



**LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL**  
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## LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL – Council Minutes

### **Minutes of the Meeting of Langport Town Council held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7.00pm in the first-floor meeting room, Langport Town Hall**

#### **Present: Councillors**

S Glas  
S Dromgoole (Chair)  
I MacNab  
S Peterkin

A Donald  
R Crumb  
A Wilson  
C Gherasim

#### **Public participation:**

There were no items raised

#### **In Attendance:**

Gerard Tucker – Town Clerk, Morag Kelly - Deputy Clerk and two members of the public were present.

**TC2024/57 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1))** Cllr M Crumb (recuperating following surgery and Cllr Paterson (attending another meeting). Cllr Richard Wilkins was unable to attend as he is at a National Conference

#### **TC2024/58 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 declarations. No declarations of interest were made.

#### **TC2024/59 Town Clerk's Oral Report –**

- **Internal and external lifts – Town Hall.** The Town Clerk informed the council on the progress with the installation of an internal lift . The deposit has been paid and the installation is expected to be completed by the end of September. The cost of £4,800 plus VAT will be hopefully met by an application to draw down S106 funds . The external lift is awaiting a historic survey and report which is being prepared by Greg Beale. The clerk will follow this enquiry up as it should be completed by the end of September.
- **Picnic table damage – Cocklemoor**  
Sadly, the inappropriate use of a disposable barbeque placed on tables has caused some damage. A review of the appropriate way to proceed with a repair will be conducted. Signage to be considered.

- **LABG request to hold three late night shopping events.**

The Langport Area Business Group has informed that they intend to hold three late night shopping events in the run up to Christmas. These will be held on Thursday evenings on 24<sup>th</sup> October 28<sup>th</sup> November and 19<sup>th</sup> December.

- **Disabled Parking infringements near The Precinct**

A regular visitor to Langport who legitimately is entitled to park in the disabled bays near The Precinct has complained that there are vehicles parked in the spaces, not displaying appropriate exemptions. The clerk informed that he will be purchasing signs to be placed on the stainless steel bollards informing that these are spaces for the use by vehicles displaying a Blue Badge exemption.

- **Bonds Pool sign damage**

The Deputy Clerk has been made aware of damage to the Bonds Pool sign by a Berry's coach. A complaint has been sent with a request that the sign is replaced.

- **Throw Lines installation**

The Clerk has previously reported that the Throw lines have now been installed. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue recently held a successful training day on Cocklemoor on how to use the them.

## **TC2024/60 To receive written or oral reports from meetings and training attended by councillors on behalf of the Council –**

- Joint Council Committee. The costs associated to the installation of changing rooms at The Memorial Field have risen to an expected £120,000, plus VAT. Whilst research is underway to identify if it may be possible to reclaim the VAT, the request for the Joint Council to cover the entire costs from S106 funding contributions has been received. As the Joint Council Committee reports to the respective town and parish council, a decision has to be supported by each. Cllr Paterson proposed, seconded by Cllr Wilson and unanimously **AGREED** to endorse the request.
- Entertainments and Activities working party. A communications strategy has recently been received which identifies the methods proposed to inform people of events and meetings in the locality. The various methods to be used include an App, Facebook, Website, additional Digi Boards, Notice Boards, QR codes and print. Whilst the intention is credible, the need to identify a central, lead person or organisation who will co-ordinate information is required. A meeting held earlier at All Saints Church discussed the project to install a kitchenette and toilets. An event has been organised for 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 7.00pm when A Christmas Carol will be performed. Tickets are now on sale and information will be distributed to all councillors.
- Levels and Moors LCN. The meeting to be held in Westonzoyland on 18<sup>th</sup> September has a focus on Flooding. It is understood that the EA will be in attendance together with the Internal Drainage Board. The meeting previously postponed entitled Reinventing The Levels is to be held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September in Aller Village Hall commencing at 7.00pm
- Langport Area Business Group recently met and as previously reported are to host three late night shopping events. Members were asked for their views on the Funfair visit to Langport at Easter. In response, it was considered good for Langport, although a comment about noise and excessively large vehicles was raised. The Christmas event on 7<sup>th</sup> December is to be shared with LABG in anticipation that some members will want to take space at the regular weekly market.
- Flood Group. Cllr Paterson informed that there had recently been a meeting with the EA and that the Wagg Drove rhine clearance requirement was at the top of the EA's work programme. A Somerset Resilience presentation is to be held in All Saints Hall on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November commencing at 7.00pm. All are welcome to attend.

- Edward Hext Trust. Cllr McNab informed of the exhibition in Low Ham Church on the life of Edward Hext who provided the almshouses in Langport. The display has been extended until the end of September.

### **TC2024/61 To progress a memorial to Deborah Speed**

Cllr McNab presented a draft sketch of a proposed memorial to the former Town Clerk Deborah Speed. The intention is to depict a rural scene with a river and wildlife and install above the entrance to Northmoor from the Town Garden. The anticipated costs is considered to be approximately £450 for both the design and manufacture. Contributions are to be sought in the form of donations and should insufficient funds be raised, the Town Council will be approached to make up any shortfall.

### **TC2024/62 A discussion on the issues that increased demands for car parking has on Langport.**

Cllr Dromgoole reminded the Council of the findings from the car park survey held in March, particularly the number of all-day parking associated to work. All ideas are currently being considered. Cllr McNab shared with the Council an idea to rearrange the car parking on Cocklemoor in an attempt to provide additional spaces. A rough sketch has been produced with herringbone parking introduced alongside a one way system. The car park is owned by Somerset Council and if there is to be any progress with this, they need to engage. Cllr Wilkins will be informed of the idea and his views sought.

### **TC2024/63 To receive a summary of the Finance and Personnel Committee**

The Clerk provided a summary of the recently held Finance and Personnel Committee. A report comparing the Cemetery Charges identified that in comparison to most other towns in the vicinity, Langport's charges were below the average. Most towns charge an administration fee. The proposal from the committee to Full Council is that charges are raised by 15% (rounded up) and an administration charge of £50 is introduced. Cllr Wilson proposed, seconded by Cllr Glas and unanimously **AGREED**.

Somerset Council are to introduce from April a charge for the emptying of dog waste and litter bins. The expected charge is £7.58 per bin per empty, which if not addressed would amount to £12,000 to the Town Council. A report had been presented to the Finance Committee suggesting that the small bins are reduced in number and replaced by larger bins. It was further relayed that quotes are expected for a large wheeled bin to be placed on Cocklemoor for three months – June to August to relieve the pressure. Cllr Donald proposed, seconded by Cllr McNab and **RESOLVED** by majority that Langport Town Council adopts a 'No Bin January' in an attempt to get people to take their litter home with them.

There are many tasks around the town that it has not been possible to undertake, either through Somerset Councils austerity measures, the increased demands on the Community Payback scheme or an absence of volunteers. To address this the Clerk has suggested that the employment of a lengthsman may be the answer, particularly to undertake unusual tasks such as setting up the market, checking and putting up/down Christmas lights etc, as well as other tasks usually associated a lengthsman scheme. Councillors endorsed the idea of the Clerk researching a cost comparable system and reporting back at a future meeting.

### **TC2024/64 To receive reconciled accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> August**

The transfer of the accounts programme from Rialtas to Scribe is almost complete. The current account has been reconciled for each month to August and the clerk had presented the detail to the Finance meeting for their scrutiny and input. Councillors endorsed the reconciled accounts which were duly signed by the Chair.

### **TC2024/65 Finance – Bank Account Balances -**

To note the balances of the Council's bank accounts as of 31/0/2024. The balances on the Council's bank accounts were presented. The deposit account had £165,257.51 in the account and the current account £4,902.50. There were no questions arising.

### **TC2024/66 Finance – Payments made –**

A list of payments made since the previous meeting had been previously circulated. No questions were raised.

### **TC2024/67 To receive the External Auditors report**

The External Auditors report has been received and is displayed on the Town Council website. There was one area of concern as the (then Locum) clerk had inadvertently ticked the box to inform that the Town Council was not the sole trustee of any trusts. The correction was made and the audit has been approved. This opened a debate about the future requirement of the Town Trust and the Clerk was asked to identify what is involved in closing it down and transferring any remaining responsibilities to the Town Council.

### **TC2024/68 To receive items of correspondence to include:**

No additional items were raised that had not previously been aired.

### **TC2024/69 Chairman's Report**

Cllr Dromgoole informed that the work to identify support for the merger of both Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council is imminent. He requested a meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September to discuss the appropriate way to distribute the survey of residents in both parishes.

He further informed of a disturbing issue that a renowned quality, expanding business has had to move from Langport because there is insufficient workspace in the town.

Meeting closed 8.55 pm

Signed .....

Date: .....