

# Dorchester Town Council

## Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

23 November 2020

The meeting was conducted using Zoom videoconferencing.

Present: Mayor R. Biggs and Councillors, B. Armstrong-Marshall, 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 T. Harries and D. Taylor.

25. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 28 September 2020 were confirmed and will be signed by the Mayor as a correct record at the next opportunity.

26. **Presentations, Communications, Questions and Motions**

Councillor Chisholm proposed a motion, which was seconded,

“That Dorchester Town Council, as a levy payer itself, calls on the Dorchester Business Improvement District (DBID) to arrange an independent review and evaluation of its governance, impact and engagement with both its levy payers and the wider community.”

Members recognised that the timing of any review process should take account of the needs of business in the current post-Covid environment, as well as the need for it to be a constructive process, were both essential to its success. The Chairman of Policy Committee offered discussion at a future meeting. In recognising this offer, on being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

The Mayor thanked those involved in the Remembrance Day service, and reported his attendance at the Tirah Memorial service and several online AGMs. He also noted the successful implementation of the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground Source Heat project.

27. **Planning and Environment Committee – 5 October 2020**

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

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 5 October 2020 be adopted.

28. **Planning and Environment Committee – 2 November 2020**

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

A Member asked a question regarding the condition of the Judge Jeffreys building.

**Resolved**

- a) That the condition of the Judge Jeffreys building be noted
- b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 November 2020 be adopted.

29. **Management Committee – 9 November 2020**

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

A Member asked a question regarding the names of the Thomas Hardy roses to be used in the new rose garden.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 9 November 2020 be adopted.

30. **Policy Committee – 16 November 2020**

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

**Resolved**

- a) That the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2020 is approved and accepted

The Town Clerk provided further information regarding the tender process for works at the Municipal Buildings as well as providing written answers to questions received from residents regarding the tender process, the grant system that supported the biomass element of the works, the relative merit of biomass as a green heating system and the heat inefficiency of the building.

Members raised questions regarding the impact of delaying a decision to implement the planned extension works on plans to work more closely with Dorchester Arts; the alternatives to biomass; the capacity to supply heat to partner buildings; the risk of pollutants resulting from biomass, and the ability to limit heating to the offices part of the building only.

**Resolved**

- b) That with regard to roof repairs at the Municipal Buildings
  - i) The main contract for roof repairs is awarded to A Hammond & Sons Ltd of Sturminster Newton
  - ii) The sub-contract for scaffolding is awarded to SWS Ltd
- c) With regard to the Municipal Buildings extension, subject to the Council achieving planning permission, a grant from Low Carbon Dorset and likely receipt of Renewable Heat Incentive, the Council proceeds with a scheme to create a two storey extension to accommodate a biomass heating system and offices, along with internal remodelling works
  - i) The main contract for construction is awarded to A Hammond & Sons Ltd of Sturminster Newton
  - ii) The appointment of the installer of the Biomass Heating system is delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of Policy Committee and after discussions with the Council's Mechanical & Electrical advisors and main contractor
- d) The future disposal of 19 North Square is confirmed; that the Town Clerk seek opportunities to work with partners to develop the building as affordable housing; and that should a suitable scheme not be identified

within a maximum of 12 months the property be disposed of on the open market

- e) The Draft Heads of Terms of the agreement with Dorchester Arts be agreed (Appendix 1)
- f) To enable continuity, the current Dorchester Arts Task Group members remain in place for the remainder of the implementation period and for the first year of monitoring of the agreement

Council considered recommendations regarding the future of tourism services in the town. A Member raised concerns regarding the impact of the loss of the Dorchester TIC on the wider area outside Dorchester.

### **Resolved**

- g) That, with regard to Tourism Services in Dorchester
  - i) The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, write to Dorset Council acknowledging the likely loss of the Dorchester TIC, but seeking financial support for a transition to a new model of tourism information delivery to be co-ordinated by the Town Council
  - ii) That the Town Clerk prepare a report identifying costed options for future delivery of local tourism information services within the town, including the co-ordinator/partnership approach advocated by the Tourism Strategy developed by the Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee

Council considered recommendations from the Policy Committee regarding its risk management processes.

### **Resolved**

- h) That, with regard to the Council's Strategic and Operational Risk Registers
  - i) That the assessed high level strategic and operational risks be approved
  - ii) That an additional risk related to the reputational damage that the Council would suffer should it not play its part in a co-ordinated response to the longer term impact of the Covid 19 lockdown be added to the register
  - iii) That the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers, as a whole, be approved
- i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 16 November 2020 be adopted

### **31. Update from Dorchester Ward Members of the Dorset Council**

Councillor S. Jones identified the adoption by Dorset Council of a new Children, Young People and Families Plan, which would be focused on a return to a local provision of services.

Councillor Rennie identified that a meeting of the Markets Joint Panel would take place in December and that informal discussion with Dorset Council regarding the future of markets had been constructive. She also announced that free parking would be offered on the three Saturdays in December before Christmas.

Councillor Canning highlighted that the Scrutiny Committee would consider proposals for extending car park charging hours to include evening and Sunday charging, prior to its consideration by the Dorset Council cabinet in December. He also noted that Members had received a presentation regarding the Dorset Local Plan, which required the delivery of 34,000 houses across the county.

Councillor Fry identified that the Local Plan would be considered by Cabinet in early December and that consultation on the Plan would take place from January – March 2021.

Councillor Biggs encouraged Members to use online processes to log incidences of fly tipping and general waste issues, noting also that the Street Cleaning service has now moved to being a reactive rather than planned service. He also identified that works were being undertaken on Poundbury to bring roads up to the standard where they could be adopted as highways. A Member asked a question regarding shelters on Poundbury that were currently fenced off.

32. **Absence form Council**

Council considered the six month attendance rule and a request to waive the requirement for Councillor Harries to attend Council due to ill health.

**Resolved**

That the Council approves Councillor Harries non-attendance at meetings of the Council due to ill health for the period up to the next Annual Meeting of Council on 25 May 2021, at which point a review of the waiver should take place.

The Mayor agreed to write to Councillor Harries passing on the Council's best wishes.

Mayor

Council rose at 8.25pm.