CHARD TOWN COUNCIL
The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
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Mayor: Toria Bates and Temporary Proper Officer Neil Bloomfield

CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, TA20 1PP on Monday 17th June 2024 commencing at 7:00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates (Mayor), Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Grief-Page, Cllr Hussey, Cllr A Kenton (Deputy Mayor), Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Richter, Cllr Shortland Cllr Williams and Cllr Webb

OFFICERS & OTHERS PRESENT:
Neil Broomfield Temporary Proper Officer, Beverley Newman DSO, Rev. Georgina Vye (Chaplain), Cllr Wale (Somerset Councillor) & Cllr Payne (Somerset Councillor)

Chaplain's 'Thought for the Day'
Presented by Rev. Vye.
The Main theme for the thought of the day was: Reflection on who we are as: Chard Town Council, as the community of Chard and as individuals. With a focus on the qualities of; kindness, care, grace and humility.

Public Participation Time
There were 6 members of the public present.
3 questions were asked, 1 by proxy in writing to the Proper Officer

The first question was two-fold; first highlighting an inaccuracy of a previous question asked at public participation at the Full Council meeting from the 20th May 2024 and then further highlighting the requirements for Cllrs to declare an in interest and secondly requiring confirmation of any virement of funds for the SALC grant related project.
The proper Officer sated he had not released any funds for this project and agreed to provide this confirmation in writing.

The second question asked if the recruitment of the permanent Town Clerk would be undertaken to the letter of the law. The Proper Officer replied 'Yes'.

The third question: Are the Council spending money in a way they should be for the benefit of Chard?

Somerset Councilor reports.
Updates were received by Cllr Wale, Cllr Kenton & Cr Baker.

2024/94 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
The following apologies were received and accepted Cllr Crook (personal), Cllr Hassan, (Work) Cllr Watson, (Personal)

2024/95 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**
No declaration made at this time

2024/96 **EXCLUSION OF MEMBERSOF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed: Cllr Shortland Seconded Cllr Bulmer
Unanimous

RESOLVED: That will exclude members of the press and public in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2024/97 **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Proposed Cllr J Kenton Seconded Cllr Shortland
For: 5 Abstain: 6 Against: 1

RESOLVED: to make the following amendment to: agenda item 2024/31 a), Minutes from March 18th 2024 to delete the word '**NOT,** for minutes 4th April 2024 to show Cllr Kenton declared an interest as a member the Town Team not the Town Carnival and to agenda item **2024/53** minutes 8th April 2024 so the resolution reads:
To accept the offer made by the applicant to be employed as the Proper Officer and give delegated authority to the Mayor and RFO to negotiate terms of employment.
and for these sets of minutes and 20th May 2024 minutes be agreed as an accurate account.

2024/98 Council noted the minutes from the Finance and Audit meeting12th December and the fact the Resolution to 2023/60 a) wasn't actioned:

RESOLVED: *To accept the draft budget on the basis that a further Councillor workshop is conducted in January to take account of the output of the Tree Survey and the need to deliver services previously undertaken by Somerset Council, which may result in revisions being made before presentation to Full Council.*

2024/99 REVIEW OF POLICIES

It was noted that due to; a) The Scheme of delegation requiring changes - as stipulated at Full Council 20th May, and b) the need to defer the Financial regulations as significant updates are required.

Proposed Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr A Kenton

For:8 Abstain: 4

RESOLVED: That the Finance & Audit Policy Group will review these to submit for approval to Full Council July Monday 22nd 2024

2024/100 STANDING ORDERS

Proposed Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr A Kenton

For:9 Abstain: 2 Against:1

RESOLVED: Not to consider the revisions of the Standing Orders at this time as both original and revised documents are required to a comparison.

2024/101 INTERNAL AUDIT

Proposed Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr Grief-Page

For: 10 Abstain: 2

RESOLVED: For Council to adopt the Internal Audit Report 2023/24

2024/102 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 203/24 AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2023/24

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Shortland

For: 7 Abstain: 2 Against: 3

RESOLVED: For Council to go into Closed session to discuss an aspect of this agenda item that may have impacted on insurance had it been discussed with member of the public present.

Discussion

Proposed: Cllr Seconded

Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to come out of Closed session to continue open discussion on this agenda item.

(a) Proposed: Cllr Baker — Seconded Cllr Grief-Page

For: 6 — Abstain: 3 — Against: 3

RESOLVED: For Council to approve all numbers apart from number 8 of the section 1 Annual Governance Statement document 2023/24, to state Council are unable to put a remedy in place for this and sign the document.

(b) Proposed Cllr Baker — Seconded Cllr A Kenton

For:10 — Abstain: 1

RESOLVED: For Council to approve and sign Section 2 Accounting Statements 2023/24.

2094/103 CONFIRMATION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSURANCE COVER IN RESPECT OF ALL UNSURED RISKS:

Council noted all renewal details

2024/104 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Council noted and agreed the table of annual subscriptions

2024/105 BANK MANDATE

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer — Seconded Cllr J Kenton

For: 7 — Abstain: 5

RESOLVED: For Council to agree to issue a Debit card to both Temporary Town Clerk / Proper Officer and Operations Manager in the knowledge reiterated by the DSO at this meeting that debit cards have do not upper limit spend restraints.

2024/106 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS:

Proposed: Cllr Baker — Seconded Cllr J Kenton

Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to accept the month of July schedule of meetings and agree the rest of the council year meetings at the Full Council meeting 22nd July 2024

2024/107 RECRUITMENT OF A PERMANENT TOWN CLERK

This item was withdrawn as it has been scheduled to discuss under Confidential 'Staffing Matters'

2024/108 RECRUITMENT OF A RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER (RFO)

Council noted the HR Committee had instigated a recruitment process for a Locum RFO and that according to the internal audit 2022/23 it is good practice to have the RFO as a separate role to that of the Town Clerk.

2024/109 **PROPER OFFICER UPDATES**

(a) **Information Centre & Guildhall Entrance**

Cllrs Baker and J Kenton declared an interest and left the room as if agreed this agenda item would necessitate a request to Somerset Council planning. Cllr Baker is the Chair of Somerset Planning & Cllr J Kenton is a member of the Somerset Planning.

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to reaffirm its commitment to this project and seek the necessary quotes.

Cllrs Baker and J Kenton re-entered the meeting room.

(b) **Staffing Matter**

Cllr Baker and Cllr J Kenton declared an interest and left the room as their capacity as Somerset Councillors affords them information relating to the devolution process currently underway.

Proposed: Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Bulmer
Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to increase the number of Amenities operatives by one and to take the funds for this from the Devolution EMR.

Cllrs Baker and J Kenton re-entered the meeting room

2024/110 **Notice of Motion from Councillor Baker – Community Governance Review**

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to suspend Standing Orders so a member of the public could speak.

The suggestion put to council on this item was to seek collaboration with the relevant neighbouring parishes before commencing this project.

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED: For Council to resume Standing Orders

Proposed: Cllr Hussey Seconded Cllr Richter
For: 9 Abstain: 2 Against: 1

RESOLVED: For Council to agree:

- A Community Governance Review is needed,
- To set up a working group to apply for a community governance review with a view to apply to the Unitary Council who have responsibility for undertaking Community Governance Reviews
- To report back to Full council on progress of this work

The following Cllrs agreed to be part of the working group:

- Cllr Baker
- Cllr Bulmer
- Cllr Hussey
- Cllr Grief-Page
- Cllr Williams

It was further agreed by Council that other Cllrs not present at tonight's meeting could be members of the group.

2024/111 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Full Chard Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 22nd July 2024 and will take place in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

2024/112 **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**

The Clerk gave a verbal report to council and advised the HR Committee had resolved the following but brought it to council for ratification.

1. **STAFFING MATTERS**
   a) It was **RESOLVED** that Work Nest be appointed as the Councils HR advisors on a five-year contract (3 year break clause) at a fixed cost of £3,051.25pa

AGREED

b) It was **RESOLVED** the Operations Manager contract be amended and brought into line with the scheme of delegation and that in the absence of the Town Clerk he be appointed Deputy Clerk and Proper Officer. The job title amended to Operations Manager & Deputy Clerk.

AGREED

c) It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk (temporary) contract, due to end 8th July 2024 be extended by a further 3 months.

AGREED

d) It was **RESOLVED** a locum RFO would be sought soonest to allow council to recruit a permanent post holder.

AGREED

2. Complaints/Discipline

a) The Clerk gave a verbal update on the number of current complaints.
b) In regards the ongoing complaint and the process thus far. The council resolved that the process would be completed in accordance with the councils policy. External Cllrs would be used if necessary.

AGREED

END

