

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 29th JANUARY 2020** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

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

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

Invited guests: The Reverend Gareth Regan
County and District Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook
District Councillor Janet Bradford
District Councillor Liam Mullone
District Councillor Richard Keeling
Ms Sue Errington Fairtrade Devon Co-ordinator

Honorary Freeman Mr Henry Cole

Representative of the Press: Ross Bryant, Mid Devon Advertiser

In attendance: Philip Rowe Town Clerk
Samantha Scott Deputy Town Clerk
Sally Henley Town Development Manager
Alexandra Robinson Committee Administrator

The Mayor invited his Chaplain, The Reverend Gareth Regan, to deliver prayers.

379. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone, including invited guests to the Full Council Meeting.

380. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County & District Councillor Gordon Hook.

381. **INTERESTS**

None Declared.

382. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20th November 2020 were received and signed as a correct record.

383. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

384. **PRESENTATION – FAIRTRADE IN NEWTON ABBOT**

The Mayor welcomed District Councillor Richard Keeling, Chairman Teignbridge District Council and Fairtrade Ambassador to Teignbridge and Ms Sue Errington Fairtrade Devon Co-ordinator, Devon Development Education and invited them both to update the Council on progressing the Fairtrade status in the town.

Councillor Keeling thanked the Mayor for the invitation and gave a brief background to Fairtrade in Teignbridge. The District Authority had passed a Resolution to develop Fairtrade towns within the District and many had since joined such as; Chudleigh, Bovey Tracey, Dawlish and Mortonhampstead. It was noted that Newton Abbot did have Fairtrade status but this had lapsed some years ago and the aspiration was to reinstate Fairtrade for the town.

Ms Errington provided an insight into the development of Fairtrade in Devon over the past ten years raising the following key points:

- Fairtrade supports farmers in low income countries;
- The scheme originated in the UK but is now supported globally;
- Fairtrade focuses on the production of goods such as coffee, cocoa, bananas and sugar manufacture;
- Today over 2 million farmers worldwide benefit from the scheme;
- Fairtrade provides a guaranteed minimum price for produce set at the start of the season, the price can go up but will not fall below the agreed value;
- Farmers are given assurance from knowing what they will paid;
- In addition to the fees paid to the farmers, the co-operative that they are affiliated to are also supported financially;
- The co-operative can spend the financial support on a variety of areas to benefit their community such as; developing schools, electrical supplies, transport infrastructure, health care and clean water supplies;
- Photographs shown of new building for local pre-school in St Vincent and the development of farm roads to facilitate taking produce out of the farm to the local markets;
- The Fairtrade scheme requires standards from the farmers and co-operatives in order to benefit from the scheme; these include;
 - Farmers must respect the environment;
 - Provide safe working conditions and no child labour;
 - Improve hygiene both for workers and the for the packing and sale of produce; and
 - Suitable packing equipment, a shed and overalls; and
- Sainsburys and the Co-Op Stores both stock Fairtrade bananas so the end products reach consumers in the UK and are identifiable by the labelling.

Ms Errington recapped the presentation and outlined the aims from the Fairtrade Devon Group:

1. The Town Council to pass a Resolution;

2. Fairtrade products, such as tea, coffee, chocolate on sale in the shops and cafes in the town;
3. Fairtrade products used in schools, offices and among groups in the town;
4. Involvement in 'Fairtrade Fortnight' and
5. Membership on the local Fairtrade Steering Group.

Ms Errington reported on the positive feedback from towns and parishes that had achieved Fairtrade status and how it had raised their profile among residents and visitors placing a positive emphasis on businesses in their towns. She noted that the UK was the biggest user of Fairtrade products with a third of bananas sold being Fairtrade and 10% of tea. Ms Errington outlined a huge range of products within the Fairtrade scheme, some 4,500 products from wedding rings, socks, flowers and footballs. Each year representatives from Fairtrade farms are invited to the UK for a fortnight to experience where the products are sold and update on how their communities are developing as a result of the funding.

The Mayor thanked Ms Errington and Councillor Keeling for their informative presentation and invited questions from Members, who raised the following key points:

- Sought clarity on the possible deforestation in South America to prepare farmland for Fairtrade sales which would not comply with Fairtrade regulations;
- Newton Abbot had Fairtrade status for the town but it had since lapsed but Members would be keen to reinstate once the Council had moved to Newton's Place; and
- The Council would work to move forward on the project.

Following a discussion among Members, accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that once the Council had moved to Newton's Place it would be pleased to progress towards reinstating Fairtrade status for Newton Abbot.

The Mayor thanked both Councillor Richard Keeling and Ms Sue Errington for their time and excellent report. Following which they were invited to leave the meeting.

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

- A. Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook reported matters on behalf of Councillor Gordon Hook in his absence and also on the following issues in which she had direct involvement:
 - A reduction in funding budget for Devon County Council and the proportion assigned to Adult Social Care and Childrens Services;
 - A reduction in the Public Health budget and a serious risk of underfunding for preventative care;
 - Given the complexities of Brexit, the Fair Funding Review has yet to be tabled fully in the meantime there has been a one year settlement and Council's now source their funding through bidding for funding streams;

- Future High Street Fund – a competitive application to bid for funding for enhancements to the town centre; to include support for flood risk management, development of sustainable transport, new cycle routes and improvements to the town centre’s security provision.
- Newton Abbot Garden Community application for funding to enhance areas of new development;
- Bradley Lane redevelopment site to appoint development partner; arrange public consultation and submit planning application towards the autumn;
- East Street low-carbon development of five social rental flats, two with wheelchair access;
- Drake Road low carbon development of two, three-bed properties for families in need;
- TDC Council Tax rise of 2.94%;
- Repayment of £1m towards pension deficit of £83m;
- Two additional officers, Climate Change and Planning Enforcement;
- Reduction in Councillor Allowances and
- Introduction of New Homes Waste Bin Charge.

B. District Councillor Janet Bradford reported on the following issues in which she had direct involvement:

- College Ward Member on Licencing and Planning Committees;
- Local residents’ issues; and
- Outline Planning Consent for Langford Bridge (NA3).

C. District Councillor Liam Mallone reported on the following issues in which he had direct involvement:

- Outline Planning Consent for Langford Bridge (NA3);
- Public Consultation on development of NA3; and
- Public concern at development of NA3.

Councillor Mike Pilkington noted the public comments regarding the outline planning consent for the NA3 development but advised Members that a Public Consultation event had taken place but that residents were still able to make written comment prior to full planning consent being considered.

D. District and Town Councillor Phillip Bullivant reported on the following issues in which he had direct involvement:

- Peninsula Pension budget deficit;
- CIL Income for Town and Parish Councils to be reviewed;
- Hele Park Allotments to be delivered early spring 2020;
- Review of Flood Risk Assessment to the town; and
- New Homes, waste bin charge.

Councillors queried the possible reasons for a pension deficit and noted the possible change in allocation of CIL income to town and parish councils. There being no further questions from Councillors, the Mayor thanked the District Councillors for their reports.

386. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the list of engagements (previously circulated) which the Mayor had carried out since 20th November 2019.

The Mayor reported that he had thoroughly enjoyed all the events he had attended throughout the Christmas period and into the New Year. He noted that it was a privilege for him to represent the Town Council and meet many groups within the community. In looking ahead to forthcoming events, the Mayor invited all Councillors to join him at the Green Room, Newton Abbot on Friday 31st January. The Green Room was a new business, recently opened as a café and cocktail bar taking the vacant premises in Scott Close off East Street.

The Mayor invited the Deputy Mayor to report on the engagements that he had undertaken. The Deputy Mayor reported that he did not wish to single out any particular engagement but that he and his wife had thoroughly enjoyed the events that they had attended during the last few weeks.

387. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- A. The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 17th December 2019 as presented by the Chairman, Councillor D Howe, were received and approved;
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 14th January 2020 as presented by the Chairman, Councillor D Howe, were received and approved;
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & Audit Committee** held on 15th January 2020 as presented by the Chairman Councillor C Parker, were received and approved; with the exception of Minute 20/01(374)B.

388. **PRECEPT 2020/21**

Arising from Minute 20/01(374.B) the Mayor reminded the Council that it was the statutory duty of the Council to approve a Precept for 2020/21. The Mayor invited the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee to remind Members of the recommendation made to Council. In doing so Councillor Parker thanked staff for the work involved in producing the reports necessary for the Precept submission. He reminded Members that whilst all areas of the Council's service delivery had been considered in full that some areas had been subject to detailed consideration and scrutiny.

Councillor Parker emphasised that Newton Abbot Town Council offered exceptional standard of delivering services across the town and continued to deliver an extensive programme of wide ranging events throughout the civic calendar. The Council would continue to deliver its aspirations of Newton's Place, a community hub for the town and would seek to enhance the town with the purchase of cleansing equipment capable of clearing weeds and cleaning street furniture and signage. The Council had made notable achievements for which it should be proud, and he applauded the Council for its tremendous efforts.

It was proposed by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Corney-Walker that a Precept in the sum of £866,039 be adopted for the year 2020/21.

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that the Council hereby adopts a Precept of **£866,039 for 2020/21** representing an increase of £2.88p p.a. (0.06p per week) or 2.91% for a Band D property in Newton Abbot and that Teignbridge District Council be therefore requested to collect on the Town Council's behalf the **sum of £866,039**.

389. **NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT – UPDATE**

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal update on the Newton's Place Project. The Town Clerk advised Councillors that there had been a meeting of the Newton's Place Project Board on Thursday 23rd January 2020 at which the Project Manager had report the project to be in its final phase of the construction programme. The construction team had worked on site throughout the Christmas period and continued to work weekends to complete the programme. The utility services had been installed and connected and the subsequent testing and commissioning of the heating system would commence. The delay to the programme had meant that the move of office staff would take place mid March 2020 once the Council had received satisfactory confirmation from the Building Control Inspector and Fire Safety Officer.

The Clerk added that unfortunately there continued to be a delay with the installation of the lift 'car' which meant whilst the staff would be able occupy the building it would not be possible to provide access to the public.

During the transition period the Council would operate 'Business as Usual' providing access to the public via telephone, email and the website and Council meetings would be held at various locations within the community. The Clerk assured Members that these would be well publicised and at venues accessible to the public.

The Chairman of the Project Board recorded his appreciation of the Clerk who had worked extensively, under a great deal of pressure, to achieve the progress to date. The Council echoed its support of the Clerk and staff in progressing the Project to date.

The Mayor invited Mr Nigel Canham, PR and Media Consultant to add to the report on Newton's Place. Mr Canham reiterated the Council's intention to prepare for 'Business as Usual' and to ensure that staff were well equipped to keep the public informed of services throughout the transition to Newton's Place.

390. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

391. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

392. **NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT**

- A. The Mayor invited the Clerk to give details of the Council's plan to accommodate staff during the intervening period between the completion of sale of the existing Town Hall and the move to Newton's Place. The Clerk outlined the proposals to accommodate the staff and following a discussion among Members, accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that the Council approve the instigation of a Licence to Operate to apply beyond the Completion of Sale of the 9 Devon Square and during the intervening period prior to the move to Newton's Place.

- B. The Clerk advised that a valuation had been received on the further asset adjacent to Newton's Place. Following clarification from Members, accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor be authorised to purchase the further asset adjacent to Newton's Place at the sum contained in the independent valuation as reported to the meeting.

393. **COMMON SEAL**

Following a proposition by the Mayor it was:

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of the Council be hereby affixed to the Contract in Minute 392 A and B above as necessary to give effect to the resolution passed by the Council at the meeting.

394. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council was to be held on Wednesday 11th March 2020.

Chairman (Mayor)