CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk
Mayor: Garry Shortland

CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Guildhall Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP on Monday 18th March 2024 commencing at 19:00pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hassan, Cllr Hussey, Cllr A. Kenton, Cllr J. Kenton, Cllr Richter, Cllr Shortland (Mayor), Cllr Watson and Cllr Williams

OFFICERS & OTHERS PRESENT

Gail Chadwick Responsible Financial & Grants Officer and Kevin Dyer Operations Manager.

Rev. Georgina Vye (Chaplain), Cllr Wale and Cllr Payne

Chaplain's 'Thought for the Day'
The theme for the thought for the day was around working together.

Public Participation Time
There were 17 members of the public present.

Summary:
2 members of the public raised questions regarding the following items on the agenda:

- SALC Grant
- The confidential item regarding review of the Rolley Report

Reports from County and District Councillors
Council received County Councillor reports from Cllr Payne, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Baker and Cllr Wale. Key themes were Council Tax billing, consultation regarding closure of a Nursing Home in Chard, National Tourism Week, bidding for a Park Run in Chard, feedback from the inaugural meeting of Chard Chamber of Commerce, the Knife Angel Sculpture being installed in Taunton on 3rd April for a short period to promote positive conversations around knife crime, Careline moving from analogue to digital and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Police Report
No formal police report was received and no members of the Police were present.

2024/27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received and accepted:

Cllr Bulmer (personal), Cllr Crook (personal) and Cllr Grief-Page (personal).

2024/28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There following declarations of interest were made in respect of item 2024/35:

- Cllr Shortland – personal – Chairman of the Town Team;
- Cllr Baker – personal – member of the Town Team & Chairman of Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited;
- Cllr J Kenton – personal – member of the Town Team and Somerset Council representative of Citizens Advice Somerset;
- Cllr Eggins – personal – Somerset Bus Partnership;
- Cllr Richter – personal – Somerset Bus Partnership and Chard & District Museum;
- Cllr Hussey – personal – Chard & District Museum;
- Cllr Williams – personal – member of Chard Carnival Committee.

2024/29

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Watson
Unanimous

RESOLVED: TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
As certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information Full Council is, therefore, recommended to resolve "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 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".

2024/30 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
7 For; 2 Abstain; 1 Against.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Full Town Council meeting held on 28th February 2024 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

2024/31 (a) COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Council considered the HR Committee minutes from meetings held on 7th November 2023, 20th November 2023 (Extraordinary) and 5th March 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Hassan
6 Abstain; 2 For.

RESOLVED: to note the minutes of the HR Committees as being within its delegated powers.

(b) Council considered the minutes of the Amenities and Events Committee held on 12th March and the recommendations made by that Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
9 For; 1 Abstain.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Amenities and Events Committee be noted and the recommendations made be adopted, which were:

- To fund from the Devolution of Assets EMR the cleaning, opening and closing of Bath Street toilets for 12 months on the current contract for 2024/25 operated by Somerset Council at a cost of £13,228.
- To delegate authority to the Operations Manager to purchase (costing between £3.5K and £4.5K) and install new swings at Halcombe Park, with the monies utilised from the Playground maintenance budget.
- To continue with the current bar franchise agreement for a further 12 months.
- To accept the tender for the Solar Panel and Battery Storage Project from IJ Cannings & Son Ltd, utilising funds from the Climate Change EMR to cover the cost with the remaining funds being transferred to a sinking fund for the long-term future of the solar panels (existing and new).

2024/32 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES

(a) The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7pm in the Town Hall.

2024/33 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT AND UPDATES

(a) **Town Clerk's Update -** Council considered renewal of the Vodaphone mobile phone contract for 6 staff at a reduced rate.

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Watson
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To accept a 24-month renewal contract costing £100 per month.

2024/34 FINANCE

(a) **Risk Register**
Council considered the revised risk register.

Proposed: Cllr Richter Seconded: Cllr Hassan
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To adopt the revised risk register.

(b) **Budget 2023/24**
Council noted the Income and Expenditure Report showing progress against budget for 11 months to end of February 2024.

(c) **Earmarked Reserves**
Council considered recommendations for movement of funds to Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To transfer £30K to the Play Equipment EMR and £40K to the Guildhall Sinking Fund from the General Reserve at the year end.

(d) **Insurance**
Council considered the proposal from Aviva for a further 3-year renewal for insurance.

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Hassan
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To renew the Council's 3-year deal with Aviva giving a £1,589.99 reduction in the 2024/25 premium.

2024/35 **GRANTS**
Council considered the recommendations from the Grants Sub-Committee in respect of Community Developments Fund Grants for 2023/24 and Core Funding Grants for 2024/25.

(a) **Community Development Fund Grants 2023/24**

(i) Citizens Advice Somerset

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Baker
9 For; 1 Abstain.

RESOLVED: To provide a grant of £1,000 to Citizens Advice Somerset.

(ii) Chard Area Resilience Group

Proposed: Cllr Richter Seconded: Cllr Williams
9 For; 1 Abstain.

RESOLVED: To provide a grant of £300 to Chard Area Resilience Group.

(iii) Somerset Bus Partnership

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
8 For; 2 Abstain.

RESOLVED: To provide a grant of up to £500 to Somerset Bus Partnership.

(b) Core Funding Grants 2024/25

(i) Chard Area Youth Committee

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Williams
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To provide a core funding grant of £10,000 to Chard Area Youth Committee.

(ii) Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
7 For; 3 Abstain

RESOLVED: To provide a core funding grant of £1,000 to Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited.

(iii) Chard & District Museum

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr Baker
8 For; 2 Abstain

RESOLVED: To provide a core funding grant of £1,000 to Chard & District Museum.

(iv) Chard Town Team

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr Eggins
8 For; 2 Abstain

RESOLVED: To provide a core funding grant of £1,000 to Chard Town Team.

2024/36 BANK ACCOUNT

Council considered the report regarding the bank account.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To add Cllr Bates and Cllr Williams to the bank signatories for Lloyds Bank and Nationwide and authorise the Operations Manager as an authorised user for electronic payments. Officers to consider the options of a Debit Card v Business Charge Card a revert to Council with their findings.

2024/37 CHANGE TO MEETING SCHEDULE

The change of the date for the Finance & Audit Committee to Monday 15th April 2024 was noted.

2024/38 APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF £35K FROM SALC

Council considered the report submitted by the Task & Finish Group relating to an application for a grant of £35K from Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and seed funding prior to start of the project.

20.12 Standing Orders suspended for a member of the public to speak

20.15 Standing Orders reinstated

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Watson
5 For; 3 Against; 2 Abstain.

RESOLVED TO:

- Approve the submission of an application to SALC for seed funding;
- Transfer an amount equivalent to the remaining CDF Grant budget in 2023/24 to an EMR to be used to match/part fund the project;
- Agree to apply for up to £35k from the SALC Health & Wellbeing Fund to support the CommuniTEA project;
- Form a suitable agreement with the CommuniTEA Community Interest Company (CIC) to monitor and deliver the seed funding and the £35K funding from this funding application through the Council;
- Allow Officer time to help with advertising and social media of this project, where possible, and aid with report writing to funders and the Town Council; and,
- Agree to allow the CIC to apply for £1,000 from the grant fund, if criteria are met, during the following years to confirm general support of the application.

2024/39 RECRUIMENT OF REPLACEMENT FOR TOWN CLERK

(a) Council considered the report showing 3 alternative proposals for the organisational structure.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Eggins
9 For; 1 Abstain

RESOLVED: Not to undertake a review of the organisational structure at present as Council is unsure of the changing form required with the

devolution of assets but allow this to be completed when the Locum Clerk is in place.

(b) Council considered giving delegated authority to the HR Committee to oversee and support recruitment of a replacement Town Clerk and/or changes to the staff structure.

Proposed: Cllr Richter Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
9 For; 1 Abstain

RESOLVED: To delegate to the HR Committee creation of a recruitment pack with interaction of the officers and any organisational changes, which are to be brought back to full Council for agreement.

2024/40 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Full Town Council meeting will be the Annual Town Council meeting which will be held on Monday 20th May 2024 in the Guildhall commencing at 19.00.

20.30 Suspended standing order

20.35 Reinstated standing orders

2024/41 CONFIDENTIAL

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted the press and public were excluded during consideration of the following item (Item 2024/29 above refers):

(a) Council considered the report from the Operations Manager and Town Clerk on the review as to the commissioning and findings of the Rolley Report.

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr Bates
9 For; 1 Abstain

RESOLVED: It appears that certain aspects of the review were not totally independent or unbiased and Council will offer an unreserved apology to those affected and rescind the Report. Legal advice on the wording to be sought by officers for which fees of up to £3K are agreed.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 10.23pm.

22/6/24

MAYOR: **DATE:**