

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2021** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Corney-Walker (Chairman) Presiding

Councillors	P Bullivant	D Howe
	Mrs C Bunday (Dep Mayor)	Mrs A Jones
	C Davieson	M Joyce (Mayor)
	A Hall	C Parker
	M Hocking	M Ryan

In attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk  
Alex Robinson – Principal Administrator

195. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Karen Crout, Ryan Hall and Richard Jenks and Sally Henley, Town Development Manager.

196. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were received and signed as a correct record.

197. **INTERESTS**

None.

198. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

199. **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman invited Members to report on meetings with outside bodies.

A. Councillor Mike Joyce reported on the Chamber of Trade noting that the new Chairman has taken proactive steps to encourage increased membership and revitalise the organisation and its commitment to businesses in the town. Following a recent relaunch event held at Newton's Place the Chamber of Trade attracted 20-30 new members which was a positive step in providing support to local business.

B. Councillor Mike Hocking reported on the recent meeting DALC AGM (Devon Association of Local Councils), where Representatives voted in favour of a 4% rise in subscription fees. Following which DALC intend to investigate how to balance the fees across the sector given the variation in size of local councils. DALC were also considering promoting local policy at the national level through NALC. Councillor Hocking reported his intention to stand down as a member of the Board of Directors at DALC in the latter part of 2022 to allow the election of a new member in advance of the Local Elections scheduled for May 2023. Councillor Mike Joyce added that he hoped that DALC would consider reinstating their seat on the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel.

C. Councillor Mrs Ann Jones informed Members that the Civic Society had arranged the AGM for 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021 from 10.15am to be held at the Courtenay Centre and she invited Members to contact her if they wished to join the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Councillors M Joyce, M Hocking, and Mrs A Jones for their updates to Members.

## 200. **NEWTON'S PLACE - UPDATE**

A. The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on matter in relation to Newton's Place. The Clerk reported on the following:

a) Newton's Place was entered in the South West Building Excellence Awards 2021 in the Public Building category and had been awarded Highly Commended.

b) This year Newton's Place would be entered in the RIBA (Royal Institute British Architects) awards. A requirement is that premises entered into the Awards have been open for 12 months and the Council would be notified of the outcome in due course.

c) The final defects have now been addressed, including the new floor and flooring to the first floor. The required redecoration has been completed with the exception of one area which was too damp but would be reviewed again next year. The recent loss of the lift was due to a serious outage to Western Power, this had caused damage to a lift component which had now been replaced and the lift was fully operational once more. The Council's architect was reviewing the surface water drains to the West side of the building but that concluded the major outstanding elements of work to the building.

d) The Clerk reported that there had been no further contact from the former contractor or their appointed Administrators. However, following the completion of the outstanding works the Quantity Surveyor and Project Manager would prepare the final accounts and the Clerk anticipated that a report would be available for the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee early next year.

e) Visitor numbers to the Museum were very positive, with 4548 visitors since the re-opening in May 2021 (part of which was subject to strict booking arrangements due to Government Social Distancing requirements) and 140 to the St Leonard's Tower. When compared to typical visitor numbers of 2,000 per annum in the former Museum in Devon Square showed the popularity and success of Newton's Place.

The Chairman invited Councillors to raise queries or comments on the Clerk's verbal report. Councillors queried whether there was an alternative means of access to the building in the event that the lift was out of service again. The Clerk advised that he had made preliminary enquiries into a stairlift to allow access from the lower ground floor to the upper ground floor thereby allowing access to the main Museum exhibition area. Councillors endorsed the need to ensure that Newton's Place remained accessible for all visitors and thanked the Clerk for his efforts to date.

Councillor Parker reported that the new owner of 9 Devon Square (the former Town Hall) had extended an invitation to Councillors to see the premises following its refurbishment and now that it was ready to open for business as a Funeral Home.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for his verbal report and Councillors for their additional suggestions in relation to access to the building.

B. The Clerk referred to the summary Written Statement of Investigation (WSI), previously circulated. The original document was prepared by Mrs Val Harrison the Conservation Consultant for the Newton's Place Project. It was a requirement of Condition 10 of the Principal Authority's Listed Building Consent and on completion

detailed the entire project from start to finish. As a 141 page document it detailed the aspects of change and delivery throughout the construction and refurbishment and had been annotated with photographs. The final document has been filed with the Devon Archive and would form part of the national records. The Council's Communications Advisor, Nigel Canham prepared the summary document as a precis of the full record.

The Chairman commended Mrs Harrison for her comprehensive document which would provide a permanent record of the Newton's Place Project and Mr Canham for his efforts in preparing a concise summary of the full document. Councillors recorded their appreciation to them both.

Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED** that the verbal report provided by the Town Clerk be noted.

## 201. **POLICIES**

The Chairman introduced the policy documents, previously circulated and reminded Members that these were reviewed annually.

Following a review of the policy documents among Members it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Policies in relation to;

### **Health & Safety (H&S):**

- (a) Health & Safety Main document
- (b) Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
- (b) Electrical Safety
- (c) Guidance on Manual Lifting and Handling
- (d) Potentially Abusive or Violent Persons
- (e) Working Alone
- (f) Safety in Offices and Museum and

### **Snow Plan 2021**

Be hereby, approved and adopted subject to minor amendment.

## 202. **ACCOUNTS INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

The Chairman noted that the Responsible Financial Officer had received queries in advance of the meeting and invited Members to raise any further comment. Committee received and noted the overview of Income and Expenditure statement for Policy and Resources Committee for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and considered the budget for 2022/23.

In considering the budget Members discussed the impact of inflation, the rising cost of fuel and utility charges and nationally negotiated salary award for the next year. Members agreed that given these factors were likely to rise and reflect an increase in the budget requirement the budget for Policy and Resources should be considered further at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Following discussion among Members, accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that a) the Income and Expenditure Statements for the Policy and Resources Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, be

hereby, approved and signed by the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee and b) that the proposed budget for the Policy and Resources Committee be given further consideration at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee but to take specific account of the potential rise in inflation, fuel costs and salaries for the year **2022/23**.

*Councillor P Bullivant requested that it be recorded that he was not in favour of b) above.*

**203. LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had received a letter of resignation from the Principal Administrator earlier that day as the current postholder had been offered a position at another local Town Council. Members expressed their regret as they all had experience of the postholder's dedication to her job and the assistance they had received from her. Nonetheless they expressed their good wishes to her in her new post and thanked her for her outstanding service whilst in the role. It was the Members' opinion that the post was one of importance that should be refilled to avoid a loss in service to the Council. The Clerk advised that he and the Deputy Clerk had commenced the recruitment procedure to refill the post.

**204. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

CHAIRMAN