



## Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.15pm, in the Town Hall,  
Fore Street, Dulverton TA22.

**Present:** Chairman/Mayor: Mrs Christine Dubery. Councillors: Mr Nick Thwaites, (also representing Somerset West & Taunton (S.W.T.)); Mr Alan Ottey; Mr Bill Gash; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mr John Preston; Mrs Ann Van Praag; Mrs Margaret Rawle and Mr Steven Pugsley, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.), who arrived at 8.30 and left at 9.00pm.

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

**Apologies for absence and acceptance of any reasons offered if agreed:**

Cllrs. Mrs Allison Crisp and Mrs Frances Nicholson (S.C.C.), due to illness.

**Declarations of Interest:** None

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

**Questions for County and District Councillors:**

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

SWT Assets: Cllr Mr Thwaites stated that as far as he was aware all SWT assets, including Kemp's Way and the car parks, will be transferred to the new Unitary Council.

Guildhall Light: The failure of the light to work has been reported by Cllr Mrs Rawle. The report was immediately closed as having been resolved, Mrs Rawle having been informed that someone will investigate. Members were requested to monitor the situation.

Cllr. Mrs Frances Nicholson S.C.C.

In her absence Cllr Mrs Frances Nicholson requested that the following was reported to members:

1. Road Closures: Chris, Ryan Chamberlain has confirmed access right through the Jury Road closure for buses, school buses and emergency vehicles and the contractor will attempt to 'reduce disruption' to residents. It has been confirmed that people will be able to access their homes, the schools, doctors, dentists, nursery, community centre and business units, but may have to go the long way round, or may have to wait a short while.

2. Kemps Way Potholes - Mr Andrew Turner (S.C.C.) has made it quite clear that one contractor with one job should be dealing with potholes on the road at the edge of Kemps Way (Highways) and potholes in Kemps Way (currently SWT). At present he has to get the District to undertake to pay their share and is working on this. After April all responsibility for that area will lie with one authority.
3. Salt Bins & Bags – A budget proposal from the administration in Taunton to cut salt bins and bags next year has been withdrawn by the Executive. Members are requested to write to Mike Rigby the portfolio holder, reinforcing the importance of not making this cut.  
The Clerk was requested to write accordingly, also querying as to the validity of a 'consultation process' which few saw sight of and lacked in clarity.

Members were informed that S.C.C. maintain that there do not exist any silt traps on Exmoor. This is disputed by members. Mr Bryant is to be asked to confirm this and provide details as to where silt traps are situated.

Abbots Way – Two lights nos. 4& 5 are still not working.

#### Cllr. Mr Steven Pugsley - S.C.C.

1. LCN Pilot – Members were informed that there is a proposal to base the governance of the LCN on the current Exmoor Panel, which Cllr. Mr Pugsley supports.
2. Winter Maintenance Highways Program – Members were informed that some roads, designated as 'red routes', which should be automatically gritted, were not because the driver considered it too dangerous. Poor signage was subsequently used to close the roads concerned. Furthermore, many 'green routes', which should be gritted, if freezing weather is anticipated for more than 24 hours, also remained untreated.  
Somerset County Highways have issued a warning notice to the contractor involved.  
Cllr. Mr Pugsley warned members that it will effect the future of the LCN Pilot if these issues fail to be resolved.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 as circulated:** were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Vann Praag, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

#### **6890 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:**

6842 Kings Coronation – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023

After lengthy debate, having given due consideration to financial constraints, it was agreed that:

- 1) The Town Hall Steps will be decorated with red, white and blue bunting & a flag
- 2) A banner will be placed at Kings Corner (further consideration is to be given to the wording), together with the flag pole and flag.

#### **6891 Accounts:**

Financial Statement – January 2023: See Appendix A

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

Payments for approval – January 2023: See Appendix B

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

### **6892 Committees:**

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

a) Dulverton Partnership Group Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Dulverton Partnership Group meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried.

b) Dulverton Partnership Group Meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Dulverton Partnership Group meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Proposed by Mr Thwaites, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

RESOLVED: That the existing Independent Contractor Agreement is extended for a further year with minor alterations as advised by the Dulverton Partnership Group. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

c) Grounds Committee Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Grounds Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Proposed by Mrs Parrish, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

All Saints Church Retaining Wall - Cllr Mrs Dubery informed members that following the collapse of part of the rebuilt wall earlier in the year, further advice and costings are awaited from the structural engineer before progressing further.

d) Legal & Finance/Policy & Procedure Committee meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Legal & Finance/Policy & Procedure Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

### **6893 Planning Applications:**

To approve comments as per Appendix C.

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

Members were reminded that there exists 21 days to respond to a planning consultation. In the event that a members has an objection/does not support the application a Planning Committee meeting will be scheduled in order that an agreed response can be forwarded to the relevant Planning Authority within the time allotted.

### **6894 Somerset Council Statement of Community Involvement- Consultation Response:**

Members expressed considerable concern that under the proposed new rules, objectors/supporters of a planning application would have to share three minutes between them, rather than having three minutes each as per the existing rules.

Members consider that proposed planning can be very emotive issues, directly affecting the wellbeing of residents who should be given adequate time to express views and concerns. Failure to do this will appear undemocratic and the Council indifferent to the views of its own residents. Planning is one areas of responsibility where the Council directly engages with its residents, the process should therefore be seen to be open and transparent. The opportunity should be given to all to air opinions in a public forum.

### **6895 S.W.T Street Trading Policy – Consultation Response:**

Members commented that they fail to understand why SWT are revising the current policy bearing in mind that any changes will only be operative until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

The following observations were made concerning the proposals:

- **10.3** Applicants will have to display an application of the notice, (cost is down to the applicant) for 14 days if the events are 'short term'.  
The example of the 'notice' provided in Appendix 2 however is to be used by individual stall traders and the length of time required for displaying the 'notice' is 28 days. Is an alternative 'notice' to be available for the use of organizers of events?
- **10.5** A person or trader can object. However, there are no details on what basis a person or trader can object, or how many are required before consent is refused.
- **11.2** There appears to be no right of appeal regarding the partial refund of fees. If an application is refused due to the failure to meet the criteria or due to an objection from one of the consultees then it can be assumed that the objections are reasonable. However, if a resident or fixed trader objects and there exists no reasonable reason for their objection (an individual simply doesn't like people coming to their area for example) how can the applicant/organizer be assured that the refusal was fair. Organizers should be able to obtain details of why an application was refused and be able to appeal that decision, for personal or fixed trader objections.
- **Section 18.** Policy on specific areas in the district Town centres.  
Imposes a considerable amount of criteria to be met, which would cause concern for sole traders applying for a license. Efforts may be being made to achieve many of the aims (e.g. not using plastic bags, use of electric vehicles etc.), all admirable targets, but difficult to achieve in a short space of time. It indicates that those that meet the criteria will be looked on more favourably – is this fair?  
The document appears to have been written with Taunton, Minehead and Wellington in mind. The whole thing is more directed for use by individual based traders rather than the type of markets organized by local councils. Is a second document covering markets and trader events etc. needed?
- **Section 17.** Refers to town centres - No traffic between 9.30am and 4.00pm. This appears to be written for specific purpose not as a general document for all of the town centres.

Cllr. Mr Pugsley stated that he intends to pursue the issues raised bearing in mind that policies and procedures will be transitioning from SWT to the new Unitary Council. Are the new policies going to be relevant?

### **6896 Dulverton Live! 23 – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023:**

Cllr. Mr Gash requested that members consider funding for the forthcoming event to cover the basic costs of advertising and the hire of the Town Hall.

Members sought confirmation that the event would remain open to organisations and groups serving Dulverton residents and requested feed-back as to how successful the event had been in terms of the recruitment of volunteers and members etc.

RESOLVED: To approve funding amounting to £350.00 towards the Dulverton Live 2023 event. Proposed by Mr Thwaites, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

**6897 Dulverton Local Services Directory:**

Cllr. Mr Gash attended a meeting organised by Dawn Carter, Project Manager (S.C.C.) for 'Somerset Connect', at Dulverton Junior School on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January.

The aims of this nationwide project are to be able to provide early intervention with regards help and support to residents and families, enabling them to be more resilient and connected to their community by integrating services and support closer to home.

To this end the proposal is to produce a local services directory for public use.

Although in support of these objectives, members commented that this service already exists in Dulverton in the form of the Village Agent. Being a relatively small community she has been able to identify and signpost residents very successfully to the relative authorities and to the many voluntary organizations working in Dulverton. Furthermore, the Exmoor News publishes a comprehensive list of contact details. Another layer of bureaucracy may create confusion.

It was subsequently:

RESOLVED: Not to pursue the proposal to publish a local directory unless further advice/information is forthcoming. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Van Pragg and carried with one abstention.

**6898 Councils for Fair Tax Declaration:**

Although in agreement with the sentiment expressed, members consider that this issue has relevance to much larger Town/City and County Councils.

**6899 Late Correspondence:**

Correspondence noted by members.

NHS Consultation - Cllr. Mrs Rawle urged members to complete the public consultation on the future of acute hospital-based stroke services in Somerset, individually and suggested that in any event they would benefit from reading the proposals as it involves stroke patients in the Exmoor Medical Centre catchment area.

The Exmoor Schools Federation, Dulverton – Strategic Partnership with the Moorland Federation - This partnership will operate to ensure our schools in Dulverton retain their individual character, but benefit from access to more resources, knowledge and skills. Furthermore, a Head of School will be appointed to lead our schools and the Nursery, working to Ms Philp as Executive Head Teacher when they commence their appointment in September.

**6900 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:**

None

**6901 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:**

Brushford New Housing: Members were informed that Regal Residences have gone into liquidation; however the business has been purchased by another company.

The site has been cleared but there has been no progress regarding the new builds. Buyers of the planned houses should receive their deposits back by March 2023.

**Chairman** .....