



Town Clerk: Miss Joy Norris MSc ACIS

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

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01884 38249

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held remotely on Tuesday 7 July 2020 commencing at 19:00 hrs

Present

Chair: Councillor L Knight

Councillors: E Andrews, J Buczkowski, M Dale, R Dietrich, G Guest, J Johns, W Jones, J Lochhead, R Murch, I Morton, M Smith.

In attendance

Officers: J Norris (Town Clerk), S Reardon (Assistant Town Clerk) and M Weston (Deputy Town Clerk)

1 member of the Press

8 Members of the Public

46. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- i. That Councillor K Baldwin has resigned from the Town Council; a letter of thanks will be sent to her.
- ii. That the planning application for the construction of the town centre relief road has been lodged with the Planning Authority and is available for comment.
- iii. That work to improve the water flow in the Mill Stream has commenced as has the required work to the Cemetery Chapel and Mortuary.
- iv. That a £5,000 grant has been received from MDDC to provide assistance with the local economy restarting after the COVID19 closure period.
- v. The report from the Independent Examiner into the Neighbourhood Plan has been received.

47. Apologies For Absence

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Councillor K Haslett.

48. Declarations of Interests

The following Declarations of Interest were made

- i. Councillor M Rowe declared an interest in Agenda No 10 (ii) Land at NGR 303437 103555 East of Langford Mill and Tye Farm, Langford ([19/01679/MFUL](#)), Minute

55b as she has made a personal representation against the planning application in question.

- ii. Councillor R Murch declared an interest in Agenda No 10 (ii) Land at NGR 303437 103555 East of Langford Mill and Tye Farm, Langford (19/01679/MFUL), Minute 55b in that he has made a personal representation against the application in question and is very good friends with a business owner who will be significantly impacted.
- iii. Councillor G Guest declared a personal interest in Agenda No 10 (ii) Land at NGR 303437 103555 East of Langford Mill and Tye Farm, Langford (19/01679/MFUL), Minute 55b as he has received correspondence from those in favour and against the proposed development.
- iv. Councillor E Andrews declared a personal interest in Minute 55b as she has received several telephone calls concerning the proposed development.

49. **Public Participation**

This agenda item allows members of the public present at the meeting to raise matters which are relevant to Cullompton; up to 3 minutes is allowed for each person.

Speaker 1:

Spoke against the proposed solar farm at Langford and claimed that, as a result of the development of the site in this way, his business will close due to the construction noise; he doesn't see why a company can come in and develop this site and put an established business into bankruptcy together with many birds or prey that are unsuitable to be rehomed and would have to be euthanised. It would also remove a substantial tract of fertile arable land together with an issue with the flood plain and water drainage.

Speaker 2:

CPRE Devon has written several strongly worded letters in opposition to the development of the Solar Farm at Langford. MDDC report states that the development would have a significant detriment to the landscape and it is considered that this site should never have been considered as it is a functional flood plain; these plains should only be considered for essential infrastructure only. The speaker said that considers that the proposal has a very low output, high carbon footprint and there is no promise that the site would be returned to it's former state after it reaches the end of its useful life.

Speaker 3:

- i. Help@ Hand – The Speaker asserted that the costings related to the project should not be in Part II.
*Councillor J Buczkowski responded stating that the decision as to whether or not the Press and public would be excluded during consideration of the agenda item was one for the council to take at the appropriate time and that the Agenda only stated that the press and public **may** be excluded.*
- ii. Public Toilets – He asserted that the costings for the reopening of the public toilets should not be in Part II as it's in the public interest.
*Councillor J Buczkowski again stated that the decision on whether or not exclude the Press and public was one for the council to take at the appropriate time and that the Agenda the Agenda only stated that the press and public **may** be excluded.*

- iii. Unison Payments – The speaker stated his belief that payments of subscriptions to a union is a matter personal to the individual and should not be featuring in the council's accounts.

Councillor J Buczkowski stated that in this, the speaker is incorrect. It is common practice for union subscriptions to be deducted from an individual's salary, in the same way that Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions are, and then the employer passes the payment on to the union.

- iv. Minutes of Meetings: Some not published since March 20 and is a blatant issue that needs to be addressed.

Councillor J Buczkowski stated that, as the email from the speaker raising this matter had only been received yesterday, he had yet to investigate and respond.

- v. Weekly Informal Meeting: Why are these meetings happening and decisions that are made at these meetings not in the public domain?

Councillor J Buczkowski stated that the meeting was an opportunity to share information between the Town Clerk and ~~other senior Councillors~~ Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Policy, Finance and Personnel Committee¹ and that no decisions are taken. Where the town Clerk has made delegated decision these have been reported to Council.

Speaker 4:

Asked for the Clerk to please respond to emails in a timelier manner as it is hampering his communication with other parties.

Councillor J Buczkowski responded stating that meetings do not provide the time or place to interrogate the Clerk and that it would be appreciated if the Speaker would also correspond in a timely and professional manner.

Speaker 5:

Speaking on behalf of the residents of Langford and surrounding settlements against the proposed development of a solar farm in the area. 162 objections are noted on the MDDC website already and he repeated that c150 acres of productive land lost. The development has no bearing on the proposed Garden Village Initiative. Believes that the Planning and Licensing Committee were unaware of the full facts when first considered and should now not support the proposed development.

50. **Minutes**

- i. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 were considered.
- ii. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 were considered.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.
- (ii) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

¹ Amended in accordance with Minute 64 Town Council meeting 23.07.2020

51. **Action List**

RESOLVED that consideration of the Action List relating to the Town Council is deferred until the next meeting.

52. **Help@Hand**

The Managing Director of the Help@Hand App made a presentation regarding the Help@Hand App.

The presentation was made at the request of the Community Wellbeing Committee and originated with the Cullompton Community Support Working Group.

Help@Hand app assists GP surgeries and local authorities to be able to maintain a list of local information to easily be accessible for people particularly concerning support groups;

Councillor M Smith has requested that the Town Team and Help@Hand could cooperate with a view to providing information.

RESOLVED that the ICT Working Group works with Help@Hand to establish the framework for a bespoke solution for the Town Council and the costs with a view to allocating a budget for the project in 2021-2022.

Note: 20:12hrs Councillor J Lochhead left the meeting.

53. **Cullompton Public Toilets**

Consideration was given to the re-opening and cleaning regime of the public toilets in Cullompton (Station Road and Town Hall).

RESOLVED that the Public toilets at Station Road are reopened with the following conditions:

- i. The situation is reviewed in 2 months.
- ii. The Town Clerk authorised to close the toilets immediately if necessary.
- iii. The toilets are spot checked regularly.
- iv. Cleaning and personal hygiene items are provided.
- v. Signage is provided "Clean it before you use it".
- vi. A contractor is appointed to clean the facility 4 times per day.
- vii. That the toilets are locked overnight between 18:00hrs and 07:00hrs

RESOLVED that the toilets in the Town Hall remain closed to the public.

Note: Councillor W Jones departed the meeting due to technical difficulties.

54. **Motions submitted in Accordance with Standing Order No 9**

RESOLVED to defer consideration of Councillor Buczkowski's proposals until another suitable meeting of the Council.

55. **Items referred from the Planning and Licensing Committee**

- (i) Consideration was given to a response from the Town Council to the Mid Devon District Council Consultation on the draft Design Guide.

RESOLVED that the following comment is forwarded to MDDC:

“That the document is particularly thin and there is no recognition in this document that the fact that Cullompton has become the District focus for development and that the Garden Village Initiative and the need for a Relief Road are not mentioned at all.”

- (ii) **Land at NGR 303437 103555 East of Langford Mill and Tye Farm, Langford (19/01679/MFUL).** Construction of ground-mounted solar PV panels to generate up to 49.9mW (Site Area 60.78ha).

To consider whether or not the Town Council wishes to make further representation(s) regarding the planning application (having previously submitted a representation in October 2019) and, if such further representation is to be made, the nature and reason of such representation.

RESOLVED that, as the time is approaching 21:00, to extend the meeting until 21:15.

RESOLVED that planning application 19/01679/MFUL) is **OPPOSED** in the most rigorous terms in that the proposal:

- a. Is clearly unsuitable for the land on which it is to be built.
- b. is not essential infrastructure.
- c. will not generate anything like the claimed electricity.
- d. will destroy well established businesses in the immediate vicinity.

That the procedures of the Planning and Licensing Committee are reviewed to ensure that the Committee knows exactly what it is being asked to comment on.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor G Guest and was taken as follows:

Proposed Councillor J Buczkowski.

Seconded Councillor M Dale.

Voted **IN FAVOUR** of the motion: Councillors E Andrews, J Buczkowski, M Dale, R Dietrich, J Johns, M Smith.

Voted **AGAINST** the motion: Councillor G Guest.

ABSTAINED from the vote: Councillors L Knight and I Morton.

Note: 20:56hrs **RESOLVED** to extend the duration of the meeting until 21:15hrs

56. **Conservation Area Review**

A response to the Conservation Area Review for Cullompton was considered.

It was agreed that Councillors should forward feedback to the Town Clerk for onward transmission to the Planning Authority.

57. **Gift Of A Burrows Committee**

Consideration was given to the appointment a maximum of 7 Councillors to the committee. Gift of A Burrows is a registered charity with its own bank account and the Town Council is the sole trustee.

RESOLVED that the following members are appointed to form Gift of A Burrows Committee: Councillors E Andrews, J Buczkowski, M Dale. R Dietrich I Morton and R Murch.

58. **Regular Payments**

In accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations No 5.6 to authorise payments for the year of payments which arise on a regular basis.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations No 5.6, payments which arise on a regular basis and were listed on Supporting paper F to the Agenda are authorised provided that:

- i. Town Hall and Cemetery Water need to be added to the list of regular payments.
- ii. overtime needs to be authorised separately from the regular salary payments.
- iii. payments are reported after they have been made for scrutiny purposes.

59. **Payments**

The accounts due for payment were examined.

RESOLVED

- (i) that payments are agreed as on Supporting Paper G to the Agenda with the exception of the payment listed for the YMCA
- (ii) that the Town Clerk contacts the YMCA regarding the conditions in the Service Level Agreement for non-delivery of service due to force majeure.

The meeting closed at 21:20hrs

Agreed