CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
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Mayor: Cllr Martin Carnell Town Clerk: Paul Russell

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Minutes of the Chard Town Council meeting held in the Guildhall Auditorium, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP on Monday 26th September 2022 commencing at 7:00pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Brown (Chair), Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Crook, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hawkes, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton and Cllr Richter.

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Russell, Town Clerk, and four members of the public.

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting all those present observed a minute silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

Public Participation Time
Four members of the public were present. One representation was made to Council by the Cotley Hunt.

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

Police Report
The police were not present.

2022/62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Carnell (personal), Cllr Grief-Page (illness), Cllr Hasson (work), Cllr Jones (personal) and Cllr Watson (personal).

Apologies were also given for County Cllr Wade who was attending another parish council meeting.

2022/63 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
The Deputy Mayor thanked all Councillors for their support during the period of mourning following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

2022/64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Cllr Baker: Personal – Chard Carnival Committee, Chard Town Team and agenda items 70(e) and (g);
- Cllr Brown: Personal – Chard Carnival Committee;
- Cllr Kenton: Personal – Chard Town Team.

2022/65 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

That as certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information Full Council **RESOLVED** 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 under Confidential Matters 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.

2022/66 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on the 11th July 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Richter
For: 9
Abstention: 1

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on the 22nd August 2022 be amended as follows and referred back to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk and Cllr Hawkes to negotiate with relevant suppliers a new gas contract and refer the new electricity contract back to Chard Town Council for approval.

2022/67 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Councillors noted the report from the Town Clerk:

(a) **The Somerset County Council Chair's Awards for Service to the Community 2022/23 –** Council noted that a nomination had been requested. Nominations would be submitted to the Town Clerk to forward for consideration.

(b) **Council Tax Reduction Proposals –** Council noted that a consultation was currently being undertaken on a revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme by Somerset County Council.

(c) **Somerset Day –** Council noted that a 'Communities Group' was being set up. Councillors would submit any suggestions.

(d) **Cemetery Car Park –** Council noted the request received by its Solicitor and, following discussion, agreed to obtain further information and consider the matter at the next Amenities & Events Committee meeting.

(e) **Upper Henson Play Area Consultation –** Council noted that this consultation event was taking place from 5pm to 7.30pm in the Guildhall on Wednesday 28th September 2022.

(f) **Conference –** Council noted that a parish and town council conference to discuss unitary was being held on 4th October in Yeovil.

(g) **Energy Costs –** Council noted that a new energy contract had been entered into with West Mercia Energy for all Council's energy supplies. The revised energy rates from 1st October 2022 until 31st March 2023 would be 21.1p/kWh for electricity and 7.5p/kWh for gas.

(h) **External Audit –** It was noted that Chard Town Council's external audit had been completed. No concerns had been raised.

2022/68 COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) **Committee Appointments –** Council considered the appointment of additional Members to its Committees.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED that the following appointments be ratified:

- Amenities & Events – Cllr Bates, Cllr Crook, Cllr Hawkes and Cllr J Kenton;
- Finance & Audit – Cllr Bates.

(b) **Committee Meeting Resolutions –** Council noted the resolutions passed at both the Amenities & Events Committee meeting held on 19th July 2022 and the Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on 26th July 2022.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED that the minute relating to matter raised in the public participation time item on the Finance & Audit Committee be removed from the minutes of the Committee.

(c) **Culturally Chard –** Council considered the challenge received from South Somerset District Council regarding the appointment of Cllr Eggins by Chard Town Council on to the Culturally Chard Steering Group.

Following a lengthy debate regarding the challenge and Chard Town Council's representation on the Steering Group the following resolution was passed:

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Bates:
For: 5
Against: 4
Abstention: 1

RESOLVED that Chard Town Council accepted that it had made a mistake regarding the appointment of Cllr Eggins to represent Chard Town Council on the Culturally Chard Steering Group and would withdraw the appointment with immediate effect.

2022/69 UNITARY AUTHORITY

Council noted the verbal update provided regarding progress towards the creation of a unitary authority for Somerset. Vesting day would be 1st April 2023.

2022/70 COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) **Civility & Respect Initiative –** Council considered the report regarding the Civility & Respect initiative jointly developed by NALC and SLCC.

Following discussion, the following resolution was passed:

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous

RESOLVED to defer adopting the Civility & Respect pledge until the following actions have been completed:

- A training programme for Councillors and staff has been developed and adopted;
- The revised Code of Conduct has been adopted by Council;
- The required policies that are part of the pledge, including the Member/Officer protocol, have been reviewed and agreed by the Finance & Audit Committee prior to approval of the Full Council.

(b) **Football Club Lease –** Council considered entering into the Lease with Chard United Football Club in relation to the new sports changing rooms at Jocelyn Park.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED to formally enter into the lease with Chard United Football Club related to the new sports changing rooms facility at Jocelyn Park.

It was further agreed that the Town Council would work with Chard United Football Club regarding energy usage and the development of a handover pack.

(c) **Energy Review Report –** Consider considered the report compiled by Cllr Hawkes outlining possible options to address the impact of the energy cost increases.

Following discussion, the following resolution was passed:

Proposed: Cllr Hawkes Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED:

- That a Task & Finish Group be set up;
- That Cllr Baker, Cllr Hawkes, the Senior Caretaker and the Town Clerk be charged with identifying and implementing any options that would reduce energy usage and loss within the budget allocated for the Guildhall;
- That any major schemes be referred to the appropriate Committee and Full Council for ratification prior to implementation.

Council formally agreed to extend the meeting to 9:30pm to consider the remaining items on the agenda. It was agreed to consider one confidential item immediately.

2022/71 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

As certain items to be discussed included the consideration of exempt information it was **RESOLVED** under Item 2022/65 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 would 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

(a) **Councillor Request –** Council considered the request for an extended leave of absence.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

RESOLVED to grant an extended leave of absence to Cllr Jones due to personal reasons until 26th March 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Richter Seconded: Cllr Hawkes
Unanimous

RESOLVED to returned back to the main agenda.

2022/72 COUNCIL MATTERS (Con't)

(a) **Community Plan –** Council considered the report to develop a Steering Group to commence the Community Plan. The Plan would be developed over the next few months with a completion target of June 2023. It offered significant opportunities to consult and engage with the local community.

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Hawkes
Unanimous

RESOLVED:

- To appoint four representatives from the Town Council to sit on the Steering Group;
- To seek a political balance of three members from the Liberal Democrat Party and one member from wither the Green Party or the Independent to represent Council on this Steering Group;
- To adopt the draft Terms of Reference subject to amending item 5 to "shall have a budget to be determined";
- To set up an initial Steering Group meeting of the four Councillors as yet to be appointed to appoint the additional Steering Group Members to represent the Community.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.36pm. The outstanding agenda items would be considered at an additional Council meeting, date to be agreed.

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MAYOR: **DATE:**