



Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 10th July 2023 at 7.15pm, in the Town Hall,
Fore Street, Dulverton TA22.

Present: Chairman/Mayor: Mrs Christine Dubery. Councillors: Mr Nick Thwaites; Mr Alan Ottey; Mr Bill Gash; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle; Mrs Allison Crisp; Mrs Frances Nicholson and Mr Steven Pugsley, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.) who left at 9.00pm.

Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public: None

Apologies for absence and acceptance of any reasons offered if agreed:

Cllr. Mrs Ann Van Praag who is unwell.

Declarations of Interest:

None not already declared.

Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management: Item 16 is to be brought forward for discussion following questions for County Councillors.

Presentation - Dulverton Weir & Leat Trust

Mr Phillip Hull informed members that a proposed plan for repair has been drawn up. He maintains that the Leat is an important asset for the Town, being the most intact and largest medieval leat in Europe, compared only with one in the south of France. It represents the start of the first capitalist project in Britain and was very much a community based project.

The Trust has been in existence for seven years during which time it has attempted to enter into negotiations with three councils and two political parties. Currently the whole of the leat is owned by one authority, Somerset Council, which should make future negotiations simpler. The Authority has been informed of its' responsibilities regarding maintenance requirements etc.

Finances remain an issue particularly as Somerset Council has a lack of funds and has yet to make a decision concerning the future ownership of the Leat. Partners in the project do have access to a considerable amount of funding. However Mr Hull believes that the Leat should remain a community asset and could be of considerable economic benefit for the Town with regards tourist interest.

An information pack was handed to members.

Mr Hull thanked members for their continuing support.

Questions for County Councillors:

Cllrs. Mrs Frances Nicholson & Mr Steven Pugsley S.C.C.

Car Park Charges: It was confirmed that charges are to increase by an average of 10%. This was an executive decision, members having no input.

The Clerk was requested to write to Cllr, Mike Rigby (Portfolio Holder) and point out that since Covid the footfall in Town has failed to return to pre-Covid levels, subsequently like many other town centres, the economy was suffering. An increase in car park charges will only exacerbate the problem, which will in turn impact on Somerset Council as empty shops means a reduction in receipt of business rates.

An enquiry is also to be made concerning the continuing availability of paper shoppers permits.

Waste Collection – Proposed Industrial Action: Industrial action will take place on Wednesdays/Thursdays and Fridays for the next four weeks. The collection of black sacks will be prioritized during this period. The dispute is between the contractor and its' employees. Further information can be found on the Somerset Council website.

Rural Fund: Funding is available for capital infrastructure projects which will benefit the area economically and support local businesses. Any award has to be match funded.

LCN Jetting Scheme: Cllr. Mr Pugsley commended Cllr. Mrs Dubery on her hard work on behalf of the LCN for the proposed scheme. As a result far more jetting will be carried out throughout the Exmoor area.

6954 Consultation Responses:

a) ENPA - Proposed Committee Changes Survey:

Responses as follows:

- There exists a lack of clarity as to why/how the proposed changes will affect cost savings.
- It will diminish the opportunity for local people to express their views.
- There will be fewer members to influence the decision making.
- It will result in a poorer service to the customer as it will significantly slow down the process.

b) ENPA – Proposed improvement works at Exford car park

Responses as follows:

- Why has the business case not been made available?
- Does it include the cost of enforcement?
- There doesn't appear to be an assessment as to what should be charged. It should be low enough to enable local people to still use the facility
- The facility is mainly used by local people accessing schools etc. There is therefore a danger of local car displacement.

c) ENPA – Proposed improvement works at Haddon Hill car park

Responses as follows:

- The facility is mainly used by local dog walkers. There is therefore a danger of local car displacement resulting in street parking.

d) S.C. - Licensing Policy

Cllrs. Mrs Dubery and Mr Nick Thwaites will respond with the same comments as made when responding to the West Somerset & Taunton District Council consultation recently.

Minutes of the meetings held on 12th June 2023 as circulated: were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

Minutes of the meetings held on 19th June 2023 as circulated: were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Parrish, seconded by Mr Gash and carried.

6955 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:

6943 Grant Request – Peer Led Pain Support Group:

No response to further enquires have been received from the Dulverton Medical Centre to date.

6946 Idverde Service Annual Level Agreement – Dog Bins: Having considered several options available members:

RESOLVED: That the annual fee of £499.20 + VAT to Idverde for emptying of two dog bins is approved for payment. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

6956 Accounts:

Financial Statement – June 2023: See Appendix A

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mrs Crisp and carried.

Payments for approval – June 2023: See Appendix B

RESOLVED: That the payments as per Appendix B are approved. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Parrish and carried.

6957 Committees:

None

6958 Planning Applications: None

Members noted the following:

6/9/23/007DC – The Discharge of Condition application has been accepted.

1 Barns Close West, Dulverton Somerset, TA22 9EE

6959 Administrative Officer – Overtime Approval:

RESOLVED: To approve payment of overtime as submitted. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

6960 Speed Awareness/Traffic Calming:

Cllr. Mr Gash requested that members consider how more considerate driving and slower speeds can be encouraged on the approach to Brushford from Dulverton, without putting people's driving licence and livelihoods in jeopardy.

Cllr. Mr Thwaites informed members that the SID type device proposed are supported by the police speed group as they do not capture images only record the number of vehicle exceeding the speed set limit.

Cllr. Mrs Dubery stated that she would enquire from Exford Parish Council members as to how effective the ones installed in their area had been.

Cllr. Thwaites agreed to investigate costs etc.

6961 ENNIS Project – Donation Request:

RESOLVED: To approve a grant of £50.00 towards the treatment of knotweed on DTC property. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Crisp and carried.

6962 Lion Stables Public Toilets – Approval to meet cost of statutory checks:

RESOLVED: To approve to payment of £225 + VAT to Yeo Electricians for the statutory electricity check and report. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mrs Dubery and carried.

Members were informed that three out of the five cubicles are currently open to the public. Parts are still awaited concerning the repairs outstanding to the remaining two.

6963 Late Correspondence:

Correspondence noted by members.

Complaint regarding perceived ‘clutter’ outside shops’ – Anonymous: The Clerk was requested to ascertain from Somerset County as to whether the items referred to are on private land; i.e. where exactly is the boundary?

6964 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:

None

6965 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:

All Saints Church Boundary Wall:

Members were informed that the report has been received from the structural engineer who has advised that prior to any contract being signed a full specification is provided for the works by a quantity surveyor.

Cllr. Mrs Dubery is to source quotes for consideration.

Exmoor Lawns – Dog Mess: The groundsman has complained of increasing incidences of dog mess, particularly on the banks which he regularly carries out strimming.

Members agreed that the cost of three signs ‘Please pick up after your dog’ is obtained to be placed on the banks.

Dulverton Lives: Permission has been obtained regarding the hanging of a large banner at Kings Corner.

Secret Gardens/Artisan Fair: Both events were deemed a great success. Cllr. Mrs Dubery extended her thanks to all the volunteers involved.

Chairman