

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ONLINE WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.00 P.M.**

Present: Councillors R D 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 N Parker  
C Davieson M Pilkington  
R Hall M E Ryan  
R Hayes Mrs L Sheffield  
M Hocking

Invited Guests: Reverend Gareth Regan  
County and District Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook

In attendance: Philip Rowe Town Clerk  
Sally Henley Town Development Manager  
Nigel Canham Communications Advisor  
Alexandra Robinson Principal Administrator

553. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone, to the remote Full Council Meeting.

554. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Brian Hayes and Samantha Scott Deputy Town Clerk.

555. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

556. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and the Special Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were received and signed as correct records.

557. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

558. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that the government restrictions that remained in place had resulted in there being fewer opportunities for Mayoral engagements. However Councillor Richard Jenks was pleased to advise that he would be attending the opening of the Museum on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The Mayor reminded Councillors of their invitation to a private viewing of the Museum on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September and he encouraged all Members to book a place as it was a wonderful opportunity to see the work within Newton's Place complete.

559. **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:

- The Opening of the Museum on 3<sup>rd</sup> October for pre-booked appointments;
- The Council's recently appointed Facilities Maintenance Officers x 2.

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

- The Council's external auditors had received the AGAR and were reviewing the background papers;
- Consideration of the Council's key priorities were the uplift of the town and public realm and enhancing the social and economic viability for Newton Abbot;
- Local Government Pay Award for Officers;
- The realignment of budgets rather than an increased budget for 2021/22;
- The financial summary for the Newton's Place Project was being prepared; and thanked the Town Clerk for his commitment and efforts in seeing the project to a successful completion.

The Town Clerk advised Members that due to the COVID restrictions and the suspension of Committee Meetings that they had not received the regular Income and Expenditure statements for review. Following discussion it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chariman of the Finance and Audit Committee be delegated authority to review the Income and Expenditure statements and report back to Council in due course.

C. Councillor David Howe, Chairman of Planning Committee reported on the following issues:

- Continued Interim management and consideration of Planning Applications.
- Online Planning Committee Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October and presentation from Emily Farrell, Planning Consultant.

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

- Introduction of new policy, Homeworking Policy.

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

- The Christmas lights would be erected in the town at the end of October and the Lights would be switched on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020;
- Ideas for COVID safe Christmas festivities such as a virtual treasure hunt and festive handouts in the town were being discussed and progressed, and

- Support for the local businesses, in offering festivities that would enhance the town over the Christmas period and increase the social and economic vibrancy during these difficult circumstances.

## 560. **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

### **A. Arrangements for Future Meetings**

The Mayor advised that further to Minute 20/05(497) the Council would review its arrangements for meetings during the continued Government restrictions and whilst it had been hoped that the restrictions may have been lifted that the message from the Prime Minister that week confirmed that the current arrangements must remain for the next six months or until further advice from the Government. The Council would continue to suspend meetings of Committees and Sub-committees and the Council would continue to hold monthly remote meetings to conduct the business of the Town Council.

### **B. Code of Conduct – Attendance at Meetings**

The Mayor reminded all Members of their duty to respect the Summons to Council Meetings and even where these meetings were held remotely, due to the current circumstances, that Members were still required to give appropriate apologies in advance of Meetings should they be unable to attend.

The Mayor advised that the 'six month rule' still applied for non attendance at Meetings and therefore Members should be mindful to communicate such absence to the Council whereupon he assured all Members that the Council would always give reasonable regard to situations requiring extended absence.

## 561. **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

The Mayor invited Councillor Mrs Carol Bunday to update Members on the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Councillor Mrs Bunday reported that arrangements were underway to provide a sensitive service within the parameters of the Government's restrictions for COVID-19. Councillor Mrs Bunday acknowledged the difficulties in meeting public expectations at one of the most important commemorative events of the year but preparations would ensure that Wreath Laying would be included meeting social distancing requirements. Further details of the arrangements would be reported to the Council in due course but in the meantime Councillor Mrs Bunday invited help and assistance from fellow Councillors at the event to ensure social distancing could be maintained throughout. It was noted that the Royal British Legion had decided that there would be no sale of Poppies for 2020 due to the current restrictions and the large proportion of their sellers and poppy manufacturing was carried out by those considered to be more vulnerable to the COVID infection.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mrs Bunday for her efforts in regard to Remembrance Sunday and endorsed her request for assistance.

## 562. **TRIAL 20 MPH SCHEME FOR NEWTON ABBOT**

The Mayor reported on the recent presentation given by Devon County Council on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to consider the Trial 20 mph scheme for Newton Abbot. The proposals had been extended to include the main A and B roads into the town as well as the residential areas. The Mayor proposed deferring the decision on the Trial

Scheme to a Special Meeting of the Council where Councillors would consider further evidence and the views of stakeholders in making its decision.

Councillors discussed the principles of the proposals as outlined by Devon County Council and following some debate the Mayor deferred the matter to a Special Meeting of the Council, the date for which would be advised.

The Mayor invited Councillor Colin Parker to inform Members of a separate speeding issue relating to Buckland and Milber Ward. Councillor Parker reported on the grave situation on the stretch of road, from the junction with Haytor Drive to the garage, known as Shaldon Hill. This stretch of road is currently limited to 40 mph where the further section of road has been reduced to 30 mph with notable improvements in road safety as a result.

Councillor Parker requested the support of the Council in writing to Devon County Council in requesting a reduction in the speed restriction to 30 mph. Councillor Mike Ryan made a specific request that occupants of properties in Moorland View are prevented from accessing the rear of their properties from this stretch of main road as this increased the risk of road collisions and harm to road users. Councillors extended their support for the proposal and accordingly it was;

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Colin Parker prepare a letter in consultation with the Mayor to Devon County Council requesting a speed reduction from 40 mph to 30mph on the stretch of road known as Shaldon Hill and further to include a request to deter property owners in Moorland View gaining access to the rear of their properties via the main road.

#### 563. **VISION, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The Mayor reminded Members of their consideration of the Council's Vision, Priorities and Objectives at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, following which the document had been amended to reflect the changes in priority. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Vision, Priorities and Objectives 2020/21 be hereby, approved and adopted for 2020/21.

#### 564. **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The Mayor introduced the new Policy document, previously circulated, drawing Members' attention to the key principles contained within it. Councillor Jenks noted that the policy was intended for use following the relaxation of the current Government Guidance and emergency measures taken for staff under COVID-19. Following the review of the document it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Policy document: Homeworking Policy, be hereby, approved and adopted and would be reviewed annually in line with other Council Policies.

#### 565. **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER**

Members had been advised of the presentation to be given at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on the findings and recommendation in response to the Government White Paper – Planning For the Future. The deadline for submission of responses to the Government was by 5pm on 15<sup>th</sup> October and therefore the Town Clerk sought delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman and Vice

Chairman of the Planning Committee to make a response on behalf of the Council within the consultation period. The Mayor reminded the Council that all Members were invited to attend the presentation at the next meeting of the Planning Committee. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee to respond to the Government White Paper – Planning for the Future.

#### 566. **NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT – UPDATE**

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal update on the Newton's Place Project. The Clerk reported that the project was in its final stages of completion with just a few elements of the snagging list to be finished. The Clerk reminded Members of their invitation to attend the Museum's private viewing sessions on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September and he encouraged those Members who had not yet booked to register a place.

Councillor Mike Ryan, Chairman of the Newton's Place Project Board thanked the Council for its foresight and wisdom in the purchase of the former St. Leonard's Church; for commissioning the refurbishment and the transfer of the Town's Museum and collection to Newton's Place. The project had required a tremendous amount of hard work but it had been a success and would provide fantastic facilities for the community of Newton Abbot. Councillor Ryan thanked everyone sincerely for their involvement in the project.

Mr Canham, Communications Advisor, informed Members that BBC Spotlight would be filming on site at Newton's Place on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September and that he had arranged a media day on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September and a further interview with BBC Radio Devon later the following week ensuring that Newton's Place would receive a broad range of media coverage.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for his report on Newton's Place and Members echoed their appreciation for the work undertaken by the Clerk and the Project Team to deliver Newton's Place. Accordingly, it was:

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

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

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to update Members on an invitation from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to appoint an additional Police Advocate to work alongside Councillor Mike Joyce in representing the Council. Councillor Mike Hocking had been appointed as the second Police Advocate for the Council until May 2021 where there would be a review of the OPCC Advocate Scheme.

The Mayor invited Members to raise any matters arising:

Councillor Colin Parker thanked the Council for its support in a letter to Devon County Council on a reduced speed restriction for Shaldon Hill and other matters regarding access to properties on Moorland View.

Councillors Mike Ryan and Mike Hocking thanked the Mayor for his Chairmanship during these difficult times and to officers for making the necessary arrangements for remote meetings.

The Town Clerk thanked the Council for acknowledging his work and efforts in the Newton's Place Project.

The Mayor concluded the meeting in thanking Councillor Mrs Jackie Hook for her attendance that evening.

**568. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Council would be advised.

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Chairman (Mayor)