



LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL
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LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL – Council Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of Langport Town Council held on Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 7.00pm in the Ground floor meeting room, Langport Town Hall

Present: Councillors

S Dromgoole
M Crumb
I MacNab
A Wilson
S Peterkin

A Donald
R Crumb
B Patterson
S Glas

Public participation: Cllr Wilkins referred to the recently circulated newsletter message from himself and Cllr Stanton. The focus of narrowing the budget deficit remains a priority to resolve. The sad news of the passing of Cllr Dean Ruddle, Chair of Somerton Town Council was reflected by both Cllr Wilkins and Cllr Dromgoole.

A recently determined planning application for 100 houses on land off Somerton Road was approved, despite there being numerous challenges from both councils and members of the public. Cllr Wilkins is to identify the appropriate Planning Policy lead Officer and the clerk will then request a meeting.

In Attendance:

Gerard Tucker – Locum Town Clerk, Morag Kelly - Deputy Clerk. Somerset Councillors – Cllr Richard Wilkins. Four members of the public were present and a representative from Huish Episcopi Parish Council.

TC2023/108 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1)) Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Stanton

TC2023/109 Declarations of interests

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declaration.

There were no declarations of interest

TC2023/110 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41 (1))

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered an accurate record and were duly signed by the chair.

TC2023/111 To receive a short update on bus usage:

Rosa Kell (Wells Bus Users Group) provided an update on the challenges of delivering public transport services in Somerset. The underlying message that Rosa gave was that if the use of bus services are not improved, then they are in danger of being reduced or lost.

TC2023/112 Town Clerk's Oral Report -

including use of delegated powers and update on progress since the last meeting.

The Locum Clerk thanked all who involved in assisting to dismantle the Christmas lights. He continued by informing that Deborah Speed had returned to work on a part-time basis. Councillors endorsed the support shown towards Deborah and continued to wish her a continued recovery. The Locum Clerk expressed a concern that North Street was subject to a programme of roadworks very soon after an intensive resurfacing programme and has contacted Wessex Water for an explanation.

TC2023/113 To receive written or oral reports from meetings and training attended by councillors on behalf of the Council.

To receive reports from:

- Flood Group – Cllr Paterson informed that the group had set up a display on the island in December informing of the work of the group. Of concern is the impact of flooding in the area around Wagg Drove and the need for further engagement with the Drainage Board and River Authority. A fatality was reported in the river.
- Landmark Langport. Cllr Peterkin informed that there are now three new trustees . Also that a new administrator Alice Mounter has been appointed. There continues to be a shortfall in the finances of the organisation and Huish and Langport Councils are to consider financially supporting them through this problem. The large first floor room in the Town Hall is to be known as The Parrett Room.
- Langport Area Business Group will have a new chair after their meeting in April. There are aspirations to produce a directory and town map which will support the businesses in Langport.

Joint Working Group updates:

- Transport Group – Cllr Dromgoole informed the group has not met since the last meeting and that there was nothing to report.
- Entertainment & Leisure – Val Saunders informed that a draft Terms of Reference for the group has been prepared and is to be discussed at their next meeting. The group intends to identify each of the community venues and record the parking provision, access, facilities etc. Aspirations of the community identified in the recent survey included the introduction of a cinema and skate park. These ideas are to be further considered. Val informed that there is a recognition that there is a need to improve communication.
- Governance – Cllr Dromgoole repeated the request earlier for a discussion with a Senior Planning Policy Officer to understand the better the future provision of housing developments in and around Langport. The drawing down of developers contributions (S106 funds) has become a priority. A Terms of Reference for this group is required and will be prepared and presented in due course.

TC2023/114 To receive recommendations from the Finance and Personnel Committee to include:

- i. A review of the Deputy Town Clerks salary. Cllr M Crumb informed that Morag Kelly had received an appraisal in September where it was recommended that her salary rise by two incremental points. This had not been implemented, hence the reason for it being considered at this meeting. Cllr M Crumb proposed, seconded by Cllr Donald and unanimously **AGREED**. 9-0-0
- ii. Implementation of the NJC Salary increase. The pay award has been back dated to April 1st and is £1,925 per full-time employee. This item is not for information, however the chair sought endorsement which was unanimous 9-0-0

TC2023/115 To receive a report on footpath improvements to Cocklemoor, in conjunction with the Canals and Rivers Trust.

The Locum Clerk had previously circulated a report which informed of the need to invest in repairing and maintaining the paths on Cocklemoor. The Canal Trust are prepared to organise a Canal Camp in Langport to assist with undertaking the works. The purpose of the report was to inform Council of the opportunity and to seek their support for the Locum Clerk to continue dialogue with the Inland Waterways Association to explore setting up a Canal Camp. Councillors unanimously endorsed this suggestion 9-0-0.

TC2023/116 To discuss the use of Cocklemoor by the funfair over the Easter weekend.

Edward Stokes fun fair has requested that they again come to Cocklemoor between 28th March and 2nd April. They have requested that a line of car parking spaces are vacated allowing them the opportunity to install a ride which requires a hard surface. Councillors **AGREED** to support the request, yet would require a contribution of £1,000 to cover the additional space required. 9-0-0.

TC2023/117 To finalise the budget for 2024/2025

Led by the Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee, Cllr M Crumb informed that the Town Clerk had returned to light duties, which includes overseeing the budget and taking control again of the finances. The budget presented to the council in December had received a few minor amendments, which had been discussed and approved by the Finance and Personnel Committee. The budget presented was unanimously endorsed 9-0-0.

TC2023/118 To agree the Precept for 2024/2025 Based on the budget previously approved, To enable the delivery of the budget previously agreed, Langport Town Council would need to raise £114,795 through the precept. This equates to a rise of 7% and to a Band D residence is an additional £15.50 per annum or 30 pence per week. Proposed Cllr M Crumb, seconded by Cllr Dromgoole and unanimously **AGREED** 9-0-0

TC2023/119 To receive the calendar of meetings for 2024 The calendar of meetings which had previously been circulated was unanimously approved.

TC2023/120 Chairman's Report The Chair reiterated his sadness of the passing of Cllr Dean Ruddle. 'Mr Somerton' was an appropriate title for someone who gave so much of his life to representing and supporting the town and creating numerous opportunities.

The proposed housing development at Ducks Hill, Huish Episcopi is an example of why there is a strong need for both parishes to be involved. Unfortunately, Langport Town Council has not been

consulted on this application, which is a concern as it remains unclear if Huish Episcopi Parish Council had also been consulted.

Items for information – included:

Pending road closures:

29th February – The Hill for utilities connections

29th January for 10 working days – Bow Street, installation of ducting

EV charging point. Additional work is required, particularly the fitting of an isolator switch.
EDF Energy or Podpoint are qualified to undertake the work and quotes are being obtained.

Meeting closed 8.40 pm

Signed: Date: