



# Dulverton Town Council

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## The Clerk

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm, using remote video conferencing.

**Present:** Chairman/Mayor: Mr Gerry Lewis. Councillors: Mrs Christine Dubery; Mr Allan Ottey; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle; Mr Nick Thwaites, (also representing Somerset West & Taunton (S.W.T.)); Miss Kathryn Vellacott and Mr Piers Wood. Mrs Frances Nicholson, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.).

**Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public:** None

**Apologies for absence and acceptance of any reasons offered if agreed:**  
None

**Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Mrs Christine Dubery with regards the Sports Field.

**Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management:** None

**Questions for County and District Councillors:**

Cllr. Mr Nick Thwaites - S.W.T.:

Kemps Way – Drainage Issues: SWT have agreed to dig out the drain at the corner of Kemps Way and the entrance to the caravan park which has been blocked and has caused flooding in the drive of Hanover House. Members were informed that due to problems with the sub-contractor work has been delayed, however it has been re-scheduled to start this week.

Lion Stables Car Park: Members were pleased to see that the car park has been tidied and the lines re-painted.

The Clerk expressed concern that permission regarding the use of the car park to hold the Farmers Markets had not been confirmed by SWT. Consent to trade however has been given. It was commented on that traders are making urgent enquires regarding bookings, and it is leaving it late to order, print and display posters advertising the events.

Members consider the Farmers Market an integral part of the recovery of the High Street and are anxious to have the application approved as soon as possible.

Cllr. Thwaites agreed to pursue the issue.

Cllr. Mrs Frances Nicholson - S.C.C.

S.C.C. Budget & Tax Setting: Members were informed that last month the County Council set its budget and council tax rates for the year. It was a budget that nobody voted against indicating the level of agreement with the proposals, which included increases both for adults' and children's services. This was considered high priority in the light of Covid-19.

The County Council's council tax has gone up by 1.99%, plus 3% specifically for adults' social care (the Government expects this to happen and bases any funding provided centrally on it.) There is no change in the precept for the Somerset Rivers Authority for the County or funding the District's Councils). As a result the County Council precept for a Band D council tax charge is £1,353.53 for 2021/22. This adds £64.33 per annum (£1.23 per week) to a Band D property. This remains one of the lowest council tax charges in England.

Affordable Housing: Central Government has now recognised that West Somerset faces a severe challenge of housing affordability – as it has for some time for North Devon. This means that there will be some extra funding available for affordable housing.

Higher levels of grant funding for the most affordable "social rent" housing will now be available for schemes in the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) housing authority. This is because SWT has been added to a list of areas of "high affordability challenge".

The change will enable affordable housing providers (usually housing associations) to apply for grants which enable them to provide "social rent" housing - the most affordable housing as it takes account of local incomes.

For the last few years, grant levels have been lower and have only enabled housing at "Affordable Rents" which are set by calculating rents which are up to 80% of fluctuating market rents. The difference has had to be made up through additional market housing to cross subsidise the affordable.

The news was announced by Homes England, who manages public funding for affordable homes, as part of their Affordable Homes programme 2021-2026. The new grant levels are available from April this year.

Covid19 Vaccinations: The program in Somerset has proceeded swiftly with Somerset being the first area in the country to reach the target of offering a vaccine to all over 70s. Rates of infection are going down rapidly. However it is possible that they may rise again. Therefore the guidelines with regards wearing masks, keeping a distance and washing hands, must continue to be observed, as lockdown, hopefully, starts to be relaxed.

Dulverton Primary School - Speed Management: Members were informed that 'wig wag' lights are to be installed and programmed to come on half an hour before registration commences and half an hour after school finishes, warning motorists to be aware of children crossing and to adhere to the 20 mph speed limit.

S.C.C. Elections: The election scheduled for May 2021 has been postponed due to the proposal being currently considered to create a Unitary Authority. The Police & Crime Commissioner elections will be taking place.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 as circulated:** were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 as circulated:** were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Lewis, seconded by Mrs Parrish and carried.

**6649 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:**

**6636 Emergency Town Centre Grant:**

Members were informed that having received many applications and undertaken several interviews, Ali Pegrum was offered, and has accepted the post of Dulverton Visitor & Tourism Promotion Consultant. The initial contract will be for twelve months.

Consultations are ongoing with the Environment Agency concerning the erection of a bandstand on Exmoor Lawns.

**6636 Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund:**

S.C.C. is still assessing applications and the allocation of funds available.

**6636 All Saints Church:**

**North Wall:**

A response has been received from Setfords Solicitors advising that the best course of action would be for a site visit to be organised between the church, council, the owners of the schoolhouse and also a structural engineer who can look at the site and advise on the best course of action for the repair work and also give an indication of cost. The Clerk advised that this can only take place after 29<sup>th</sup> March due to covid19 restrictions.

In the meantime members were advised that the scaffolding would appear to be successfully stabilizing the wall.

**Church Wall - Adjacent to 1 Lady St:**

The Clerk advised members that she had spoken to the contractor assigned to undertake the emergency repairs at the entrance to the drive, who had agreed to inspect the length of the wall for mortar failure, voids and structural cracks. During their conversation he had remarked that, having passed the wall on a daily basis, he had noticed a marked unexplained deterioration in the condition of the wall since January, which he will investigate further.

**6628 Community Flood Plan:**

Cllr. Dubery informed members that the Flood Plan had been updated, a copy of which will be available on the website.

Members thanked Councillor Dubery for all her hard work co-ordinating the project.

**6650 Accounts:**

**Financial Statement – February 2021: See Appendix A**

**RESOLVED:** That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Miss Vellacott and carried.

**Payments for approval – February 2021: See Appendix B**

**RESOLVED:** That the payments as per Appendix B are approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

### **6651 Committees:**

Minutes to be approved by the relative Committee members and be adopted as part of this meeting:

#### Town Management Committee Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Management Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 are approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mrs Parrish and carried.

#### Legal & Finance Committee Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Legal & Finance Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 are approved. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

Members were informed that a Grounds Committee meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **6652 Planning Applications**

#### Exmoor National Park Planning Authority:

6/9/21/105: Proposed removal of existing porch and construction of new porch and roof, together with extension to terrace. HOUSEHOLDER  
Sorrento, 9 Northmoor Road, TA22 9DF

Observations: Members agreed that the proposals are an improvement to the property and are aesthetically pleasing.

6/9/21/106: Proposed replacement refrigeration plant and installation of external cold rooms, together with the replacement of existing shop awning, removal of doors and polycarbonate roof from storage area, installation of new AC unit and installation of new fire exit. FULL  
Doone House, Fore Street, Dulverton, TA22 9EX

Observations: Having considered the proposals members expressed the following concerns/queries:

- 1) Question the height of the refrigeration plant in relation to the wall – is it higher?
- 2) The use and number of emergency lights, the effect on neighbouring properties and bearing in mind the 'dark skies' initiative.
- 3) Amount of noise emanating from the refrigeration plant and the potential impact on neighbouring properties.

### **6653 Website – Annual Costs:**

Members were asked to approve the following annual costs as from April:

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Domain registration:          | £11.98  |
| Hosting (DTC share of costs): | £35.96  |
| Software license:             | £169.98 Max. (less a discount of £67.98 = £102) |

RESOLVED: To approve payment of the costs above. Proposed by Mr Thwaites, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried.

**6654 Late Correspondence:**

Correspondence noted by members.

**6655 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:**

Exmoor Medical Centre Patients Group Meeting – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021:  
Attended by Cllr. Mrs Margaret Rawle who reported that Dr Collier has left the Practice, Dr Blackburn has taken her place until a replacement is appointed.

**6656 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:**

Dulverton Good Neighbours/Food Bank: Members were informed that since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 the project has delivered over sixty boxes of food. Not all the need has resulted from the covid19 pandemic. Since 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 approximately 600 food boxes have been provided.

The project is still receiving generous donations and gifts of produce. No further funding is required at present.

Community Bus: The bus is available to transport those who have appointments in Minehead to receive a vaccination. A seat must be booked in advance by contacting Mrs Jan Ross.

**Chairman .....**