

**Minutes of the Seaton Town Council ('the Council')
Meeting
on Monday, 11 December 2023**

Present:

Chair: Cllr. A. Singh

Town

Councillors: K. Beer, E. Bowman, K. Brooks, P. Burrows, N. Dyke, D. Haggerty, M. Hartnell, J. Russell & C. Wood

Officers: Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk

Public: 2 members of the public were in attendance

119. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. D. Ledger and approved.

120. Declarations of interest

Cllrs. Hartnell & Haggerty declared personal interests as an East Devon District Councillors (EDDC) and Cllr Hartnell declared a personal interest as a Devon County Councillor (DCC). Cllrs. Dyke & Wood declared personal interests as Volunteers at the Gateway.

121. Minutes

A motion to amend the minutes of the meeting of 6 November 2023 was brought. (proposed Cllr. Dyke; seconded Cllr. Wood). Cllrs. Bowman, Dyke & Wood and Bowman voted in support of the motion, and Cllr. Wood requested a recorded vote. Cllrs. Beer, Burrows, Hartnell & Russell voted against the motion to amend. Cllrs. Brooks, Haggerty & Singh abstained. Therefore, the motion was not carried.

Members therefore moved to the recommendation on the agenda - to approve the minutes as drafted - and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Seaton Town Council held on Monday, 6 November 2023. (proposed Cllr. Burrows; seconded Cllr. Russell). Cllrs. Beer, Burrows, Hartnell & Russell voted in favour of approval. Cllrs. Bowman, Dyke & Wood voted against approval. Cllrs. Brooks, Haggerty & Singh abstained.

122. Chairman's Report

Members noted the Chairman's report.

123. County Councillor's Report

Members noted Cllr. Hartnell's verbal update. The following matters were highlighted:

- Highways - as part of the Government's Autumn statement additional funding had been announced for highways maintenance. DCC would receive just in excess of £6.5 million in the current financial year and the same amount in 2024-25. Sixty-six schemes had been brought forward across the county. In Seaton, this would include repairs to Valley View, which had been in a poor state of repair for some time. The additional funds would not be sufficient to cover all the maintenance work required across Devon, but would at least enable some schemes to be completed.
- Multi-use trail – a couple of outstanding matters were being resolved by the contractors around planting. It was hoped that this would be open by the end of the year.
- Bus shelters – Cllr. Hartnell had attended a number of meetings regarding the town's bus shelters with officers from DCC, EDDC and this Council and it was intended that the replacement of the existing shelters on the seafront – which required removal and re-siting and replacement by one larger shelter - would be part of wider improvements to the Fisherman's Gap area of the seafront, for which Seaton Town Council had earmarked funding. EDDC had agreed to consent to the works being undertaken on their land and DCC were obtaining quotations from contractors to carry out the works. It was hoped that this would be completed by the end of this financial year and would include removal of the flowerbeds to make space for the shelter, resurfacing and the creation of space for possible future events.
- Seaton Hospital – Cllr. Hartnell had attended the first steering group. The main outcome was that the Chair and Chief Executive of the Seaton & District League of Friends (SDLOF) were working up a business plan for use of the vacant space at the site, alongside a public campaign led by two local residents – Martin Shaw & Jack Rowland. There would be a further meeting of DCC's Heath & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee towards the end of January 2024 and the focus would be to keep pressure on NHS Property Services and NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Underfleet cycle path – this project had received some funding from the regeneration group to prepare a feasibility study

124. District Councillors' Reports

Members noted the following updates from East Devon District Councillors:

- Cllr. Haggerty reported on the following:
 - attendance at bus shelter replacement meetings as referred to by Cllr Haggerty above.
 - attendance at Coast meets Country meetings with councillors from Sidmouth to consider options to take this forward after the funding ends. A report will be brought to the Council, in due course.
 - he had also been working with colleagues at East Devon on expanding 'coach friendly' status across the county
 - the legalities attached to the sale of Seaton Jurassic were awaiting formal sign off

- Cllr. Hartnell added that:
 - all EDDC ward councillors had been consulted on SDLOF's bid to nominate Seaton Hospital as an asset of community value and this was unanimously supported. A previous application has been turned down by officers, based on the relevant policy framework. It was uncertain whether the current process would be a decision made under delegated powers or one that would go to Council.
 - there has been a review of the costs of emptying bins across East Devon and these would be increasing, which would impact on the Town Council who currently paid EDDC for emptying the bins owned by the Town Council
 - as parking charges had increased significantly in the last year a review had been carried out as to the impact this had had. The conclusion reached was that the increase in fees had had little negative impact.
 - as regards the marketing of the Moridunum, despite several expressions of interest during the marketing period, no bids had been forthcoming and ward members would be meeting with officers in January 2024 to discuss next steps.

125. Town Clerk's Report, including update on Local Government Awards Scheme

The Town Clerk reported and highlighted the following:

- there had been substantial damage to the allotment tracks during the recent storms. These had been cordoned off and tenants notified to prevent damage to vehicles travelling over them. The Facilities & Town Maintenance officer were in the process of repairing them with the assistance of Harcombe Engineering
- the bus shelters replacement project was progressing, and officers had been working closely with colleagues at DCC and EDDC to deliver this scheme. A further meeting of Council may be needed in January to make a final decision as regards the funding for the improvements to Fisherman's Gap.
- the Council's application for Quality accreditation under the Local Government Awards Scheme was in its final stages. One further document had been requested by the accreditation panel and final determination was awaited.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and thank officers for their work on the accreditation application. (proposed Cllr. Burrows; seconded Cllr. Beer).

126. Public Question Time

The Town Clerk read a statement from a member of the public that had been submitted in advance, expressing concerns about the Council's decision to purchase new civic regalia and requested a response from the Chair. The Town Clerk advised that a response had already been sent to the individual concerned, explaining the Council's decision and reasoning, and the Chair asked that this be reiterated.

One member of the public, Mr Jack Rowland, spoke in public question time and reiterated many of the points made by Cllr. Hartnell in his report. He had been working on the following, as regards Seaton Hospital:

- assisting the Chief Executive of SDLOF on the bid to nominate Seaton Hospital as a community asset in his role as Chair of the Seaton Hospital Steering Group
- a petition containing more than 9,000 signatures which had been handed in on 6 December 2023
- attendance at a meeting with the ICB ON 5 December with representatives of EDDC, SDLOF and the Seaton Hospital Steering Group
- further meeting of the Steering Group was schedule for the 14 December 2023

Mr. Rowland also asked Cllr Hartnell what impact there might be on services in the town in the next financial year, due to the increasing financial pressures DCC was under. Cllr. Hartnell confirmed that there was a great deal of work going on, but it was difficult to say with certainty at this stage and decisions on funding were often made by central government at a late stage. However, he highlighted the likelihood of pressure around spending on special educational needs and it was hoped that significant funding would be available from central government by way of a 'safety valve' intervention (a form of financial assistance with strict conditions attached).

127. Committee Minutes

Members noted the minutes of the following meeting:

- Planning Committee – 2 October & 6 November 2023
- Finance & General Purposes Committee – 16 October 2023

Members noted the minutes.

128. Seaton Hospital - Community Right to Bid Nomination

Members **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to write a letter confirming the Council's support for the Seaton & District Hospital League of Friends nomination for their community right to bid. (proposed Cllr. Singh; seconded Cllr. Burrows)

129. Update on Tourist Information Centre

Members noted the update.

130. Community grant applications

Members considered and **RESOLVED** to approve the following application for a community grant:

- Coffee & Tots Toddler Group - £1,000

Members further **RESOLVED** that the recipients of community grants be invited to attend future meetings of the Council and explain how the funds had made a

difference to their group or organisation. (proposed Cllr. Singh; seconded Cllr. Bowman)

131. Playpark inspection reports

Members noted the play park inspections.

132. Events 2024 Update

Members considered the update report on events planning for 2024 and **RESOLVED** to:

- note the update
- note the agreed date of Saturday 15th June and extended time of the Seaton Summer Celebration in 2024, to begin at 1pm and end no later than 10pm
- note the information regarding potential additional site security requirements and associated costs for the Seaton Summer Celebration event in 2024
- note the risks associated with the Seaton Outdoor Cinema event for 2024
- resolve to support, by way of a small grant scheme and officer advice and guidance, any local community groups or third party providers who wish to organize and deliver an event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Beach landings, in the terms detailed in the report.

(proposed Cllr. Singh; seconded Cllr. Beer)

133. Allotments Risk Assessment

Members considered and **RESOLVED** to approve the risk assessment for the allotment site. (proposed Cllr. Singh; seconded Cllr. Burrows)

134. Updates from councillor representatives on outside bodies

Members received and noted the update from Cllr. Wood, in her capacity as the Council's representative attending a meeting of the trustees of the Gateway Theatre Company on 6 December 2023, including the following:

- there had been an increase in community-led events, and of particular note was a weekly 'tea & chat' event and an upsurge in events involving children and young people
- nostalgia film events were now being shown
- ticket sales had increased in the preceding two-months, across a variety of live and cultural events, as they were understanding more what the community wanted
- the Gateway were keen to understand the proposed maintenance to the town hall for the following financial year
- the trustees had decided to change the fire safety consultant.

135. Seaton Town Council Budget 2024-25

Members noted that the Council's current financial position as at month 8 was on target and considered the draft budget for 2024-25 (V.4 – 11 December 2023), as



recommended by the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 20 November 2023 and **RESOLVED** to:

1. approve the Council's budget for 2024-25 (V.4. – 11 December 2023), with gross expenditure estimated at £483,839, offset by predicted income of £49,076
2. approve the precept for 2024-25 at £434,763 – a rise of £6.52 per year/12p per week on a Band D property - increasing the total annual payment from £126.11 to £132.63 on a Band D property.

(proposed Cllr. Beer; seconded Cllr. Burrows)

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 item on the agenda as matters being discussed included commercially sensitive information.

136. Office space at Marshlands

Members considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- note the work being undertaken by officers to prepare the room
- authorise the Town Clerk to negotiate heads of terms with the potential tenant based on the rental cost detailed in the report for use of office and communal areas, to include all utilities (excluding telephone/broadband, contents insurance and business rates)
- agree to a lease in excess of 12 months
- authorise the Town Clerk to instruct Tozers to prepare the necessary lease

(proposed Cllr. Burrows; seconded Cllr. Singh)

137. Beach School Tender

Members considered the results of the beach school tender and **RESOLVED** to:

- approve the award of the Seaton Summer Beach School 2022 programme to Contractor A at the maximum cost detailed in the report
- authorise the Town Clerk to take such action as she considers necessary, to ensure the programme is able to support Seaton Tramway's Natural Seaton Festival in 2024

(proposed Cllr. Singh; seconded Cllr. Wood)

Meeting closed at 7.30pm

Signed _____

Dated 5/2/2024