

Minutes of a meeting of the **Town Council Meeting** held in the Council Chamber, North Street, Ilminster on Tuesday 16th December 2014 at 19:30hrs

Present:

Chairman: Cllr E J Taylor

Councillors: Cllr C Goodall, Cllr V Higgins, Cllr A Lawson, Cllr D Miller, Cllr R Neave, Cllr J Pallister, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd and Cllr S Storey

In Attendance

Officers: Miss N McIntosh (Administrative Assistant), Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

County Councillor: Linda Vijeh

3 members of the public attended the meeting and wished to speak.

Speaker 1

Speaker 1 spoke about the proposed improvements to the A303. He said that he believed it should be viewed as an enlargement of the A303, no traffic survey or study for an alternative had been undertaken to establish if the proposed works were necessary.

The Speaker asked the Town Council a) Do you think the proposed development is still a good idea? b) Does the Town Council know something he was unaware of? c) Would the Town Council like to be kept informed of the traffic survey figures when published?

The Mayor replied the Town Council would like to be informed of the traffic survey figures when available, which will be put in the public domain.

Speaker 2

Speaker 2 a representative of South Somerset Climate Action spoke on climate change and the effect of fuels on the environment. He believed that more people should look for better use of resources such as increasing use of public transport; this would allow public money to be used more effectively and funds could be used to provide more cycle tracks/lanes

Speaker 3

Speaker 3 was a representative from Campaign to Protect Rural England, reported the annual traffic figures for the Ilminster Bypass to Podimore over the past 5 years has shown that traffic had not risen but reduced, he believed this proved that ever growing traffic does not have an impact on the A303 route so it was not necessary to carry out the proposed works. He reported that the Western Gazette Newspaper's campaign for duelling the A303 had collected under 4000 signatures to support the proposed improvements which he believed was a relatively small number.

317. Suspension of Standing Orders

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 1m which relates to photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the meeting.

318. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton, Keitch, Sothern and Swann.

319. Declarations of Interest

The declarations of interest outlined in the table below were made:

Name	Agenda Item	Minute No	Interest	Nature of Interest	Action
Cllr Pallister	12	328	Personal	Chairman of Sports Club	Did not speak or vote
Cllr Shepherd	12	328	Personal	Member of Cricket Club and Sports Club	Spoke but did not vote

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320. Minutes

RESOLVED

- (i) that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.
- (ii) to note the office action list relating to Town Council meetings.

Points raised during consideration of the office action list included:

- **Item 3 Football Club Plans** - Planning Application to be discussed by SSDC Area West Committee 17th December 2014 at the Henhayes Centre, Crewkerne
- **Item 9 Open Spaces Review** – The soil test report for the cricket squares had been received
- **Item 14 Project Plan** – District Councillor Goodall had received a response from the developer regarding the footpath between the petrol filling station and Riec Sur Belon Way which states that it has now been adopted by Somerset County Council.
- **Item 15 Winterhay Lane Footpath** – Councillor Storey reported she had been approached by upset residents regarding the on-going Winterhay Lane issue. They had recently been advised by police that it was a private lane. Cllr Storey said that residents are keen to know why the matter is not moving forward; Cllr Miller agreed that there has been no drive from Somerset County Council on pushing the matter forward to date.
County Councillor Vjeh said she would liaise with Somerset County Council to get a further update on the matter.

321. Mayor's Announcements/Engagements

- a) The Deputy Mayor made the following announcement relevant to Town Council and Mayoral activities and engagements.
 - The Mayor reported to Council that she is currently arranging for Mayors from surrounding areas to attend a performance at the Warehouse Theatre
 - The Mayor reported the disappointment that Town Council members were not invited to attend the Civic Carol Service at the held at the Minster on Sunday 7th December 2014
- b) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements between 18th November 2014 and 16th December 2014 were circulated with the agenda.

322. Police Report

The Ilminster Beat Report for November was circulated and considered at the Planning, Highways & Transport & Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2014.

323. Reports from District Councillors

Councillor Goodall informed the Council that she hoped to circulate a written report via email in the next week.

324. Report from County Councillor for Ilminster

County Councillor Vjeh had submitted a written report for November 2014 which was circulated with the agenda and would email Councillors with any additional information.

Issues discussed included:

- Councillor Shearman asked Councillor Vjeh to pass on his thanks to Somerset County Council for opening the Beacon Road as expected before Christmas 2014
- Councillor Vjeh was asked to speak with Somerset County Council regarding the street lights at the Butts, which have been out for a long time. It was explained that several residents had reported the outage but no resolution nor information on repairs had been forthcoming.

325. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

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326. Review of Committees

Councillors were given the opportunity to suggest if any further revisions were necessary to the terms of reference for committees and frequency of meetings agreed on the 24 June 2014.

Issues discussed included:

- General comments received were that Councillors were content with changes
- Resources Committee a view was expressed that as Committees had some delegated spending powers the role of the Resources Committee was not necessary and it would be preferable to revert to having a finance and Policy Committee and Staffing Committee, the former having responsibility for all financial matters.

RESOLVED

- (i) that Councillors should email the Town Clerk with any views and suggestions
- (ii) if any views or suggestions are received the Town Clerk will convene the Working Group to discuss the matters raised and the Working Group will make recommendations to Council.

327. Sports Club Licence

The Council considered requests from the Cricket Club, Football Club and Sports Club to change the licence arrangements for the Sports Club.

Issues discussed included:

- the advisability of knowing the outcome of the planning application for the Football and community facility before a decision is made

RESOLVED to defer consideration of the requests to change the licensing arrangements for The Sports Club until the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20th January 2015.

328. Club Licences and Leases

The Council considered the heads of terms to be included in new licence and lease agreements with the football, cricket and sports club.

Issues discussed included:

- the inclusion of details relating to the maintenance regime of pitches and the expected standards

RESOLVED that

- (i) That the heads of terms to be included in new licence and lease agreements with the football, cricket and sports club as attached to these minutes as appendix 1 are approved .
- (ii) That the Town Council's solicitor (previously agreed) be requested to start compiling the template for the licences and lease based upon the agreed heads of terms
- (iii) That the Chair of Open Spaces, Cllr Neave and the Town Clerk meet with Cricket Club representatives and Football Club representatives to negotiate the details to be contained in the licence / leases
- (ii) That the details negotiated in (iii) above to be reported to Council for approval

329. VAT Registration

The Council were asked to consider whether the Town Council should become VAT registered. The Town Clerk reported that some of the recent activities undertaken by the Town Council e.g. operation of the Kiosk on the Recreation Ground and the agreement of the Sponsorship Policy meant that the Town Council needed to consider its VAT status.

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The Clerk informed Councillors that the supply of buildings and land was usually VAT exempt unless a decision had been made to 'Opt to Tax'; dependent upon the decision made at this meeting "Opt To Tax" would be brought to the next Council meeting for consideration.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Communication with HMRC has been frustrating as there are few advisors who understand the provisions with regard to local authorities
- The Society of Local Council Clerks has provided some advice
- Information has been sought from the Town Council's Internal Auditors
- Crewkerne and Yatton Town Council who are VAT registered, have been contacted and information on the implication of VAT registration obtained.
- Vat does not need to be charged the provision of burial and cremation plots
- The potential extra workload for the staff
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RESOLVED that the Town Council becomes VAT Registered

330. Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Council considered adopting a new complaints procedure.

No issues were discussed whilst considering this item

RESOLVED that

- (i) That the Complaints Procedure as attached to these minutes as Appendix 2 is approved and adopted with immediate effect
- (ii) That a Complaints Panel is established with the terms of reference as given in Appendix 3 to these minutes

331. Policy on Recording Meetings

The Council considered adopting a policy on recording meetings

Issues discussed included:

- Draft Policy is 'based upon the Policy adopted by South Somerset District Council and the model document published by the National Association of Local Councils
- An individual member of the public's right not to be recorded
- Electrical Safety
- Providing notices around the meeting room to inform attendees that recording is taking place
- Providing facilities and space for recording equipment the Council Chamber has inadequate space for large equipment

RESOLVED that the Policy on Recording Meetings, as attached as Appendix 4 to these minutes is approved and adopted with immediate effect

332. Budgets

The Council considered the proposed expenditure and priorities for the financial year 2015/16

Issues discussed included:

- The Council Tax Reduction Grant paid to the Town Council by the South Somerset District Council has been reduced
- The number of band D equivalent properties (the Council Tax base) has risen.
- Predicted expenditure from earmarked reserves for 2015/16 is still in preparation and will be forwarded to Councillors in due course.
- The External Auditor's comment about the low level of contingency / un earmarked reserves and the need to address this as part of the budget process and ensure that the Council has made adequate provision.

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- A separate document is needed with regard to the Football and Community Facility which will show the income (from grant sources) and the expenditure on building construction

RESOLVED

- (i) To note the information provided
- (ii) that Councillors should send any comments and suggestions regarding the 2015/16 budget to the Town Clerk and these will then be reported during consideration of the budget and the precept at the Council meeting on 20th January 2015.

333. Project Plan

The Council considered the progress on the project plan and the following changes were identified as necessary.

Issues discussed included:

- Item 7 Silver Street Car park - Awaiting on the decision of the Local Plan, until can move forward with idea
- Item 8 Drain Infrastructure – Wessex Water has carried out work to drainage outside Swanmead Community School, Ditton Street
- Item 8 Delete the words Knott Oak and Ditton Street

334. Authorisation of Payments and Notification of Virements

The Schedule of Payments for authorisation was circulated with the agenda for Council's approval.

Issues discussed included:

- Repair to South Somerset District Council window and payment

RESOLVED that the accounts listed in the schedule presented to the Council totalling £20,192.04 be approved.

335. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public whilst agenda item 20 was discussed due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

336. Hammerhead Land

The Town Clerk reported that there had been no further update regarding the Hammerhead Land.

The meeting closed at 21:30 hrs.

Chair's signature & date