



Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 10th October 2020 at 7.00pm, using remote video conferencing.

Present: Chairman/Mayor: Mr Gerry Lewis. Councillors: Mrs Christine Dubery; Mr Alan Ottey; Mrs Louise Parrish, Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle; Miss Katheryn Vellacott; Mr Piers Wood and Mr Nick Thwaites (Somerset West & Taunton Council (S.W.T.)), and Mrs Frances Nicholson (Somerset County Council (S.C.C.)), who both left the meeting at 8.45pm.

Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public:

Mr Roger Watts:

The Town Council recently gave Notice of forthcoming work by Somerset Highwaysincluding Oldberry Lane? My interest was raised.... when Somerset Highways last visited Oldberry Lane the end result struck a number of us as regrettable?

Dulverton's bridge no longer marks a distinct break between medieval Town and country as remarkable as any in the UK. And, on a personal level, we've suffered from many cars driving up Oldberry Lane at speed, including after dark, to do a three point turn before parking.

As I understand it on this occasion the focus will be on implementing a 20mph limit in the centre of Dulverton.

This prompted me to place on the Dulverton Facebook Community page a piece entitled "Is traffic speed through Dulverton the real problem?" And I'd recommend to the Town Council the comments this elicited.

A few brief remarks if I may on a related issue - which really underlay my question and which I suspect might take up much time in the years ahead.

At a recent United Nations Conference the prime minister promised the government would increase the amount of protected land in the UK to 30% by 2030 to support the recovery of nature.

Sounds easy enough? National parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty already make up 26% of the land in England.

However campaigners have not been slow to point out that there is a Crisis of Nature in UK National Parks...including Exmoor. Partly due no doubt to underfunding? But also the result of overexploitation? By visitors... by farmers and other residents...and by Commerce?

UK National Parks are attempting to prioritise conservation whilst continuing to be lived-in, working landscapes, and whilst accommodating for-profit activities.

The larger settlements on Exmoor, including Dulverton, look likely to continue to spread, particularly along valley bottoms, bringing more traffic and more people. They are becoming semi detached - seeking to offer business opportunities and visitor attractions themselves.

What can settlements on Exmoor - and Dulverton in particular - do to contribute to meeting the Prime Ministers pledge?

Cllr. Mrs Rawle informed those present that the 20 mph limit was requested by DTC as a result of local consultation which strongly supported the proposal.

The Chairman thanked Mr Watts for attending and for his contribution to the meeting and although agreed with Mr Watts that the points raised would require considerable discussion centred around ENPA activities and policies, commented that there was unlikely to be a consensus of opinion between the authorities concerned or local residents.

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:

Payment by Cheque: The Clerk enquired as to how long SWT had refused to take payment by cheque concerning non-domestic rates, and whether this policy was imposed on any other payment due to SWT such as parking permits.

Cllr. Mr Thwaites was unaware of the 'no cheque' policy and agreed to make further enquiries.

Cllr. Mrs Frances Nicholson S.C.C.

Local Council Reorganisation: The Secretary of State has issued a letter inviting official submissions of business cases from other interested parties. There are no details available concerning what form a Unitary Authority would take.

No decisions have been made by Government regarding the scheduled S.C.C. elections next year.

Schools & Covid19: Members were informed that pupil attendance was high. There do exist some isolated cases of infection which has resulted in the appropriate year group having to self-isolate for 14 days. Cllr. Nicholson commented that it is more likely to be a member of staff that tests positive with Covid19, than a pupil.

Church Lane: A report to S.C.C. some weeks ago regarding the existence of an increasing number of weeds which require treating is to be pursued by Cllr. Nicholson.

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020 as circulated: Were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried.

Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd September 2020 as circulated: Were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

6596 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:

6586 Emergency Town Centre Grant:

Attempts are continuing to be made to ensure that the application meets all the criteria set by SWT before proceeding further.

6587 Somerset Emergency Community Fund:

Three possible projects have been identified:

- 1) EV Charging Points – A proposal being pursued by Cllr. Mr Ottey. The working Group have met Mr Peter Ash and a price for one standard machine obtained. However, some issues have been raised with regards the capacity of the electricity supply.
It was reported that SWT are investigating the viability of placing EVC's in either Exmoor House car park or the Guildhall car park.
- 2) Plastic Free Dulverton – The proposal is being investigated by Cllr. Mrs Dubery who is liaising with local traders and has obtained costings with regards the supply of paper bags.
- 3) Solar Panels for Community Buildings – Cllr. Mrs Dubery is identifying suitable locations and seeking details of costs from a local supplier.

6588 Website Accessibility:

The Chairman reported that he has resolved some of the issues and does not foresee problems with regards compliance with the new regulations.

6589 Future Council Meetings:

Virtual meetings are to continue for the foreseeable future.

6597 Accounts:

The Financial Statement: See Appendix A

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

Payments for Approval: See Appendix B

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

6598 Committees:

Planning Committee Meeting – 24th September 2020:

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 24th September 2020. Proposed by Mr Lewis, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

Grounds Committee Meeting – 9th October:

RESOLVED: To adopt as part of this meeting the minutes of the Grounds Committee meeting held on 9th October 2020. Proposed by Mr Lewis, seconded by Mrs Parrish and carried.

RESOLVED: To purchase as recommended by the Grounds Committee a Toro Proline Rotary Mower, supplied by Devon Garden Machinery at a cost of £1,049 (including VAT). Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

A Town Management Committee meeting was scheduled for Friday 23rd October 2020 at 2.00pm.

6599: Planning Applications:

Exmoor National Park Planning Authority:

6/9/20/115: Retrospective planning application for the erection of feather edge fence and metal gate. (HOUSEHOLDER)
1, Amory Road, Dulverton TA22 9QY

Observations: Members expressed concern that if the excess height of the fence is approved it will create an unwelcome precedent.

WTCA 20/12: Removal of 1 no. Table Dogwood tree (Cornus controversa) adjacent to r/o property.

Observations: No objections.

6600: Bandstand – Exmoor Lawns:

Members were advised that there exists a theoretical shortfall in the funding of an outdoor performing arts venue based on an early understanding of the actual cost of construction. In order to progress the project members were requested to consider offering to fund the shortfall by a way of a loan to Dulverton Partnership, on the understanding that it may not be required, as it is anticipated that funding will be obtained from alternative sources.

It is anticipated that the activities using the structure on the Exmoor Lawns will raise funds well in excess of any maintenance/staging costs and that should there be any outstanding money owing to DTC this would be recovered from such profit.

The Dulverton Partnership is anticipating completing the project by late spring 2021.

RESOLVED: To guarantee a loan of £12,000 to the Dulverton Partnership, if required, to fund the outdoor performing arts venue project. Proposed by Mr Lewis, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

6601 Late Correspondence:

Correspondence noted by members.

E.N.P.A. Graham McVittie - Marsh Bridge Car Park: Councillor Mrs Rawle informed members that the car park is no longer required to store equipment so will not be closed for public use.

6602 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:

E.N.P.A. - Exmoor Tourism Response and Recovery Plan- -12th October 2020: Attended by Cllr. Mrs Christine Dubery who provided members with a verbal report.

Attempts are being made to extend the season and encourage visitors throughout autumn and winter. Targeted marketing is to be undertaken.

6603 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:

Dulverton by Starlight: Members were informed that there existed concerns regarding the cost of insuring the small trees located on buildings in Fore Street and High Street. Members commented that the public liability involved should be covered by the insurance taken out by the traders/owners of the individual buildings.

Councillor Resignation: The Clerk read to members the contents of an email received just prior to the meeting from Mrs Ernest who wished to tender her resignation as a member of this Council. The Chairman accepted it with regret.

Chairman