

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors D Corney-Walker (Mayor) Presiding
A Hall (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: B Bailey M Joyce
J Bradford C Parker
P Bullivant M Ryan
J Cook L Wood
L Cooke C Davieson
A Gibbs N Yabsley

Officers in attendance: Phil Rowe Town Clerk
Sam Scott Deputy Town Clerk
Sally Henley Town Development Manager
Linda McGuirk Principal Administrator

By invitation Martin Rich Devon Communities Together
Nikki Warner Teignbridge District Council Emergency
Planning Officer

Also, present District Councillor J Hook
3 x Members of the Public

361. WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a quotation from William Shakespeare's Othello.

362. APOLOGIES

Valid reasons for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R Buscombe, T Corney-Walker and G Jennings. Members **agreed** to approve the reasons for absence. Apologies were noted from Nigel Canham, Communications Advisor.

363. INTERESTS

None declared.

364. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15th November 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

365. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town Clerk advised that in accordance with the rules of public participation, a statement had been received from a member of the public. The Mayor invited the member of the public present, Mrs Kerry Sutton, representing Queen Street traders, to read her statement.

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“At NATC the people of Newton Abbot should be at the heart of all they say and do yet they have failed dismally in this by not listening to the residents and traders whose livelihoods depend on the honesty and integrity of its councillors.

It is time for the Town Council to collectively and publicly put its head above the parapet, to be seen and heard truthfully representing the residents and traders even when the councillors’ own parties have passed what are demonstrably terrible decisions.

NATC should be engaging with, listening to and representing the people of Newton Abbot, not easing through their party decisions.”

Members thanked the member of the public for attending the meeting and noted the statement, as read. The Mayor advised members they can discuss the statement at a future meeting if they so wish.

366. EMERGENCY PLAN

The Mayor welcomed the representative of Devon Communities Together to the meeting and invited him to give a presentation to members on the benefits of creating an Emergency Plan in Newton Abbot.

Members were informed that Teignbridge District Council’s (TDC) Emergency Planning Officer was also in attendance to support discussions, if required.

The presentation covered:

- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- What a Community Emergency Plan is.
- Procedures for handling sudden or unexpected situations.
- Understanding your community.
- Devon Community Resilience Forum.
- Process to produce a plan.
- Response Team.
- Community recovery.
- Type of risks.
- Funding to support the creation of a plan and for equipment.

The Mayor thanked the representative for his informative presentation and invited members to ask questions.

Councillors recognised the importance of creating a Community Emergency Plan for Newton Abbot and welcomed further discussion to agree the next steps. Members raised concerns about duplicating the work of the County and District Councils.

The TDC Emergency Planning Officer confirmed there are wider Devon and Teignbridge plans in place and reassured members of the importance of producing a robust community led emergency plan utilising local knowledge. Members were advised that a prepared community will recover quicker financially, emotionally and physically.

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In principle members supported the creation of a Community Emergency Plan and recommended that the Community & Heritage Committee continues discussions with TDC’s Emergency Planning Officer and Devon Communities Together.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that in principle the Council hereby supports the creation of a Community Emergency Plan for Newton Abbot and refer the matter to the Community & Heritage Committee to lead the project and work in partnership with relevant organisations.

367. REPORTS OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

The Mayor invited County and District Councillors to provide a report on their recent activity in Newton Abbot.

District and County Councillor J Bradford reported on issues in which she has had direct involvement:

- DCC budget.
- Children’s Services.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system overhaul.
- Resident issues.
- Parking and traffic issues in and around Decoy School.
- Reporting potholes on Devon County Council website.
- Proposals for Queen Street.

Councillor J Bradford requested Queen Street is included on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting.

District and County Councillor P Bullivant reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- SEND capacity in schools.
- DCC budget.
- Potholes.
- Devolution and the plan for Devon and Torbay.
- Devon Local Transport Plan.
- Queen Street.
- Teignbridge District Council Peer Group Challenge review.
- Cinema development.
- Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Garden Community Project.
- A382 development.
- Highweek Way bus transfer and cycle/pedestrian works.

District Councillor J Hook referred to the report she had submitted prior to the meeting:

- Queen Street.
- Future High Street Fund.

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- New cinema.
- Bradley Lane development.
- Sherborne House Car Park Housing project.

Councillor J Hook noted there was an agenda item to adopt a Biodiversity Policy and suggested the Town and District Council work in partnership to achieve the objectives.

Members asked for clarification on Sherborne House car park and raised concerns about the delay to the Bradley Lane development.

District Councillor C Parker reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Teignbridge District Council Peer Group Challenge review.
- Resident issues.
- TDC Planning Committee timescales.
- Sherborne House car park housing development.

District Councillor M Ryan reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Resident issues.

The Mayor thanked the District and County Councillors for their reports as they provided a valuable insight into the issues within Newton Abbot.

368. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor updated Members on recent engagements which he and his consort, Councillor T Corney-Walker had attended. The Christmas events were a great success and were well attended. In particular, the Mayor expressed his pleasure at the Mayor’s Carol Service in December which had been the focus of BBC Spotlight’s feature on Newton Abbot.

In the course of the agenda preparation the Mayor reported that he had enjoyed attending a presentation at Holbeam Dam.

369. **PRECEPT 2024/25**

The Council discussed the recommendation made by the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on 10th January 2024, Minute number 24/01(356).

The Mayor invited the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee, Councillor Colin Parker, to report on the Precept for 2024/25. Councillor Parker reminded Members that the budget and Precept reflected the needs and aspirations of the community, had been generated following a great deal of detailed work on behalf of Councillors and Officers and recapped on the increase required to meet the growth in services to be provided to the town. Councillors were also reminded that it was the statutory duty of the Council to approve a Precept for 2024/25. The Chairperson referred Members to the recommendation made to Council as set out in Minute 24/01(356).

It was proposed by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor M Joyce that a Precept in the sum of **£1,594,558** be adopted for the year 2024/25.

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Arising from the above discussion, accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that a Precept of **£1,594,558** for the year 2024/25 be approved representing an *increase* of £31.62 p.a. or 0.61p per week (representing an annual payment of £181.88 / £15.16 per month / £3.50p per week) or 21.04% for a Band D property in Newton Abbot and that Teignbridge District Council be requested to collect on the Town Council’s behalf the sum of **£1,594,558**.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the Town Clerk and the RFO for their work to support members in the preparation of the budget. Thanks were extended to the Facilities Maintenance team for their work to improve the town environment.

370. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

a) Members considered the current vacancies for representatives on outside bodies. Following a discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the current vacancies for representatives on Outside Bodies be hereby filled accordingly:

- Devon Association of Local Council (DALC) County Committee
Position not filled.
- Devon & Cornwall Police Advocate
Councillor L Wood.
- Stover Canal Trust
Councillor B Bailey.
- Court Leet (new position)
Councillor A Gibbs.

b) The Council’s representative on the Bradley Barton Community Association, Councillor L Cooke, gave a report on her attendance at a recent meeting of the Association and raised concerns about the management and governance of the centre under the current Bradley Community Association.

Councillor P Bullivant responded that the Bradley Barton Community Centre is run by a charity in accordance with charity rules and that the lease is fully complied with.

The Mayor advised that a discussion should be held at a future meeting and suggested the Town Clerk investigates and reports back at the next meeting.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk investigates the management of the Bradley Community Centre and reports back at a future meeting of the Council.

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371. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 21st November 2023, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor M Joyce, were received and approved.
- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 12th December 2023, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 9th January 2024, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor M Joyce were received and approved.
- d) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & Audit Committee**, held on 10th January 2024, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor C Parker were received and approved.

372. **POLICIES**

The Mayor introduced the Biodiversity Policy, previously circulated, and advised members that under the 2021 Environment Act public authorities, including Town and Parish Councils in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published in May 2023 states that the public authority must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Biodiversity Policy be hereby approved and adopted subject to the inclusion of Sandringham Park on page 3.

373. **BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY**

Following adoption of the Biodiversity Policy, minute number 24/01(372) above, members recognised the necessity to declare a biodiversity emergency and the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment for the future prosperity and the well-being of all who live, work and visit Newton Abbot.

It was agreed to establish a biodiversity working party to consider the action plan and report back to the Community & Heritage Committee. Councillors J Bradford, P Bullivant, J Cook and M Joyce volunteered to be members of the working party.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council hereby declares a biodiversity emergency and pledges to provide leadership to ensure that the Council works

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with organisations, partners and its community to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable biodiversity net gain within Newton Abbot.

374. **CALENDAR OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2024 – 2025**

Consideration was given to a draft calendar of Events, Council and Committee meetings for the year 2024/25, previously circulated.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the calendar of Council and Committee Meetings and Events for the year 2024/25 as submitted to the Council, be hereby approved and adopted.

375. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

376. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th March 2024.

Meeting closed at hours 20:55 hours.

Chairperson (Mayor).....Date.....

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....