

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

24 January 2017

Present: Mayor T. Harries and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, C. Biggs, R. Biggs, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, J. Hewitt, S. Hosford, G. Jones, S. Jones, T. Jones, T. Loakes, R. Potter, M. Rennie, K. Rice and D. Taylor.

Also: Reverend Canon T. Woodhouse, the Mayor's Chaplain, Daniel Cadisch of Dorchester Citizens Advice Bureau and members of the Youth Council

Apologies: Councillors G. Duke, F. Kent-Ledger, A. Lyall and P. Stein.

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

43. Communications and Questions

The Chairman of the Youth Council highlighted some items that had been discussed at their meeting, including the relocation of the Waste Recycling Centre, the impact of Affordable Housing, which they supported, on trees at the Trinity St Tennis Courts site and support for homeless people in the town. The Town Clerk agreed to formulate a response to these points.

Daniel Cadisch gave a short presentation on the work of Dorchester CAB. In 2016 the CAB's 30 paid staff and 100+ volunteers helped 7,000 users deal with 12,000 issues. The key issues were benefit entitlements, debt management, housing employment and relationship issues, and the CAB had secured in excess of £3.3M of benefits and other savings during the year. It was recognised that pressure on public services was increasingly making it difficult for vulnerable people to access benefits and healthcare due to cuts in administration and other parts of delivery systems. Daniel explained the Bureau's campaigning role, based on the evidence it gathers from users, highlighting previous work on PIPs and zero hours contracts.

Daniel identified the success of the first IT apprentice employed by the Bureau supported by Town Council funding and explained plans to recruit a Legal advice apprentice in 2017. The work of the Bureau would increasingly focus on Universal Credits, the need for settled housing and the impact of Local Government Reorganisation. The Mayor thanked Daniel for attending the meeting.

The Mayor congratulated those involved in Christmas events in the town including Cracker, Carols in the Gardens and staff and volunteers at Weldmar, the hospital and

Company at Christmas. He highlighted the importance of Holocaust Day and also advertised a fundraising concert at the United Church and a Family Fun Day in May.

The Mayor outlined a communication regarding Ridgeway Radio's application for a community broadcasting licence. Members agreed to offer the in principle support of the Council and invited the Council's Community Development Officer to provide a detailed report to the Policy Committee regarding how the Town Council could offer practical support.

44. Updates from Partner Authorities

Councillor R. Biggs provided an update of recent work at Dorset County Council, explaining the poor funding record of central government and consequential significant cost to the County Council of supporting unaccompanied Assylum seeking children. He also identified the fairer funding arrangement for Syrian family refugees, which prompted a question regarding support for clothing collection for Syrian refugees in the Middle East.

Councillor Biggs also updated Council regarding the planned April opening of Damers First School, an initiative to resolve poor broadband quality in Poundbury, the Ironman call to account, the Bridport Road bus shelter and new arrangements for the delivery of a combined youth service in the town.

In providing a verbal update regarding the work of West Dorset District Council Councillor D. Taylor highlighted the risks associated with the move towards Universal Credit, the Local Plan and land supply review, and ongoing work on the search for savings and local government review.

45. Planning and Environment Committee – 5 December 2016

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

A Councillor highlighted that minute 52 should be amended to cover issues raised in relation to Duke's Avenue and Icen Way.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 5 December 2016 be adopted.

46. Planning and Environment Committee – 3 January 2017

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

Councillor S. Jones asked that minute 64 be amended to provide a more detailed explanation regarding the reference to the personal interest of the two councillors named.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 3 January 2017 be adopted.

47. Management Committee – 10 January 2017

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

Resolved

- a) That Councillor C. Biggs be appointed as the representative on the 1610 Stakeholder Group
- b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 10 January 2017 be adopted.

48. Policy Committee – 17 January 2017

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

The Chairman spoke to minute 22, explaining that the proposed financial strategy and budget allowed for the ongoing stable delivery of Council services while preparing the Council to deal with the consequences of cuts in service by other tiers and potential Local Government Reorganisation. In the short term this also allowed the Council to build a Corporate Projects Reserve of £325,000 and members would be involved in a review of the Corporate Plan that allowed consideration of where this might be allocated.

The Chairman also provided further details regarding minutes 23 and 25.

Resolved

- a) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget as laid out in Appendices 1 – 3 of the minutes of the Policy Committee be adopted, to include
 - a. A Council Tax Band D charge of £183.50, an increase of 1.94%
 - b. A precept of £1,296,336, an increase of 3.62%
 - c. The transfer of £250,000 from the General Reserve to the Corporate Projects Reserve
- b) That Councillor S. Jones is appointed to the Community Land Trust review Task and Finish Group
- c) That, subject to all funding being in place to commence works on the Museum refurbishment project, a loan of up to £140,000 is made

available to Dorset County Museum, for a period not to exceed 10 years, on terms to be agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, with West Dorset District Council and the Dorset County Museum

- d) That, prior to the March Council meeting, Council receive an informal briefing regarding the impact of budget cuts and local government reorganisation at Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council
- e) That new pay and grading arrangements are introduced with effect from 1 April 2017, at a cost that may increase the Revenue Budget by £11,000 a year in due course, to be offset by efficiencies to be identified by the Outdoor Services Manager
- f) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 17 January 2017 be adopted.

49. **Calendar of Meetings**

Resolved

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2017-18 be approved

The Council rose at 7.50 pm.

Mayor