

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ONLINE **WEDNESDAY**
27th MAY 2020 AT 7.00 P.M.

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

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

Representative of the Press: None

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

501. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone, to the first remote Full Council Meeting. The Mayor paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of the Council's Handyman Mr Kieran Dore, who had sadly passed away following illness and to the former Mayor Ken Lewis who had also recently passed away. The Mayor invited his fellow Councillors and Officers to pause for a minute's silence as a mark of respect for them both.

502. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs K Crout, C Davieson, B Hayes and D Howe.

503. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

504. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th March 2020 were received and signed as a correct record.

505. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

506. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that the government restrictions put in place to prevent the further spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had resulted in there being no Mayoral engagements. However Councillor Richard Jenks noted the swift engagement of local councils and community organisations who had rallied

to support and provide essentials to the housebound and vulnerable members of the community.

Activities had ranged from handling telephone and email enquiries from the Town Council; directing the public to appropriate services and the hands on production and delivery of food parcels, hot meals, medication and support for those in need. The Mayor personally thanked Councillors Chris Jenks, Brian Hayes and Phil Bullivant for their effort in preparing and delivering food and hot meals in collaboration with HITS foodbank but he also thanked all his fellow Councillors for their considerable support throughout all areas of the community. He noted that these efforts were ongoing and would continue for as long as they were needed. The Mayor commended everyone's hard work in these unprecedented times.

507. **MAYOR/CLERK ACTIONS DURING PERIOD OF COVID-19 GOVERNMENT LOCKDOWN**

The Mayor updated Members on the actions taken on behalf of the Council during the period of COVID-19 Government restrictions.

The Mayor reported that the Council had provided immediate Grant Funding of £2,500 to COVID-19 Mutual Aid to assist in their ongoing provision of food and support to vulnerable people directly affected by the pandemic.

The Mayor advised that the Council had extended the contract of the Public Relations and Media Consultant Mr Nigel Canham for a further 12 months. Mr Canham would continue to work on the Newton's Place Project but his role would broaden to include the delivery of the Council's vision and aspirations beyond the opening of Newton's Place.

The Clerk reported that given the Council did not currently have the services of a handyman he had arranged for an additional litter pick and bin collection at the Town Quay and Buckland Skatepark. With the easing of the government restrictions these areas had become busier again and would benefit from the additional street cleansing resource.

Members commended the Mayor and the Clerk on their prompt actions and accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that the Council approve the actions taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, Councillor Richard Jenks on actions taken during the period of COVID-19 Government restrictions.

508. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 17th March 2020 as presented by the Vice Chairman, Councillor M Joyce, were received and approved.

509. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor invited Chairman 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:

- Deferral of the Museum's Accreditation with the Arts Council for period of 12 months; and
- The continued efforts of the Community Engagement Consultant and Museum staff to provide online activities to engage with the public using the Museum website and social media.

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

- Commended staff for continued financial management during COVID-19 restrictions;
- Capital Investment of sale of Town Hall with CCLA;
- Management and review of annual budgets in line with changes in demand for services during 2020;
- Recovery and support for local economy emerging from COVID-19 restrictions, support for local shops and businesses; and
- Local authority grants for businesses and improvements to the town centre environment to encourage footfall and patronage.

C. Councillor Mike Joyce, Vice Chairman of Planning Committee reported on the following issues:

- Interim management and consideration of Planning Applications;
- Consultation and consideration of Major Planning Applications, 20/00585/MAJ and 20/00586/MAJ in relation to Houghton Barton at a future meeting of the Council; and
- Council response to the Draft Local Plan consultation.

D. Councillor David Corney-Walker, Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee reported on the following issues:

- Management and review of existing Council Policies and the introduction of new policies in relation to COVID-19 and the operation of Newton's Place.

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

- The extensive Events Programme planned for 2020 had been cancelled due to COVID-19;
- Grateful thanks and appreciation to the Council's Events Co-ordinators for the months of prior preparation and organisation to deliver the programme; and
- The Events programme would resume when restrictions were lifted and it was safe to do so.

510. **PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCES**

The Mayor invited Members to consider supporting local businesses by suspending the annual Pavement Café Licence Fee for a period of 12 months upon renewal. The Town Development Manager commended Members for their

support for local businesses and highlighted that it was a practical gesture that would assist cafes in the town as they resumed business in the coming months.

Arising from a detailed discussion 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.

511. **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The Mayor introduced the Policy documents, previously circulated drawing Members' attention to the key principles contained within them. The Principal Administrator referred to the DALC addendum and reported that it covered the temporary arrangements for holding remote meetings. Members noted that the previously approved Business Continuity Plan and Risk Management Plan had been updated to reflect the risks associated with COVID-19 and finally the Principal Administrator introduced the new Premises Use Policy intended for use within Newton's Place, once open to the community. Following the review of the documents it was;

RESOLVED that the:

- a) DALC Addendum to Standing Orders be hereby approved and adopted for use prior to 5th May 2021, and
- b) (i) Revised Business Continuity and Risk Management Plan,
(ii) Council Risk Management Plan and
(iii) Premises Use Policy, be hereby, approved and adopted.

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

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal update on the Newton's Place Project. Members were informed that the Council had not taken partial possession of Newton's Place and intended to wait for Practical Completion of the construction project. The lift had been installed and subject to final tests and commissioning should be fully operational by Friday 5th June 2020 which would trigger the Practical Completion date. The Clerk, Project Manager and Architect planned to meet Pollards on site on 5th June 2020 to take possession of Newton's Place. The Architect had prepared an extensive snagging list for Pollard's attention and these remedial works were due to be completed by next week but it was noted that due to the COVID-19 restrictions some supplies had been halted and there would be areas that remained 'incomplete' until full business could resume. These would not affect the practical use of the building or its operation.

Throughout June the conservation specialists would finish works to the pulpit, font and capitals and the three large Museum exhibits would be transported and installed into the exhibition space. These being the railway signals, the Sandford Orleigh Screen and the Lethbridge Diving Bell.

The Clerk added that just as Councillor Mrs Sheffield had advised the Museum staff and Community Engagement Consultant continued to work to provide activities and opportunities for engagement for the public via social media and the website with superb results. Social media posts had attracted an average weekly following of between 2-3,000 views but the latest post showing photographs of finished areas of Newton's Place had attracted 22,000 views and

56 comments all of which conveyed the wonderful support and enthusiasm from the public for the project. Members echoed their appreciation for the work undertaken by the Clerk and the project team to deliver Newton's Place. Following discussion among Members about aspects of signage and the land adjacent, accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that the verbal report by the Town Clerk on the Newton's Place Project be noted.

513. LATE CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS ARISING

The Mayor reminded Members of the forthcoming presentation by Teignbridge District Council on the Future High Street Fund Application scheduled to take place on 28th May at 2.15pm.

The Clerk advised that further information would be provided to Members on the proposed initiative; Reallocation of Road Space for Active Travel. Further details would follow in due course.

Councillor Mike Ryan advised Members that he had attended the Funeral Service for Mr Kieran Dore on 14th May and due to the COVID-19 restrictions the family had been limited to very few attendees. The family had expressed their heartfelt thanks to the huge number of friends, colleagues and associates who lined The Avenue to pay their respects.

The Mayor recorded the Council's appreciation to Councillor Philip Bullivant for his assistance in storing the Museum exhibition cases during this protracted period of lockdown and restriction of movement.

Mrs Sally Henley, Town Development Manager conveyed her thanks for the Council's ongoing support to the businesses of Newton Abbot during these difficult times.

The Clerk conveyed his good wishes to all Councillors to continue to keep well and stay safe in these unusual circumstances.

514. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council was to be held on Wednesday 24th June 2020.

Chairman (Mayor)