Chard Town Council
The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
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Mayor Cllr. Jason Baker **Town Clerk Andrew Gunn**

COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Town Council held on Monday 16th March 2020 in The Guildhall, Chard

Present: Baker (Chair), Bulmer, Mrs. Morrison, Mrs. Wootton, Shortland, Williams and Kenton.

In Attendance: Angela Cox, standing in for the Town Clerk,
Matt Hawker – Guildhall Manager.
Quentin Coleman - SSDC Environmental Services Team Leader.

There was No. #6 members of the public and No. #0 members of the press present.

The meeting started at 7.30 pm

7.30pm Chaplain's 'Thought for the Day'

Public Participation Time
This section (at the Chairman's discretion may last up to 15 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Council.

A resident of Chard said the country was facing a grave threat from coronavirus and it was beholden on those who could, to help those in need. He said that he had a number of volunteers and he asked if the Town Council could form a steering group and fund a leaflet to be delivered to every household in Chard giving advice and offering help to those who needed it. He thought the cost would be in the region of £200.

The Chairman thanked the resident and asked that he leave his contact details to follow up the request as soon as possible.

Reports from County and District Councillors
District Cllr Baker advised that the Boden Street public toilets would shortly be closed and locked ahead of their demolition in July as part of the town's regeneration programme. The public would be redirected to public toilets in Sainsburys supermarket and the Guildhall.

Police Report
The Supervisor advised that two new PCSO's would be starting shortly in the Chard area and he would bring them to the next meeting. He asked that incidences of street

drinking be reported to the Local Authority to build up evidence that there was a need for a Public Space Protection Order to prevent unsocial street drinking. At the moment there was insufficient evidence to support the need for an order. He noted that anti-social behaviour by a few young people in the town would soon be dealt with. The Chief Inspector had estimated that a third of the police force may be affected by the coronavirus which could impact on neighbourhood policing. The recent theft of lead from church rooves had been carried out by an organised group from Lincolnshire with contacts overseas and it was hoped this would be resolved shortly.

AGENDA

2020/065. Apologies for absence and to consider whether to approve reasons given (If you cannot attend please telephone or email your apologies to the Town Clerk). LGA 1972 s85 (1).

Cllr Mrs Bates – work commitment
Cllr Carnell – work commitment
Cllr Mrs Kenton – Illness
Cllr Mrs Orchard – Self Isolation
Cllr Mrs O'brien – Self Isolation
Cllr Mrs Whittaker-Mather - Self Isolation
Cllr Mrs Young – Family commitment
Andrew Gunn, Town Clerk - Illness

Proposed: Cllr. Mrs Morrison Seconded: Cllr. Bulmer
Agreed Unanimously

Resolved - that the apologies and the reasons given were accepted.

2020/066. Mayor's Announcements.
The Mayor advised that he had attended a Chard Together event. He also announced the re-opening of Hayes Travel in the town and advised that Snowdon Car Park would be closed for re-surfacing work for a short time.

2020/067. Declarations of Interest. Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 SI No.1159. (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors on any agenda item.

2020/068. To resolve to exclude members of the press and public - To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960

Proposed: Cllr. Mrs Morrison Seconded: Cllr. Mr Shortland
Agreed Unanimously

RESOLVED – that owing to the confidential nature of the items, the public, including the press, should be excluded from the meeting when Agenda Items 2020/75, 2020/087, 2020/88, 2020/089 and 2020/90 were discussed. It was also agreed that the published agenda order be amended to allow all of the confidential items to be considered in one block and to allow the presenting officer to leave following discussion of the item.

2020/069. Council Meeting – minutes - To confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting of the Town Council held on 20th January 2020 and 17th February 2020 (attached).

In response to a question regarding the minutes of 20th January 2020, the Chairman said they would be discussed in the confidential session and signed later in the meeting.

It was agreed to defer the signing of the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 2nd March 2020 as the minutes had not been circulated. LGA 1972, Sch 12 para41 (1).

20th January minutes Proposed: Cllr. Baker Seconded: Cllr. Kenton
Agreed unanimously

17th February minutes Proposed: Cllr. Bulmer Seconded; Cllr. Mrs Wootton
Agreed by 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on 20th January and 17th February 2020 be adopted.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

2020/070. Council Meeting – minutes - To receive and note the minutes of the following meetings and approve any recommendations if required: LGA 1972, Sch 12 para 41(1).

Planning and Highways - 17th February 2020

RESOLVED – that the minutes were received and noted.

2020/071. Finance – Town Council Year 2019/20 Year to Date Budget – to review the income and expenditure / balance sheet for the year to date (Account & Audit Regulations 2011).

RESOLVED – to note the year to date expenditure and balance sheet

2020/072. Finance – Budget Virements

In response to questions regarding the Performing Rights Society license and electricity, the Chairman agreed to clarify the points with the Finance Officer and provide a written response.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Wootton Seconded: Cllr Mr Shortland
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED – to note the Budget Virements

2020/073. Finance – Direct Debits, BACS and Manual Payments – to review schedule of payments (report attached).

In response to a question regarding a manual cheque issued, the Chairman believed it was a change of company name but agreed to clarify the point with the Finance Officer and provide a written response.

RESOLVED – that the report was reviewed and noted

2020/074. Finance – Accounts for Payment – to review and note items of expenditure (LGA 1972 s150 (5)) – cheque signatories to be agreed.

The Chairman noted that two cheque signatories would be required that week.

Proposed: Cllr Shortland Seconded: Cllr Kenton
Unanimous

Resolved –to approve the accounts for payment with cheque signatories to be agreed.

2020/075. Finance – Bad Debts
This item was considered in confidential session.

Item 1
Proposed: Cllr Mrs Morrison Seconded: Cllr Shortland
Agreed by 6 in favour, 0 against. 1 abstention.

RESOLVED – to write off the bad debt as per confidential report.

Item 2
Proposed: Cllr Kenton Seconded: Cllr Shortland
Agreed by 4 in favour, 0 against. 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED – to write off bad debt as per confidential report.

2020/076. Finance – Direct Debits

The Chairman noted that there were 3 new direct debits to agree as detailed in the report.

Proposed: Cllr Mr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Mr Williams
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED – to confirm the Council's procedures for the use of variable direct debits

2020/077. Policy – Risk Management and Insurance

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as the report was not available.

2020/078. Council's Complaints Procedure

The Chairman advised that this was one of a number of policies required to be reviewed periodically. No changes were proposed to the policy.

Proposed: Cllr Mr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Mrs Wootton
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED – to adopt the Council's Complaints Procedure

2020/079. Policy – Freedom of Information

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as the report was not available.

2020/080. To adopt the Council's Policy for dealing with the press / media

The Chairman advised that the policy had been reviewed and no changes were proposed.

Proposed: Cllr Mr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Mrs Wootton
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED – to adopt the Council's Policy for dealing with the press / media

2020/081. Guildhall Manager's Report

The Guildhall Manager presented his report, noting that the selected local supplier for gas now appeared to be unavailable. Councillors agreed he should try the next choice of supplier from the list and if needed, amend the purchase order.

The report of the Guildhall Manager was NOTED.

2020/082. Community Liaison Officer - Community Liaison Officer's March Report

The report of the Community Liaison Officer was NOTED.

2020/083. Amenities

The SSDC Environmental Services Team Leader presented his report and advised that play inspections were completed and a disabled swing needed repairing, weed spraying would commence that week. Chapter A safety and working at height training had been completed. SSDC had serviced two mowing machines although only one was being used. He had proposed to the Clerk that the second mower be sold and a mini-sweeper be purchased. Mower refresh and shrub maintenance training would be carried out. The SSDC street sweeper would be in the town the following week. There were some staffing issues which were being monitored.

During discussion it was noted that two different weed killing solutions were being trialled.
It was requested that a hedge in Avishayes and another at Jocelyn Park be cut back.
The Chairman thanked the team for their assistance with the tree planting at Snowdon Park along with local school children.

The amenities report was NOTED.

2020/084. Town Clerk's Report

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as the Town Clerk was not in attendance.

2020/085. Town Clerk's Delegated Powers

This item was withdrawn from the agenda as the Town Clerk was not in attendance.

2020/086. Reports from Representatives of Outside Bodies

Councillor Mrs Morrison gave a brief update on the work of the One Team.

2020/087. In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the press and public were excluded during consideration of the following items (Item #2020/068 above refers)

2020/087. Amenities To agree the recommendations of the report.

The SSDC Environmental Services Team Leader advised that he had met with the SSDC Environmental Services Manager and 3 options had been proposed.

The Chairman asked Councillors to select one of the proposed options which would then be costed. Following some debate on the proposed options, it was proposed and seconded that Option 3 be progressed.

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded Cllr Mrs Wootton
Agreed by 5 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

RESOLVED - to progress the cost of Option 3 of the confidential report.

2020/088. Salaries in Confidence. To agree the recommendations of the report

Councillors agreed to the recommendations in the confidential report.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Morrison Seconded: Cllr Shortland
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED - to progress the recommendations of the confidential report

2020/089a. Staff in Confidence

The Chairman reminded Councillors that the Town Clerk had provided a verbal update at the previous meeting. Three options were offered and following debate, Option 3 was agreed as per the confidential report.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Morrison Seconded: Cllr Shortland
Agreed Unanimously.

RESOLVED - to progress Option 3 of the confidential report.

2020/089b. Clerk to give verbal update on staff

This item was deferred as the Town Clerk was not in attendance.

2020/089c. To receive and approve a recommendation from the Clerk in regard to a staffing issue

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs Wootton, both as members of the Personnel Sub Committee, gave a verbal update on the staffing matter as per the confidential minutes.

2020/90. Motions from Councillors where expenditure has been identified

This item was withdrawn as Councillor Mrs Kenton was not in attendance.

2020/075. Finance – Bad Debts

The Chairman gave a verbal update on the finance issue as per the confidential minutes.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Mrs Wootton
Agreed Unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.34pm.