



LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL
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LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL – Council Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of Langport Town Council held on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 7.00pm in the first-floor meeting room, Langport Town Hall

Present: Councillors

S Glas
A Donald
I MacNab
S Peterkin
C Gherasim

S Dromgoole (Chair)
R Crumb
A Wilson
B Paterson

In attendance was Gerard Tucker, Town Clerk, Somerset Cllr Richard Wilkins and 2 members of the public.

Items raised included a Veterans event on Cocklemoor in June and the continuation of the showing of films locally.

TC2024/108 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Cllr M Crumb was unable to attend due to a holiday commitment and submitted her apologies.

TC2024/109 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. Cllr Dromgoole declared a personal interest in item TC2024/111.

TC2024/110 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council Meetings held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41 (1))

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered accurate and were duly signed by the Chair.

TC2024/111 To consider the following Motion:

Resolved: That this Council reviews and amends the Standing Orders, particularly Section 12.8.1 which refers to the maximum term that a Councillor is permitted to Chair the Council. With the possible merger of the two councils – Huish Episcopi Parish Council and Langport Town Council, Councillors will have the option of proposing annually the current Chair should they so wish for a further period, not extending beyond May 2027.

Cllr Dromgoole left the room as he had declared a personal interest in this item. The clerk informed that the current Standing Order 12.8.1 precludes the Chair being elected for a period of more than three years. With the pending merger of the two councils – Huish Episcopi and Langport, continuity in leadership is considered important. Proposed by Councillor Stephen Glas seconded by Councillor Alan Donald and unanimously **AGREED** that the Standing Orders be amended. Cllr Dromgoole returned to the meeting.

TC2024/112 Town Clerk's Oral Report -

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

A request has been received to use Cocklemoor for an event in support Armed Forces Day on Saturday 21st June. In principal, the event is supported, yet more detail is invited to be shared at the next meeting of the Tourism and Marketing Committee in February. John Kitchen, the principal organiser is invited to attend that meeting.

The proposed improvements to the paths on Cocklemoor through an Inland Waterways Association programme called Canal Camps is underway. The dates for the work are between June 22nd – 6th July 2025.

The clerk informed that he has applied to the ABP Summerset festival fund for £1,500 towards the costs of materials and £900 from the IWA, in support of accommodation for those attending the camp.

The gruelling 124km Tour of Wessex cycle event will be passing through Langport on Saturday May 24th

A stainless steel post in the car park was damaged by a Biffa vehicle. Cllr McNab and the clerk repaired the post for which a contribution of £250 has been received from the company's insurers. Cllr McNab was thanked for his assistance.

The clerk thanked all who had involved with the removal of the Christmas lights. He will write to the Landlord of The Black Swan who helped with the lights in North Street.

The lights in the trees on the island are considered to improve the area through the dark winter months. The Clerk has agreed to their retention until April, when it will be reviewed if they are to stay, or be removed.

The wicker bird hide on the path between Cocklemoor and Black Bridge is damaged, most probably through general wear and tear. The increased use of the path by walkers and the river by canoeists and paddle boarders has reduced the wildlife in the area. The clerk was advised to arrange the removal of the bird hide.

TC2024/113 To receive a report from the Town Clerk on the cemetery to include:

The pollarding of the three sycamore trees has been completed by Arbortech. There was a fallen tree which is at the later stages of decomposing. The clerk informed that this tree which is lying parallel to the cemetery wall is to be left, providing habitat for bugs and insects. This conforms with the cemetery being an identified environmental area.

A resident in The Avenue has expressed concern about the large Douglas Fir tree on the boundary of the cemetery. Arbortech has inspected the tree and informed that with the exception of possible branch drop, the tree looks to be in good condition. The suggestion of an annual tree inspection report was considered helpful and Arbortech are to be invited to quote for the annual inspection.

A section of wall in Kennel Lane is leaning towards the road. Following a site visit, the suggestion of removing the wall and rebuilding it is to be pursued. The clerk is to produce a specification of works and then seek quotes from interested parties. The Joint Council Committee discussed the problem of the wall recently and on receipt of the quotes, Huish Episcopi Parish Council are to be invited to contribute to the programme of work required.

The clerk informed that the topple testing of headstones to determine if they are safe is overdue. He informed the council that it is his intention to place notices at the entrance to the cemetery informing of the pending topple testing programme.

TC2024/114 To receive written or oral reports from meetings and training attended by councillors on behalf of the Council

Finance and Personnel Committee

- Advertising the position of Lengthsman. The council had previously approved the budget which included the part-time position of a Lengthsman. This committee discussed the Job Description, Person Specification and advertisement, which following approval by the full council will be implemented and applicants sought. Cllr Peterkin proposed, seconded by Cllr Donald and was approved by majority. 9-0-1 (Cllr Paterson abstained)
- Fact finding opportunity for the investment organisation CCLA. A report prepared by the clerk and presented to the F&P committee recommended that reinvesting the town councils finances with the Churches, Communities and Local Authorities (CLA) organisation would earn the council significantly more in interest. A video meeting has been organised with a representative of CCLA for Tuesday 28th January on line at 2.00pm. The invitation to attend will be extended to all councillors.
- Grant awards - £100 Citizens Advice, £150 Play Day, Somerset Council. Proposed by Cllr Peterkin, seconded by Cllr Paterson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to grant these payments.

Joint Council Committee –

Cllr Dromgoole informed that in response to submitting the petition to Somerset Council to merge the parish of Huish Episcopi and Langport town councils, he has spoken with the lead officer and recommended that there are no wards within the proposed new structure. On the 10th February, there is an opportunity for a joint presentation which Councillor Dromgoole will be attending with the chair of Huish Episcopi – Cllr Gadd. The suggestion by Cllr Dromgoole to rename the new council Huish and Langport Town Council was not supported, with support shown for Huish Episcopi and Langport Town Council. Clarification on the need for a referendum will be sought. Cllr Paterson expressed a concern that the Joint Council meetings are held during the day, preventing those working being able to attend.

Local Community Network – to include:

- Active Travel – The clerk referred to the large map of the suggested route which has been prepared. There are five places where help is required to overcome access issues. The primary objector to the proposed use of Park Lane as a cycle route has been identified and a meeting to discuss concerns and issues is to be organised.
- Health and Wellbeing. An application for primary exploratory funding through SALC has been submitted. The intention is to identify activities that takes place in the parishes and towns within the Levels and Moors area and by sharing the completed list, attempt to address loneliness in the area.
- Highways. At a recent meeting, it was resolved to compile a list of highway concerns and submit to Somerset Council. This will include accident blackspots. Cllr Dromgoole informed of a discussion with Somerset Council who would like to develop a transport hub. £450,000 is available to install bus shelters, digital information boards, cycle racks, left luggage storage etc. A meeting has been organised at 4.00pm on Tuesday 4th February, which councillors were invited to attend.

Cocklemoor Trust – Cllr McNab informed of a meeting recently held with Wessex Water regarding the installation of a water quality monitoring station. Whilst the investment has yet to be secured, the indication is that within the next year, the installation will have been confirmed.

TC2024/115 Planning

Application Number: 25/00017/LBC

Applicant: Mr Sam Spurgeon

Location: Annandale, The Hill, Langport. TA10 0QD

Proposal: Installation of a lead flat roof and conservation roof light, covering (not replacing) a ham stone flat roof situated over a single room ground floor extension to the west of the building

Application Type: Listed Building Consent

Cllr Glas proposed, seconded by Cllr R Crumb and unanimously **Resolved** to recommend support for this application. 10-0-0

Application Number: 25/00080/S73

Applicant: Mrs Sarah Poyntz-Wright

Location: North Street Surgery, North Street, Langport. TA10 9RH

Proposal: S73 application to vary condition 2(approved plans) to allow change to layout and fenestration and relocation of the southern stair to be an external stair in relation to approval 24/01074/FUL for erection of a two storey extension of the west wing of the existing GP surgery

Application Type: Section 73 determination

Cllr Dromgoole proposed, seconded by Cllr Peterkin and unanimously **RESOLVED** to recommend support for the application. 10-0-0

TC2024/116 Finance - To receive the reconciled accounts to 31st December The current account at 31st December contained £9,074.76 and amount which has been reconciled.

TC2024/117 Finance – Bank Account Balances -

to note the balances of the Council's bank accounts as of 31st December 2024

Current Account	-	£9,074.76
Capital reserve Account	-	£129,857.10
Town Trust	-	£6.303.79

TC2024/118 Finance – Payments made -

to note items of expenditure made in December. The list of payments made was circulated prior to the meeting and no comments or observations were raised.

TC2024/119 Appointment of an internal auditor- The clerk had previously informed that he considered that whilst Westcotts Accountants were thorough in auditing the finances of the Town Council, they did not involve with the auditing of processes and policies. Cllr Glas proposed, seconded by Cllr Paterson and unanimously **AGREED** to appoint Lisa Newby, clerk at Bruton Town Council as the Internal Auditor for Langport Town Council with immediate effect. 10-0-0

TC2024/120 – Chairman's Report

Two items were raised under this heading – a repeat of the situation with the pending merger and the opportunity to meet with Somerset Council staff on 10th February. Cllr Dromgoole also informed of a discussion with the Landscape Recovery team regarding the pending changes to land management, including the area owned by Langport Town Council

Meeting closed 9.00pm

Signed

Date: