



Town Clerk: Miss Joy Norris MSc ACG

The Town Hall, 1 High Street, CULLOMPTON, EX15 1AB

[enquiries@cullomptontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cullomptontowncouncil.gov.uk)

01884 38249

**Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council  
held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 commencing at 19:00 hrs**

**Present**

**Chair:** Councillor K Haslett

**Councillors:** J Buczkowski, A Connolly, I Emmett, G Guest, J Johns, M Rowe, M Smith and C Snow

**In attendance**

*Note: Councillors attending by remote access are not able to participate nor vote in the meeting*

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

1 member of the press attended the meeting on zoom

1 member of the public attended the meeting in the Town Hall

**361. Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor did a roll call of all the Councillors present and welcomed Councillors Connolly and Rowe to their first full Town Council meeting since their co-option.

He Mayor then made the following announcements:

- Thank you to everyone for their concern at the last Town Council meeting and especially to Councillor Buczkowski for stepping in when the Mayor was unwell and had to leave.
- A reminder about the community engagement event being held at the Walronds on Saturday (25 September); the Mayor will be attending and the Town Council will have a stall so if as many Councillors as possible could attend, even if it is only for a short time, it would be appreciated.
- A paper copy of Councillor Berry's District Council and County Council report has been placed in each Councillor "booth"; it will also be emailed out to Councillors.

**362. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Beckwith, Dale, Dietrich and Knight.

2 Points of order were raised.

- 1 Did the Chair approve in advance the late distribution of supporting documents and what was the reason? The Mayor confirmed that she had known about the late distribution and agreed but had taken the view it was better to send them out late than

not at all and she was aware that Councillors may wish to defer those items when they got to that point on the agenda.

- 2 Could it be confirmed that the Clerk has received Declarations of Acceptance of Office from all Councillors present? The Town Clerk confirmed that she did have the relevant documents.

**363. Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interests were made regarding any items on the Agenda at this stage of the meeting.

Cllr Smith did declare a personal interest during consideration of Agenda No 15 Town Hall as he knows one of the interested parties.

**364. Public Participation**

This agenda item allows members of the public present at the meeting to raise matters which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

**Speaker 1**

The Speaker has looked at the Town Council's website and it appears that the Town Council is breaching Regulations by not publishing Appendices 3 clear days before a meeting.

Following the Resources Committee on 9 September the Speaker had sent an email to the Mayor raising concerns over the publication of papers as raised by a Councillor at that meeting and as no reply was received subsequently sent a further email; the Speaker also sent 2 emails to the Deputy Mayor and received an unsatisfactory reply so he then circulated an email to all Councillors

**RESOLVED** to allow the speaker a further 5 minutes as there were no other members of the public present and therefore no other representations to be made during the 15 minutes allowed for public participation

The Speaker thanked the meeting for being allowed to continue and then said that as a member of the public he expected a reply to his email expected reply – why has no councillor responded? The Speaker said that either his emails are being blocked by the snooper or tampered with and diverted away from them being received.

The speaker said he has made a complaint to the ICO and is now considering malpractice, malfeasance in public office for the Council as a whole.

The Mayor responded that she had not received any emails and suggested that the speaker put their points in writing and delivered the written document to the Town Council office and that any emails about council business sent to her personal accounts would not receive a response.

A response was given by a Councillor that Councillors may receive correspondence but choose not to reply and another Councillor apologised saying they would check but thought they had responded to the email from the speaker.

There was a further comment from a Councillor that it is legal to present supporting papers at a meeting but it is the Town Council's own procedure rule that supporting papers should be distributed with the agenda.

**365. Minutes**

This agenda item was to confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 as a correct record. (Supporting Paper A to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED** to defer consideration of this agenda item until the next meeting.

**366. Action List**

This agenda item was to receive and review the Action List relating to the Town Council. (Supporting Paper B to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED** to defer consideration of this agenda item until the next meeting.

**367. Payments for Authorisation:**

The accounts due for payment were examined. (Supporting Paper C to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED** that the invoices due for payment as presented totalling £6,221.99gross, and the direct debits and standing authorisation items totalling £1,494.09gross be approved.

**368. 2022/2023 Budget**

To consider any guiding principles for setting the 2022/2023 budget. (Supporting Paper D to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that as a guiding principle for the 2022/2023 budget the maximum increase per household that will be considered is 3%
- (ii) that (i) above does not preclude assessing if there are any service areas where economies can be made.

**369. Committee Composition**

Consideration was given to the composition of Committees, in particular requests from recently co-opted Councillors. (Supporting Paper E to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Rowe s appointed to the Cemetery and Town Hall Committee and the Resources Committee.

**370. Recording of Meetings**

Consideration was given as to whether or not to continue allowing all attendees of meetings held on the "Zoom" platform to record the meeting using the record facility within "Zoom" (Supporting Paper F to the Agenda)

It was agreed not to change the current practice of enabling attendees to use the zoom recording facility.

**371. Annual Report 2020/2021**

Consideration was given to the Town Clerk having delegated authority, following consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Community Wellbeing Committee, to finalise the content of the 20/21 Annual Report. (Supporting Paper G to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED**

- (i) Not to publish an annual report for 2020/2021
- (ii) That a Working Group comprising any interested Councillor is formed to start work imminently on an Annual Report for 2021/2022 that comes out in a timely manner soon after the end of the financial year
- (iii) That the Working Group set up in (ii) above reports to the Community Wellbeing Committee
- (iv) That the Working Group remit is responsibility for the design and content of the Annual Report.

**372. Town Hall Hire**

Consideration was given to information relating to the potential of re-opening the Town Hall for hire. (Supporting Paper H to the Agenda)

**RESOLVED** that any decision to resume hiring out the Town Hall is deferred until January 2022

A recorded vote was requested:

Voting in Favour: Councillors Connolly, Guest, Johns, Smith, Haslett

Voting Against: Councillors Buczkowski, Emmett, Rowe

Abstention: Councillor Snow

**373. Members Questions**

This agenda item is to give Councillors an opportunity to ask questions which are relevant to the work of the Council.

The following questions / matters were raised:

- Why has the Town Council been recruiting staff instead of using contractors; staffing levels should reflect winter not summer requirements
- Reminder of the Autumn Festival scheduled for 9 October
- Councillor Guest requested he is provided with hard copies of meeting documents for the foreseeable future
- Concern that a previous question regarding the Upcott Field and Gift of A. Burrows Charity accounts has not received a formal response. The Council needs to satisfy itself that everything is in order and discharging its Trustee functions correctly.

**374. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** in accordance with the 1960 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act to exclude the public and press during consideration of:

- Agenda Item 15 Town Hall on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature (items subject to legal advice and negotiation).

The reports relating to this items had been withheld from public circulation and deposit.

**375. Town Hall**

To consider communications regarding egress of persons from the south side of the Town Hall and consider next steps. (Supporting Paper I to the Agenda, confidential for Councillors only)

**Note:** 20:51hrs. Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in the agenda item as he knows the interested parties.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) To instruct the Town Council's solicitor regarding the drafting of a licence
- (ii) Seek to negotiate moving the egress location.

The meeting closed at 21:05hrs