

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ONLINE WEDNESDAY 4th NOVEMBER 2020** AT 7.00 P.M.

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

Councillors: P Bullivant M Hocking
Mrs C Bunday D Howe
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

Invited Guests: Reverend Gareth Regan

In attendance: Philip Rowe Town Clerk
Nigel Canham Communications Advisor
Alexandra Robinson Principal Administrator

588. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone, to the last remote Full Council Meeting of 2020.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Mayor referred to the latest Government guidelines in relation to COVID-19 and the impending national lockdown from 5th November through to 2nd December 2020. The Mayor advised Members that the Town Clerk in consultation with himself and the Deputy Mayor had agreed that Newton's Place would be officially closed to the public during the lockdown period. He added that the Town Council staff would work from home but would continue to be available for enquiries from the public via telephone or email. The Facilities Maintenance Officers would continue to work within safe practices to ensure the town centre assets were maintained and the Museum staff would work on the Collection in accordance with the Government Guidelines.

589. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Chris Jenks and Samantha Scott, Deputy Town Clerk and Sally Henley Town Development Manager.

590. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

591. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23rd September and the Special Meeting held on 28th October 2020 were received and signed as correct records; subject to:-

Minute 20/10(587) - It being noted that Councillor Mike Hocking requested that Devon County Council be advised of the Council's concern of the likely impact the Second National Lockdown would have on the town's economic vibrancy. Therefore DDC be requested to take this into account when embarking on consultation for the proposed 20 mph speed restriction in Newton Abbot;

Minute 20/09(562) – It being further noted that Councillor Colin Parker thanked the Council for supporting his proposed speed reduction at Shaldon Hill; which would be considered by Devon County Council on 5th November 2020.

592. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

593. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor advised Members that he had nothing to report but he invited the Deputy Mayor to update Members.

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that Speed Watch had formed an official group in Newton Abbot and Councillor Mike Joyce had been appointed as the Group Co-ordinator. Councillor Joyce further added that Councillor Philip Bullivant had completed the necessary training and registration process and he welcomed further applicants to participate in the scheme. Councillor Joyce advised Councillors that the Town Council had taken receipt of two Speed Indicator Devices (SID) and these were in the process of being assessed and calibrated; he would inform the Council once they were available for use. Councillor Joyce offered to make a full report to the next Meeting of the Community Engagement Committee.

Councillor Philip Bullivant advised Councillors that he would contribute towards the cost of the equipment from his District Councillor Community Fund once Teignbridge District Council lifted their temporary suspension on applications to the fund.

594. **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 successful opening of the Museum on 3rd October for pre-booked appointments which has reached over 800 booked tickets;
- The additional family sessions run by the Community Engagement Officer, to provide more suitable times for families;
- Having visited the Museum with her family, the Chairman commended Newton's Place as a wonderful asset for the town; and
- Her disappointment that the Museum would have to close after only a month due to the recent Covid-19 lockdown.

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

- The review of the Income and Expenditure Statements from January through to September 2020;
- Awaiting a date for the Internal Auditor inspection subject to Government restrictions;
- Following the two meetings of the Strategic Planning Forum scheduled for the 11th and 25th November 2020 there would be a meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee 13th January 2021 to make the necessary recommendations on the Budget and Precept 2021/22 to the Council on 27th January 2021.

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

- The online Planning Committee Meeting held on 13th October, considered the response to Government White Paper – Planning for the Future and the Council’s response had been submitted; and
- The Chairman thanked Councillors for their consideration and responses to Planning Applications.

The Mayor thanked the Chairmen for their updates to the Council.

595. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS

The Mayor invited Councillor Mrs Carol Bunday to update Members on the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2020. Councillor Mrs Bunday reported that there would be a small sensitive service within the parameters of the Government’s latest 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.

Councillor Mrs Bunday reported that she would have assistance from fellow Councillors and officers of the Town Council at the event to ensure social distancing could be maintained throughout. The arrangements had been widely publicised to encourage residents to view the service online as part of a live stream rather than attend in person.

Councillor Mrs Bunday advised Councillors that the Christmas Lights had been installed in the town and would be switched on discretely later in November. Preparation for Christmas Late Night Shopping events had been made but were subject to the government restrictions as to whether these would be able to proceed as planned.

Councillor Bunday finished her report in thanking the Council for their continued support for the Community Interest Company (CIC) which had been greatly appreciated.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mrs Bunday for her report and in particular her efforts in regard to Remembrance Sunday.

596. GRANTS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Mayor invited the Chairman of Finance and Audit Committee to update Members on the applications for Grants and Financial Assistance 2020.

Councillor Colin Parker advised Members that the Principal Administrator had reminded previous recipients of the scheme that the application process was open for 2020. Councillor Parker noted that to date there had not been as many applications which may be due to additional support and financial assistance being available from alternative sources during the COVID-19 pandemic. This being the case it was suggested that they be further reminded of the opportunity for assistance from the Council. Given the current government restrictions, the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee requested that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority in consultation with himself and the Vice-chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee to review and approve the applications. Councillor Parker would update the Council of all applications to the scheme. Following discussion, accordingly it was;

RESOLVED that a) the Town Clerk be given delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee to review and approve applications for Grant and Financial Assistance and b) the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee would update the Council on those applications.

597. BRADLEY WARD VACANCY

The Mayor invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the Vacancy in Bradley Ward. The Town Clerk informed Members that the District Council had received and verified ten valid signatures requesting an election for the Vacancy in Bradley Ward. This would mean that the vacancy could not be filled by co-option and an election would be held in May 2021, subject to the Government Coronavirus Act 2020 which had deferred all elections to that date. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that it be noted that the Bradley Ward Vacancy would be filled by election, that date being deferred until May 2021.

598. LATE CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS ARISING

The Mayor referred to a letter he had received from a resident of Newton Abbot asking for the residents of the town to acknowledge the work of the emergency services in some way. The Mayor invited Members to offer suggestions and these would be given consideration at a later date.

Councillor Mike Hocking advised the Council that having previously been elected to the Company Board of NALC in October 2020 that he had been appointed Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, to which Members offered their sincere congratulations on his appointment.

Mr Nigel Canham informed the Council that Newton Abbot Community Transport would continue to provide services within the Government Guidelines and current restrictions.

The Town Clerk advised Members that he received details on the Government Guidelines from a variety of sources, which had been previously circulated and he would ensure that the clearer guidance notes would be published on the Town Council website to inform residents of Newton Abbot. Mr Rowe further added that he had provided letters of authority to staff, to allow them to travel to Newton's Place for work during the Government Lockdown in accordance with the regulations.

Councillor Parker offered his good wishes to fellow Councillors during the period of Lockdown and this was echoed by all Councillors.

The Mayor concluded the meeting in thanking Councillors and wishing them to remain safe and well during these unrepresented times.

599. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Council would be 27th January 2021 (Precept Meeting).

Chairman (Mayor)