

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting  
held in the Council Chamber. The Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster,  
on Tuesday 22 January 2019 at 19.30hrs

**Present:**

**Chair:** Cllr J Fowler

**Councillors:** Cllr M Gunn, Cllr M James, Cllr V Keitch, Cllr A Shearman, Cllr S Shepherd,  
Cllr R Swann, Cllr T Walker and Cllr F White

**In Attendance**

**Officers:** Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

Mr O Woodhams, Strategic Manager, community & Traded Services, Somerset  
County Council

PSO J Martin

4 members of the public attended the meeting

**Speaker 1 – Future Education provision in Ilminster**

The local authority have commissioned an independent review to consider options which will ensure the financial sustainability of the education system in the Crewkerne / Ilminster area and thus secure and provide the foundation for further improvement in the standards achieved by all schools in the partnership. The review is due to report by Easter at the latest. There will be a period of consultation about the options for change. This process has already caused uncertainty in both Crewkerne and Ilminster communities. Various rumours have and are being put at different times, since the review was announced 12 months ago. Actions outside this process by individual schools are only likely to increase uncertainty.

Both the diocese and the local authority are supporting the retention of one secondary school for the Crewkerne / Ilminster area and that is Wadham.

It is important that for the benefit of the school children in the area that a two tier system is introduced both for educational and financial stability.

The Mayor responded that as and when the review report is published the Town Council will consider the report and form its view on the future of education in Ilminster

**Speaker 2**

- Footpath into Rutters Lane there are no identified owners for this lane between Highfield and the telephone exchange; - residents seem to keep it tidy but the surface is poor.
- Ground outside Methodist Church - brambles and bushes are growing unchecked and this is in a visible location and gives a poor impression of the town.  
Cllr Keitch offered to discuss the matter with the new South Somerset District Council Conservation Officer
- Nippy Bus - the speaker has contacted the head office of First Bus in Aberdeen and Mr Perrot at County Hall; it is clear that the former Nippy bus route is not going to be resurrected but if all the local councils were willing to work together a local supplier may willing to offer a similar service provided it would not be running at a loss

The Mayor responded that the Town Council's Planning, Highways and Transport Committee have recently discussed buses and community transport

and Cllr Burton will be researching projects in other areas with a view to further discussion about provision in and around Ilminster.

**545 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burton, Dewick, Mackillop and Taylor.

**546 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors made Declarations of Interest as detailed in the table below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Minute No</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>	<b>Type of Interest</b>	<b>Action</b>
J Fowler	Agenda No 3 d Office Action List – member of the Canal Way Action Group	547D	Member of the Canal Way Action Group	Personal	Spoke and voted
	Agenda No 10 Update from the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group	554	Married to the Volunteer Administrator	Personal	Spoke & voted

**547 Minutes**

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on **20 November 2018** were considered

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

- b) The minutes of the meeting held on **27 November 2018** were considered.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record

- c) The minutes of the meeting held on **10 December 2018** were considered.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018 be confirmed as a correct record

- d) The Office Action Plan relating to Town Council Meetings was considered.

Issues raised during discussion of this agenda item included:

- Writing to South Somerset District Council regarding the Town Council's comments about the masterplan for the planning application for land south of Canal Way
- Land acquisitions
- Writing to South Somerset District Council regarding the Town Council's comments about the Gambling Act

**RESOLVED** to note the Office Action Plan.

## 548 Mayor's Announcements/Engagements

- a) The Mayor said that she had been approached by a number of Councillors concerned that they had insufficient time to read the budget papers, therefore it was likely a proposal would be made when the relevant agenda items were reached to defer consideration of any budget related matters to a an extra Town Council meeting to be held on 29 January 2019.
- b) Details of the Mayor's engagements between 14 November 2018 and 15 January 2019 had been circulated but there were 3 additional engagements:
- |              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 14 December  | Vaughan Lee residents party    |
| 16 December  | Town and Country Carol Service |
| 19. December | Vaughan Lee Winter Wonderland  |

## 549 Police Report

PCSO John Martin gave a report on policing matters that had happened in Ilminster since October 2018.

- 6 Anti Social Behaviour reports
- 2 burglaries
- 3 non- dwelling burglaries
- 4 other thefts
- 2 shop thefts
- 9 assaults
- 7 domestic incidents
- 3 harassment cases
- 11 criminal damage reports - 3 related to vehicles and 4 linked to neighbour disputes

The PCSO urged everyone to check their car lights to ensure they are all in working order - it is especially important at this time of year with long dark nights and poor weather conditions.

Cllr Keitch had recently met with the Police and Crime Commissioner and had used the opportunity to comment the work of the Ilminster neighbourhood team.

## 550 Reports from District Councillors

Cllr Keitch, as a District Councillor, gave an oral report, the topics included:

- Peer review the recent peer view of the District Council has given extremally positive feedback, there are some recommendations but most related to matters that had already been recognised and were being addressed. This feedback is particularly pleasing for staff who have been working hard to make transformation happen. One of the reviewers was so impressed that he is bringing a team from his own council to visit and learn from SSDC's recent experience
- Discussions are continuing on the future of local government in Somerset. Next week there will be a meeting of Somerset councils Chief Executives and Leaders to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various options; this information will then be discussed at each Council. Following the discussions by each Council an agreed way forward will published for public consultation. The whole process will take number of years and will not impact on the May 2019 election.
- Battery packs have arrived and are being installed – this is a very exciting green project that will generate income.

- The first phase of houses in Marlborough are about to come on market; this is a project where South Somerset District Council have invested with a local developer as income generation opportunity.
- The District Council is looking to achieve a balanced property portfolio to provide income - investment in property will be agreed to maximise return and is not constrained by location.
- There are still slight delays in processing applications and 3 extra planners have been employed to help reduce the backlog.
- Transformation went live 2 January 2019; the technology is being tested and there will be a soft launch on 29 January 2019 followed by a programmed 90 day roll out.
- The Yeovil Refresh and the Chard Regeneration Project are progressing. A contractor has been appointed to demolish the existing buildings in Chard, and an architect for the new scheme is also in place.
- Representations have been made to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that present funding arrangements are not fair for rural counties.
- The Council Plan, which contains the priorities for the next 3 years, is being revamped and will shortly go to Councillors for final comment.
- Comments regarding the proposals for the A303 have been sent to Highways England
- The Local Plan review is underway
- Drop-in sessions for people interested in standing as a District Councillor will be held on 15 and 28 February at the South Somerset District Council offices in Brympton Way, Yeovil.
- South Somerset District Council has taken over the former Womens refuge as a hostel for homeless people; the way the hostel is being run and the services provided e.g – getting people tenancy ready are being used by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as a best practice example of good use of money from the homeless fund.

**551 Report from the County Councillor for the Ilminster Division**

The County Councillor's reports for November and December had been circulated prior to the meeting. Unfortunately the County Councillor was unable to attend the meeting and had sent her apologies but if any Town Councillors had any comments or questions about the reports they should contact her direct.

**552 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Reports from Representatives from Greenfyde and Neroche schools had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**Ilminster Literary Festival** Cllr Keitch reported that an exciting programme is being put together for the 2019 Festival

**553 Recommendations from the Resources Committee**

Recommendations from the Resources Committee were considered

- (i) Staffing Structure

**RESOLVED** that subject to negotiations with existing permanent staff

- (i) the Town Council's permanent staff comprise  
 Town Clerk – full time  
 Deputy Town Clerk – full time  
 Administrator - full time  
 Senior Open Spaces Warden – full time  
 Open Spaces Warden – full time

- (ii) that the statutory role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) moves from the Town Clerk to the Deputy Town Clerk
- (iii) that the Town Clerk is line manager for the Deputy Town Clerk and the Administrator
- (iv) that the Deputy Town Clerk is the line manager for the Senior Open Spaces Warden
- (v) that 6 months after the new structure is implemented consideration is given to the employment of an apprentice
- (vi) that there is budget provision for access to people with specialist knowledge e.g. HR, cemetery
- (vii) that there is budget provision for a full time seasonal open spaces worker to be employed 1 April – 30 September

(ii) Working Group

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that a working group be set up to review the management processes and accountable responsibilities through which the Open Spaces Team has currently been managed, with particular reference to the Reports and complaints arising from recent disciplinary actions and, in so doing, to meet with key individuals including the Town Clerk for their input; and to make recommendations to the Town Council for consideration at the March 2019 meeting as to what improvements should be put in place in response to the lessons learnt.
- (i) that the working group comprise Councillors Belobaba, Dewick and James

**554 Update from the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group**

Consideration was given to a recommendation from the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group regarding the appointment of a consultant to assist with developing the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was explained that prices had been sought from organisations interested in offering consultancy support to the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group. 3 positive responses had been received and representatives of the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group had presentations from those 3 responding organisations. After the presentation it had been a unanimous decision on the preferred organisation. Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The appointment of a consultant is an important step
- Grant funding can be applied for to help meet costs

**RESOLVED** that ECA Community Interest be appointed as consultant to the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group based on their quotation of £14,100 (plus travel).

**555 Strategic Plan 2018/19-2020/21 – Status Report**

Consideration was given to the quarterly Status Report.

**RESOLVED** to note and agree the quarterly status report

The Mayor invited Mr Ollie Woodhams to speak regarding Somerset County Council's request for funding towards Ilminster library. Mr Woodhams circulated a briefing note for reference which is attached to the minutes as Appendix 1.

Mr Woodhams stated that the County Council is committed to having maintain Ilminster Library and since the funding request was made in November has been taking forward plans for a staffing restructure. By implementing a changed staffing structure, using volunteers and installing a self-service machine it should be possible to maintain the current library opening hours.

A modern library service is not just about lending books, it is also a place to help people access information .e.g digitally excluded persons who may need help from skilled & trained staff, work with children, staff visiting schools, socially isolated people come together in a library

A funds input of approx. £6,000 would maintain 2 staff for 2 full days per week but a 3 year commitment would be required.,

The Library service are talking to South Somerset District Council about working together to provide touchdown space, Langport will be the initial focus for this and Ilminster the second.

#### **556 Strategic Plan 2019/20 – 2021/22**

To consider the draft Town Council 3 year Strategic Plan for 2019/20 – 2021/22.

Issues raised during discussion of this agenda item included:

- Providing more explanatory information in the SWOT analysis

**RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the following items to an extra Town Council meeting to be held on Tuesday 29 January 2019

- (i) Strategic Plan 2019/20 – 2021/22
- (ii) Budget and Precept 2019/20
- (iii) Medium Term Financial Plan
- (iv) Capital Programme
- (v) Investment Strategy

#### **557 Draft Calendar of Meetings**

The draft calendar of meetings for the municipal year starting in May 2019 was considered.

**RESOLVED** to approve the draft calendar of meetings starting in May 2019 as a working document.

#### **558 Payments and Virements**

The Schedule of Payments for authorisation was not available for the meeting to consider due to a minor technology issue.

**559 Clerk's Updates**

The following Clerk's Updates have been sent by email since the last Town Council agenda was published and no questions were raised at the meeting.

Number	Date	Topic
17/18	18.12.18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Herne Vale Play Area</li><li>2. Neighbourhood Plan Consultant</li><li>3. Draft Notes of Resources Committee</li><li>4. A303 Road Noise</li><li>5. Festive Opening Hours</li></ol>

The meeting closed at 20:41hrs

## **Briefing note for Ilminster Town Councillors:** **Request for Funding for Ilminster Library**

January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019

This note supplements the original funding request set out in our letter of 12<sup>th</sup> November, which confirmed that:

- The County Council has taken a decision to retain Ilminster Library as one of 19 library buildings operated by the council, but because of well-documented financial pressures, the budget available to Ilminster library will be reduced in 2019/20.
- We hope to achieve this budget reduction through a combination of:
  - Financial support from Ilminster Town Council, or other local partners or donors.
  - Volunteering support from the Friends of Ilminster Library.
  - Opportunities to deliver shared services with South Somerset District Council.

We requested an annual contribution of between £5,000 and £8,000, for a three-year period.

Over the past two months, we have taken forward our staffing plans for the library through a restructure proposal, which would see the library reduce to a predominantly single staffed structure. We are encouraged that the Friends of Ilminster Library have identified a number of potential volunteers, and we will be installing a self-service machine. Through these measures, we will be able to maintain current opening hours. However, there are likely to be some impacts on the current level of service provided:

- A reliance on a single staffing model, even with support from volunteers, would make it difficult to continue with some of the current activity programme, for example School and Pre-School visits by our trained library staff, and our regular 'coffee, chat and activity' group working with socially isolated adults.
- Many of our more vulnerable customers rely on skilled staff support to use the public access computer terminals to (for example) apply for benefits online. We will may not be able to offer this service with just one member of staff.

Funding for an additional 9 hours of staffing time per week (at a cost of approximately £6,200) would enable us to maintain 2 staff in Ilminster library for 2 full days per week. Working with volunteers from the Friends of Ilminster Library, at this level of staffing we could:

- Maintain and enhance our current offer, continuing to offer a full range of activities and events for children and adults, and offering support for digitally-excluded customers using the computer network.
- Offer an extended range of activities (e.g. after school homework clubs) and look to extend current opening hours, if sufficient volunteers could be found.

Additional funding above this level could be used to create a budget for additional events, or to invest in new furniture and refurbishment, enhancing the appeal of the library.