



Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 14th November 2022 at 7.15pm, in the Town Hall,
Fore Street, Dulverton TA22.

Present: Chairman: Mrs Christine Dubery. Councillors: Cllr. Mr Nick Thwaites, DTC & Somerset West & Taunton (S.W.T.); Mrs Allison Crisp; Mr Bill Gash; Mr Alan Ottey; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle: Mrs Ann Van Praag and Cllrs. Mrs Frances Nicholson and Mr Stephen Pugsley, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.) who left at 8.45pm and four members of the public.

Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public:

Mrs Jan Ross – Town Hall Trustee: Members were reminded that the Town Hall is a Grade Two Listed Building, run by volunteers, funded by the thrift shop, hiring out of the facilities and ticket sales from the Film Club. Income that has declined since the onset of Covid. The increased electricity prices will raise the annual cost from £2,000 to £10,000. Proposals have been made to install solar panels on the roof but the Trustees have been informed by the Historic Buildings Officer E.N.P.A. that this will not be permitted due to the listing status of the building. Financial help from the Government is no longer available and although there are substantial savings in place, they are ring fenced to meet the cost of a new roof.

The Town Hall Trustees requested that members consider an increase in the precept to help meet the costs of electricity on the basis that the Town Hall facilities are vital to the well-being of the town and its' residents.

Members suggested that a letter is written to E.N.P.A. concerning the regulations that solar panels cannot be installed on Grade Two Listed Buildings.

P.C.S.O. Michelle Haines: Members were informed that there continues to be a low rate of crime in Dulverton. Community contact has been increased as have regular farm visits. Monthly surgeries are to be held in the Library and there will be a police presence at local Christmas events.

It is anticipated that a second P.C.S.O. is to be allocated to cover Dulverton and the surrounding area.

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

Declarations of Interest:

Cllrs. Mrs Allison Crisp and Mrs Ann Van Praag with regards to Item 14.

Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management: None

Presentation: Hilary Hawkins (Volunteer) and Ian Atkinson (Chief Officer), West Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau:

The organisation has been supporting an 'outreach' service held fortnightly at Fishers Mead Community Centre. Many seen are vulnerable, unable to access the service electronically or unable to travel. One hundred and twenty five case activities have been undertaken to date during 2022.

As future funding from the new Somerset Unitary Council remains unclear the organisation is looking at financial opportunities in anticipation of a cut in historical funding from S.C.C.

Members requested that details of the specific costs accrued regarding the fortnightly visits to Fishers Mead Community Centre are provided.

Questions for County and District Councillors:

Cllrs. Mrs Frances Nicholson and Mr Stephen Pugsley - S.C.C.

LNC Boundaries: No decision has been reached due to the volume of responses to the consultation.

Dulverton Visitor Centre: Members expressed concern that the Dulverton Visitor Center may be closed due to financial constraints. Cllrs. Mrs Nicholson and Mr Pugsley informed members that 'everything was on the table for discussion at the present time but will be arguing for the retention of existing local resources.

E.N.P.A. Members were informed that the Authority have recruited two new planning officers and additional administrative support.

Highways Diversion Signage: Members identified further instances of confusing signage. They were advised to raise the issue at the next Exmoor Panel meeting. In the meantime Cllr. Mrs Nicholson will continue to pursue the issue.

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

Exmoor House Car Park Ticket Machine: Issues were raised by members concerning the ticket machine which is failing to recognise certain coins and consequently over charging. Cllr. Mr Thwaites agreed to pursue the issue.

Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2022 circulated: were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

6856 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:

6852 LCN - Devolved Funding Schemes: Cllrs Mrs Frances Nicholson and Mr Steven Pugsley continue to work on the proposals.

Members were requested to submit details of blocked drains requiring jetting, to Samantha Murrell, Town and Parish Council Liaison and Scrutiny Officer.

6845 Barnsclose – Proposed access: The draft licence is still awaited.

Following a meeting with representatives from German Fisher PLC, Cllr. Mr Alan Ottey informed members that the proposal is to lay a track from the left hand side of the gate. All vehicles will be escorted through the recreation ground at specified times.

It is anticipated that preparation regarding access will commence prior to Christmas, the work on the site to commence in January 2023.

6845 Grounds Tree Work: The Clerk confirmed that she had sent three invitations to tender for the work but only received one positive response.

RESOLVED: To accept the quote from Three Atop Woodland Services at £1,450 plus VAT. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

6855 Speed Camera: Following discussion members determined that no further action is taken.

6857 Accounts:

Financial Statement: See Appendix A

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mrs Van Praag and carried.

Payments for approval: See Appendix B

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

6858 Committees:

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

a) Dulverton Partnership Group – 12th October 2022

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Dulverton Partnership Group Meeting held on 12th October 2022. Proposed by Mr Thwaites, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

b) Dulverton Partnership Group – 7th November 2022

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Dulverton Partnership Group Meeting held on 7th November 2022. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Thwaites and carried.

Members were informed that Grounds, Town Management and Legal & Finance Committee meetings were scheduled to be held on 29th November 2022 as from 1.00pm to resolve the budget and precept for the financial year commencing 1st April 2023. Agendas and budget papers were circulated in anticipation.

6859 Planning:

RESOLVED: To adopt the comments as per Appendix C as part of this meeting. Proposed by Mrs Van Praag, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

6860 Committee Membership:

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr. Mrs Allison Crisp as a member of the Planning Committee and the Grounds Committee. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

6861 West Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau:

Following discussion members agreed to defer a decision until the next scheduled meeting in anticipation of receiving further information concerning the specific costs with regards holding a fortnightly surgery held in Dulverton from Mr Atkinson.

6862 Dulverton Food Bank – Grant request:

Following receipt of the request for a grant, members received information maintaining that at this point in time the Dulverton Food Bank had enough funding to fulfil existing need.

However, members recognise that the demand is likely to increase considerably in the not too distant future and therefore:

RESOLVED: To ring-fence £500.00 in anticipation of making a grant award to the Dulverton Food Bank when existing funds have diminished.

6863 S.A.L.C. – Affiliation fee:

RESOLVED: To approve payment of the affiliation fee for the period April 2020 to March 2021, payable to Somerset Association of Local Councils amounting to £390.03. Proposed by Mrs Parrish seconded by Mrs Van Praag and carried.

6864 Office – Licence renewal:

RESOLVED: To renew the license regarding the two rooms at the Dulverton Club & Reading Room as from 1st October 2022, accepting the rent increase of £400 per year. Proposed by Mr Gash, seconded by Mr Thwaites and carried.

6865 Correspondence:

Correspondence noted by members.

6866 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:

All Saints Church Boundary Wall: Members were given a report of the meeting held between the owners of the Old School House and Chris Ware the contractor, which was attended by Cllr. Mrs Dubery and the Clerk.

The pond has been emptied of fish and is to be drained of water next week.

Mr Daughy confirmed that there would be access to the Old School House if required by the contractors.

The following proposals were agreed:

- To further reduce the stress on the wall by removing some of the weight of the soil behind it, on land owned by Mr & Mrs Daughy. This can be done by creating a steeper slope by 'battering' the ground back to a degree that it holds itself in place. Possibly as much as fifty degrees. Mr Daughy stated that this piece of land was unlikely ever to be used and agreed that the easiest way to maintain the area would be to plant it with small compact shrubs.
- To reinstate a 13 meter length of wall from the right hand side of the newly reinstated wall to the large laurel bush. Based on last years' prices the estimated cost amounts to £18,152, excluding VAT. These costs are likely to rise in the very near future.

Mr Ware agreed to forward written estimates to both parties, stating the agreed specifications as soon as possible.

Dulverton Patient Group: Cllr. Mrs Margaret Rawle reported that as council representative member on Patient Group she volunteered on 5th November at the Exmoor Medical Centre to help the medical staff administer the annual flu vaccinations by greeting and directing patients in an orderly way to the clinicians.

6867 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:

Parish Rooms: A public meeting is to be held to discuss the future use of the building and funding issues.

Parish Magazine: The magazine is to cease publication after the next issue due to lack of volunteer involvement and funding.

Chairman

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