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 Monday 13th November 2023 commencing at 19:00pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Brown (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Crook, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hussey, Cllr Hassan, Cllr A. Kenton, Cllr J. Kenton, Cllr Shortland (Mayor), Cllr Williams.

OFFICERS & OTHERS PRESENT

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

Rev Georgina Vye and Cllr Payne

Chaplin's thought for the day was delivered by Rev Georgina Vye, the key theme as we move in to Advent is to consider doing random acts of kindness, however small, to help and support those in need.

Public Participation Time

There were in the region of 15 members of the public present.

Summary:

2 members of the public spoke.

Subjects were:

- Councillor training and an enquiry as to the whereabouts of a written response to that member of public's specific question at the previous Council meeting in September.

- Contingency arrangements for Council Meetings in the event that more than 35 members of the public attend meetings in future.

Reports from County and District Councillors

Council received County Councillor reports from Cllr Payne, Cllr J Kenton and Cllr Baker. Key themes were Somerset Council's financial health, Hinckley C and winter gritting for major roads.

Police Report

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

2023/127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received and accepted:

Cllr Grief-Page (personal), Cllr Richter (personal) and Cllr Watson (personal).

2023/128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest made:

- Cllr Williams – Agenda item 2023/136a – Chard Carnival Committee member
- Cllr J Kenton – 2023/132 (c) - Unitary Councillor
- Cllr Brown 2023/136 (c)(3) – Forton & Tatworth Parish Councillor

2023/129

Proposed: Cllr Brown Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
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".

2023/130 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Draft minutes from Full Council meeting 11th September 2023 were accepted as an accurate account and members agreed to the Mayor to signing them.

2023/131 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) **Public Engagement Event** – Scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16 January 2024 from 4pm to 7pm in the Auditorium of the Guildhall. The Mayor stressed that he expected all Councillors attend.

(b) **Successful Halloween Night** – Between 700-800 young people attended the event which was a great success.

(c) **Christmas Lights Switch-on 25th November** – Work commenced today on erecting the lights which should be in place by 17th November.

(d) **Request for Councillors Assistance** - The Mayor asked for Councillor volunteers to help at the Christmas Concert on 11th December.

2023/132 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT AND UPDATES:

Council were asked to appoint a representative of Chard Town Council to the Chard and Blackdown Local Area Network (LCN).

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr A Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To appoint the Mayor, Cllr Shortland, as the Council's representative on the Chard and Blackdown LCN.

REPORT:

(a) Chard Stone

Consideration was given to the installation of the hamstone 'Welcome to Chard' sign at the Eastern Gateway and funding to cover the costs.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to reduce the size of the stone and install at the Eastern Gateway within the funds available (£2,783) held in the MTIG EMR.

(b) Speed Indicator Device (SID)

Consideration was given to installing a SID at Snowden Hill.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Hussey
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To engage the public to support a Speedwatch Campaign throughout Chard to maximise the chance of gaining grant funding for Speed Indicator Devices across the Town.

(c) 20mph zone – Henson Park

Consideration was given to extending the 20mph zone at Henson Park.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Brown
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To extend the 20mph zone in Henson Park as proposed due to the close proximity to the school and play parks and the history of accidents in the area. Funding to be taken from the CIL EMR.

(d) Community Plan Update

The update was noted.

(e) Councillor Training

Schedule of training noted and Councillors to revert to Officers with availability to attend courses.

(f) Changes to Committee Meeting Schedule

Consideration was given to changing the meeting schedule up to May 2024 to assist in expediting decisions in a timelier fashion and to support budget preparation/precept setting.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To make the following changes to the meeting schedule:

Amenities & Events Committee

- From Tuesday 16th January 2024 to Tuesday 9th January 2024:
- From Tuesday 19th March 2024 to Tuesday 12th March 2024:
- From Tuesday 21st May 2024 to Tuesday 14th May 2024:

Finance & Audit Committee

- To cancel the meeting on 23rd January 2024

Full Council

- From Monday 15th January 2024 to Tuesday 23rd January 2024

2023/133 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) Council noted the minutes from the Amenities and Events Committee meeting held on 12th September.

2023/134 FINANCE

(a) Financial Information for 7 months to 31st October 2023

Council noted the Income and Expenditure Report for 7 months to 31st October 2023, together with the Balance Sheet as at 1st November 2023 and current Earmarked Reserves.

(b) Movement of Reserves

Consideration was given to movement of reserves to address the required shortfall in General Reserves and cover the funding cost of the refurbishment at Upper Henson Park.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Brown
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To transfer £28,731.21 from EMR Play Equipment to the General Reserve to support the Reserves Policy whereby General Reserve should cover approximately 3 months net expenditure. Also, to transfer £9,705.79 from EMR Play Equipment and £11.563.21 from EMR CIL to Amenities Capital Expenditure to cover payment of the bill from Wicksteed re the Upper Henson Park refurbishment.

(c) Grant Funding Policy

Consideration was given to the revised grant Funding Policy which amalgamates the Community Development Fund Grants and Annual/Support Grants.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Hassan
For: 10 Abstain: 1

RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Grant Funding Policy with the recommended amendments make by the Finance and Audit Committee.

2023/135 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Council noted the next Full Chard Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 29th January 2024 in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

2023/136 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 these items (Item 2023/129 above refers)

9.00pm Cllr Williams left the meeting

(a) Ownership of Stage & Lighting Equipment

9.00pm Cllr Baker declared an interest as Chair of the Carnival Committee but asked to make a statement before leaving the room.

9.03pm Cllr Baker left the meeting

9.03pm Standing Orders were suspended

9.06pm Standing Orders reinstated and the meeting continued

Consideration was given to ownership of the stage and lighting equipment funded by a grant from Historic England in respect of Culturally Chard.

PROPOSAL: Chard Town Council takes ownership of the sound equipment and allows all groups to use it for their events

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Eggins

A named vote was requested by Cllr Eggins.

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Bulmer	Cllr Brown	Cllr Hussey
Cllr Crook	Cllr Hassan	
Cllr Eggins	Cllr Bates	
	Cllr J Kenton	
	Cllr A Kenton	

No resolution was made.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL: Chard Town Council agrees that the equipment was bought for Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited and belongs to them.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Bates

A named voted was requested by Cllr A Kenton

For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Brown	Cllr Bulmer	Cllr Crook
Cllr Hassan		Cllr Eggins
Cllr Bates		Cllr Hussey
Cllr J Kenton		
Cllr A Kenton		

RESOLVED: The stage and lighting equipment was bought for Chard & District Carnival Committee Limited and belongs to them.

9.14pm Cllr Williams and Cllr Baker returned to the room.

(b) Councillor request for leave of absence

Consideration was given to a Councillor request for leave of absence.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr A Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To grant Cllr Grief-Page leave of absence for a period of 6 months.

(c) Town Clerk Report Confidential

(1) Upgrade of Fire & Security System to meet Insurance criteria

Consideration was given to the quotations received to upgrade the Fire & Security System in the Guildhall.

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To award Coomber Security Systems Ltd the contract to upgrade the Fire & Security System to meet the Council's Insurance

Company requirements and cover the cost of £9,726 from the Guildhall Sinking Fund.

(2) Chard United Changing Rooms

Consideration was given to the request to become joint signatory, as landowner, with Chard United to the application for grant funding from the Football Foundation.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to pursue the funding and to establish a Task and Finish Group to ensure quotes for work are acceptable and the project is tightly managed.

The Task & Finish Group will consist of Cllr Baker, Cllr Shortland, Town Clerk, Operations Manager, Nathan Turnbull from Somerset Council (re s.106 funding) and representative(s) of Chard United.

In view Cllr Brown's declaration of interest in item 2023/136 (c)(3), the Mayor switched items 2023/136 (c)(3) and 2023/136 (d).

9.17pm The RFO & Grants Officer and Operation Manager left the meeting

(d) Probation period of staff member

Consideration was given to whether the Town Clerk had satisfactorily completed the probation period as stipulated in his employment contract.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To confirm to the Town Clerk in writing that he has satisfactorily completed his probation period.

9.21pm Cllr Brown left the meeting and the RFO & Grants Officer and Operations Manager returned to the meeting.

(c) (3) Cemetery works/ Sale of Land

Consideration was given to the purchase by the Town Council of the share of land at the cemetery currently owned by Tatworth & Forton Parish Council (T&FPC), where an offer had previously been made by the Town Council. In addition, consideration was also given to how best to move forward with the subsequent development of the cemetery.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Crook
Unanimous

RESOLVED: To accept the counter proposal from T&FPC for purchase of their 20% share of the land, with funds to cover the purchase being taken

from the EMR Cemetery. In addition, to establish a Task & Finish Group to progress the development of the cemetery to create more burial plots.

The Task & Finish Group will consist of Cllr Baker, Cllr Kenton, the Town Clerk and the Operations Manager.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 9.32pm.

MAYOR: **DATE:** 6/2/24