

**Minutes of the Seaton Town Council ('the Council')  
Meeting  
on Monday, 4 September 2023**

**Present:**

**Chair:** Cllr. A. Singh

**Town**

**Councillors:** K. Beer, E. Bowman, K. Brooks P. Burrows, D. Haggerty, M. Hartnell, D. Ledger & A. Mendham

**Officers:** Town Clerk

**Public:** 2 members of the public were in attendance

**67. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. N. Dyke, J. Russell and C. Wood and approved.

**68. Declarations of interest**

Cllrs. Haggerty, Hartnell & Ledger declared a personal interest as an East Devon District Councillors (EDDC) and Cllr Hartnell declared a personal interest as a Devon County Councillor (DCC). Cllr. Singh declared a personal interest as he volunteered at the Gateway Theatre Company.

**69. Public Question Time**

One of the members of the public present, Mr Jack Rowland, asked that his name be recorded and the minutes and also asked for further information as to the plans for Marshlands. The Town Clerk advised that the Council had made various decisions over the last 2 years, with a view to modernising the building and ensuring it was compliant with health and safety legislation and improving accessibility so that the first floor of the building could be used. Some grant funding had been received from DCC towards the new lift mechanism and the Council was in discussions with potential tenants for parts of the building, to potentially make more use of all of the building and generate further income from it.

**70. Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Seaton Town Council held on Monday, 3 July 2023. (proposed by Cllr. Ledger; seconded by Cllr. Haggerty).

**71. Chairman's Report**

Members noted the report.



## 72. County Councillor's Report

Cllr. Hartnell reported that:

- he had attended Operation Loki with PC Amerilli targeting anti-social drivers and would be meeting with the manager Tesco and of PC Amerilli on the 13<sup>th</sup> September to discuss any possible action from Tesco to deter anti-social drivers.
- he had visited Seaton Heights - Multi-Agency meeting to discuss ongoing vandalism and site risks and possible ways forward
- Fore Street to be resurfaced in early October over 2 nights between 7pm and midnight
- Eyewell Green now resurfaced
- Harepath Road had been nominated for patching
- a scheme for Valley View scheme had been put forward for resurfacing and to make the zig zags outside the school enforceable also on Scalwell Lane
- additional parking enforcement had been requested, due to concerns around parking in Harbour Road.
- possible changes to the pay & display timings might be considered to counter the parking of mobile homes on the seafront and also the town council might consider looking into a traffic management plan for the seafront & Harbour Road to address ongoing issues

## 73. District Councillors' Reports

All three East Devon District Councillors gave a verbal report that it had been another relatively quiet month due to the holiday season. Members noted the reports.

## 74. Town Clerk's Report

Members noted the Town Clerk's report along with the following additional updates:

- a request for a review of had been received by the Information Commissioner (ICO) regarding a freedom of information request which had been dealt with by the Town Clerk. The Council had received confirmation from the ICO that after their discussions with the applicant, the request for a review had been withdrawn.
- a new operating mechanism was installed on the sliding doors in 2021. This is working and monies spent more recently relate to general maintenance, to ensure it keeps working. The Facilities Officer is working with the tenants to get to the root of current problems and find a solution.
- the Carnival Committee runs the Christmas Lights Switch On, with the Council installing the lights in the run up to the date and supporting the Carnival Committee. They have set the date for 1 December. Cllr Mendham stated that businesses had not yet been notified of the date. Officers confirmed that they had met with representatives of Seaton Chamber and confirmed the date and indicated that any help they were able to provide the Carnival Committee in delivering the event would be





appreciated by the Committee. It was further confirmed that officers were meeting with the Carnival Committee on 12 September at Marshlands and all were welcome to attend.

**75. Committee Minutes**

Members received and adopted the minutes of the following meetings:

- Planning Committee – 3, 17 & 31 July and 14 August 2023  
(proposed Cllr. Haggerty; seconded Cllr. Beer)

**76. Update on Tourist Information Centre**

Members noted the update and Cllr Bowman commented that there was a very positive reaction from the public to the ongoing presence of a tourist information centre in the town.

**77. External Auditor's Report**

Members received and **RESOLVED** to note the completion certificate and report from the Council's external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, on the 2022/23 annual return. (proposed Cllr. Ledger; seconded Cllr. Beer)

**78. Councillor surgeries**

Members **RESOLVED** that they would liaise amongst themselves to agree further dates and venues for councillor surgeries and advise the Town Clerk if arrangements needed to be made to book Thury Harcourt or other venues. (proposed Cllr. Ledger; seconded Cllr. Singh)

**79. Emergency expenditure – allotments**

Members noted the expenditure of £320 + VAT, authorised under emergency delegated powers, to fell and remove a dangerous lime tree at the allotments.

**80. Request to use Underfleet Playpark to facilitate works**

Members considered the request to permit access underneath the Underfleet Playpark for works to be carried out, and associated documents. Concern was expressed about the damage that this could potentially cause to the playpark and **RESOLVED** that an independent ground survey should be prepared, funded by the applicant, to provide further information as to potential risks before the request could be properly considered. (proposed Cllr. Hartnell; seconded Cllr. Bowman)

**81. Play Park Inspection Reports**

Members received and noted the play park inspections.

**82. Community Grant Application**

Members considered the application for a community grant from Re:Store towards assist in funding an initiative based on the Action East Devon Headlight peer support model, which has proved to be very successful in other areas. This initiative supports young people's mental health in Seaton.





Mr. Jack Rowland asked if he could speak and standing orders were suspended to permit this. Mr. Rowland wanted to make the Council aware that when Seaton Area Health Matters had been wound up, the monies remaining in their account – approximately £11,000 - had been transferred to Re:Store. The Town Clerk directed Members to section 23 of the application, which detailed the reserves held by ReStore and the uses for which they were earmarked but could not confirm whether the donation from Seaton Area Health Matters had been received before or after the application was submitted.

Members decided that they would like further information about this before making a final decision and therefore **RESOLVED** to seek further information from Re:Store and defer a decision until the October meeting. (proposed Cllr. Burrows; seconded Cllr. Bowman)

### **Confidential Items**

The Chairman moved that in accordance with the Council's Standing Order 1(d) press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the agenda as matters being discussed included commercially sensitive information.

### **83. Request from the Gateway Theatre Company**

Members considered the request from the Gateway Theatre Company, which sought a credit against costs incurred, for maintenance to the town hall clock, during 2022-23. The total cost of this work was £2,335, which had been paid by the Council and reimbursement of 50% (£1,167.50) had been received from the Gateway, as tenant. In considering the request, Members restated the Council's ongoing support and their wish for the Gateway to continue and thrive. However, in the context of prudent management of public funds, this support had to be considered against their responsibilities to all residents of the town. The following matters were discussed:

- the financial support already provided to the Gateway
- £22,877 had already been expended by the Council, in the current financial year (2023-24), towards maintenance of the town hall including replacing the central heating system and essential repairs to the clocktower. Under their lease, the Gateway would be responsible for 50% of this - £11,438.50 and had confirmed that these monies were held in a reserve for this purpose. This would ordinarily this would become due at the end of the current financial year, along with any further costs incurred in the intervening period. In debate, Members considered whether, if they approved the request for a credit, this might be conditional upon the expenditure already incurred in 2023-24 being repaid earlier than March 2024, within 6-8 weeks of this decision, thereby providing reassurance to the Council in its duties towards the management of public funds and assistance to the Gateway. This should not cause undue pressure on the Gateways' finances as they had already confirmed that they held monies in reserve for this purpose.



- the Gateway had the opportunity to make an application for a grant, of up to £1,000, under the Council's Community Grants Policy and would again be encouraged to do so.
- notwithstanding the decision the Council made in response to this request, it would not form a precedent for any future such requests.

In light of the above, Members **RESOLVED**, in this instance, but without setting any precedence for future requests, to approve:

- a credit of £1,167.50 towards maintenance costs incurred by the Gateway but this would be agreed CONDITIONAL UPON the Gateway agreeing early repayment of expenditure towards maintenance incurred during 2023-24 (ie with 8 weeks of this decision), thereby reducing the amount due from £11,438.50 to £10,271.  
(proposed Cllr. Burrows; seconded Cllr. Beer)

Meeting closed at 7.20pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 21/10/23

