

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

25 January 2021

The meeting was conducted using Zoom videoconferencing.

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

33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 November 2020 were confirmed and will be signed by the Mayor as a correct record at the next opportunity.

34. Presentations, Communications, Questions and Motions

Councillor Chisholm proposed a motion, which was seconded,

“That Dorchester Town Council become the body which authorises banners in South Street in Dorchester.”

Members discussed a recent example of the current decision making process related to a specific banner.

Resolved

That the Town Clerk approach Dorset Council to request delegated power to be authorised to administer banners to be put up in South Street, and reports back to a future Policy Committee.

Councillor Chisholm proposed a motion, which was seconded,

“That Dorchester Town Council expresses its support for local Showmen families that are experiencing difficulties in securing utilities to their site “The Thorns”, situated at the junction of Slyers Lane and Cokers Frome Road on the edge of the town”

Members discussed the background to the motion, as well as recognising that access to utilities at a reasonable cost was an important principle that the Council should support. The Mayor identified that any expression of support would be by letter direct to the Showmen families.

Resolved

That the Town Clerk writes to local Showmen families expressing the Town Council’s support for their quest to secure utilities at their site “The Thorns”, situated on the edge of the town

The Mayor thanked all those involved in the distribution of Christmas hampers in December. He also noted the successful repair of the wall at Bowling Alley Walk and advised Members of discussions between Dorset Council and DAPTC regarding a wider wellbeing agenda.

The Town Clerk noted that it has been the Council's intention to use the 2021 Annual Town Meeting to provide an opportunity for the wider community to meet with some of the key groups active in the town and hear about their plans. Such an approach would currently be difficult to prepare for because of the uncertainty surrounding lockdown.

Resolved

That, as in previous years, the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, will take place on the evening of the nearest available Council meeting, 22 March 2021, and that the Council renews its plans to develop a larger community focused event for the 2022 meeting

35. Planning and Environment Committee – 7 December 2020

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted. A Member asked whether it was the intention to seek confirmation from Dorset Council that its Local Plan consultation process met all legal requirements. The Chair invited Council to ratify resolution 51i), which had been resolved at Committee level in order to prepare the ground to make an appropriate submission on this aspect of the Local Plan consultation.

Resolved

- i) That resolution 51i), restating the Council's opposition to development north of Dorchester, be ratified.
- ii) That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 7 December 2020 be adopted.

36. Planning and Environment Committee – 4 January 2021

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted. The Chair highlighted minute 59ii) regarding the need for an additional Vice-Chair for the Committee due to the absence of Councillor Harries.

Resolved

- i) That Councillor R. Ricardo is appointed as a Vice-Chair to the Planning & Environment Committee
- ii) That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 4 January 2021 be adopted.

37. Management Committee – 11 January 2021

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

Noting Minute 27 Members discussed a second opportunity to provide a shield bed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion. The Chair will discuss the practical implications of creating two shield beds with the Deputy Town Clerk.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 11 January 2021 be adopted.

38. **Policy Committee – 18 January 2021**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted, with three sets of recommendations for Council decision.

Resolved

- a) That the Council implements the Tourism Development element of the (Heritage) Tourism Strategy and makes appropriate budget provision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2021/22 Revenue Budget for the first three years of the service
- b) That should Dorset Council close the Dorchester Tourist Information Centre, the impacts be monitored and that a review of the need for a dedicated TIC service should be undertaken prior to the 2022 summer visitor season, once the new Tourism Service outlined at i) has been fully implemented

In presenting the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2021/22 the Chair responded to a question from Mr Peter Stein regarding his proposal to lower Council Tax.

A number of Members spoke in support of the Budget and Council Tax rise, in particular focusing on the outcome of the Corporate Plan, the Council's efficiency drive, and past approaches to Council Tax increases.

Resolved

- c) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget are adopted as laid out in the Appendices to the Minutes of the Policy Committee, to include: -
 - A Council Tax Band D charge of £198.21, an increase of £1.57 (0.80%)
 - A precept of £1,516,277, an increase of 0.80%
 - The inclusion of one-off contributions to a new Development Support Reserve (£90,000) and a continuation of a higher contribution to the Municipal Buildings Reserve (£100,000).

Council considered the recommendation of the Policy Committee with regard to a National Park for Dorset.

Resolved

- d) That the Town Council does not determine its position on a National Park for Dorset until the Government formally invites submissions, at which time the Council will consult more widely with residents about its response.

A Member asked a question regarding the impact of parking fees on the Sunday Car Boot sale.

- e) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 18 January 2021 be adopted

39. **Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee – 19 January 2021**

Council noted the minutes of the Joint Committee, including the request for a Town Council nominee to the Tourism Partnership.

Resolved

- i) That, as Chair of Policy Committee, Councillor S. Hosford be appointed as the Council's Outside Body representative until the Annual Meeting of Council in May.
- ii) That the minutes of the Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee of 19 January be noted.

40. **Dorset Council Matters**

Councillor S. Jones identified plans at Dorset Council to use unallocated CIL monies. Councillor Canning identified that CIL would be the subject of a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Rennie highlighted the need for the Council to respond to consultations regarding free parking days and car parking charges; free parking for those using vaccination centres had been agreed by Dorset Council. She also noted that Dorset Council had recently introduced youth workers targeted to work with local Youth Centres.

Councillors Biggs and Canning highlighted progress with Childrens' Services, including the creation of a new site at Shaftesbury that would remove the need to house vulnerable young people out of county. Councillor Biggs also noted that a new Member Code of Conduct would be adopted shortly, alongside an online Declaration of Interests form.

Councillor Fry highlighted that works had now started on the Multi-Storey Car Park at Dorset County Hospital.

Several Dorset Councillors referred to works taking place at the Linneys on Fairfield.

Mayor

Council rose at 8.30pm.

On conclusion of the meeting the Mayor responded to a question relating to the biomass boiler.