



## Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 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 Ann Van Praag; Mrs Frances Nicholson, who arrived at 7.40pm and left at 8.50pm and Mr Steven Pugsley, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.) who left at 8.50pm.

**Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public:** None

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

Miss Mandy Rose - Clerk

**Declarations of Interest:**

None not already declared.

**Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management:** None

**Presentation – Gold Star Award 2023:**

In acknowledgment of his conscientious attitude and commitment towards his work and responsibilities concerning the maintenance of all the public spaces in Dulverton, the Chairman, on behalf of members was pleased to present Mr Takel with the Gold Star Award 2023.

Cllr. Mrs Dubery expressed members' gratitude and thanks for all his hard work. An achievement recognized by the Somerset Playing Fields Association for many years', as can be seen by the certificates displayed in the Town Council Office.

**Questions for County Councillors:**

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

**Asset and Service Devolution:** Members were informed that to avoid bankruptcy, services will be required to be cut to the statutory minimum. Assets can be sold with Government approval, furthermore they are looking to devolve certain services, with the possibility that they will be devolved to the newly created LCN's to manage and run, funding issues have not been resolved.

In order to protect services, Somerset County intend to speed up the pace of devolution, however do not intend to raise the precept. Decisions will have to be made within the next few weeks in order that Parishes are given the opportunity to increase their precepts accordingly.

Somerset Highways are to provide details of current costs.

Highways – Green Routes (secondary salting routes): Routes are to be prioritised as follows and are to be treated early in order to minimise risk:

- 1) Routes which connect villages.
- 2) Routes which connect businesses and education establishments.

Both Cllrs. Mrs Nicholson and Mr Pugsley have been instrumental in identifying the routes necessary to connect communities.

ENPA Visitor Centre: See minute 7003.

LCN Meeting – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023: Topics of discussion involved:

- Update on Somerset County's financial position.
- Avon & Somerset Police report
- Highways subgroup update
- Economic Regeneration subgroup update
- Affordable Housing subgroup update
- ENPA – Financial situation.
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The Crime Commissioner will be attending the meeting scheduled during January 2024.

Salt Bins: It has been agreed that the existing system will be retained but will only be accessed online using maps.

Cllr. Mr Preston thanked Cllrs. Mrs Nicholson and Mr Pugsley with regards their continuing efforts in support of the residents of Dulverton.

**Minutes of the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 as circulated:** were approved and signed. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Van Praag and carried.

### **6997 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:**

6995 Dulverton Live Event:

Cllr. Mr Gash thanked all those involved in the event were thanked for their help and contributions.

The number of attendees was not as high as last year, however very positive comments have been received from those who participated.

Members considered that a bi - annual event may work better and that the time of year be revisited.

6982 Highways Issues - Update

Winsford Hill - Horse Warning Signs: New signage has been agreed to be erected on the reverse side of cattle grid signs on Winsford Hill and Varle Hill with the addition of SLOW painted on the road at various locations., in an attempt to reduce animal fatalities due to speeding vehicles. Further consultation is ongoing with ENPA with regards additional signage.

Town Centre – 'Kerb Blips': – All requested have been installed.

High Street – Priority Give Way: A map of the proposed signage and double yellow lines (DYL) from the junction at Union Street and the High Street, up the High Street to the top of Vicarage Hill was circulated. Priority will be given from the bottom at Webbers Corner. To ensure the safety of queuing traffic approaching the 'Give Way' entrance near Rosemary Lane Junction on Vicarage Hill, DYL's will need to be extended the full length of Vicarage Hill. This will be part of the amendment order to be advertised in the next couple of months.

### **6998 Accounts:**

Financial Statement – October 2023: See Appendix A

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mrs Parrish, seconded by Mrs Van Praag and carried.

Payments for approval – October 2023: See Appendix B

RESOLVED: That the payments as per Appendix B are approved. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mr Gash and carried.

### **6999 Committees:** None.

Members were reminded that Grounds and Town Management Committee meetings were scheduled for tomorrow morning as from 10.30am.

A Legal & Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00pm when a recommendation concerning setting of the precept 2024/25 will be considered.

### **7000 Planning Applications:**

RESOLVED: To adopt the comments as per Appendix C as part of this meeting. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

### **7001 Royal British Legion:**

RESOLVED: As per custom and tradition to award a grant of £50.00. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mrs Crisp and carried.

### **7002 Lion Stables Public Toilet Facilities:**

Cllr. Mrs Dubery informed members that a further visit from an engineer from Danfo UK was awaited to resolve the continuing issues. One cubicle is still out of action.

An electrician will be undertaking the repairs to the fans later this week.

### **7003 ENPA Visitor Centre Proposals:**

To realise required savings from Autumn 2024, the Authority was, at its meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 23, recommended and subsequently resolved to agree to various proposals including the following:

*'The relocation of Dulverton National Park Centre into Exmoor House, operating 5 days a week Easter to end of October only.  
The change will be over a 15 to 18 month migration.'*

Cllr Mrs Rawle commented that DTC had failed to be informed of the proposals concerning the Visitor Centre, only becoming aware following the publication of the ENPA meeting agenda. There consequently was very little time to prepare a response. Furthermore there was a lack of information provided by ENPA to stakeholders before the issue was resolved. What information was available was limited to visitor numbers and sales.

Members also expressed their concerns regarding the effect that the transfer of the Visitors Centre to ENPA Headquarters from the Visitor Centre will have on the Town Centre. These include the possible threat to the continuing existence of the Library and the difficulty in finding something to fill the vacant space of this large central commercial building.

They were advised to maintain contact with ENPA, and request that DTC and the Dulverton Partnership are involved in any future decision making process. To this end a request for a meeting between all parties is to be made to ENPA, to be held in January 2024.

**7004 Somerset Bus Partnership:**

Members considered a request from the Somerset Bus Partnership for a grant to help meet help fund the next campaign and to produce the marketing materials. Members were informed that, to date, a request for details of recent accounts had been requested but not received.

RESOLVED: To award a grant of £60.00. Proposed by Mr Thwaites, seconded by Mrs Parrish and carried.

**7005 Cemetery Memorial Repair:**

Members were presented with the invoice submitted regarding the repair of the memorial on Grave Plot 461.

RESOLVED: To reimburse the owner of the lease pertaining to Grave Plot 461 amounting to £90.00. Proposed by Mrs Crisp, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

**7006 Late Correspondence:**

Correspondence noted by members.

Leader of Somerset Council, Cllr Bill Revans – Asset and Service Devolution - opportunities for parishes

Having discussed the contents of the letter and the list of possible services that SC propose can be considered, members agreed that further information is required and the Clerk was subsequently requested to write to SC and ask for:

- Specific details on those services being considered for cancellation; the current costs of providing those services and the current provider of those services.
- If there exist proposals to devolve any existing funding streams, for example the car parks in Dulverton.

The receipt of this information will then enable members to determine whether to progress the proposals. However, it needs to be stressed that at this point in time there is no commitment from DTC to pursue the proposals.

**7007 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:**

Cllrs Mrs Rawle and Mr Gash attended the ENPA meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 23 (minute 7003) as representatives from DTC.

**7008 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:**

Dulverton Post Office – Members were informed that as from 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the Post Office will be open as from 9am until 1.15pm.

Office Christmas Lunch – Members are invited to attend the office Christmas lunch to be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Chairman .....**