CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP

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Mayor: Cllr Jenny Kenton

Acting Proper Officer: Adrian Turner

CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Town Hall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP on Monday 13th March 2023 commencing at 19:00pm.

PRESENT:	Cllr Bates, Cllr Brown**,** (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Crook, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Grief-Page, Cllr Watson, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, (Mayor), Cllr Richter.
OFFICERS PRESENT:	Gail Chadwick: Grants Officer, Beverley Newman: Democratic Services Officer (DSO),
OTHERS PRESENT:	CC Cllr Payne, Cllr Wale

Chaplin's 'Thought for the day'
Apologies were received by Cresswell Whitton

Public Participation Time
5 members of the public spoke (1 by proxy), all comments and questions related to matters concerning the Independent Report commissioned by Chard Town Council. Councillor Payne presented a signed petition, a call for the Council was made to accept the petition which was granted**.**

Questions raised by proxy and formal replies given after the meeting were:

1. Do any of the members of the town council have any financial relationship with the persons who are the subject to the investigations and tonight's meeting? Are they recusing themselves from being part of the meeting?
   CTC response: This is information that the Council does not hold. You could request this information from each individual Councillor using their individual email accounts but it is outside the scope of the FOIA.

2. How many complaints did the Town Council receive before it triggered its own investigations?
   CTC response:
   - The Council has not received any formal complaints.
   - Commissioning the independent investigation was triggered by the resignation of the most recent Town Clerk.

3. Where did the council receive information from? Formal grievances, letters of complains, exit interview statements? Were the complaints received from more than one area e.g., employees, outside agencies, members of the public?

CTC response: All of this is information contained in the Rolley report, which may or may not be published depending upon the legal advice the Council is currently seeking.

4. Were the type of complaints different or of a similar nature?
   CTC response: This is information contained in the Rolley report, which may or may not be published depending upon the legal advice the Council is currently seeking.

5. Do any of the individuals have similar complaints in their background either from this Town Council or others civil service jobs/positions?
   CTC response: This is information that the Council does not hold.

6. What training do councillors receive on interpersonal skills and at what point in their public life?
   CTC response: None

7. What value for money are the people of Chard receiving as the preset for Council Tax Bills has risen sharply, how much has this external report cost the people of Chard?
   CTC response:
   - In line with the national situation, the Council has incurred rising running costs, particularly energy and fuel. The precept for 2023/24 for Band D has increased by £14.27 per annum (approximately 27.5p per week). The increase is lower than the current rate of inflation.
   - The external report cost the Council £4902.20.

8. What process has the council followed in trying to resolve any of the issues raised by complainers?
   CTC response:
   - The Council commissioned the independent report.
   - The Council has no legal powers to discipline or sanction Town Councillors.

Reservoir Presentation
An informative presentation was delivered – see Chard Town Council website for the full presentation.

Reports from County and District Councillors.
District and County Councillor reports were received and noted

Police Report
No police report was submitted.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
"In the last 6 weeks Andy, myself and members of staff have:
- Held 3 Tea with Mayor's events, met with over 30 people from local groups and organisations in the town.
- Held our first Team exercise with help from Stuart & Viv our Town Cryer and Mace Bearer which was attended by our new Town Clerk Gareth Hughes
- Attended many other events to include:

- Shows, meetings, displays and most recently the *Chard Together* event. Here we met so many people from our community who wanted to tell us about their culture and how they are sharing ours.
  I commented that that I hadn't moved very far from my roots being a *Chard girl* but that I have learned from Andy's experience what it was like working in the 80's in a foreign country and I am proud of how Chard has welcomed everyone and how we have grown as a community because of that.

- You should have received an invitation to my civic service on St. George's day and I am hoping that you will be able to attend. Chard concert brass and Backdown Acapella have kindly agreed to perform for us and there will be tea and cake afterwards.

2023/31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received:
Cllr Baker, Cllr Hassan & Cllr Hawkes,

Proposed Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Brown
RESOLVED: To accept apologies provided.
Unanimous

2023/32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest made:

- Cllr J Kenton agenda item **2023/39 (a)** Personal

2023/33 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on the 24th January and 31st January 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

2023/34 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) Review of resolutions

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Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Williams
Unanimous

RESOLVED that the resolutions passed at all committee meetings held since 24th January 2023 be accepted.

2023/35 PROPER OFFICER REPORT

There was no Proper Officer report at this time.

2023/36 COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) Kings Coronation

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr Richter

Unanimous

RESOLVED that the draft Terms of Reference and delegation of powers for the Kings Coronation Task and Finish Group provided be accepted to include the following statement as the Key Responsibilities:

To deliver a series of events to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III

(b) Financial Regulations

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

Unanimous

Council noted and agreed the minor amendments to the Financial Regulations to satisfy a recommendation from the Internal Auditor.

(c) Independent report

Formal adoption & agreement of recommendations of the Independent Report

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Andi-Grief Page
Unanimous

RESOLVED that there be a Full Council meeting 29th March 2023 to formally adopt the Independent Report and agree the recommendations therein.

i) Proposed statement from Council

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Bulmer
Unanimous

RESOLVED there be a recorded vote for agenda item 2023/36 c i) Results were as follows:

Councillor	**Vote**
Cllr Bates	For
Cllr Bulmer	For
Cllr Brown (Deputy Mayor)	For
Cllr Crook	For
Cllr Eggins	For
Cllr Grief-Page	For
Cllr A Kenton	For
Cllr J Kenton (Mayor)	For
Cllr Richter	For
Cllr Watson	For
Cllr Williams	For

RESOLVED that the statement compiled by the Council as published with the March 13th 2023 agenda and relevant documentation, accompany the Independent Report upon its publication.

ii) Seeking legal advice

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED to authorise seeking legal advice from Everys solicitors regarding the proposed publication of the recent Independent Report for a revised fee of £3,000 (original quotation (£2,000) and that the Proper Officer (PO) acts on this advice as soon it is received. In addition to delegate power to the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to instruct Everys in the absence of the PO

2023/37 **RESILIENCE GROUP** This item was withdrawn

2023/38 **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**
There will be an additional *ordinary* Full Council meeting 29th March 2023 as per agenda item 2023/36 (c) above and the next Full Chard Town Council meeting after will be held on Monday 9th May 2023, both at the Guildhall Auditorium, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at19.00 pm.

2023/39 **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**
In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this

(a) Outstanding Service Awards/Honorary Alders –

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED to accept the proposed nomination for the Honorary Alder

There being no other business the Mayor thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 20.10

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MAYOR: **DATE:**