



# Dulverton Town Council

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## The Clerk

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**MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting** held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019 in the Town Hall, Dulverton, commencing at 6.30pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Mr Keith Coulman; Mrs Christine Dubery; Mr Gerry Lewis; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mrs Margaret Rawle and Mr Piers Wood and one member of the public.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr. Mr Nick Thwaites (SW&T), and Mr Ian Fleming.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:** Mrs Rawle proposed that Mrs Dubery be invited to chair the Parish Meeting, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

**MINUTES** of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and published on the website were read by the Clerk, were accepted and signed. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

**MATTERS ARISING:** None

### **REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS /CLUBS:**

**Streamcombe Allotment Trust:** Grants amounting to £830 were awarded over the past year, beneficiaries being local people both young and elderly, including the Brushford Luncheon Club and the Youth Club.

Trustees stand on a four year rotation basis. There are two retirees this year, both however are willing to be re-appointed.

**U3A:** Continues to be well attended. However, new members are always welcome.

**Dulverton & District Young Peoples Project:** A new Chairman has been appointed and the facility continues to thrive.

**Dulverton Gardening Club:** The club has over one hundred membership. The Junior Garden Club is proving to be particularly popular.

**Dulverton Cricket Club:** A new Chairman has been appointed. There exists one senior and one junior team. Cricketers of any age are being encouraged to join. New netting will be required in the near future.

**Flood Action Group:** A volunteers meeting is scheduled to be held in the near future and both resident and volunteer lists require updating. More volunteers are required to assist when there is a threat of flooding.

**Town Hall Committee:** The hallway, stairs and landing have been redecorated and the stage technically enhanced. Further refurbishment projects are to be undertaken.

**Dulverton Players:** The recent production of the 'Railway Children' was particularly successful.

**Dulverton Cinema:** The twice monthly events continue to be very well attended.

**Exmoor Community Bus:** Volunteer drivers are required.

**The Voice:** Following the sad loss of Mr Ivan Gunn it is unlikely that The Voice will re-commence.

**Heritage Centre:** The Heritage Centre is currently housing an exhibition in the large exhibition room concerning the centenary of the publication of Lorna Doone. The exhibition has been partly funded by the award of two grants.

The shop is now installed in the Deer Room, which has proved controversial but the situation is being monitored.

Mr Nelder reported that the Cheese Store, which houses the model railway and is integral to the tourist economy of the Town is currently under threat. The current twenty year lease is due to expire in the near future, and there exist a myriad of problems concerning the future. Somerset West and Taunton (SW&T) are proposing to increase the rent ten-fold and demanding that extensive repairs are carried out particularly to the roof. An alternative is to consider a transfer of asset, however the current constitution is not acceptable to SW&T. The model railway cannot be moved as it has been built into the structure of the building. Consideration is now being given to setting up a CIC in attempt to rectify the situation as far as the legal status is concerned.

Mr Nelder expressed his disappointment at the lack of help and support received from SW&T.

### **REPORT FROM THE MAYOR/CHAIRMAN:**

- **Abbots Way Pond:** Despite considerable effort the pond continues to be a problem. The council is considering more radical options to deal with the issues while maintaining this as a pleasant garden site.
- **Town Environment:** The Town Management committee continues to monitor the town environment, reporting problems and chasing SW&T and SCC to fulfil their obligations.
- **Car Parks:** After a year of meetings WSC Task and Finish group produced a disappointing report which appeared to defer any decisions on any aspect of Car Parks.
- **All Saints Church:** The churchyard maintenance problems have been resolved by the Grounds Committee and the entire area is in very good condition. Despite several approaches to the Diocese and the All Saints PCC with regard to assisting with the £75,000 cost of the church wall repair, no help was forthcoming.
- **Cemetery:** The Grounds Committee have re-organised the maintenance of the cemetery resulting in the area being in excellent repair. Grave plots are being levelled over a period to enable grass cutting to be simplified
- **Exmoor Lawns:** The area is now transferred to DTC and a considerable amount of work has been carried out to survey trees and to remove undergrowth along the riverbank. There are plans to enhance the area for community use.
- **Dulverton Library:** DTC campaigned strongly together with the general community to protest the SCC plans for possible closure. SCC finally voted to make no changes.
- **Exmoor Parish Lengthsman Scheme:** Dulverton Town Council continues to administer the scheme on behalf of the other parishes involved.
- **West Somerset Council:** Most dealings with WSC this year have been very difficult. Staff arrangements resulting from the formation plans for the new council have left many areas understaffed and with expertise shortages.
- **Dulverton Laundry:** A landmark building and service closed with sixteen redundancies.
- **Dulverton Summer Festival – Lorna Doone 150:** In conjunction with the Traders, DTC is planning a two day event to take place on Exmoor Lawns. The event will include costumed re-enactment, music and a themed Sunday lunch.

- Councillors: Cllr Nick Thwaites resigned in May 2018. Cllr Ian Fleming resigned in Dec 2018. Cllr Ivan Gunn fell ill in December and sadly passed away in early 2019. Rev. Elaine Jessiman was unable to continue as a councillor due to ill health and resigned in April 2019. Cllr Judy Ernest remained on the council until the end of the term but ill health prevented her from attending many of the meetings. Cllr Louise Parrish joined the council in September 2018. It is noted that only six people stood for election this year all of whom were existing councillors.
- Web Site: A new site has been developed for DTC which includes details of Dulverton's businesses and facilities. The site continues to be enhanced on an on-going basis.

**REPORT FROM THE CLERK:**

Finances – Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019: Members will be presented with the Financial Return and a summary of Receipts & Payments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, along with the closing balances for their approval at the Council meeting to be held at the meeting scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

Those present were informed that the reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 amounted to £123,849, resolved, committed and ring fenced expenditure amounts to £51,233.

According to the Governance and Accountability Regulations, the Annual Return and the Notice advertising the rights of the public to view the accounts will be displayed on the website. The documents will be published as required by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019, the inspection period being from 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019 until 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Internal & External Audits 2018/19: Those present were informed that the internal audit has been undertaken and considered by the Finance Committee.

The Clerk commented that there currently existed four councillor vacancies and that as a result the existing members are undertaking a considerable amount of extra responsibility. West Somerset Council has not received any requests to hold an election from residents; she would therefore welcome enquiries from anyone interested in being co-opted as a member of the Council.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Gold Star Award 2019: It was unanimously agreed by all present that the Gold Star Award 2019 should be awarded to Miss Robyn Sandiford. She is recognized by everyone as someone who takes real pride in her work and probably goes beyond the call of duty to ensure that Dulverton is always presented at its best for both residents and visitors.

Miss Sandiford will be given a personalized certificate and a self - adhesive gold star which it is hoped she will attach to her work station so all can see. The Clerk also intends to request that an announcement is published in the Parish Magazine.

Nothmoor Road – Road Closures: Mr Nelder complained that due to the closure of the road for the whole day, by Wessex Water, who undertook only one and a half hours work, the family business received no trade whatsoever. He queried as to whether the Town Council could intervene to ensure that unnecessary prolonged closures can be avoided.

Recycling Centre: Disappointment was expressed at the reduced service offered by the facility.

Cllr. Dubery thanked the Council Staff for their work over the year.

**MEETING CLOSED:** 7.30pm

**Chairman**.....