

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 22nd JANUARY 2025** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors A Hall (Mayor) Presiding
C Parker (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: B Bailey A Gibbs
J Bradford A Ineson
P Bullivant G Jennings
R Buscombe M Joyce
L Cooke P Parker
D Corney-Walker M Ryan
T Corney-Walker L Wood
C Davieson N Yabsley

Officers in attendance: Phil Rowe Town Clerk
Sam Scott Deputy Town Clerk
Linda McGuirk Principal Administrator
Nigel Canham Communications Advisor

By invitation Carol Bunday, Freewoman
Mike Hocking, Freeman

Also, present 4 x Members of the public

358. WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed all those present and invited Councillor L. Cooke to give a reading. Councillor Cooke recited the poem 'If' by Rudyard Kipling.

359. APOLOGIES

All members were present. Apologies were noted from District Councillors Jackie Hook, Robert Hayes and Martin Wrigley MP.

360. INTERESTS

None declared.

361. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13th November 2024 were received and signed as a correct record.

362. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Council received the following Question from Mr Tom Pearce:–

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

*In light of the continuous issue of abandoned trolleys in the River Lemon and hedgerows around the town, will Newton Abbot Town Council formally request Asda Supermarkets add a coin return mechanism and connecting chains to their trolleys?
A similar system is used at the Lidl store in Kingsteignton and prevents this antisocial behaviour issue.*

It was agreed that the Clerk should draft a letter to the Head Office of Asda to address the ongoing issue with shopping trolleys, as well as other matters affecting the town. It was further suggested that the letter could be a joint correspondence with the owner of the River Lemon.

363. **REPORTS OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

The Mayor invited County and District Councillors to provide a report on their recent activity in Newton Abbot.

District and County Councillor J Bradford reported on issues in which she has had direct involvement:

- Emails regarding parking issues, potholes, the Bradley Mills development and the traffic congestion in the town.
- Attended a special meeting of Devon County Council (DCC) on the Devolution White Paper.

Cllr R Buscombe asked if the County Council had identified a preferred solution.

District and County Councillor P Bullivant reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Attended a special meeting of DCC on the Devolution White Paper and stressed the importance of the Town Council taking part in the discussions.
- Outlined his Adult Social Care & Health responsibilities.
- Announced there will be an additional £83 million funding to repair potholes.

Councillor M Joyce asked if the County Council are in discussion with the primary care networks.

Councillor R Buscombe asked about the combined authority model.

Councillor P Parker asked why the May elections were being delayed and whether Cllr Bullivant had supported the decision.

District Councillor C Parker reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Planning applications including the Buckland Road application which has now been withdrawn.
- Pothole complaints.

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

- Devolution.

District Councillor R Buscombe advised he wished to talk in detail about the Devolution White paper and would defer his report until agenda item 13 'The English Devolution White paper'.

District Councillor M Ryan reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Continued to receive complaints regarding Queen Street.

The Mayor thanked the District and County Councillors for their reports as they provided a valuable insight into the issues within Newton Abbot.

364. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor updated Members on recent engagements which he and the Mayoress had attended as outlined in the report circulated prior to the meeting.

The Deputy Mayor had enjoyed attending the Pantomime.

365. **PRECEPT 2025/26**

The Council discussed the recommendation made by the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on 15th January 2025, Minute number 25/01(352a).

The Mayor invited the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee, Councillor Colin Parker, to report on the Precept for 2025/26. Councillor Parker reminded Members that the budget and Precept reflected the needs and aspirations of the community, had been generated following a great deal of detailed work on behalf of Councillors and Officers and recapped on the increase required to meet the growth in services to be provided to the town. Councillors were also reminded that it was the statutory duty of the Council to approve a Precept for 2025/26. The Chairperson referred Members to the recommendation made to Council as set out in Minute 25/01(352a).

It was proposed by Councillor C Parker and seconded by Councillor D Corney Walker that a Precept in the sum of **£1,698,731** be adopted for the year 2025/26.

Arising from the above discussion, accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that a Precept of **£1,698,731** for the year 2025/26 be approved representing an *increase* of £8.79 p.a. or 0.17p per week (representing an annual payment of £190.67 / £15.89 per month / £3.66p per week) or 4.83% for a Band D property in Newton Abbot and that Teignbridge District Council be requested to collect on the Town Council's behalf the sum of **£1,698,731**.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the Town Clerk and the RFO for their work to support members in the preparation of the budget.

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

366. **POLICIES**

Consideration was given to reviewing the Council's Standing Orders. The Town Clerk reminded members it was their statutory duty to review Standing Orders annually. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Council's Standing Orders be hereby approved and adopted.

367. **CALENDAR OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2025 – 2026**

Consideration was given to a draft calendar of Events, Council and Committee meetings for the year 2025/26, previously circulated.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the calendar of Council and Committee Meetings and Events for the year 2025/26 as submitted to the Council, be hereby approved and adopted.

368. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 19th November 2024, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor M Joyce, were received and approved.
- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 10th December 2024, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor M Joyce were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 7th January 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor M Joyce were received and approved.
- d) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & Audit Committee**, held on 15th January 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor C Parker were received and approved.

369. **STRENGTHING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND**

The Council gave consideration to formulating a Council online response to the Government's consultation on the introduction of measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England.

Arising from consideration of the matter it was

RESOLVED that delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to prepare and submit a response on behalf of the Council to the Government's consultation on the

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

introduction of measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England

370. THE ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER

Consideration was given to the following:-

- A. The summary of the Government's Devolution White Paper; and
- B. A paper by the Town Clerk entitled The Case for Strengthening Parish and Town Councils in Response to the Government's Devolution White Paper.

Both of which had been previously circulated.

Arising from a detailed debate on the items it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Council notes the Government's Devolution White Paper;
- (b) that the Council endorses the view to oppose a single unitary authority for Devon as the only solution;
- (c) that the Council writes to the Government supporting the following elements of the White Paper:-
 - i. The introduction of genuine devolution to local areas;
 - ii. The provision of remote access to formal council meetings;
 - iii. Reform of the standards system, including sanctions;
 - iv. Enhancement of the Right to Bid legislation becoming the Right to Buy;
 - v. The overhaul of the local audit system;
 - vi. The imperative that town and parish councils retain their local proportion of CIL to continue addressing the specific needs of their communities;
 - vii. Encourages the Government to establish a legal framework that gives parish councils first refusal on public amenities and green spaces in new developments which would ensure these resources remain accessible and well-maintained; and
 - viii. Improved working relationships with parish and town councils.
- (d) that a Working Party be created to consider all aspects and implications of the Devolution White Paper as it affects Devon and report back to the Council as necessary.

371. VICARY MILL LEAT

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

The Council gave consideration to a request to grant authority to the Mayor and Town Clerk to agree and sign an Easement with Teignbridge District Council for the diversion of the Vicary Mill Leat through Council owned land to the River Lemon.

The Mayor invited Freeman Mr Mike Hocking to address the Council. Mr Hocking spoke about the importance of protecting the Leat and liaising with the Environment Agency to ensure the weir continues to flow.

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that authority be hereby granted to the Mayor and Town Clerk to agree and sign an Easement with Teignbridge District Council for the diversion of the Vicary Mill Leat through the Council owned Bradley Community Garden to the River Lemon.

Cllrs J Bradford and P Parker abstained from voting.

372. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

373. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March 2025.

Meeting closed at hours 20:10 hours.

Chairperson (Mayor).....Date.....

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....