

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2021**  
AT 6.30 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors M Joyce (Mayor) Presiding  
Mrs C Bunday (Deputy Mayor)

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

Invited Guests: Rev Patrick Parkes  
In attendance via zoom: District Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook  
Kate Benham ACTion for Teignbridge  
Nick Knight, Mid Devon Advertiser

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

12. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Kate Benham ACTion for Teignbridge. The Mayor noted that it was the first face to face meeting held since the start of the Pandemic and the first meeting held in Newton's Place.

The Mayor welcomed and congratulated the new Town Councillor for Bradley Ward, Councillor Alex Hall, noting that he was the youngest ever Member of the Town Council. He also congratulated Councillor Colin Parker on his election to Chairman of Teignbridge District Council and Councillor Phil Bullivant on his election to Devon County Council.

The Mayor invited Rev Patrick Parkes to open the meeting with prayers.

13. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Rob Hayes.

14. **INTERESTS**

Councillors M Hocking and Mrs A Jones gave notice of their intention to declare personal interests in Minute 22 below.

15. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April and the Annual Council Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were received and signed as correct records.

16. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

## 17. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor invited the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Carol Bunday to report on her recent engagement at Southlands Residential Home. The Deputy Mayor informed Members of their recent 'virtual' cycle ride across Britain which had already raised several hundred pounds for their charity Kingscare, Kingsteignton and had also benefitted from the improved fitness and wellbeing among their participants.

The Mayor reported on some of his engagements, highlighting the most enjoyable visit to Horsemanship for Health and the Presentation evenings for the two Devon Air Ambulance Landing sites at Sandringham and Decoy. The Devon Air Ambulance presented the Town Council with a certificate of appreciation for their support and donations towards the project. The Mayor expressed his sincere thanks to Mrs Karen Jenks for her work and support in connection with raising funding for the landing sites.

The Mayor reported on the opening of Shaldon Bakery and the new Race Lounge in Queen Street, both of which were new franchises to Newton Abbot and were an encouraging sign of renewed economic vibrancy in the town. Newton's Place had formally acknowledged the installation of the Defibrillator unit, as donated by Jay's Aim and one of only three units fully accessible 24/7 in the town.

In closing his report, the Mayor remarked on the Most Reverend Nick McKinnel, Bishop of Plymouth's recent visit to Newton's Place where he was overwhelmed by the transformation and restoration of the former church.

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

The Town Clerk reported on the following actions taken:

1. The contract for the Christmas Lights had been extended by two years at discounted fee;
2. The Council had purchased a replacement petrol lawnmower;
3. The Council had offered match funding in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to support the services provided by Newton Abbot Security Trust (NAST) and the purchase of two new CCTV cameras; and
4. The sourcing of a new storage facility in Bradley Lane.

Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Council endorsed the actions of the Town Clerk, taken since the last meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

## 19. **RESUMPTION OF MEETINGS**

Further to minutes 21/03(669) and 21/04(687) further consideration was given to the resumption of the Council's Calendar of meetings from 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 as part of the Government's 'Road Map' and lifting of restrictions. The Principal Administrator outlined possible options for the Council to consider in keeping with the Government restrictions and to ensure that Newton's Place continued to provide a covid safe environment for Councillors, staff and visitors. Following consideration among Members, accordingly was:

**RESOLVED** that subject to the Government advice regarding the lifting of restrictions in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic from 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 that the Council delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to resume meetings in accordance with covid-safe practices.

## 20. **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 re-opened to the public on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 using the booking system and noted it had been busy with visitors particularly, during the half-term week;
- The Museum Curator would be retiring from the Council after over 30 years of service.

B. Councillor Colin Parker, Chairman of Finance & Audit Committee reported on the following issues:

- The Internal Audit Report and AGAR to be reported at a Special Meeting of the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021; and
- New card payment system to be installed.

C. Councillor David Howe, Chairman of Planning Committee reported on the ongoing difficulties in the planning process with the Principal Planning Authority who were subject to staff shortages, increased volume of applications and more recently technical difficulties in publicising information via the portal.

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

- Due to the ongoing restrictions in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the uncertainty about when these might be lifted it had not been possible to organise additional events, however the Band Concerts would be going ahead and the Events Co-ordinator was working on preparations for the Town Criers Competition;
- Preparations would be made for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022 and
- The shopping bags giveaway in the town centre was a great success, with positive comments and appreciation from local shoppers.

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

## 21. **20 MPH SPEED RESTRICTIONS SCHEME FOR NEWTON ABBOT**

The Mayor updated Members on the working group meetings hosted by Devon County Council to which he, the Clerk and Principal Administrator had been attending. The working group had reached the point they wished to produce a Perception Survey to seek views of road users in Newton Abbot prior to drafting a proposal scheme.

Following from Councillor Bullivant's enquiries as a Member of Devon County Council the Town Council had been invited to provide a proposal of roads to be specifically included or excluded from the scheme. Following a lengthy discussion among Members, accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillors would be invited to prepare a map identifying roads to be specifically included or excluded from the proposed 20mph speed restriction scheme for Newton Abbot. The date to be advised.

## 22. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Mayor invited Members to consider applications for Financial Assistance, a summary of which had been previously circulated.

The Committee received the following Applications for consideration:

<u>Financial Assistance</u>	
1. Action on Climate in Teignbridge CIC	£1,500.00
2. Green Futures	£500.00
3. Newton Abbot 5 <sup>th</sup> Brownies	£901.50

Following consideration, it was

**RESOLVED** that Applications for **Financial Assistance** listed as 1, 2 and 3 be hereby granted.

*Councillors M Hocking and Mrs A Jones having declared personal interests on 2 and 3 respectively, abstained from the discussion and voting thereon.*

## 23. THE ALEXANDRA THEATRE

The Mayor referred Members to the two briefing papers, previously circulated and advised Councillors that the matter should be referred to a Special Meeting to allow due consideration of the proposals. Following comments from Councillors on the sensitively and complexity of the proposals for the Alexandra Theatre it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Mayor would call a Special Meeting of the Council in which to consider the proposals for the Alexandra Theatre at which representatives from both the Friends of the Alexandra Theatre and the District Council would be invited to attend. The Date to be advised.

## 24. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chairman introduced the Notice of Motion as submitted by Councillor Ryan Hall in accordance with Standing Order number 8. Councillor Hall presented the original motion in full, to provide Members with context and background in response to the employment practices used by some leading firms in the UK, as follows:

'This Council notes with alarm the growing number of employers who are using fire and rehire strategies to reduce workers' pay, overtime and holiday benefits.

Until such a time as the Government legislates to make this practice illegal; this Council will refuse to enter into contracts with companies using such strategies.'

Members expressed their grave concern at the employment practices adopted by these firms to retain staff and the abhorrent treatment of their employees and recorded their support for the first paragraph of the Motion. However, Councillors noted that such policies were not always apparent to Officers when procuring services on behalf of the Council and indeed some services were sourced via a broker service, particularly in relation to Utilities.

Therefore, following a lengthy discussion Councillors recommended that the Mayor write to the Right Honourable Mims Davies MP, Minister for Employment, to express the Council's grave concern and seek a move to legislate against such working practices in the UK as has successfully been achieved in other European nations.

Following a further discussion, Members gave their support for the Motion to be amended as follows:

'this Council notes with alarm the growing number of employers who are using fire and rehire strategies to reduce workers' pay, overtime and holiday benefits.' and for the Town Clerk to prepare a written response on behalf of the Council, accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that a) 'this Council notes with alarm the growing number of employers who are using fire and rehire strategies to reduce workers' pay, overtime and holiday benefits.' and b) the Town Clerk be authorised to write a letter on behalf of the Town Council to the Minister for Employment, the Rt Hon Mims Davies MP, to seek to make such employment practices illegal.

*It was proposed and seconded that Until such a time as the Government legislates to make this practice illegal; this Council will, where possible, refuse to enter into contracts with companies using such strategies. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.*

## 25. **NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL – LONG TERM VISION**

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to report on a Long-Term Vision for the Council. The Town Clerk reminded Members of the Community Plan, produced with the involvement of the community and published in 2008. The Plan identified 20 key projects for the town one of which being the development of a community hub which was the instigation of the Newton's Place Project. The Clerk recommended that it was time for the Council to review its long-term vision and had sought initial advice from Emily Farrell, CIC as a consultant and was able to confirm that Mrs Farrell would be able to support the Council in this programme of work.

Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED** that a) Mrs Emily Farrell, CIC would be commissioned to assist in the preparation of a revised Community Plan for Newton Abbot and b) that the project be assigned to the Community Engagement Group to direct the programme of work and to report back to the Council in due course.

## 26. **NEWTON'S PLACE**

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to provide the background to the proposed purchase of a new projector and screen for the St. Leonard's Room at Newton's Place.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that now the refurbishment of Newton's Place had been completed and the building was occupied that there were still some small

installations that needed to take place. The infrastructure was in place to have a projector and screen in the St. Leonard's Room and this would complete the suite of IT, presentation equipment available for use as part of the community room.

In noting that the infrastructure was already in place, Members offered their support for the purchase and installation of the presentation equipment and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to purchase a projector and screen for the St. Leonard's Room of Newton's Place, as specified.

**27. LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

Councillor Phil Bullivant was pleased to report that Devon County Council had approved the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points at three locations within Newton Abbot; Devon Square, Osborne Street and to the rear of Courtenay Park.

Councillor Colin Parker noted the written report as provided by Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook and suggested that once the normal calendar of meetings resume that County and District Councillors continue to be invited to provide written reports in addition to the invitation to attend Meetings of the Council to allow for transparency and good practice.

**28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Council would be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

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Chairman (Mayor)