



## Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting 2019 held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### Present

<b>In the Chair</b>	Cllr Ken Beer
<b>Councillors</b>	Cllr. D Ledger Cllr S Read, Cllr. J Rowland, Cllr J Russell, Cllr. M Shaw
<b>In attendance:</b>	15 Members of the Community Committee Secretary

### **19/TM/01 Welcome and report from the Town Mayor / Chairman: Cllr. K Beer**

Cllr. Ken Beer welcomed all attending the meeting and provided an update as follows:

- The Devon Air Ambulance Night Time Landing Strip had been installed and was now in operation. The Town Council would be responsible for this going forward.
- Retained Seaton Primary Schools' swimming pool with the help of East Devon District Council for the public to use during the summer months.
- Better signage in town for the markets etc.
- The Town Council was continuing with the Seafront Enhancement Scheme.
- Have resurrected the Promote Seaton group which consists of local people, businesses, volunteers and traders to come up with ideas to increase trade in the town.
- Spent time with traders to create a Cultural Quarter at the top end of the town as since the Post Office moved footfall had decreased. The Town Council were planning to hold Artisan Markets in Windsor Gardens which might attract people to that part of the town.
- Maintained the Town Council's involvement and planning in Seaton Carnival, Velo Vintage and the CycleFest, along with the Christmas Tree and lights. Helping assist with the Grizzly which was held annually in the town.
- The Town Council were receiving many complaints about dogs allowed on the seafront. Seaton no longer had a Dog Warden and it would be a pity if dogs were banned completely from the seafront as Seaton was being advertised as a Dog Friendly Town.
- The Town Council were striving to keep the town clean and tidy, but it might involve getting a contractor to do the work or asking for volunteers who would be interested in helping.
- Finances – last year the Council stayed within its budget. This year the budget has been increased by 1.9% as the amount the Town Council receives from Central Government and the District Council had been drastically reduced and the Council was having to pay most of the costs incurred for running services in the town.

- The Town Council lost its Clerk at the end of March this year. This has had a huge impact on the remaining staff who were having to cover the Clerks workload as well as their own. The Council has employed a locum clerk for two days a week to help until a new Clerk is in place.

**19/TM/02 Presentation by Mr James Chubb, Countryside Team Leader, EDDC**  
Cllr Ken Beer announced that unfortunately James Chubb, who was going to give this presentation, was stuck in road traffic on the A30 and would not make the meeting.

**19/TM/03 Minutes of the Town Meeting 2018**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2018 were agreed.

**19/TM/04 Reports from Seaton Town Council Committees**

**Cllr H Sanham: Chairman Community & Open Spaces Committee**

Cllr Ken Beer announced that Cllr Sanham had sent her apologies for this meeting. Cllr Beer said that regular meetings were held of the Community and Open Spaces Committee and it was one of the main committees of the Council making sure that everything in the town was running smoothly.

**Cllr J Rowland: Promote Seaton**

In the absence of an Events Manager Cllr Rowland had taken over chairing meetings of this group. Meetings were held usually once a month and anyone interested in Seaton was welcome to come along to the meetings. The types of events Promote Seaton were promoting and helping with were the Outdoor Cinema Event to be held in Cliff Field Gardens. During these meetings it would be nice to have ideas come forward for events in the town. The Council were very concerned about the vibrancy of the town centre and would like businesses to come along to the meetings. Since the closure of the post office the footfall in Beer Road and Queen Street had dropped considerably and some planning applications had come in wanting to change the use of retail outlets to residential dwellings which the Council had resisted so far. Cllr Rowland thanked Cllr Ledger and Cllr Read for helping him weed around the town along with the Streetscene Team from East Devon District Council. Cllr Rowland said the Town Council was committed to making improvements to the street furniture, finger posts and signage in the town this year.

**Cllr. S Read: Chairman Planning Committee**

Cllr Read explained that the Planning Committee was an advisory body and could only make recommendations on planning applications to the District Council. The Committee considered all applications and generally raised no objections to them. During the past year the Committee had reviewed 97 applications of which 74 were recommended for approval and 23 applications were recommended not to be approved, the objections being on the grounds of over development, the effects of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring properties and coastal erosion. Of these 23 applications 7 were approved by the District Council.

**Cllr. M Shaw: Devon County Councillor for Seaton**

Cllr Shaw explained that he had prepared a written report as he represented nine parishes. The County Council spent a large amount of their budget on Social Care,

Education and Children's Services along with Highways. Over the past year Cllr Shaw had been involved in many local issues including Highways, the speed limit on Seaton Down Hill and the resurfacing of the road in Townsend Avenue. There were many concerns raised relating to speeding issues. Another concern which residents raised was the missing section of the cycle route through Seaton Wetlands. Cllr Shaw said he had been pressing hard to get this resolved and the County Council were now in negotiations with the landowners to allow the cycle route to be completed through the Wetlands. There was the question of trying to extend the route through to Axminster. Currently the only funding available was for cycle routes which were helping with congestion in urban areas. These were some of the issues which Cllr Shaw had dealt with during the past year.

### **Cllr J Rowland: Seaton Hospital**

Cllr Rowland reported that there was a group set up in the town called Seaton Area Health Matters which had been established for just over a year. One of its primary aims was to look at the future of Seaton Hospital. Since the loss of the hospital beds there were concerns about the long term future of the hospital as 40% of the space there was now empty. Over fifty clinics still operate from the hospital and the Care at Home was based at the hospital. The group had been working on a business plan over the last few months and the final version had been sent to the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Royal Devon and Exeter Trust and NHS Property Services. A meeting had been scheduled to be held with representatives from these groups to discuss the business plan. The group were trying to make the hospital into a Health and Wellbeing Hub. The groups aim was to maintain the existing clinics running there, try and attract more clinics, but also have more voluntary services operating from the hospital so it would be a centre for the community. Legally the hospital was owned by NHS Property Services and they needed convincing that the business plan was sound.

### **Cllr K Beer: Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Cllr Beer reported that this committee met once a month to look at the spending of the Council to ensure the finances were in order. The committee ensures that any money the Council spends was spent correctly and this was one of the main priorities of any Council.

### **19/TM/05 Police Report from PC Adam Speers**

Unfortunately the Police were unable to attend the meeting, but PC Adam Speers had sent in a report. Cllr Beer reported the breakdown of the crime figures as follows:

269 crimes for the year which were nine more than the year before.

Criminal damage and Public Order offences were down. The shop lifting figures were up which was due to one male shop lifting from several shops over the Christmas period. Sexual offences were up, but this was sorted in August as a male had been sent to prison. The police were continuing to warn the public about scams where people were being asked to transfer money out of their bank accounts to unknown people. The banks were wise to this and were taken measures to prevent this from happening. Scam talks were held in the town along with internet safety talks in Seaton Library. Local events which were organised in the town were well run which was a help to the police and much appreciated.

PC Speers again thanked all residents and shop owners in the town centre in the aftermath of the Clarence fire in December for the support they given to the residents who were made homeless.

### **19/TM/06 Grant Recipients 2018/19**

Cllr Beer reported that every year the Town Council sets money aside to be given out as grants to various organisations in the town. Some of these recipients had come along to the meeting to say what they had done with the grant or what they intended to do with it.

#### **Seaton & District Garden Club**

The Chairman of the Seaton & District Garden Club thanked the Council for the grant they received of £240. The flower bed at the top of Harepath Road was starting to take shape and the club had arranged for the grass to be cut. It was hoped that a water butt would be installed shortly which would be a great help. There were volunteers who, each month, came and weeded the bed and kept it neat and tidy. Some of the plants were in situ and the volunteers keep adding plants to the bed. The bed was due to be judged sometime in July, so the grant had been used for buying new plants, cutting the grass and maintaining the health and growth of the plants.

#### **Seaton & District Twinning Association**

The Association received a grant of £500 which they were very grateful for. They had a visit of about forty eight people from Thury Harcourt planned for July and they were spending about £3,500 on entertaining the visitors. Most of this money had been raised by the association themselves. In the past they have visited the Seaton Jurassic Centre and they were aware of the CycleFest which was taking place over the same weekend as the Thury Harcourt visit. The visitors would have a choice of whether to stay in Seaton and watch the racing or be taken elsewhere locally.

#### **Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring & Ride Service**

Shirley Williams from Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring & Ride Service thanked the Council for their grant of £1,000. People who are eligible to use this service include the elderly, people with disabilities and people living in isolated areas with no other transport facilities. The minibus is wheelchair accessible and the driver picks up passengers from their homes and takes them into town for shopping or to use local services. A different area is covered each day. The grant would go towards the maintenance of their vehicles and the needs of the drivers.

#### **Seaton Library**

Seaton Library ran Teen Sessions which the Town Council had supported for over ten years. For two hours a week the library is dedicated to teenagers only. They can use the space as they wish. They can participate in activities or just meet friends. The library staff and volunteers provide this safe environment and help them with whatever they want to do. The library feels these sessions make a difference to young peoples lives. They cover a wide range of activities and workshops. The grant given by the Town Council would help continue this work. It had been used to buy refreshments, food ingredients and art and craft materials. Over the past year several local artists had shared their skills and sessions including a calligraphy workshop and cake decorating. These sessions had been of a huge benefit and Seaton Library were very grateful for the support they had received from the Town Council over the past ten years.

### **HALFF (Health & Local Foods for Families)**

HALFF thanked the Town Council for the support they had given to them. They teach people how to cook for good health. The people who attended these sessions love it and could use the skills they learnt at these sessions. The Town Council had helped HALFF enormously by letting them use the facilities at Marshlands to run cookery demonstrations twice a month. HALFF do not charge for these and must raise the money themselves.

### **Seaton Parkrun**

Tony Smith from Seaton Parkrun thanked the council for the grant which was given to them within the last year to cover the ongoing costs of putting on the events. The Town Council had help set up the parkrun which started in November 2016. The runs start on the Esplanade at Fisherman's Gap at 9.00am on a Saturday. It is a free event and has grown in numbers since it first started and attracts people from out of the local area. The grant is used to cover ongoing costs such as equipment. The parkrun receives several referrals from local GP surgeries which prescribe them from both a physical and mental perspective.

### **TRIP Community Transport**

Sharon Thorne, Deputy Manager of TRIP thanked the Council for their grant and explained that even though TRIP was based in Honiton they do cover Seaton with their Voluntary Car Service which supports people getting to and from medical appointments. They also have a shop in Honiton which sells disability aids which is a non profit outlet. They were very grateful to the Council for the help and support which they gave TRIP and thanked the Council for this.

### **19/TM/07 Seaton Pool Presentation**

Cllr Beer presented a cheque to Seaton Primary School to help towards keeping their pool open for use during the summer. The primary school thanked the Town Council for their grant.

### **19/TM//08 Town Cryer Handover**

Cllr Beer said that unfortunately the new Town Cryer was unable to attend the meeting, but as soon as they could start the Council would like them to promote Seaton as much as possible.

### **19/TM/09 Public Forum: Question & Answer Session**

Question: Axe Yacht Club has a webcam showing the entrance to Seaton, but not to its best advantage. Could the Town Council investigate having a webcam on the other side of Axmouth Bridge showing the whole of the seafront and possibly Seaton Wetlands which are the best views of the town so as to encourage visitors to the area as we need something better than what is there now?

Answer: Comments have been made by visitors that Seaton has the best seafront in Devon as it is flat, and the views are beautiful, and more should be made of this. Having a webcam on the other side of Axmouth Bridge is a good idea.

Question: Is there nothing that can be done about the seagulls sitting on the roof of the old Post Office building? The pavement by the Post Office is covered in seagull mess and is terrible. There is no deterrent to stop the seagulls from sitting on the roof.

Answer: Numerous letters have been written to the owners of the building, but as a Town Council we cannot force the owners to do anything to prevent the seagulls from going onto the roof.

Question: Could the Town Council say what they are doing about replacing the Dog Warden who recently left? Dogs have been allowed to go along East Walk and if there are bye laws preventing this they should be enforced. Seaton needs a Dog Warden particularly as it is now coming into the summer season.

Answer: Cllr Beer said the Town Council was getting complaints about dog fouling and it is one of the top priorities on the Councils Personnel Committee agenda along with recruiting a new Town Clerk. The Council was looking to appoint a new Dog Warden, but we were the only town in East Devon with a Dog Warden.

Cllr Rowland said he appreciated the work which the Dog Warden did. They saw their job as trying to educate people and not just to issue them with a fine. From comments posted on social media people thought the Dog Warden was on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Dog Warden was only contracted to work ten hours per week. The Council appreciated that this was an issue and lately there had been a problem with the dog bins not being emptied which was a contractual issue. In the future if the public notice any dog bins which needed emptying, they could report this online on the East Devon District Councils website. Cllr Beer added that if people had not got access to the internet, they could phone the Town Council and report it.

Question: Town Council discussed boards which would help in telling people they should not be walking their dogs in the area between East Walk and Fisherman's Gap between 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> September. Has the Town Council made any progress with this at all?

Answer: Cllr Beer replied that he was not sure how this was progressing but thought that it was an excellent idea as if people continued to walk their dogs in that area during the summer months there would come a time when dogs were completely banned from the seafront which the Town Council did not want as they were trying to promote Seaton as a Dog Friendly Town.

Cllr Beer reminded people that Council meetings were open to the public and they were most welcome to attend any meeting. There was a Public Question Time at the start of meetings where members of the public could raise any matters with the Council.

Brian Palmer thanked HALFF (Health & Local Foods for Families) for the cooking demonstrations they ran at Marshlands. He had learnt so much from the sessions and so had other people who attended them. His cooking skills had improved.

Brian urged anyone who was interested in healthy cooking to attend these demonstrations.

Cllr Ken Beer called the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 19.58.

Chairman

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Date:

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