

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

22 November 2021

Present: Mayor G. Jones and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, S. Biles, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, L. Fry, T. Harries, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper, A. Lyall, R. Major, R. Potter, M. Rennie, R. Ricardo and D. Taylor.

Apologies: Councillor S. Hosford.

30. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 27 September 2021 were confirmed and were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

31. Presentations, Communications, Questions and Motions

The Mayor discussed his schedule of events, which had included a visit by pupils of Prince of Wales School to the Council Chamber; each pupil had made a short presentation, many on the environment. He also highlighted a visit made to Spectra, a Fire Service initiative focused on building confidence in young people.

A Member congratulated all those involved in the organisation of the Remembrance Sunday services, but noted the reduced attendance among Members of Council.

32. Planning and Environment Committee – 4 October 2021

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Further to Minute 37 the Chair agreed to arrange for attendance at the Dorset Council Committee considering the planning application for the Old Military Hospital on the Grove Trading Estate.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 4 October 2021 be adopted.

33. Planning and Environment Committee – 1 November 2021

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Regarding Minute 43 a Councillor requested that the issue of sustainable food procurement be highlighted to the new Member Group to be set up to monitor the management by Dorchester Arts of the Municipal Buildings.

Further to Minute 47/1 a Dorset Council Member confirmed that highway regulations prevented the erection of a warning sign regarding pedestrian use of Greys Bridge.

Further to Minute 48/3 a Dorset Council Member identified that the Planning Officer responsible for s106 monies would attend a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member asked for clarification of the Council's Fair Trade status.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment

Committee held on 1 November 2021 be adopted.

34. **Management Committee – 8 November 2021**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 8 November 2021 be adopted.

35. **Policy Committee – 15 November 2021**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

The Minutes were amended to note that Councillor S. Jones had declared an interest as the Outside Body representative of Dorset Council for Dorchester Arts and left the room during discussions regarding its grant situation at Minute 13.

A Member expressed concern that staff engaged by Dorchester Arts to carry out Town Hall keeping duties might not receive the same terms and conditions as those employed to carry out similar duties by the Town Council.

Councillor Fry declared an interest as a trustee of Dorchester Youth and Community Centre. The Clerk identified that the item related to the Centre was resolved, such that no other action was required.

A Member expressed disappointment regarding the Committee's decision not to pursue options to develop 19 North Square as affordable flats. Several Members sympathised with the concern, but also recognised that pursuing the scheme further risked delivering sub-standard accommodation at a high price.

Resolved

- a) That, with regard to the Council's Strategic and Operational Risk Register
 - i) The assessed high level strategic and operational risks included in the Risk Register be approved
 - ii) Risks related to the transition from the current Town Clerk to their successor, staff working from home receiving insufficient training, cybersecurity and the consequences of a poorly developed Local Plan, be added to the register
 - iii) The Risk Registers, as a whole, be approved
- b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 15 November 2021 be adopted.

36. **Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee – 19 October 2021**

In noting the minutes of the Joint Committee a Member updated Council with the news that, at Minute 24, the Dorset Ways with Words project had failed to secure a National Lottery grant.

37. **Dorset Council Matters**

Councillor Canning highlighted recent discussions with officers at Dorset Council that indicated the determination of the Council to include the DOR13 allocation in the draft Local Plan, with Garden Village funding being used to develop a plan for the site and discussions taking place with central Government regarding the cost of

introducing road infrastructure. He noted the strong opposition of Wessex Water, based on concerns regarding infrastructure costs and the impact on the catchment area for fresh water. A number of Members, including Dorset ward Councillors for Dorchester and Charminster St Marys, expressed concerns regarding the local plan process and the representation by the Dorset Council of objections received relating to DOR13. A Dorset Councillor had written to the local MP seeking clarification of statements recently made at Government level, but also noted the limited options available if the Council was to meet Government housing targets.

Councillor Fry identified that, due to problems related to the installation of technology into meeting rooms at County Hall, it had been announced that virtual meetings of the Dorset Council would continue for the immediate future. He highlighted a recent visit to the Army Battle Lab at Winfrith. He had also raised the issue of pigeons at Damers Road Railway Bridge with Dorset Council.

Councillor S. Jones highlighted a Children's Services initiative regarding the creation of locality groups to provide a one stop shop for parents and facilitate improved liaison between agencies working in the community.

Councillor Rennie noted the recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services, which had been scored "Good", with a special recognition of the Domestic Violence toolkit; and also welcomed the support the Council was offering for a national initiative, "16 days of Action against Domestic Abuse".

Councillor Biggs mentioned the arrival of a new manager at 1610 Leisure Centre, who was placing a special interest on environmental, security and maintenance matters. He also noted the position regarding the adoption of the highways on Poundbury, with outstanding issues under discussion in relation to trees and street lighting. He highlighted consideration being given, through the Audit and Governance Committee, regarding investing cash in short term funds that held investments in fossil fuels, answering a question regarding how the Council might co-ordinate its activity with other Councils and use voting powers associated with shares in its ownership.

38. Town Clerk Appointment Panel

The Chair of the Panel, Councillor Biggs, reported on the process that had been undertaken in relation to the appointment of a new Town Clerk and recommended the successful candidate for consideration by the Council.

Resolved

That, subject to appropriate checks, Mr Steven Newman be offered the post of Town Clerk, effective from the date of the departure of the current Clerk.

Council recorded their thanks to the Panel for the work they had undertaken.

Mayor

Council rose at 7.55pm.