

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ONLINE WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021** AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillors R Jenks (Mayor) Presiding  
M Joyce (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: P Bullivant D Howe  
Mrs C Bunday C Jenks  
D Corney-Walker Mrs A Jones  
Mrs K Crout C Parker  
R Hall M Pilkington  
R Hayes M E Ryan  
M Hocking Mrs L Sheffield

Invited Guests: Rev Gareth Regan  
In attendance: County & District Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook

Officers in attendance: Philip Rowe Town Clerk  
Samantha Scott Deputy Town Clerk & RFO  
Sally Henley Town Development Manager  
Nigel Canham Communications Advisor  
Alexandra Robinson Principal Administrator

677. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Rev Gareth Regan to open the meeting with prayers.

678. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Colin Davieson.

679. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

680. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were received and signed as a correct record.

681. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

682. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Due to the pandemic, there had not been any civic duties for the Mayor since the previous meeting. The Mayor did however hope this situation would change from 12<sup>th</sup> April when high streets would re-open.

683. **MAYORAL/CLERK ACTIONS TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING BETWEEN MEETINGS**

None.

684. **PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCES**

Further to minute 20/05(510) the Deputy Town Clerk requested the Council to consider waiving the Pavement Café Licence fees for a further period of 12 months as a show of support for town centre businesses.

Members discussed the situation regarding the potential use of the performance area of Golden Lion Square, and the areas available to the Golden Lion public house to trade externally from its premises.

Arising from a discussion on the matter it was

**RESOLVED** that the Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) be hereby authorised to suspend the annual Pavement Café Licence for a period of 12 months for both renewals and new applications.

*Councillor Mrs Karen Crout declared a personal interest in the item where it referred to the Golden Lion public house.*

685. **AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

The Town Clerk reported on the meeting of the Air Quality Working Group held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The meeting was attended by seven Members of the Council along with Mr Colin Bignall, Environmental Health Officer, Teignbridge District to discuss 25 generic measures to attempt to improve air quality in Newton Abbot.

The Working Party worked through all 25 measures expressing the Council's support or otherwise for the potential measure. The outcome was that Mr Bignall would take on-board all the measures supported by the Council and prepare a business case for those identified as a priority with associated cost implications and report back to the Council.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk's report on the meeting of the Air Quality Working Group held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be hereby received and noted.

686. **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS**

Arising from the meeting of Councillors with representatives of the ChargeWorks company held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the Town Clerk reported that an Electric Vehicle Charging report had been commissioned and recently received.

The report included details and background on seven options for the provision of electric vehicle charging points in Newton Abbot. Due to the complexity of the report the Town Clerk reported that a further meeting with Members would be arranged to discuss the options together with a question-and-answer session with the report's authors. Consequently, it was

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Town Clerk on Electric vehicle Charging Points be noted, and a further meeting be awaited.

687. **RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

Further to minute 21/03(669) further consideration was given to a report by the Town Clerk (previously circulated) on the resumption of in-person meetings from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Members had received various information on the issue which had been issued by various bodies following the letter of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from Luke Hall MP on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The letter explained

that the Government had decided not to extend The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020 to allow remote meetings on or after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The Mayor explained that the Hertfordshire County Council vs Secretary of State MHCLG Court Declaration would be made during week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The case challenges the Government's interpretation of councillors having to be physically present in a location to make decisions and that remotely present is therefore not permitted. Should the challenge be successful it might be possible from 7<sup>th</sup> May to continue to hold decision making meetings remotely, however, the Council needs to come to a decision on how it intends to conduct its business assuming remote meetings are not lawful.

Following a lengthy and detailed discussion on the matter it was

**RESOLVED** that on the basis remote decision-making meetings are not lawful on and after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 all standing committees be suspended on a temporary basis; non-urgent items of business be deferred; the Council meets monthly; commencement times of Council meetings be kept under review to be able to accommodate urgent business that would ordinarily be considered by the standing committees.

#### 688. **INFORMAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor reminded Members that the Informal Meeting would be held this year on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April to discuss positions within the Council for 2021/22.

Arising from discussions with officers, he proposed that as the meeting would be held remotely and in a departure from previous meetings, the Deputy Town Clerk and the Principal Administrator would be present to 'host' the meeting on the Zoom platform.

The Council expressed its support for the Mayor's proposals for the Informal Meeting.

#### 689. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor invited Chairmen to report on matters in relation to their Committees or Sub-committees during the period of COVID-19 Government restrictions.

A. Councillor Mrs Lesley Sheffield, Chairman of Community & Heritage Committee reported on the following issues:

- The Museum would open to the public from 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 on the same basis as previously in that slots would be pre-booked for six persons using the Eventbrite medium;
- The Museum would be holding term time slots for the local schools, details of which would be published at a later date.

B. Councillor Colin Parker, Chairman of Finance & Audit Committee reported that the only issue he wished to draw to the Council's attention would be the loss of income from the waiving of the Pavement Café Licenses, an initiative which he totally supported.

C. Councillor David Howe, Chairman of Planning Committee reported that Councillors continued to exercise themselves in considering individual applications within their wards. However, he had received feedback from one Councillor that it appeared non-ward Councillors were reluctant to comment on applications outside of their wards as they would have done at face-to-face Planning Committee meetings. He also

mentioned carbon reduction initiatives contained within the various development plans.

D. Councillor Mrs Carol Bunday, Chairman of the Events Sub-Committee reported on the following:

- Plans for a special commemoration of the centenaries of both the Newton Abbot Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Newton Abbot War Memorial at the Remembrance Day service in November;
- The shopping bags giveaway in the town centre from 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The Mayor thanked the Chairmen for their updates to the Council and acknowledged the continued work and efforts during the Government restrictions.

#### **690. 20 MPH REVIEW OF SPEED RESTRICTIONS FOR NEWTON ABBOT**

The Mayor invited the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mike Joyce to update Members on a recent meeting held to review the proposed speed restrictions in Newton Abbot.

The Deputy Mayor reported that he had attended a meeting of the Speed Management Working Group on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 which was attended by 18 Councillors of the various local councils. It had been decided to formulate three working groups each dealing with the following issue, design; data collection; and community engagement and consultation. Membership of the working groups would be announced by the County Council shortly. The Council noted Councillor Joyce's report.

#### **691. NEWTON'S PLACE - UPDATE**

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to give an update on matters relating to Newton's Place.

The Council was informed that in common with the Museum, Newton's Place would be opened to the public from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May and bookings for the community rooms would be available from that date. To support that, the new Newton's Place website would be going live on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

The Town Clerk also reported that the case for the proposed defibrillator at Newton's Place had been fitted and connected to the power supply. The defibrillator itself had been ordered and was hoped to be delivered within the next week.

#### **692. LATE CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Mike Joyce reported that the Council's two speed indication devices had been deployed three times in two locations over the past weeks and that he was pleased to announce that Community Speed Watch would resume from 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021. In this latter regard, he was hopeful the local Police would approve the locations for speedwatch activities very soon.

Councillor Mike Ryan wished his thanks to be recorded to the Mayor and staff for their organisation and facilitating of the remote meetings during the pandemic lockdowns. He appreciated it was all very new to everyone and thanked all for their efforts in ensuring the business of the Council was maintained during this period.

Councillors David Corney-Walker and Colin Parker referred to the submitted report of County and District Councillor Gordon Hook and expressed their disappointment of the County Council's likely decision not to approve the reduction of the speed limit on Shaldon Road from 40 mph to 30 mph. Many local individuals and groups had

supported the reduction on the basis the road was very much an urban road rather than rural in nature.

Nigel Canham, Comms Adviser, referred to initiatives he was working on relating to publicity for the waiving of the Pavement Café Licences; opening of the high street on 12<sup>th</sup> April; electric vehicle points; and a potential arboretum for Newton Abbot.

Sally Henley, Town Development Manager, also referred to initiatives relating to the re-opening of the high streets on 12<sup>th</sup> April, efforts to raise the profile of the event on social media, and publicity which would be appearing in the information kiosks in the town.

The Town Clerk took the opportunity to thank the Mayor on his and the staff's behalf for his two terms of office and in particular the second term during the strange times brought about by the pandemic. All staff were appreciative of the support received by the Mayor and all Councillors over the past twelve months.

In response, Councillor Janks explained that he considered it had been a pleasure to serve the Council and the people of Newton Abbot. He had enjoyed being Mayor, had found it interesting. He was of the view that Councillors and the people had supported one another, and the collegiality had been terrific.

**693. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Council would be the Annual Meeting to be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

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Chairman (Mayor)