

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BITTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY, 16th JANUARY
2018 AT 6.30PM**

Present: Cllr. A. Eden – Chairman
Cllr. P. Burgess
Cllr. D. Cox *minute 204 onwards*
Cllr. T. Falcão *not present minute 209*
Cllr. J. Green *not present minute 209*
Cllr. J. Orme
Cllr. J. Phillips
Cllr. R. Phipps
Cllr. E.S. Russell *minute 207 onwards*

In attendance: Ms. T. Higgs – Town Clerk
Mr. K. Orme – Minute Secretary
Members of the Press and Public

202. APOLOGIES

Cllr. D. Matthews
Cllr. V.L. Fusco

203. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

204. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Green & Falcão declared an interest in the Higher Exeter Road development.

205. DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

206. CLERK'S REPORT

- a. Saxe Street Car Park – Network Rail are due to take possession of the car park the week commencing the 22nd of January 2018 to perform the necessary works to the railway footbridge. Teignmouth Town Council's customers have had other parking arrangements for them to avoid disruption to their parking.
- b. T.A.A.G. – There is a new project to be commenced by T.A.A.G aimed at minimizing and eliminating the use of plastic straws in Teignmouth. Further information is to be submitted to Teignmouth Town Council as the project develops.
- c. Sea Cadets – Thankyou letter regarding recent monies granted by Teignmouth Town Council for their insurances.
- d. Seafarers UK – Certificate of Commemoration received for Teignmouth Town Council taking part in Merchant Navy Day on the 3rd of September 2017.
- e. Elector Fund – The second round of Elector Fund applications will close in February 2018, and Teignmouth still has £12,088 worth of Elector Fund grant monies still to be applied for. Members are encouraged to submit project ideas to the Clerk's Office.

207. MATTERS OF URGENCY BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

In light of recent events brought to light in the press article in the Teignmouth Post, Cllr Eden invited Cllr Burgess to give a personal statement.

Cllr Burgess read the following statement:

"I refer to the recent press article in the Teignmouth Post, Friday 12th January 2018 and I have asked for the opportunity to make this personal statement – thank you Chairman.

"To clarify the sequence of events – according notes/emails from the Dawlish Town Council Clerk at the time meetings were held by various committees without any involvement by myself on 24th July and 1st August.

"From these meetings, it has been confirmed by the Dawlish clerk that The Chairman of Events Committee did not recommend continuing to fund the CIC.

"These notes also state that the chair of staffing was happy for the CIC not to continue.

“The point being that decisions were made before any meeting with myself and any involvement with myself. If there was any misunderstanding about my role I am truly sorry.

“As mayor I have worked very hard for Teignmouth and the traders in our town and I have and will continue to fully support the CIC.”

Cllr Eden thanked Cllr Burgess for his statement. She commented that this was a serious matter that required a robust review since there were consequences and implications that must be understood.

AGREED

Cllr Eden proposed, Cllr Falcão seconded and it was agreed by majority that Cllr Burgess’ statement be responded to formally at the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Cllrs Cox, Falcão & Philips voted in favour, Cllrs Orme & Phipps voted against and Cllrs Burgess, Russell & Green abstained.

Cllr Cox made members aware of the residents of Talbot Court being caught in the middle of a dispute between their landlords and Teignbridge District Council, the result of which is that their refuse is not to be collected unless the residents pay an additional fee.

AGREED

Cllr Cox proposed, Cllr Falcão seconded and it was agreed by majority that the Town Clerk write to both the landlords and the District council about the matter. Cllrs Cox, Phipps, Falcão & Philips voted in favour, and Cllrs Russell, Green, Burgess & Orme abstained.

208. MULES PARK MOSAIC

Cllr Burgess gave a report on the unfortunate state of disrepair of the mosaic in Mules Park, and that a new mosaic should be installed to replace it. Cllr Green expressed her support for the proposal, but felt that the use of the words “flawed & unsuitable” in the report were unfair. Cllr Burgess agreed. Cllr Phipps suggested that any new mosaic should have its surface resin bonded to make it more hard wearing & long lasting. Cllr Russell reminded members that the original mosaic was paid for by Norman Bankcroft in memoriam of his wife, and that the wording should be continued on any new mosaic. All members were in agreement over this.

AGREED

Cllr Burgess proposed, Cllr Orme seconded and it was agreed unanimously that a sum of £1,000 be allocated for the construction and installation of a new mosaic at Mules Park.

209. EXPERT OPINION AND PLANNING ADVICE

As per their declared interests Cllrs Green and Falcão left the room. Cllrs Russell and Orme were present, but due to their status as members of Teignbridge District Council's Planning Committee, did not vote.

The matter was discussed in detail by members, and Cllr Cox informed members that, though unlikely, any action taken by Teignmouth Town Council regarding the development of Higher Exeter Road could result in costs being awarded to the Town Council. Cllr Burgess expressed that any advice sought by Teignmouth Town Council would not bind the council to take action, and all members were in agreement.

AGREED

Cllr Cox proposed, Cllr Burgess seconded and it was agreed unanimously that Teignmouth Town Council allocated a sum of up to £6,000 pounds for the following: to commission a new highways survey of the Higher Exeter Road area, and to seek expert clarification on the legality of process of the three year time frame on the planning permission for the Higher Exeter Road development.

210. VAT

The Town Clerk reported to members on the possibility that Teignmouth Town Council will need to register for VAT with HMRC. It is Teignmouth Town Council's duty to contact HMRC to register if they charge any for any items which are eligible for VAT charge, though HMRC may decide to issue an exemption. Cllr Cox suggested that the process of setting up a charitable trust to avoid VAT implications regarding Bitton House be expedited, and Cllr Russell also suggested the same for the town centre CCTV control.

AGREED

Cllr Cox proposed, Cllr Green seconded and it was agreed unanimously that Teignmouth Town Council engage DCK Accounting (VAT specialist) to act as agents for the town council with regards to registering with HMRC, and to complete on behalf of the Town Council any necessary VAT calculations relating to the application of exemptions or partial exemptions for submission to HMRC.

211. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Green gave a report to members on future of Teignmouth's Neighbourhood Plan and the item was discussed,

AGREED

Cllr Green proposed, Cllr Russell seconded and it was agreed unanimously that Stuart Todd Associates are engaged as the consultant to lead the Town Council and community through the process of the development, submission and adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan for Teignmouth, and that a sum of monies of £35,000 (2018/19) is allocated in earmarked reserves for the engagement of the consultant and a small sum for working capital.

Cllr Russell thanked Cllrs Green and Orme for their work done so far on the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Cox also thanked Teignmouth Town Council on behalf of the Kingsway Resident's Association for the grant monies received from Teignmouth Town Council to date, and reported that this have had a considerable effect in uplifting the area of West Teignmouth.

212. GRASS VERGES & VISIBILITY SPLAYS

The Town Clerk gave a report to members that Devon County Council have made an offer of a contribution of £1,861 should Teignmouth Town Council take on full responsibility for grass verge & visibility splay cutting throughout the town. The Town Clerk reported to members that this contribution, plus use of a new contractor to eliminate the current issue of multiple contractors cutting various parts of the same patches of grass independently, would increase the regularity of cuts while reducing Teignmouth Town Council's overall financial burden.

Cllr Falcão asked the Clerk to attempt to negotiate for a larger contribution if possible, and the Clerk agreed. Cllr Cox congratulated the Clerk on her work in this matter, and suggested that she write to the Local Government Association to inquire about other small authorities views on the 'double taxation' of them taking on similar responsibilities from higher tier authorities. The Clerk responded that she is in weekly contact with the Local Government Association about this already.

AGREED

Cllr Eden proposed, Cllr Cox seconded and it was agreed unanimously that the town council accepts financial contribution from Devon County Council towards the cutting of the visibility splays.

213. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

a. County

Cllr Eden began and then stopped reading out Cllr Clatworthy's email in full since it needed some editing to make sense read aloud. Councillors were invited to look at a hard copy from which the following bullet point was kindly distilled by the clerk.

- i. Cllr Clatworthy – The Provisional Settlements of the budget setting process have now been received which was in line with expectation. No decision has yet been taken on council tax increases, as this will happen at the February cabinet meeting.
- ii. Cllr Russell – The long requested hatched boxes at the bottom of Exeter Hill have now been installed, though Mike Jones of Devon County Council was correct in his warnings of the issues this would cause. Cllr Russell asked members to submit their comments to her.
- iii. Cllr Russell – The suggestion of making Keatings Lane & Westbrook Avenue access only to prevent their use as a 'rat run' to avoid traffic have been frowned upon so far.

b. District

There were none.

b. Town

- i. Cllr Green – The number and quality of festive events in 2017 were marvelous.
- ii. Cllr Phipps – Attended a meeting with the Teignbridge Beach Manager and a tour of the toilets in Starcross on Thursday the 11th of January. Cllr Phipps was shocked at the very small amount of fecal matter on a beach that can cause a water test to return a bad result.

214. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The accounts were circulated.

AGREED

Cllr Russell proposed, Cllr Cox seconded and it was agreed unanimously that the accounts for December 2017, totaling £54,791.36, be approved.

215. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, 6th January 2018

10am – attended the celebration of one year in business for The Paw Pad, 17 Hopes Close, Teignmouth.

Friday, 16th February 2018

Evening – to attend the Friends of Teignmouth Orangery soiree at Bitton House.

Saturday, 3rd March 2018

To attend the Earth hour event on the Den.

Sunday, 4th March 2018

3pm – to attend the Teignbridge District Council Civic Service at the Parish of Bishopsteignton.

Sunday, 18th March 2018

3pm - Teignmouth Town Council Civic Service at St Michael's Church.

23rd March 2018

7pm – to attend the Lord Mayor's Charity Banquet at the Guildhall.

216. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON ANY MATTER NOT ON THE ABOVE AGENDA

There was none.

217. THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Deems that all information held by this Council should be freely available to the public unless it falls under one of 23 exemptions.

Cllr Eden suggested that, to comply with the Act, that Cllr Burgess' statement in minute no. 207 be made freely available on the Town Council website.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

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COUNCILLOR A EDEN
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Bitton House, Teignmouth
Dated: 17th January 2018