**Chard Town Council**
The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk
**Mayor: Cllr Jason Baker Town Clerk: Paul Russell**

# CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Guildhall Auditorium, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP on Monday 14th March 2022 commencing at 7:00pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllr Baker (Mayor), Cllr Carnell (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Brown, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Morrison, Cllr Orchard, Cllr O'Brien, Cllr Orchard, Cllr Shortland Cllr Williams and Cllr Wootton.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Rev Georgina Vye, Mayor's Chaplin, Paul Russell, Town Clerk, Beverley Newman Democratic Officer, Cllr Gemma Verdon (County Council) and 18 members of the public.

A minutes silence was observed to commemorate Mr David Orchard, a former Town Councillor.

**Chaplain's 'Thought for the Day'**
This was kindly provided by Mayor's Chaplin Georgina Vye, The Chaplin read a poem dedicated to the people of Ukraine.

**Public Participation Time**
Five members of the public spoke. The following matters were raised:

- Concerns were raised on the impact future developments might have on flooding in Chard and whether residents would be asked to provide their own flood defences;
- Comments regarding the proposed Motion (Minute 2021/110) were presented;
- There was a suggestion put forward that a flood water management study be undertaken;
- Councillors were shown a photograph of a property affected by the flooding and more action to slow the flow was requested;
- Fundraising was being undertaken for the Resilience Group.

**Reports from County and District Councillors**

**SCC Councillors**
Cllr Verdon gave a summary of key milestones and achievements for Somerset County Council during the last year and provided an overview of planned expenditure for the next financial year. She informed Council that she would not be standing for re-election. Chard Town Councillors expressed their thanks for her contribution to the county and support in representing South Chard.

Cllr Verdon confirmed she would pass on the concerns raised by residents in relation to the flooding issues in Chard.

**SSDC Councillors**

Cllr Shortland informed the meeting that SSDC was meeting again in the Chamber.

Cllr O'Brien had previously updated Council on the latest Covid situation.

Cllr Carnell confirmed the Jarman Road Play Park was now open and an official opening would be held after the local elections.

Cllr Bulmer gave a brief report of matters discussed at the last SSDC meeting.

Cllr Baker informed the meeting that SSDC had agreed its 2022/23 budget, its last budget before the new unitary authority became operational.

**Police Report**
Sgt Jameson and Inspector Clark were in attendance. The following Police Report was noted:

- The Police were focusing on rebuilding connections with the community;
- A brief overview of the Team was provided;
- Following the pandemic, the force was now returning to basic policing duties which would include dealing with licensing issues and antisocial behaviour;
- Community Speedwatch was being relaunched;
- The new style meetings involving multiagency and partnership working now called 'Priorities' Meetings was being launched in April;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner had visited Chard recently.

Thanks were extended to the Police.

**Noted that the Update on Chard Reservoir had been postponed until the Full Council meeting to be held on 11th July 2022.**

**2021/100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bates (personal) and Cllr Young (work)

Cllr Young's formal resignation was read out by the Mayor.

**2021/101 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- Praised and acknowledged the development of the Youth Council. A productive meeting had been held earlier in the day;
- The collection of items to support those affected by the conflict in Ukraine had been set up and was operating from the Watts Store to the rear of the Guildhall.

**2021/102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Cllr Shortland (personal): Chard Town Team and Clare House Nursery;
- Cllr J Kenton (personal): Chard Town Team and Chard Museum;
- Cllr Wootton (personal): Chard Area Youth Committee;
- Cllr O'Brien (personal): Chard Area Youth Committee;
- Cllr Carnell (personal): Chard Rugby Club;
- Cllr Bulmer (personal): Chard Rugby Club;
- Cllr Baker (personal): Chard Town Team, Chard Carnival and Clare House Nursery.

**2021/103 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr Wootton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed under agenda item 2021/114 (a) to (e), on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**2021/104 FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr Wootton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Town Council meetings held on the 10th January 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

**2021/105 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**(a)** **Committee Meeting Resolutions –** Council reviewed the resolutions passed at all committee meetings held since 10th January 2022.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr O'Brian
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to ratify the resolutions and recommendations agreed at the Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on Tuesday 25th January 2022.

**2021/106 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk presented the following report:

**(a)** **Chairs Meetings –** It was agreed to cancel these meetings during Purdah.

**(b)** **Training –** Council noted that Councillor training sessions would take place on Saturday 28th May and 18th June 2022.

**(c)** **Tree Planting –** The planting of the new orchard to the rear of the Museum was postponed from 11th March to 25th march due to adverse weather conditions.

**(d)** **End of Year Financial Closedown –** Council noted that this would be undertaken in May and a Full Council meeting would be scheduled in June to formally sign off the 2021/22 accounts.

**(e)** **Upper Henson Park –** Council noted that tenders had been invited to carry out improvements to this play area. Closing date was Thursday 14th April 2022.

**(f)** **Cycle Routes –** The officer Team had attended a number of presentations related to the LCWIPs initiative and a further meeting to discuss the initiative was to be held on 16th March 2022.

**2021/107 UNITARY AUTHORITY**

Council noted the verbal update regarding the implementation of a new unitary authority for Somerset. Bi-weekly meetings were being hosted by the County Council that provided regular updates to town and parish councils in Somerset.

**2021/108 ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR 2022/23**

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to consider this item following the updates being presented under 2021/114 Confidential Items.

**2021/109 COUNCIL MATTERS**

**(a)** **Risk Register –** Council considered the formal adoption of the Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Finance & Audit Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Wootton Seconded: Cllr A Kenton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to formally adopted the Risk Register as approved, adopted and amended by the Finance & Audit Committee.

**(b)** **Mayoral Allowance –** Council considered the report outlining the request by the Mayor to allocate the balance of the Mayoral Allowance to the Mayor's charities.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to formally approved the request to donate the balance of the Mayoral Allowance cost centre at the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year to

the Mayor's Charity account as a one-off donation from the Town Council using the correct legal powers available.

**(c)** **Football Club Lease –** Council considered the development of a lease between Chard Town Council and Chard United Football club in relation to the new changing rooms being constructed at Jocelyn Park and to allocate funding from balances. The estimated cost would be approximately £750.

Proposed: Cllr O' Brian Seconded: Cllr Sortland
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to formally approved the development of a lease between Chard Town Council and Chard United Football club and to allocate a sum of £750 to fund this.

**(d)** **St Mary's Church Wall Repairs –** Council considered undertaking emergency repairs to the wall at St Mary's Church at a cost not exceeding £3,000.

Proposed: Cllr Wootton Seconded: Cllr Sortland
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to formally approved the emergency repairs to the wall of St. Mary's Church at a cost not exceeding £3,000 and that the funding be taken from the Closed Churchyard EMR fund which currently stood at £7,750.

**(e)** **Honorary Alders –** Council considered adopting the Honorary Alders scheme to recognise Councilors who had served on the Town Council for a minimum period of eight years but had not held the position of Mayor.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr O'Brian
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to formally adopt the scheme and to consider the inaugural awards under Confidential Items.

**2021/110 MOTION**

**(a)** **Motion Proposed by Cllr Baker:**
Council considered the motion proposed by Cllr Baker and seconded by Cllr J Kenton.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Chard Town Council **RESOLVED:**

- That it only debates and comments on planning applications once they have a fully agreed flood water management plan which has been agreed by the LLFA
- That it urges SSDC to insist that all relevant sites should have a maintenance plan in place that has been approved by the LLFA

- That it urges SSDC to insist that all schemes are periodically inspected by the council or LLFA to ensure correct maintenance is taking place and an enforcement policy is put in place if schemes are not maintained.
- That urges to SSDC to request that all new planning applications should contribute towards upgrading existing water infrastructure to elevate existing problems within the ageing infrastructure
- That urges to SSDC to request that a review of the local plan be undertaken to look at the suitability of submitted sites for future development with regard to flooding and flood management.

**2021/111 GRANTS**

**(a)** **Grant Report –** Council considered the recommendations made by the Grants Task & Finish Group that met on 7th March 2022.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to adopt and ratify the recommendations from the Grants Task & Finish Group without amendment.

Cllr Morrison left the room at 19.15 and returned at 19.19

**2021/112 RESILIENCE GROUP**

The Town Clerk provided an update on progress on the development of the Chard Resilience Groups. Three initial start-up meetings had taken place with a 'First Phase Steering Group' meeting being held on Wednesday 16th March 2022.

This was a smaller group where it was anticipated sub groups would be developed to work on specific areas of a resilience response in Chard.

Council agreed that:

- It would not consider the Terms of Reference for this group until the new Council had been elected and was fully operational;
- It would continue to support the group administratively for the immediate future but that it would be up to the new council to consider providing use of Guildhall rooms free of charge, bearing in mind that charities and other local non-profit making organisations were required to pay the hire fees;
- The group would be informed that use of the Guildhall and its rooms would be unavailable until after 5th May due to Purdah and the increased activities of the Officer team and Town Clerk leading up to the local elections.

**2021/113 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**(a)** **Annual Town Meeting –** Council noted that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on Monday 28th March 2022 in the Guildhall Auditorium, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm

**(b)** Council noted that the next Full Council meeting would be the Chard Annual Town Council meeting to be held on Monday 16th May 2022 following the elections on 5th May 2022 in the Guildhall Auditorium, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm. Members noted that Purdah commenced from 21st March 2022.

**2021/114 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**

As certain items to be discussed included the consideration of exempt information it was **RESOLVED** under Item 2021/103 that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**(a)** **HR & Personnel Committee**

Council considered the recommendations from the Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Wootton Seconded: Cllr Morrison

For: Cllr Carnell, Cllr Brown, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr O'Brien, Cllr Orchard, Cllr Williams Cllr Shortland.

Abstain: Cllr Baker – Declaration of Interest – Member of the Executive Personnel Committee SSDC

**RESOLVED** to adopt the recommendations from the HR & Personnel Committee without amendment.

**Council came out of Confidential Matters and addressed Agenda Item 2021/108.**

**(a.i)** **ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR 2022/23**

Council considered the draft budget for 2022/23 that was presented.

Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Budget for financial year 2022/23.

**Council went back into Confidential matters after a short break at 9.04pm, resuming at 9.07pm.**

**(b)** **Outstanding Service Awards/Honorary Alders –** Council considered the nominations for the Outstanding Service Awards and Honourary Alders that were to be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 28th March 2022.

Proposed: Cllr Wootton Seconded: Cllr Shortland
Unanimous.

**RESOLVED:**

- To present the Outstanding Services Award to Barry Ebden, Maria Carey, Maryanne & George Adams and Pat Galpin;
- To present the Honorary Alder Award to Mr Mermagan and Mrs Wyatt.

**(c)** **Clare House Lease –** Council considered the report and recommendation regarding this lease.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr O'Brian

For: Cllr Carnell, Cllr Brown, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Wootton, Cllr Morrison, Cllr O'Brian, Cllr Orchard and Cllr Williams.

Abstentions: Cllr Baker (personal interest) and Cllr Shortland (personal interest)

**RESOLVED** to allow the present lease to continue as a statutory period tenancy on the existing terms. This continuation would commence following the expiry of the lease on 7th July 2022.

**(d)** **Solar Panels Report –** Council was provided with an overview of the quotations received to install additional solar panels to the roof of the Auditorium.

Proposed: Cllr Shortland Seconded: Cllr Carnell
Unanimous

**RESOLVED**

- To install up to 28 additional solar panels subject to Listed Building Consent being granted;
- To appoint the most suitable contractor subject to a site survey.

Cllr Shortland left the meeting at 9.25pm.

**(e)** **Outdoor Digital Signage –** Council was provided with an overview of the report.

Proposed: Cllr Wootton Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

For: Cllr Carnell, Cllr Brown, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Wootton, Cllr Morrison, Cllr O'Brian, Cllr Orchard and Cllr Williams.

Abstentions: Cllr Baker (personal interest)

**RESOLVED** to support this project and delegate authority to the Council Officers to develop the project, obtain planning permission required and deliver the project.

**(f)** **Photocopier Report** Council considered the request to lease a new photocopier to replace the existing unit.

Proposed: Cllr OBrian Seconded: Cllr Morrison
Unanimous

**RESOLVED** to lease a new photocopier subject to a full assessment of rental costs and copier costs to ensure that the most cost-effective option is secured.

**(g)** **St Mary's Wall Quotation –** This had been considered under item 2021/109(d).

There being no other business the Mayor thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 9:30pm.

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**MAYOR:** **DATE:**