficult at the moment although the rents we are seeking are very competitive. The discussions we have had in the past with charities to rent out the whole of the ground floor have not borne any results so far.

Improve the appearance of the Town Centre, including signage

Within the scope of what as a Council we can do we have not made the envisaged changes yet. New town centre map displays for the Orchard car park, the outside of the toilet block in Thury Harcourt and on West and East Walk are due to be installed in the near future.

Repainting of the finger post signs is also scheduled for when the weather relents and the new colour scheme will be black and gold to replace the maroon. We also want Devon County Council to agree using the black and gold theme for the lampposts they are responsible for maintaining around the town centre and seafront.

We do meet East Devon District Council Steetscene staff to tour around the Town Centre and the seafront to bring to their attention areas that need work.

Progress the Seafront Enhancement scheme

Planning permission has now been granted and the next challenge is to raise the estimated £5 million cost.

As a relatively small town council we will need expert assistance to make successful grant applications in the current climate and we are looking to East Devon District Council for assistance.

Improve the methods of communicating with Seaton residents

This is an area where we need to make progress via the Seaton Town Council website and social media especially with the loss of the Seaton View From free newspaper that stopped trading in early January. Their chief reporter had a high attendance record at our full Council meetings or would be available for interviews when required.

Budget for 2018/19 and expense vs plan for 2017/18

Budget for 2018/19

At a meeting of Seaton Town Council on 15 January the budget for the next financial year 2018/19 was agreed together with the Council Tax precept required from the beginning of April.

The percentage increase in the precept for the Seaton Town Council budget will be 0.58%, considerably lower than the current rate of inflation. For the average Band D payer this will mean an annual bill of £99.66 compared to £99.09 last year.

This small increase of 57p for a whole year, equivalent to just over 1p per week, has been achieved without any cuts to current services or support provided by the Town Council. On the advice of our auditor we have increased the amount kept in reserves by £10,000 and Councillors also agreed to increase the amount of grant funding available to apply for in 2018/19 back to a total of £8000

Expense vs plan for 2017/18

As at 16 April the overall actual expense was £291,535.57 against a budget of £357,794.00. There will be accrued expense to pay, but the projected situation is an underspend for the final year end figures.

Seaton Hospital and local healthcare

Along with other groups and individuals Seaton Town Council opposed the loss of bed provision at Seaton Hospital and made this clear both at Council meetings and through the efforts of a number of Councillors speaking at public meetings and at Devon County Council and East Devon District Council meetings.

Since the bed closures our efforts have focussed on working to try to ensure that the hospital site is not sold by NHS Property Services and deemed surplus to requirements. To date we have submitted a request to EDDC to register the hospital as an asset of community value and played a major role in organising a Health Matters forum on 23 March. 60 people accepted an invitation to initially hear speakers, but more importantly to take part in workshops of 8-9 people in each group. The feedback has been documented and a report is in the process of being produced to demonstrate that we want to see the hospital site as a health hub for the Axe Valley offering additional clinics without losing any more of the existing ones.

Other subjects

- Took a proactive approach to contact the Exeter HQ of the Breast Screening Mobile Unit to say we wanted to see the service return to Seaton in 2021 (this followed social media posts regarding the noise from the unit overnight in the Tesco car park).
- Acted as a broker to resolve the issues between the Jurassic Mule summer bus service and the residents of Haven Court – discussions ongoing at the moment regarding a potential return of the service this summer that are dependent on the owner of the business resolving other issues.

- Great to see the Premier Inn opening recently to provide much needed additional hotel bed provision in the area.
- Also great to see the new Tramway terminus building nearing completion.
- Finally, my thanks to the staff of Seaton Town Council for their help and support to me during my year as Mayor and Chair of the Council. My fellow Councillors have been told by me that I will not be standing for re-election as Chair and Mayor on 8 May as, for personal reasons, I will not be able to devote the same amount of time that I have over the past year in all facets of the work of the Town Council. I will be continuing as a Councillor and want to devote more time to the healthcare provision in the area in view of the information shown earlier in this report.

18/TM/02 Minutes of the Town Meeting 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2017 were agreed.
(moved Cllr Rowland)

18/TM/03 Reports from Seaton Town Council Committee Chairman.

Planning Committee

Cllr Martin Shaw gave his apologies so the Town Clerk read his report

The Committee has continued to give careful consideration to all the planning applications within Seaton, and has looked at over 50 applications in the last year. We have raised no objections to the majority of applications. However there have been a number of cases where we have objected on the grounds of overdevelopment, adverse effects on neighbours' amenity, design, risks of coastal erosion, and other reasons. While East Devon District Council have followed many of our recommendations, we have continued to find cases where our considered opinions have been ignored and we have disagreed with the decisions made.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Cllr Heather Sanham gave her apologies so the Town Clerk read her report.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee which is responsible for approving payments, monitoring income and expenditure each month against approved budgets, approving petty cash expenditure, and reviewing and reconciling bank statements, continued to meet regularly throughout the year. It is this Committee's responsibility to ensure that the Council complies with the Audit Commission Act 1998 which it does through its internal controls and financial regulations. The Council's Responsible Financial Officer is the Clerk. The Finance & General Purposes Committee is also responsible for producing a draft annual budget for the Council.

This has been another busy year for the Town Council and we are pleased to have been able to progress many projects as well as deliver new ones for the benefit of the town, despite only a modest increase in the precept over the previous year.

During 2017/18 Seaton Town Council continued to make improvements to Marshlands which is now used regularly for meetings and functions. Other areas which the Town Council maintains are Cliff Field Gardens, Elizabeth Road playing fields and play park, the Underfleet play park, various local footpaths, Seaton Down Hill picnic site, and some of the town's floral areas and hanging baskets.

One of the new projects during the year was improvement of the town's signage. This included new highways signs which have recently been installed; new maps which will soon be located at different sites around the town as well as a new panel at Axminster Station promoting Seaton. The town's finger posts will be upgraded shortly.

An Air Ambulance landing site at Seaton Cricket Club is being supported by the Town Council with a financial contribution and the submission of the planning application.

The Town Council continued to fund a TIC service at Seaton Jurassic for the benefit of visitors, residents and businesses, and has again supported community groups through its grants system.

During 2017 we received approval from EDDC for the town's seafront enhancement proposals, and funds were allocated towards seeking grants to take this important project forward.

As part of our support for the town and its businesses we undertook the production of the Town Guide, an events contract to continue the very successful Seaton Cycle Fest, Artisan markets, [Art@Jubilee](#) and Christmas activities, and a marketing contract to promote the town locally and regionally.

Finally, the work of the Town Council is supported through the all-important staff of administrators, handyman and dog warden, all led by our full-time Town Clerk.

Community & Open Spaces Committee

Cllr Burrows read his report as the Chairman of the Communities Committee.

The Communities committee deals with all the Parks and Open Spaces for which the Council has responsibility within the Town. The committee has an Annual budget with delegated responsibility for its expenditure in the implementation of the continued upkeep and potential improvement of leisure, recreational and related provision. It identifies projects that will involve or provide facilities or activities for people of all ages.

It undertakes an on-going review of the provision of public parks and open spaces within the Town to ensure that the needs of residents are met as far as possible. The Committee will manage and monitor projects, including those funded by Section 106 agreements.

It is responsible for promoting Seaton as a destination hub through its marketing team & events manager

This year has seen Seaton being promoted through the provision of Events that encourage people to come and visit and stay in Town. The Premier Inn is very welcome. Karin Frewin was our Marketing & Events officer until the end of 2017 and we thank her for all the hard work that entailed in promoting Seaton. However, the role has now been split and we have an inhouse Events officer Juliette Williams and an outsourced Marketing group One Voice media.

Events that the Town Council put on include the Cycle Fest, Artisan Markets, Art@jubilee, Big clean, Seaton in Bloom, Christmas Lights switch on & Christmas Carnival.

Money for new Town centre signage has been received and this will be implemented.

During 2017 Seaton Town Council distributed 15,000 guides to Seaton and the surrounding areas. The 2018 guide is at this moment being distributed to a much wider area, 25,000 copies. This includes Exeter, M5 service stations, B&b's TIC's from Taunton to Torquay to bring people here.

We have in the budget money for repainting of the street furniture. This is soon to be started now the weather has improved.

We have a provision for the maintenance of Bus shelters but this can only go ahead when East Devon & Devon County give us ownership.

A Seaton app has been produced, a business directory from seatondevon.org will be utilised when it is finished.

Seaton will be advertised at Axminster Station with signage agreed with Devon County & Axminster Town Council, although Seaton has been pushing this for a couple of years.

This year's Christmas late night shopping & Carnival was a great success with 2 organisations working well together. This year it will be held on a Saturday 1st December.

During the year our Town Crier, David Cramer, gave up his post due to ill health. He will be sorely missed and we are seeking a replacement. We are still waiting for an 'Around Seaton Heritage Trail' to be produced but hopefully soon it will be available.

We have expressed an interest in being a part of the 'Tour de Coast' project which aims to install 100 daymarks around the coast of England. We are still waiting for progress on that.

We have purchased STC Banners for our contractor's van so people know what the Council does when putting in floral displays & tidying the Town.

The Council has been working hard to make sure the Jurassic play area is up and running with the remedial work finally being completed to the satisfaction of our staff.

We have purchased many weights to stabilize the 20 gazebos, which we own, rather than use sandbags that decay quicker. As one who helped with the April street market they were easier to lift.

We have purchased 2 flags, with the Town logo, to be flown in Windsor Gardens.

We maintain Cliff Field Gardens, Jurassic Playpark, Elizabeth Playing fields/Playpark, Seaton Down Hill picnic area and Fisherman's gap roundabout. The Labyrinth at Cliff fields is also maintained by the Council. Finally, this year we are re-entering the South West in Bloom, after a year's absence so if anyone wishes to be a part of it we would be very grateful

18/TM/04 PC Adam Speers: Police Report.

PC Adam Speers presented the Police Report. Key points were:

- PC Speers started in October 2017 and works with PCSO Mike McGauley
- The annual report from the Police is going to the Full Council Annual General Meeting on 8th May 2018
- There has been a spate of recent activity with a group of youths. The leader of the group was spoken to yesterday and the point was made to him that if the problems continue action will be taken
- Concerns over Royal Observer Way and speeding. PC Speers confirmed that speed checks were carried out last night and this will be done regularly
- Public to feel free to report any local matters to PC Speers. If it is an emergency to contact 999 or call 101 for non emergency

Questions for the Police:

- Elga Mackie from Seaton Gateway outlined that she had been working with PC Speers and PCSO McGauley to deal with youths that forced entry into the Town Hall as well as exhibiting anti social behaviour in Windsor Gardens. Facebook was used to highlight their movements

PC Speers responded to this by confirming that people need to telephone the information in via 101 so that they can obtain an injunction for anti social behaviour. He also confirmed that the Police would be stepping up their presence, identifying 6 or 7 hotspots for monitoring. PC Speers had a meeting with Gerry Moore from EDDC yesterday to discuss getting a dispersal notice but they can only be in place for 24 hours.

18/TM/05 Charlie Plowden/Tim Dafforn: Wetlands

Cllr Rowland confirmed that unfortunately, Mr Plowden and Dafforn had given their apologies

18/TM/06 Juliette Williams: Events Officer

Juliette Williams introduced herself as the Council's new Events Officer outlined the following:

- One Voice Media and PR are actively promoting Seaton in Devon Life and the Western Morning News
- One Voice want to work with local businesses to actively promote Seaton and they would be visiting the town to meet with businesses
- The Events Officer would be working on events which actively encouraged footfall into the town
- Existing events to include the Cycle Fest weekend, Artisan Markets, Christmas
- Potential new events to include a mountain bike race, vintage market, street fair in September in Fore Street and Queen Street

18/TM/08 Public Forum: Question and Answer session

Question: Mr Bernard Dunford asked about Artisan Markets and if they are continuing as the information on the website is out of date

Answer: It was confirmed that they are continuing and the information would be updated on the website. Mr Dunford was thanked for bringing this to the Council's attention

Question: Mr Eric Bowman stated that he felt there were issues with youths and that they need to be approached everytime they are seen. He also raised concerns about boy racers and one car having an ambulance siren sound effects

Answer: PC Speers reiterated the advice to call 101 to report individuals and also confirmed that an unmarked Police Car was monitoring the situation last weekend

Question: Mr Ian Barradale comments that he had issues with the new Street Trading Licensing process

Answer: Mr Barradale was advised to speak to EDDC Licensing as they would be able to assist with his query

Question: Ms Karen Kernok expressed concerns with the rubbish and mess in Jubilee Gardens

Answer: Cllr Rowland confirmed that he and Cllr Hartnell have been having walk arounds with EDDC Street Scene and that this issues would be raised with them

Question: Mrs Sharon Bruce asked when the bunting would be going up and also raised concerns with the Tourist Information Service and asked what the Council's contribution goes towards

Answer: Cllr Rowland confirmed that the bunting would be going up shortly and that he was meeting with Seaton Jurassic in the next week to discuss how the TIC is going and what the contribution

was going towards. A report would go back to the Town Council one the meeting had taken place

Question: Mrs Janine Barradale asked what the Council was doing to support youth provision and talked about a project at the Library which was struggling for funding

Answer: The Town Clerk advised Mrs Barradale that she would be happy to meet with the Library to discuss the funding issue and to offer assistance in finding grant funding.

Question: Mr Shaun Taylor asked about multi functional cycle paths and the fact that he is trying to get support for a traffic free route from Axminster to Seaton. This route would benefit the local area to a tune of £6m over 10 years. Mr Taylor said that he was reaching out to Council's and businesses for support and asked for the Council's support.

Answer: *Cllr Rowland confirmed that he and Cllr Shaw as the Devon County Councillor would be willing to support this initiative*

Question: Mr Bernard Dunford asked what was next for the Town Development Team

Answer: The Events Officer confirmed that she would be arranging a meeting of the group shortly and the first meeting would be to generate ideas as to how the group moves forward

The meeting ended at 20.32.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____