

Minutes of the Meeting of
SALCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL
 held in the Library of Cliff House, Salcombe
 at 5:00 pm on Wednesday 20th December 2023

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT * - Attendance; A- Absent; N - No Apologies Received

Cllr Mark Goodey (Mayor)	*
Cllr Jasper Evans (Deputy Mayor)	*
Cllr Caroline Bricknell	A
Cllr Andrew Reed	*
Cllr Jess Denny	*
Cllr Eoghan Grace	A
Cllr Kizzy Sims-Stirling	*
Cllr Christine Milton	A
Cllr John Cooke	*
Cllr Craig Niven	*
Cllr Rob Wheeler	*
Cllr. David Higgins	*

Also in attendance:

Dist. Cllr Samantha Dennis	A
Dist. Cllr Mark Long	*
Cty. Cllr Rufus Gilbert	A
Richard Harding (South Hams Newspapers)	*
PS Peter Shotton	N
Sara Jones (Town Clerk)	*
Pete Robinson (Cemetery Manager & Project Officer)	*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Cllr Christine Milton, Cllr Caroline Bricknell, Eoghan Grace and Cty. Cllr Rufus Gilbert

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To invite Members to declare any pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests that they may have in any matters to be considered at this meeting; and to note that a Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest, in any matter must, withdraw from the Chamber at the commencement of the consideration of that business or, if later, the time at which the interest becomes apparent, whilst also considering if there had been any changes.

Cllr Andrew Reed: Planning Application 3815/23/FUL

Cllr Jasper Evans: Agenda item 11

Cllr Mark Goodey: Planning Application 3815/23/FUL

3. OPEN FORUM

- i) Members of the public are invited to attend and discuss matters relating to the parish; they are invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
 - o **Richard Pullan** (RNLI Salcombe & Kingsbridge Fundraising Crew) - **see Appendix 1**
 - o Looking to create an event for the whole town; launching event at the weekend of Salcombe Live with the view of taking over Whitestrand. Seeking helpers to set up and run the launch event – to take pressure off themselves. Would like St Austell and The Kings Arms to help.
 - o **Applicant and architect re Planning App: 3815/23/FUL** addressed the Council regarding the application. Looking to work with the Council to ensure the plans are acceptable – **see Appendix 2**
 - o **Owner of Brewery Quay Development on Island Street and Wendy Hopkins (Brodie Planning Assoc)** addressed the Council regarding the planning application that is due to be submitted. This is to remove the primary residency restriction, with the applicant advising that despite being on the market since May 2021 the properties have not sold and they have become unsaleable. As part of the application the applicant intends to make a financial off-site affordable housing contribution, with the intent to agree the amount with SHDC and secure via a s106 legal agreement. Applicant advised that he agrees in principle with the primary residency restriction, but not in the case of this development. Initially was looking to build a multi-functional house for his own family, but due to personal circumstances this needed to change. Was advised that the initial plans for one house would prove difficult to sell with primary residency attached, so revised the plans and built commercial units with residential apartments above.

Advised Council that this building was the first in Devon to be given the primary residency restriction, that the building is an improvement on what was there before and is good for Island Street. Further advised that an Open House event brought in 50-60 viewings and has had 3 offers, but these contracts fell through with potential purchasers' lawyers advising their clients 'not to proceed' as the apartments aren't mortgageable, as unsure if the retail price will hold and the lawyers were looking to protect their indemnity insurance.

Wendy Hopkins advised that removing this condition is the same mechanism as removing an occupancy condition on an agricultural building or live/work unit. Invited Councillors to send her any questions they have when they come to discuss the application. She asked what land is available for affordable housing; Dist. Cllr Mark Long advised her that at this current time there are no sites available and suggested that they come back to the Council meeting where the application will be discussed so questions can be raised.

- ii) To note matters raised in the open forum and consider any to be added to the agenda for a future meeting

4. TO RECEIVE VERBAL OR NOTE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNTY OR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS OR ANY REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE

Councillors are welcome to raise any questions they have and consider any matters raised to be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

- Written report from **Cty Cllr Rufus Gilbert:**

1. *Thanks for all of STC's input and as you know the proposals have been submitted for publication/advertising now.*
2. *Bonfire Hill bus stop proposals. Jess has requested some funding from DCC and I have offered £1000.00 from my locality funding.*
3. *Salcombe library. There is a temporary closure on this site, whilst issues are sorted with Cliff House Trust.*
4. *Ember Road enforcement. Since the new lines were installed, there has been perhaps some miss interpretation. Enforcement is to be undertaken so as to aid better legal parking.*
5. *Onslow Road school crossing patrol. This is now under review with a recommendation to discontinue. The school has been informed and asked for their thoughts.*
6. *DIY waste disposal at recycling centres. There has been some misunderstanding via the media. Yes, some **limited** DIY waste will be permitted. It will continue not to be free for car tyres and asbestos. I will let you know more ASAP as regards how much can be taken etc. DCC is responsible for waste disposal and SHDC waste collection.*

Happy Christmas to you and all.

- Verbal report from Dist Cllr Mark Long:
 - New Planning portal is open – few teething problems as to be expected, but these are being worked on. Welcomes feedback regarding portal so issues can be fed back to planning department to be looked at. Planning fee increases, due in April 2024, were brought in by Govt for 5th Dec, so this, alongside the launch of new planning portal, has created a backlog of planning applications.
 - New procedures for planning enforcement have been accepted:
 - Better communication with town & parish councils
 - Tighter and clearer timelines throughout the process
 - Waste collections – missed collections are being reported online and things are improving greatly with this service now it's been brought in house at SHDC.
 - Brown Bin collections suspended for a month – restarts 15th January 2024 (this is a planned suspension).
 - S Devon Freeport – SHDC have agreed to remain within this and to support it, but greater scrutiny will be carried out.
- Written report from police - **See Appendix 3**

5. Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following minutes were a true and correct record and the Mayor signed them:

- i) Wednesday 25th October 2023

Against: 0

Abstain: 1 (Cllr Jess Denny as not in attendance)

For: 8

ii) Wednesday 22nd November 2023

Against: 0

Abstain: 2 (Cllrs Kizzy Sims-Stirling and John Cooke as not in attendance)

For: 7

6. PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS

See Appendix 4 Dec 23 Planning

7. PARK N RIDE 2024 SERVICE

Council **RATIFIED** for the Park n Ride bus fare to match the 164 service, as a decision was needed to be made prior to this meeting, at the request of Tally Ho. Decision was sought via email.

Adult Single £1.45

Adult Return £2.20

Child Single £1.00

Child Return £1.45

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

8. DCC ON STREET PAY N DISPLAY PARKING

Council **RATIFIED** the final points, raised by DCC since November's Town Council meeting, on DCC's on-street pay and display parking proposal, namely:

- No marked bays
- Fore Street (outside Boots): 30 mins free parking, maximum 1 hour
- Parking fees: £1 for the hour on Fore Street, outside Boots and £2 for 2 hours at all other proposed locations.
- North Sands: pay and display parking 6am – 10pm No waiting 10pm – 6am No Motor Caravans

To be noted that DCC have advised that there will be 'no return within 1 hour' in all locations.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9 bar Cllr Jasper Evans voted against the parking fee to be £2

9. WORKING GROUPS & COMMITTEES

Council considered and **RESOLVED** for:

- i. **Cllr David Higgins** to join the Community Working Group
- ii. **Cllr Jess Denny** to step down from HR & Staffing Committee and **Cllr Mark Goodey** to join and fulfil the vacancy of Deputy Chair.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

10. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TOWN CLERK

Council discussed and **RESOLVED** to giving **Town Clerk** Delegation of Authority to seek a decision from the Council when needing an urgent decision outside of meetings. Decisions to then be ratified at the following Town Council meeting.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

11. MARITIME MUSEUM

Cllr Jasper Evans left the meeting for this agenda item.

Council discussed the Maritime Museum's request to borrow and display 5 ship badges on a long-term basis and **RESOLVED** for these badges to remain the property of the Council, but to allow the Museum to have them on loan indefinitely or until such time as the Council requests their return.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

ACTION: Town Clerk

Cllr Jasper Evans returned to the meeting

12. GARDENING AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Pete Robinson, advised Council that he has been in discussion with Emma Foster at SHDC with regards to the current Garden and Maintenance Contract and what this could look like going forward. Discussed the following, which the Community Working Group discussed with Pete to be included in the contract going forward: Piggy Lane, footpath from the Spar to Onslow Road, lane from Church St to Island St, steps/path from Devon Road to Cliff Road (alongside Cliff House Woods). Emma advised that these are outside of the Council's contract, but are deemed 'as business as usual' although is aware that they have not been prioritised by SHDC.

Emma advised Pete she had been to look at Piggy Lane, with Vic Thomas (SHDC chargehand) and agreed that it needs more work, due to the surface. Looking to use their rotary brush on it, rather than pressure wash, to try and remove the moss.

SHDC have blitzed the various sites in late November, so all have been addressed and Cllr Jasper Evans noted at the meeting, that since Pete has been liaising directly with SHDC they have really stepped up with the maintenance, with Pete's role being key to this.

Cllr Jasper Evans brought up on behalf of Cllr Christine Milton, how much more would the contract cost to include extra effort by SHDC to help the town look great i.e. go the extra mile. Pete asked 'what would this look like in practice?' 'What does the Council want?'

Cllr Mark Long agreed that the Council needs to be specific in what they want from SHDC, rather than just say 'keep the standard up'

Pete said there is a synergy in that SHDC, when in town, will look at and work on other areas as and when Pete liaises with them. He advised that Beadon Cross 'welcome garden' has been tidied up and within the contract SHDC, if provided with the plants etc, will plant up the beds. Currently the Council does not have a planting scheme/schedule – Council needs to look at this going forward.

Cllr Jasper Evans advised that both him and Cllr Christine Milton have been approached by residents who would be happy to establish a volunteer group - mirror Kingsbridge in Bloom.

Pete advised that the proposed gardening & maintenance contract is now ready to put out to tender/quotes, but advised, going forward, residents and Councillors need to be the eyes and ears on the ground by reporting defects as soon as possible on SHDC's Portal, plus advise STC so that the officers can keep on SHDC's case.

Due to the contract being potentially another 3-year contract it was acknowledged by Cllr Jasper Evans that Council needs to seek 3 quotes – Pete advised that this was a Council decision, but has the experience of companies not willing to quote as they know that they won't be given the contract. Emphasised the importance of SHDC's willingness to do other jobs, on occasions, outside of the contract, when they are on site as gestures of goodwill.

Cllr Craig Niven noted that SHDC has more resources than other contractors, which will help with seasonality issues, staffing issues, resources – and the importance of the relationship that has now been established by Pete. He proposed that the Council contracts SHDC going forward rather than seek further quotes from other companies.

Pete gave the example of the yellow lines recently being repainted at Batson Green, which has been an ongoing issue for over 2 years, as an illustration of the 3 Councils working together, using the varying resources available to them and the evolving positive relationships that STC officers are leading on. It took liaison between STC (co-ordinator), DCC (paint the lines) & SHDC (cleans the road) to eventually resolve this issue.

Cllr Jasper Evans agreed with Cllr Craig's proposal of going with SHDC and that he saw it as a potential waste of STC's staff resources seeking quotes elsewhere, if the members are already happy to go with SHDC and do not think other contractors will have the resources to compete with SHDC.

Discussion took place around the Financial Regulations, with the Clerk advising that 3 quotes are normally needed, but as the overall cost for a 3-year contract may well exceed the threshold of £25K, the Council will need to comply with the relevant requirements of The Public Contracts ("the Regulations).

Discussion took place around the benefits of just looking at a 1-year contract to ensure that SHDC's continues working closely with the Council, adhering to the contract and will enable the contract to be kept under continuous review.

Council **RESOLVED**:

- To suspend the need for 3 quotes within the Finance Regulations and to source only one quote, which is to be from SHDC due to the confidence the Council has in SHDC's ability to carry out the works, above other smaller contractors, due to their accessibility to more resources, staffing and the working relationship between DCC, SHDC & STC.
- Pete to send proposed contract (for a 1 year renewable contract) to SHDC asking them to quote

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

ACTION: Pete Robinson

The Town Clerk noted her thanks to Pete for all the work he has done in pulling the proposed contract together and the work he has been doing with SHDC and the importance of the working relationship he is establishing. Members endorsed this.

13. LEGAL

- i. The Town Clerk referred the members to the report she sent to them, prior to the meeting, regarding the **Legal Advice Service offered by Tozers, with a view of retaining them on an annual contract.**

She advised the Council that she has on various occasions needed to source legal advice on HR matters, leases etc and that it was important that members have the relevant legal advisement when making decisions. She advised that she had a meeting with one of the solicitors from Tozers, who advised:

- They fill the gap for local councils – i.e. where larger councils have the legal advice within their own council/departments
- They enjoy doing the work
- Based in Exeter
- Not sure if there are any other solicitor firms that offer this advice
- Look after about 100 councils – not all local, but do include Dartmouth, Bovey & Seaton
- Will answer every random question a council may have
- Contract is with the Council/Councillors ie if an issue between clerk & council they see the council/councillors as their client
- Can help Clerk manage disputes between Councillors
- Work closely with DALC
- Provide model leases/licences – take out what's not relevant for Council to liaise with tenants - then will check final lease/licence
- Have a planning dept – advise re Community Infrastructure Levy issues
- Have a HR department

Additional work at a cost:

- Offer bespoke training – additional cost – travel + £200-£300 p/hour e.g. Councillors legal responsibilities
- If asked to negotiate on behalf of a Council then will go onto an hourly rate (less the discount)

Cost:

Based on the issues the Town Clerk advised Tozers the Council are dealing with, along with the Precept potentially doubling, the service would cost £2k+VAT, but Tozers are prepared to offer the 1st year at £1500+VAT. Depending on where the Council is at after the 1st year, may hold at £1500 or increase (could be more than £2K)

Town Clerk advised that Dartmouth Town Council use them and recommended them to her. She has also spoken to DALC who advised that they make a point of not recommending any particular services/organisation, but simply highlight the offers/organisations that are out there. However, they know of a number of councils locally who work with Tozers and speak very highly of their services. Quite a few have retainers with them now. DALC also have an arrangement with them whereby Councils can access 30 mins free advice.

DALC have used their services also, for their own governance arrangements, advising that they have always received a prompt and thorough response. They find their team friendly, approachable and generally very helpful. DALC suggested 2 other firms; namely Surrey Hills Solicitors and Wellars Hedleys Solicitors that may offer similar services. Town Clerk advised she has contacted each for a quote; receiving a response from Surrey Hills Solicitors who advised that they have dealt with Councils on a retainer basis in the past whereby they have tried to estimate the ad hoc usage throughout the year to calculate an agreed monthly fee. For most Councils they set up a "general advice" file so they can contact them for advice as and when - such work is charged at the appropriate hourly rate, most likely £275 + VAT per hour, but on occasions work can be delegated to less senior fee earners. Again any work on specific transactions would require a separate file and fee.

Council **RESOLVED** to employ Tozers on a retainer basis– 1 year renewable contract.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

14. REPORTS

Please note that these are reports on attendance at meetings, representatives on public bodies/associations or working groups; no matter will be raised for the Council to consider apart from any matters to be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

i. Mayor

5/12/23 I had the great pleasure of turning on Salcombe Christmas Lights and would like to take this opportunity to wish all a Very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

ii. Councillors

- **Cllr Craig Niven** advised that he had a meeting with Steve Frame, Trustee of Cliff House, on the back of the library temporarily suspending its services from Cliff House, due to their requirement of needing 2 staff members to be trained on the Evacuation Chair, which can't take place until Feb 2024. He discussed his role as HR & Staffing Committee lead and discussed the safety of the Council's staff with respect to fire escapes.

Town Clerk advised the Council that as the employer, the Council has a statutory duty for the well-being and safety of its staff. Advised that she has spoken to Cliff House with regards to fire escapes and has spoken to the Council's current staff, who are taking a pragmatic approach, but she reiterated again that the Council has a responsibility here and needs to look at fire regulations (on the Action Log), as the Council is currently not meeting its statutory duties e.g. no fire escape plan, no fire extinguishers in the office. She also advised the Council needs to look the Council Hall urgently with regards to Fire Regs etc as the landlord.

Dist. Cllr Mark Long advised that Cliff House meets the fire regulations as the landlord and carries out regular checks. Cllr Craig Niven advised that he will be liaising with Cliff House further.

Also discussed with Steve, that the Council is a significant part of Cliff House, as a long term tenant and in terms of the money the Council pays them, with the cost being a significant part of the Council's budget, he wanted to make sure Steve had comfort in choosing the Council as a long term tenant. Steve advised him that they had other tenants looking at the rooms, but the Trustees chose the Council as they aligned to the Council's own aims of supporting the town i.e. by renting the offices at Cliff House.

The Council's old office is currently only fit for storage, which supports the Council's decision to move. Advised that Cliff House Trust is responsible for the whole building – includes the Yacht Club as a tenant. The trust specifies the need for this and to house a reading room i.e. currently the library.

- **Cllr Jess Denny** advised she met with Martin (Tally Ho), Adam Keay (DCC) and Mark Phillips (DCC) to discuss the positioning of **2 bus stops outside the Park n Ride for the 164 bus**. Agreed

to position these by the entrance to Mcilwraith Road, with a bus shelter also being erected on the side of the Park n Ride – back of the bus shelter will face the road to protect passengers from wind, rain and surface water. All agreed in principle and to be put in place ahead of the season – which means there will be a bus service supporting the Park n Ride all year round – hence why the Park n Ride fares need to match the 164 bus fares. She advised that Don McIntosh from Tally Ho has been leading this and thanks must go to him.

She also advised that she has been in discussion, as a business owner, with Dist. Cllrs Mark Long & Sam Dennis, Chris Brooks, Chris Shears and John Birch (all from SHDC) with regards to the potential for a **Salcombe BID** (Business Improvement District).

19:00 Cllr Kizzy Sims-Stirling left the meeting.

She advised that a Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area where local businesses collaborate with themselves and SHDC to invest in projects and services to enhance the local business environment. Raise money through a levy (which is based on 1-3% of the businesses rateable value or an accommodation levy) to fund initiatives beyond what local government provides – the business decide themselves of the levy rate.

BIDs have a local governance structure, often a board, representing businesses to decide on fund allocation and improvement priorities.

BIDs focus on improvement projects, such as street cleaning, beautification, marketing, safety, and other enhancements for the benefit of local businesses.

BIDs often work in partnership with local government, receiving support in infrastructure maintenance, planning, and regulatory matters.

BIDs are established for a defined period and undergo a renewal process, allowing businesses to assess effectiveness and decide on continuation.

Has been left for Chris Shears to look at the potential revenue – will take a couple of months to gather the information. All business would vote on whether they want to establish a Salcombe BID.

- **Cllr Andrew Reed** advised that he attended (informally) a meeting held by the Trustees of the Community Land Trust. Also at meeting was Head of Affordable Housing at SHDC, Aster Housing, SHDC planning department, Middlemarch Strategic Adviser on CLT projects. Discussed how to move forward following the withdrawal of the field for housing; Steve Middlemarch met with the landowners who have agreed for Steve to contact them again in the New Year.
- iii. **Clerk report** including report from the Commanding Officer of HMS Magpie - See **Appendix 5**. Clerk reiterated that she is still working closely with Parkinson Partnership with regards to the **VAT liability** and has sent necessary documentation to HMRC in order to register for VAT. Now need to establish the true total of income received since 1st July 2016, which will involve a considerable amount of work. Cllr Craig Niven has been supporting Town Clerk with pulling relevant information together for Parkinson Partnership.

She advised that there is a question mark with regards to Ringo, who provides the parking app for Bonfire Hill parking. Current DCC staff were under the impression that the contract was between Ringo and Salcombe Town Council. Town Clerk advised that she has looked into this and has established that the contract is between Ringo and DCC and have advised DCC accordingly. DCC need to look into this further; still waiting on feedback from DCC and what impact, if any, there is on Salcombe Town Council's finances. Parkinson Partnership have advised that they can discuss this with DCC on the Council's behalf, for an additional fee, if required.

Town Clerk further advised that DCC have advised that there is a delay, due to 'circumstances and staff sickness', in paying the income for the parking for the period July-Sept 2023. She advised that she has asked DCC if the delay is also due to the Ringo issue and that DCC are outside the terms of the contract with STC with regards to paying the parking income – waiting on a reply.

Also advised that the set up of Scribe and VAT liability will need to be the key items on her to do list in the New Year.

Cllr Craig Niven advised that £100K will be earmarked within the budget for the VAT liability – this covers the projected VAT repayment of approx. £58K plus any possible fines, interest payments etc.

iv. **HR & Staffing Committee:** Cllr Craig Niven reported on the last 2 meetings:

- 6th October 2023 Nature of business discussed is confidential but included:
 - Advised that all staff contracts will be as per The Green Book, which governs pay and conditions for local authority employees.
 - Advised that all staff will be receiving a pay increase, will be backdated to 1st April 2023, following the National Joint Council for Local Government Services coming to an agreement on the 2023/24 pay award.
 - Town Clerk has had a pay increase with effect from 1st October 2023, with overtime pay agreed, with a set maximum overtime, if needed, of 3 hours per week. Additional overtime, if needed, to be agreed by HR.
- 23rd November 2023 as per minutes sent to Full Council and on website.

15. COUNCIL'S PRIORITY LIST & PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS

Council reviewed the Council's priority list with Cllr Jasper Evans offering his help with regards to the transfer of Cliff House Woods if needed. The Mayor requested for the Welcome Sign to be pushed up the list. Cllr John Craig raised the Council's website as an important action point. Town Clerk advised that it is for the Council to decide on the priorities, advising she is concerned with regards to the H&S and employment actions that need to be prioritised.

Council **RESOLVED** for the priority actions to remain as they are:

1. Minutes published within a week of meeting
2. Budget setting.
3. VAT & Scribe
4. Staff Contracts – Cllr Craig Niven to assist
5. Lease SIC and Museum – Cllrs Jess Denny & Andrew Reed to assist
6. Council Building Insurance Checks
7. P3 Project
8. Salcombe Players storage in Mortuary Building – Cllr Jasper Evans to assist
9. SHDC S106/OSSR – Cllr. Christine Milton to assist
10. SHDC Community Economic Plan

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

16. FINANCE

- i. Council received the **invoices and payroll for approval and payment – see Appendix 6**
 - Town Clerk advised that the invoice received from Simply Office Furniture needs to be paid by Desmond Rex Ltd, as the Council had already reimbursed the company for this. Cllr Jess Denny advised that she would pay the invoice via her company. The Town Clerk also asked Cllr Jess Denny, following the return of the conference table by her company, if she had the information she had requested with regards to the refund and further purchases made, including a replacement table. Along with whether she had a delivery date for the new table. Cllr Jess Denny advised that she hadn't had time to pull this information together but would send it shortly.
 - Dart Roofing: Town Clerk advised that Pete Robinson, Project Officer, has checked the work and taken photos – is happy with the repairs. She went to advise that she will be arranging, with Pete, to visit the Council Hall, so they can start looking at pulling together a maintenance program and advised the Council to start thinking in terms of budgeting for this, including this things in the longer term e.g. potentially a new roof.
 - Cliff House; rent and service charge payments are now to be quarterly for the first year (monthly thereafter), at the request of Cliff House (Town Clerk given Delegation of Authority to liaise with Cliff House directly). This months payments are the balance for the 1st quarter.
 - Requested for HR Committee to come back to her with regards to their check on salaries/hours. Advised that the payroll provider has advised that there's been an overpayment for PAYE in the

past so has recommended the Council reduces the PAYE payment this month to compensate for this. Town Clerk advised that she has therefore reduced this month's payment by £470.34

Council **RESOLVED** to pay invoices as per schedule.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

- ii. Council received the **finance report/bank reconciliation** - see **Appendix 7**
 - o Town Clerk advised, following mentioning a concern regarding BT & IT Workhouse direct debit payments at last month's meeting, that she has now resolved the query regarding the payment made to BT. Still looking into the monthly payments to IT Workhouse.
 - o As at 18th Dec 2023 - CCLA: £515K Lloyds: £18,707.54 Total balances - **£533,707.54**
 - o Town Clerk advised that the balance in Lloyds Bank will be below £10K once all payments have gone through and will look to increase the balance back up to £10K after January's Town Council meeting.

Council received and **RESOLVED** to approve the finance report/bank reconciliation and for the Lloyds Bank account balance to be increased to £10K after January's Town Council meeting.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

Cllrs Craig Niven and Mark Goodey left the meeting for the next agenda item; Cllr Jasper Evans chaired the meeting in the Mayor's absence.

- iii. Council considered the **grant application from Salcombe Christmas Lights Committee for £500**; due to the difficulties the Treasurer has been having to obtain a bank statement, due to Lloyds Bank closing in Kingsbridge, the Council **RESOLVED** to waive the need for the bank statement, due to the size of the grant and to approve the grant.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 6

ACTION: Town Clerk

Cllrs Craig Niven and Mark Goodey returned to the meeting.

- iv. Town Clerk advised **Council that the payroll provider has made administrative errors every month and wishes to change to a new company.**
Quotes for new payroll provider:
 - o SGW Payroll
£84+VAT p/q plus £90+VAT set up
 - o Mark Robinson FCA - £100 plus VAT per quarter
 - o GCSD : £55 +VAT per payrun (one person)

Town Clerk advised that Dartmouth Town Council use SGW Payroll and are happy with them. She also advised that the company called her to discuss the quote and the service they provide.

Council **RESOLVED** to employ SGW Payroll and terminate the contract with Mason Accountancy Ltd.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 6

Action: Town Clerk

Cllrs Jasper Evans and Mark Goodey left the meeting for the next agenda item. Cllr Craig Niven chaired the meeting in the Mayor's absence.

- v. The Town Clerk advised that the **rent had not been requested from either Salcombe Information Centre (SIC) or the Maritime Museum for 2022/23.** On researching, she advised

that the SIC, in August 2022, temporarily closed, and there was talk by the Council to leave Cliff House and set the Council office up in the Council Hall, but is currently unable to find anything official confirming that the rent was to be waived.

She also advised that she couldn't find any reason why the Council did not charge the Maritime Museum and has therefore issued 2 invoices to them; one for 2022/23 rent and the other for 2023/24 rent. Roger Barrett, from the museum has since advised her that he thought that the rent in 2022/23 was waived by the previous Council, but there appears to be no official decision made by the Council on record.

She advised that the museum has requested a grant every year, bar two, of £3K, to offset the grant.

Therefore, the motion to the Council is whether they would consider waiving the rent for 2022/23 for both the museum and SIC.

Cllr Jess Denny advised that she sat through 5 months of meetings with regards to the future of the Council Hall (as a member of the public). She advised that it was decided that the museum could stay regardless of what may happen to SIC, but there was no talk about the rent.

Town Clerk reminded members that they will be using public money to support the museum, if they waive the 2022/23 rent and/or give them a grant towards the rent and that they need to consider that the Council Hall will need a maintenance plan going forward, which will need to be funded by the Council.

The Council, considering that there is no official record of a decision to waive the rents, plus no specific reason for the Council to look to waive it retrospectively, the Council **RESOLVED** to charge the rent for 2022/23 for both the Maritime Museum and SIC, with payments being made as follows:

- Full payment for 2022/23 now
- Full payment/quarterly/monthly payments for 2023/24 rent and beyond – both parties can decide how they wish to pay.

With Maritime Museum able to apply for a grant for both 2022/23 and 2023/24 for the Council to consider at a future Town Council meeting.

ACTION: Town Clerk

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 6

Cllrs Jasper Evans and Mark Goodey returned to the meeting

21:30: Mayor proposed and Council **RESOLVED** to continue the meeting

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

vi. Members considered the cost of the purchase of a purple beech tree.

The Town Clerk advised members that at October 2021's Town Council meeting, the Council had approved the purchase of a Purple Beech tree for the recognition of the community for their support during Covid, which is to be planted at The Berry. She advised that this has yet to be purchased and no budget had been set. Mark Long, as the town's Tree Warden, had kindly researched costs on behalf of the clerk advising, that he had to do some searching for appropriate suppliers of the new Purple Beech, as a couple of suppliers have succumbed to the economic problems and others just do not have the capacity to meet demand.

He has selected Barcham, to source the trees, although over in Cambridge they can supply the standard trees that the Council are looking for, at a cost of:

- Beech - *Fagus sylvatica Purpurea* (Medium) at £369.00
- Plus a planting kit at £27.00 each.

Council **RESOLVED** to purchase the Purple Beech Tree at a cost of £369, plus planting kit.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

Town clerk advised members that she will also be purchasing an oak tree, when ordering the purple beech tree, from the same company, to replace the commemorative oak vandalised earlier in the year. At a cost of £319 + planting kit of £27 (Council had resolved at the time to purchase the tree, at an appropriate time, but did not set a budget on this purchase).

ACTION: Town Clerk

- vii. Members considered whether **Salcombe Rugby Club had met the terms set by the Council in awarding the previously approved grant of £2K** to the club and therefore if this could now be paid. Cllr David Higgins, as the recently appointed liaison Councilor for the Rugby Club, led the discussion.

He advised that he has seen the refurbishment of the toilets and that Julian Blazeby, from the club, advised him that he wanted to reassure the Town Council, that the Rugby Club is fully committed to being an integral part of the local community and encouraging groups and organisations to use the facilities. Where they can, they will not charge for any additional costs for use of the club, with their position being not to make a profit from local groups, but to rather just cover their costs e.g. may need to charge a cleaning fee, advising if the use of the club was in the morning and there were rugby or other activities in the afternoon they wouldn't charge a cleaning fee.

Members expressed how keen they were that the Rugby Club honored its promise to open its doors to the local community and if it turns out not to be the case, then any future grant applications may not be looked upon favorably.

Council **RESOLVED** to release the funds of £2K on the basis that Cllr David Higgins advises Julian that the Council considers the club receiving support from the Town Council on the basis of a sympathetic approach towards these community groups. The Council will make it known to these organisations that having meetings at certain times will benefit them in terms of no costs being incurred and will monitor the situation. With Cllr David Higgins to attend the club's committee meetings to keep abreast of the situation.

Against: 0

Abstain: 1 (Cllr Rob Wheeler)

For: 7

ACTION: Town Clerk

- viii. Council looked to consider the **budget for 2024/25 and setting of precept for 2024/25**. Town Clerk advised the Council that she has forecasted the accounts to the end of 31st March 2024 to establish a baseline.

She advised that currently there are no projects within the forecasted budget; with it purely being based on the forecasted expenditure and income. She will be working further with the Finance Working Group, but advised the Council that they need to inform her of what projects that will be looking to do and with that she will need projected costs including any future maintenance costs. She advised that looking at a 4-year plan will potentially help the Council.

Council **RESOLVED** to postpone the decision to set the Precept until January's Town Council meeting.

20. NEXT MEETING

Council **RESOLVED** that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th January 2024 commencing at 6.30p.m in the library at Cliff house.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 8

Meeting ended 22:53

Signed *M Goodey*

Mayor

28th February 2024