



## Minutes of a meeting of Cullompton Town Council held on Thursday 27 February 2020 commencing 7pm at Cullompton Town Hall

**Present:** Cllr Lloyd Knight (in the chair) and Cllrs: Eileen Andrews, James Buczkowski, Matthew Dale, Gordon Guest, Kate Haslett, Janet Johns, Will Jones, Ian Morton, Michelle Rowe and Martin Smith.

Also in attendance: MDDC Cllr Nikki Woollatt, DCC/MDDC Councillor John Berry, approximately 6 members of the public and one member of the press.

Judy Morris: Town Clerk

Joy Norris: Incoming Town Clerk

**194. APOLOGIES** received and accepted from Cllrs Kerry Baldwin (personal), Gordon Guest (unwell) and Kate Haslett (personal).

**195. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:** None.

**196. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**Ian Emmett:** Asked the Council if it will be supporting the Master Planning exercise in words and actions. He referred to two items that are on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting:

*Town Clerk will respond to Mr Emmett.*

**197. PRESENTATION:** Connecting the Culm project (Steven Johnson, Devon County Council): Steven Johnson explained that it is a partnership project between MDDC/DCC and the National Trust to connect local people with the river. Members of the public are encouraged to attend workshops being held in Bradninch and Kentisbeare to contribute local knowledge and find out how to get involved. There is also an on-line survey.

The Town Mayor thanked Steven Johnson and his colleague for attending to make the presentation and they left the meeting.

**198. MINUTES:** The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record. Proposed Cllr Will Jones, seconded Cllr Janet Johns.

**199. RESOLUTIONS:** Noted

**200. REPORTS**

(i) **Town Mayor's Report:** Very quiet month, nothing to report.

(ii) **County/District Councillor Reports.**

**Mid Devon District Councillor Nikki Woollatt** had submitted a written report which had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

**DCC/MDDC Councillor John Berry** circulated a written report at the meeting

**MDDC Councillor Eileen Andrews** reported on external repairs to the council's housing stock.

- (iii) **Clr Will Jones** reported, on behalf of the Community Wellbeing Committee, about the progress of arrangements for the VE Day celebrations. He explained that volunteers are needed to help on the day, anyone willing to help should contact Clr Will Jones or the Deputy Town Clerk.

## **201. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS: To review membership**

**RESOLVED:** That Clr Justin Lochhead becomes a member of the ICT Working Group, Planning & Licensing Committee, Policy, Finance and Personnel Committee and the Town Centre & Economic Development Committee. Proposed Clr Lloyd Knight, seconded Clr Russ Murch.

## **202. BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

### **(i) Payments**

**RESOLVED:** That invoices totalling £5052.72 (Purchase Daybook Page 433) are approved for payment. Proposed Clr Will Jones, seconded Clr Robert Dietrich.

### **(ii) Financial Reports: To receive Financial Reports for January 2020:**

- (a) Bank Reconciliation: Noted
- (b) Balance Sheet: Noted
- (c) Income & Expenditure report: Noted
- (d) Credit card payments: Noted

- (iii) **Leat desilting: To consider request from the Leat Working Group:** Clerk reported that the Leat Preservation Trust has agreed to make a contribution towards the cost. It was queried whether a licence is required to carry out this work.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council approves the recommendation from the Leat Working Group to accept the lowest estimate of £400 to desilt the leat from Head Weir for about 500-600 metres subject to:

- (a) Any necessary permits/licences being obtained and
- (b) Other organisations putting in what support and funding they can (looking for support from Leat Conservation Board, Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council).

Proposed Clr Martin Smith, seconded Clr James Buczkowski.

- (iv) **Submission of grant application: To receive details:** Clerk reported that, unfortunately, an application to the UK Youth Fund had been unsuccessful.

- (v) **Lease for siting of Container at Knightswood: To receive report and agree way forward:** It was noted that the lease, which was originally for 5 years, was signed in 2017 but has never been completed. MDDC would like confirmation of whether the Town Council is happy to complete on the lease with an end date of 31 March 2022

or whether it would prefer to extend the lease on the understanding that if the lease is for longer than 6 years it will need to be registered and this will incur a charge.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accepts the end date of the lease as 31 March 2022 and then reviews. Proposed Cllr James Buczkowski, seconded Cllr Lloyd Knight

### 203. MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY COUNCILLORS

- (I) That Cullompton Town Council arranges to secure the freehold of 19 High Street in order that it can be used for a community project (Cllr Martin Smith).

Note: It was resolved that the above item was deferred until the end of the meeting and dealt with as Part 2 Business, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

**FOR:** Cllrs Matthew Dale, Robert Dietrich, Janet Johns, Lloyd Knight, Justin Lochhead, Russ Murch, Michelle Rowe and Martin Smith.

**AGAINST:** Cllrs Eileen Andrews. James Buczkowski, Will Jones and Ian Morton.

It was then agreed not to go into closed session and the public were invited to stay.

A power point presentation of the draft Business Plan for the purchase and development of 19 High Street was made by Cllr Martin Smith. Discussion included:

- There appears to be a demand for incubator and start-up units in Cullompton.
- The most effective form of governance arrangement for the project has not yet been determined. It was suggested that this will be some form of Community Interest Company (CIC) working closely with the Town Council and the community.
- The main focus at present is the acquisition of the site.
- The site is currently under the control of Mid Devon District Council who are looking for offers in the region of £100k.
- MDDC has intimated that it will look favourably on an offer from the Town Council if the project is for community benefit.
- Concerns raised about: surveys which will need to be carried out, financial risk to the council, management costs.

**RESOLVED:** That, as the time is now 9pm, the meeting is extended until 9.15pm. Proposed Cllr Lloyd Knight, seconded Cllr Will Jones.

Discussion about management of the proposed start-up units, the role of the Council in the project and the financial risk if the Council purchase the land and then leases the site to a Community Interest Company.

Need to show that the Council has considered the risk and carried out due diligence. It was suggested that the Council will need to be very involved in the project in order to protect its investment.

**RESOLVED:** That, as the time is now 9.15pm, the meeting continues until 9.30pm. Proposed Cllr Lloyd Knight, seconded Cllr Michelle Rowe.

It was acknowledged that there are still a lot of questions to be answered but a lot of ground has been covered since the first meeting with MDDC 6 weeks ago when the Council was given a deadline of 28 Feb 2020 to submit its bid.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council offers £50,000 for the freehold of the site, to be funded through the Council's reserves, subject to contract and surveys and offer the following terms of contract:

- (i) That, should at any time in the future, the Town Council decide to sell the site it will undertake to pay Mid Devon District Council 50% of any uplift in the value over and above the purchase price.
- (ii) That, 10% of all future lease income received by the Town Council from the Community Interest Company, will be paid to Mid Devon District Council.

Proposed Cllr James Buczkowski, seconded Cllr Matthew Dale (unanimous).

It was further

**RESOLVED:** That a further £10,000 is taken from the Council's reserve fund to pay for costs associated with the purchase such as legal fees and surveys. Proposed Cllr James Buczkowski, seconded Cllr Matthew Dale.

**RESOLVED:** That, as the time is now 9.30pm, the remaining agenda items are deferred until the Council's next meeting on 12 March 2020.

**COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS:** To receive the draft Minutes of the following Committees and Working Groups and approve the recommendations contained therein:

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

- (i) Local Government Boundary Review: To consider response.
- (ii) Swallow Way: To consider request for highway safety measures in Swallow Way

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- (i) Devon County Council: Fore Street/Exeter Hill footway maintenance scheme

**CONTRACT FOR MANAGEMENT OF ST ANDREWS CAR PARK:** To approve variation to contract (to be sent under separate cover).

**204. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 12 March 2020 at 7pm.