



CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
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Mayor: Garry Shortland Town Clerk: Gareth Hughes

CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Guildhall Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP on Tuesday 6th February 2024 commencing at 19:00pm.

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

OFFICERS & OTHERS PRESENT

Gail Chadwick Responsible Financial and Grants Officer,
Kevin Dyer Operations Manager and
Gareth Hughes Town Clerk

Cllr Wale and Cllr Payne

Public Participation Time

There were in the region of 20 members of the public present.

Summary:

3 members of the public spoke and the Town Clerk had received an email from a member of the public which he was asked to read out during public participation.

Subjects were:

- Culturally Chard
- The Community Plan
- The increase in precept for 2024/25
- 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 Somerset Council's financial health and the inaugural meeting of Chard Chamber of Commerce.

Police Report

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

2024/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received and accepted:

Cllr Brown (personal), Cllr Bulmer (personal), Cllr Crook(personal) and Cllr Williams (personal).

2024/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2024/03

Proposed: Cllr Bates
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Eggins

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".

2024/04 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Hussey

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held 13th November 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

2024/05 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES

- (a) **The Annual Town Meeting** – To be held on Monday 25th March 2024 at &pm in the Guildhall.
- (b) **Christmas Carol Concert** – the Mayor thanked all those who helped and supported the carol concert.

2024/06 TOWN CLERK’S REPORT AND UPDATES

- (a) **Town Clerk Report’s** - Council considered the Town Clerk’s report:

1. Stage & Lighting Equipment – update re VAT. Noted.

2. Chard United and Chard Town Council

Proposed: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Bates

RESOLVED: To sign the grant application as joint signatories with Chard United on the basis that the Football Foundation will put in place restrictions on the grant being paid until Chard United confirm that all other funding for the new changing rooms is in place.

3. Chard Stone

Proposed: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Kenton

RESOLVED: To allow the Town Clerk to continue with the delegated authority to install the Chard Stone utilising a further sum of up to £367 from Street Furniture (304/4040) to cover funding in addition to the monies held on the MTIG EMR.

4. Wayfinder Signs and Fingerposts

Proposed: Cllr Bates
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Kenton

RESOLVED: To agree the additional cost of funding, being up to £1,009, from Street Furniture (304/4040) which is required to cover installation costs and Highways permission for installation, delegate authority to the Town Clerk to ensure completion of the work and authorise utilisation of the already earmarked funds in the MTIG EMR (£7,595) for this project.

5. Somerset Preservation Trust

Proposed: Cllr Baker
For: 8 Abstain:1

Seconded: Cllr J Kenton

RESOLVED: To pay the bill of £3,000 from Somerset Preservation Trust regarding the viability appraisal utilising a new budget code and make a virement of £3,000 from Coronation Events to cover this payment.

(b) Community Plan Update

Cllr Richter and Cllr Hussey gave an update on the event that has been arranged to carry forward the community plan explaining that this is not aimed at reinventing the plan but to move forward on the actions.

2024/07 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) Council noted the minutes of the Amenities & Events Committee held on 9th January 2024 and discussed the following recommendations made by that committee after its consideration of the Town Clerk's and Operations Manager's Reports:

- **2023/40 a) Item 2 – Cemetery Chapel**

Proposed: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Watson

RESOLVED: To agree release of funds from the Chapel EMR to complete work with CDS on the Cemetery Chapel.

- **2023/40 a) Item 3 – Watts Store Licence**

3 members declared an interest in this item as follows:

- Cllr Shortland - as a Chair of the Town Team;
- Cllr Baker – as a member of the Carnival Committee and a member of the Town Team; and,
- Cllr J Kenton as a member of the Town Team.

Proposed: Cllr Bates
For: 7

Seconded: Cllr Hussey
Abstain: 3

RESOLVED: To put in place a 5-year shared usage licence for Watts Store between the Town Council, the Town Team and Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited with break clauses on both sides at 18 and 42 months (subject to 3 months' notice) on the present current conditions.

- **2023/40 a) Item 4 – Cemetery Fees**

Proposed: Cllr Watson
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Bates

RESOLVED: To abolish the burial charges for under 16s and for Officers to conduct a review of other local council cemetery charges before increasing fees for 2024/25.

Proposed: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Watson

RESOLVED: to accept the following recommendations from the Amenities and Events Committee en-bloc:

- **2023/40 b) Item 2.1 – Floral Displays** – To give officers delegated authority to reduce the number of flowerbeds in the town and increase the cost of hanging baskets from £20 to £40 as well as considering sponsorship options.
- **2023/40 b) Item 3.1 & 3.2** – To give delegated authority to the Town Clerk and Operations Manager to release £45,000 from the Cemetery EMR to complete works on extension of the Cemetery and conduct relevant investigations once full ownership is obtained.
- **2023/40 b) Item 4** – To consider a new Allotment Holder's Tenancy Agreement after consultation with Allotment Committee.

- **2023/40 c) Item 7 – Guildhall Fees –**

Proposed: Cllr Bates
For: 7

Cllr Eggins
Abstain: 2

to agree to change the Guildhall fees to one specific rate and to increase charges as shown in the table below. Also to establish a Task & Finish Group who will consider a 5-year plan for the use of the Guildhall.

Resource	Rate per hour
Auditorium Inc. cafe	£27.50
Auditorium with stage and café	£37.50
Kitchen	£8 (maximum of £32 p/booking) – No change to previous
Café	£13
Bondfield Room	£10
Town Hall	£15
Mayor’s Parlour	£12

- (b) Council noted the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 12th December 2023.

2024/08 FINANCE

- (a) **Financial Report for Quarter 3 to 31 December 2023**

Council noted the Income and Expenditure Report for 9 months to December 2023 together with the variance report, and the Balance Sheet and the Earmarked Reserves Report as at the end of December.

- (b) **Virements**

Proposed: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Bates

RESOLVED: To agree virements for Payroll between payroll codes to reflect actual costs by cost centre (all within the agreed total budget) and for Other Professional Fees from the Superannuation Deficit Fund.

- (c) **Expenditure over £500 for Quarter 3**

The report was noted.

2024/09 ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR 2024/25

Proposed: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Richter

RESOLVED: To adopt the 2024/25 Financial Year budget

2024/10 PRECEPT

Proposed: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Richter

RESOLVED that a precept of £1,151,765 be requested from Somerset County Council which will result in a Band D charge of £251.37, an increase of £78.28 per annum. This includes £250,000 to be placed on an Earmarked Reserve in respect of devolution of services from Somerset Council.

2024/11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Council noted the next Full Chard Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 18th March 2024 in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders at 8.20pm.

The Mayor reinstated Standing Orders at 8.25pm.

2024/12 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted relating to a) potential legal action and b) sensitive personal information the press and public were excluded during consideration of the following items (Item 2024/03 above refers):

(a) Culturally Chard

That councillors are asked to discuss and make a decision regarding the future administration and involvement of the Town Council in Culturally Chard

Before discussion commenced Cllr Baker asked to amend his motion as follows: 'That councillors are asked to discuss and make a decision regarding the future administration and involvement of the Town Council in Culturally Chard'. His motion was seconded by Cllr Bates.

As Chairman of the Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited Cllr Baker Declared an interest, Cllr Baker left the room at 8.35pm.

Cllr Eggins declared an interest as the Town Council's Councillor Representative as part of the Culturally Chard Consortium and left the room at 8.36pm

The Mayor, as Chairman of the Town Team, also declared an interest as a member of the Culturally Chard Consortium although he stated that he had never attended any meetings due to work commitments and the Town Team had never received any benefit from Culturally Chard. The Mayor did not vote.

Proposed: Cllr Watson
For: 5

Seconded: Cllr Bates
Abstain 2

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk become the Town Council's main representative at Culturally Chard meetings until the consortium formally ceases at the end of March 2024. Any successor group to be treated like other outside groups with the Council formally nominating its representative to the group.

Cllr Baker and Cllr Eggins returned to the room at 8.40pm

(b) Rolley Report

To discuss a request to conduct a review of the Rolley report

Proposed: Cllr Baker
For: 5 Against: 3

Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Abstain: 1

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk and The Operations Manager undertake a review as to the commissioning and findings of the Rolley Report.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

MAYOR:

DATE: