

Minutes of the Meeting of
SALCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL
held in the Library of Cliff House, Salcombe
at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 24th January 2024

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

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

Also in attendance:

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

1) APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Dist Cllr Mark Long (delivering planning training) and Cllr John Cooke (personal). Cllr. Eoghan Grace advised that he will be arriving at 7pm, due to work commitments.

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. Craig Niven declared an interest in planning application: 4001/23/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.
 - Applicant for planning application **3540/23/Ful (Sheerwater)** addressed the Council. **See Appendix 1**
 - A member of the public asked if DCC had a statutory duty to consult the public with regards to DCC's proposed on-street pay and display in Salcombe. Cty. Cllr Rufus Gilbert advised him that DCC does and currently is doing so.
- ii) To note matters raised in the open forum and consider any to be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

None

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.

- **Cty Cllr Rufus Gilbert** advised that:
 - He will only vote for **DCC's proposal for on-street parking** if all the proposed towns are included in the final proposal i.e. an all or nothing approach.
 - **Modbury roadworks** are going well.

- **Dist. Cllr Sam Dennis** advised that:
 - Along with Dist. Cllr Mark Long and **SHDC's asset team she walked around Salcombe looking at the maintenance of SHDC's assets within Salcombe.** Will keep the Council in the loop
 - Still **issues with the new planning portal**, but SHDC looking to resolve them.
 - **SHDC's Executive** meeting tomorrow; **setting of budget and Council Tax**
 - **South Devon National Landscape** has received a grant of £2.2m from The National Lottery Fund, giving them in total £4.5m for their Life on the Edge project. The aim of which is to protect some of UK's most threatened invertebrates, living along S Devon coast between Plymouth & Torbay.
 - **Police:** See Appendix 2
- 5) TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS:**
- i) Wednesday 20th December 2023

Postponed to January 2024's Town Council Meeting

6) PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS

See: **Appendix 3 Jan 2024 Planning**

7) HMS MAGPIE VISIT

Council considered the budget and format for **HMS Magpie's visit (Saturday 9th – Monday 11th March 2024)** and **RESOLVED** to:

- Hold the reception in the Assembly Room at Cliff House or library (if available), otherwise the Council's meeting room.
- Put on a small buffet with drinks; up to a maximum of £750
- Date of Reception: evening of Sat 9th March
- Offer trips to school and community as last year
- Request for the Commanding Officer to say a few words at the Reception, about the ship.
- Cllr Christine Milton to be the names councillor to support the project officer, who will be organising the event, on behalf of the Town Clerk.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 9

ACTION: Town Clerk

19:10 Cllr Eoghan Grace arrived

8) WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

- i) Town Clerk advised members that they need to consider replacing Jess Denny, following her resignation from the Council, on the current Working Groups and HR Committee she sat on, whilst also taking the opportunity to consider the remit and membership of the Working Groups, to ensure they are up to date. Council **RESOLVED** to:
- DCC on-street pay and display:
 - not to replace Jess Denny

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

- Finance:
 - not to replace Jess Denny
 - **RATIFIED** for **Cllr Craig Niven** to set up Scribe and load up the bills/invoices on behalf of the Town Clerk
 - **RATIFIED** for **Cllr Craig Niven** to support the Town Clerk with the administration of the VAT liability.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

- Legal:
 - **Cllr Rob Wheeler** to replace Jess Denny for reviewing the Council Hall leases

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

- Park and Ride:
 - Cllr Christine Milton requested if Jess Denny can remain on the Working Group as a non-councillor. She advised that Jess Denny has let her know she would like to do this.

Against: 1
Abstain: 2
For: 7

- **Cllr Christine Milton** to be lead

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

Town Clerk advised that going **forward any communications with 3rd parties must go through an officer and for one of them to attend any meetings**. She advised that they have been playing catch up, which is proving to be difficult.

- D-Day:
 - Steve Frame, from Cliff House, to join the Working Group.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- Community Economic Plan:
 - **Cllr Kizzy Sims-Stirling** to join the Working Group

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ii) Members considered the following projects, and **RESOLVED**, which Working Groups to lead on the projects, remit of these groups and budget:

- Salcombe in Bloom
 - Working Group members: **Cllrs Jasper Evans, Caroline Bricknell, Christine Milton, Dist. Cllr Sam Dennis and Project Officer, Pete Robinson.**
 - Budget: £2K (from Precept)
 - Remit: to contact Kingsbridge in Bloom, National Trust and Woodcot and carry out research of areas to initially work on.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- Welcome Sign
 - Working Group members: **Cllrs Mark Goodey, David Higgins and Christine Milton**
 - Budget: £5K (from Civic Infrastructure earmarked reserves)
 - Remit: to carry out research and costs to bring to Full Council

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- Well corner area (by The Victoria)
 - Working Group: **Community Working Group members**
 - Budget: £500 (from Training earmarked reserves)
 - Remit: to tidy up the well and cupboard

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- Park and Ride project to enable motorhomes to park in Bonfire Hill carpark
 - Working Group: **Cllrs David Higgins and Andrew Reed plus Project Officer, Pete Robinson.**
 - Budget: Estimated cost £7,100 +VAT (report and costings sent to Council prior to meeting by Pete), from Transport Strategy earmarked reserves

- Remit, 2 stages:
 - 1) Fix the broken fencing and barriers
 - 2) Research the feasibility of this including check the Traffic Order, logistics, pros and cons, sight of vans over hedges, enforcement, fees and costs, to bring to Full Council

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

- Summer Bunting
 - Working Group: **Cllrs Christine Milton, Caroline Bricknell and Kizzy Sims-Stirling**
 - Budget: £1K per annum (from Precept)
 - Remit: liaise with Town Regatta and Salcombe Information Centre.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

- Mortuary Building: reflection area
 - Working Group: **Town Clerk and Project Officer**
 - Budget: £1,500 (from earmarked Civic Infrastructure earmarked reserves)
 - Remit: to look at screening the Heras fencing and costings for benches, water butt, planters/plants – with the purchase of benches being the priority.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

For: 10

9) 2024-25 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

- i) The Council considered in detail **setting the budget for 2024/25**, based on the reports sent through by the Town Clerk, ahead of the meeting, to Councillors. These reports are based on projected year end accounts for 2023/24, the annual costs needed to run the Council for 2024/25 and the current earmarked funds. The Finance Working Group have worked on these in detail with the Town Clerk over the past couple of months **and Cllr Craig Niven advised that the budget is comparable to other local town councils** in terms of Band D properties, stating that our new precept will be cheaper, using the average band D rate, than any of the other South Hams Town Councils. It will be over 60% cheaper than the highest band D rate and still more than 10% cheaper than the lowest of the other Town Councils.

Looking at our reserves only one other Town Council has a lower overall reserve than ours.

The **Town Clerk raised her concerns regarding the Council's assets**, in particular the state of the Council Hall and advised that the Council needs to look at a long term maintenance plan for the hall, within the budget, consider increasing contingency funds to £10K, general maintenance to £5K and grounds maintenance to £20K in the budget – this is based on the understanding that DCC have no monies and it is becoming more apparent that town and parish councils need to step in to maintain these areas e.g. maintenance of footpaths. She also advised that the Council need to consider increasing the budget for legal fees, from £2,500 due to the projects they are looking to do and the current leases that are currently being drawn up.

She also advised that the budget needs to be healthy so that the Council does not need to draw down on its earmarked reserves during the year, otherwise they will not be able to carry out the projects they are looking to do.

She also made clear that this is a forecasted budget, that the Council may incur unknown costs or costs she is not aware of, which have therefore not been included within this budget so the members need to be comfortable with the suggested revenue expenditure and consider if there are any other costs that need to be included now.

It was also noted that previous budgets did not appear to have taken inflation into account, with the Precept decreasing last year, nor is there evidence of a clear budget setting exercise, with the Town Clerk emphasising that the Council needs to ensure it runs as a business.

She advised the Council that, along with Cllr Craig Niven, she met with senior finance officers at SHDC to discuss the forecasted budget and explain to them the reasons for the

increase, in order to gain a sense check on what they are trying and needing to achieve through the budget. Following the meeting she advised she is comfortable with her advisement to the **Council to ensure it runs as a business** and sets a clearly defined budget, with this resulting in the projected increase.

Councillors discussed the staffing budget, which has increased considerably, with the Council now employing 3 members of staff. The Town Clerk advised that the constant demanding workload and the governance issues that the Council has inherited requires the number of staffing hours and feels that it will take at least another year to get on top of the governance issues including leases, VAT liability, policies, new finance software, with Councillors noting that there are many archived boxes that need to be reviewed. However, the Town Clerk noted that this is where costs could be cut, but the Council needs to be mindful this will impact on what it can achieve.

Cllr Craig Niven and the Town Clerk reassured the Council that, as the year unfolds, the budget can and should be revisited to ensure it is still on track and Council can resolve to amend earmarked reserves or budgeted items.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the forecasted revenue expenditure for 2024/25 as £386,181, which includes £100K set aside for the VAT liability the Council needs to address, offset by an anticipated income of £79,909 and the transfer of earmarked reserves of £154,100 to cover the projects outlined below; resulting in an **overall budget of £152,172**

- VAT Liability
- Transfer of Assets
- Welcome Sign
- Well corner area (by The Victoria)
- Park and Ride: parking of motorhomes
- Park and Ride: feasibility of 2nd field
- Mortuary Reflection Area

See **Appendix 4**

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- ii) The Council considered and **RESOLVED** to retain **9/12ths of its revenue expenditure for its General Reserves**. This was based on advisement the Town Clerk and Cllr Craig Niven has received from the VAT specialist and a budget setting training course they have attended.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- iii) Council considered and **RESOLVED** for the **Precept for 2024/25 to be £152,172** and to issue a statement to explain the reasoning behind the increase in the budget and therefore the Precept.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk

10) SALCOMBE'S COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PLAN

- i) Cllr Mark Goodey advised that the **CEP Working Group met with Laura Eames, Place and Enterprise Project Officer**, who has requested the Council look to form a Steering Group, made up of approx. 14 people from the Council and the community. Members discussed the importance of have a broad section of people, but to certainly invite the businesses who expressed an interest in this project at the Council's Meet and Greet for businesses, back in November. Members **RESOLVED** for the Town Clerk to send invites out.

Against: 0
 Abstain: 0
 For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk

- ii) Members discussed **the importance of the neighbouring parishes of Malborough and East Portlemouth** and how closely interlinked they are with Salcombe, with the view of extending the CEP's boundary map to include these parishes. The idea being for the councils to look at ways of supporting each other and working together on projects, that will have mutual benefits for the businesses and residents. Town Clerk advised she had discussed the idea with Laura Eames and also Kathy Harrod, at Malborough, who both were receptive to this. Although the idea will need to be explored in more detail within the project, as the CEP is to be based on Salcombe.

The Council **RESOLVED** to extend the boundary map to include Malborough and East Portlemouth Parishes and for the Town Clerk to formally invite both Councils onto the Steering Group.

Against: 0
 Abstain: 0
 For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk

11) COUNCIL VACANCY

Town Clerk advised, following the resignation of Jess Denny, **the process the Council needed to follow to fill the vacancy**, was to advertise the vacancy, giving the electorate the opportunity to call an election, which she has done, with the deadline being Friday 26th January 2024. Therefore, if an election is not called, the Council needed to decide the process they wanted to follow. She suggested and Council **RESOLVED** to mirror the last co-option process i.e. advertise the vacancy, ask for a bio, HR & Staffing Committee to interview any applicants, with a decision to be made at a Full Council. She also suggested the Council adopts this as their policy going forward.

Against: 0
 Abstain: 0
 For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk

12) GARDENING AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

This agenda item was postponed to the February's Town Council meeting as Council is still waiting on the quote from SHDC.

13) PLANTERS FOR EMBER CLOSE

Council considered a request from a resident, that it had inherited from previous Council, **to purchase planters and plants, to be placed in Ember Close**, to prevent vehicles parking on double yellow lines and pavement. The Town Clerk advised that although yellow lines have now been painted the resident was under the impression from previous conversations with the Council, a couple of years ago, that it had agreed to purchase the planters to ensure cars did not park on the pavement. However, although Adam Keay, from Highways, has approved for the planters to be put on the pavement (as long as the specified spacing is adhere to) there does not appear to have been any formal resolution made by the Council to purchase these. She advised that, along with the Project Officer, she has met with the resident to discuss options, following which the Project Officer advised that the cost will be approx. £585, with Town Clerk advising that this can come out of 'footpath earmarked reserves of £21,831'.

The Project Officer, advised that the yellow lines have not been painted in the correct place and has been in touch with Adam Keay, who has advised that this was because of the surface of the pavers – however, he has said he will try and get them repainted. Members discussed their concern about spending monies for the benefit of one resident and Council **RESOLVED** not to purchase these planters or plants, but for the Project Officer and Town Clerk to try and ensure that DCC repaint the lines in the correct place and increase enforcement.

Against: 0

Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk/Project Officer

14) SALCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL'S TPO APPLICATIONS: 3383/21/TPO AND 1771/21/TPO (dated Oct 2021)

The Project Officer advised members that the **Council has received a request from SHDC's planning department requesting to visit to ensure the planting of trees have taken place** under the above planning applications, with a deadline of 11th March 2024. He advised that the Council did replant on 3341/19/TPO but the trees died and the Town Clerk, at the time, made the decision not to replant and when 1771/21 came up she reiterated this position, due to the fact that replanting in a woodland wasn't necessarily going to be successful, as it had already failed.

He advised that he has pulled the Decision Notices from the Planning Portal, but only found one for 1171/21, which specifies replanting. There is an Officer Report for 3383/21 on the portal, but no decision notice, which says, 'Approval with replant'. Devon Tree Services was STC's agent on 3383/21 and he has asked them to see if they have a copy as he currently cannot see that it was ever forwarded to STC, hence STC were unaware of the need to replant.

The application for each was as follows :

- 177/21/TPO (8465894.PDF – Decision Notice) – Replant 5 X Specified Trees
- 3383/21/TPO (8544244.PDF – Officers Report) - Approval with replant

He has calculated an approx. cost to purchase the necessary trees as approx. £2,500

Council **RESOLVED** to:

- Advise planners that due to the initial planting of the trees being unsuccessful it is reluctant to plant further trees.
- Seek advisement from Mark Long, tree warden and meet the planning officer on site.
- **Cllr Andrew Reed** to support the Council's officers if a planning application needs to be submitted to discharge the condition and to also meet the planning officer on site.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Project Officer and Cllr Andrew Reed

15) COLLABORATION WITH NEIGHBOURING PARISHES

The Town Clerk advised members that Kathy Harrod, Town Clerk from Malborough, has been in touch with her to **propose the idea of collaborating with Salcombe** and the other neighbouring parishes she clerks for, on general maintenance, co-ordination of a lengthsman, grass cutting of the cycle path between Salcombe and Malborough and a Road Warden Scheme. She also advised that clerks have received an email via SLCC advising of DCC's proposal for Self-Delivery of Highway Improvements.

Council **RESOLVED** for Town Clerk to liaise and collaborate with the neighbouring parishes via Kathy Harrod on maintenance projects.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk

21:30 Council RESOLVED to extend the meeting.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

16) REPORTS

- **Mayor:** see Appendix 5
- **Cllr Jasper Evans** reported on:

- The current status of the **transfer of Cliff House Woods (CHW)**, advising that the Trust is required to obtain Charity Commission consent for the disposal and the subsequent winding-up of The Friends of CHW, and that consent was awaited. Until this is received the Council's solicitor is reluctant to carry out searches. Council needs to confirm that the Land Registry Plan accords with its understanding of the boundaries. He asked if he could contact the Council's solicitor on behalf of the Town Clerk to request he chases for a timeline and to confirm, that to the best of the Council's knowledge, the Land Registry Plan matches its understanding of the boundaries. Council agreed this, along with Town Clerk, due to her workload; although it was noted that this was not in the top 10 of the Town Clerk's priorities.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Cllr Jasper Evans

- Concerns regarding the prevalence of **molehills on the football pitch at The Berry**
Project Officer advised he would look into this.

Cllr Caroline Bricknell reported:

- That she had applied for funding for a **defibrillator on behalf of the swimming pool**, but was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, she has found another organisation who will match fund any monies raised for a defibrillator, costing £1500 i.e. need to match fund £750. She requested whether the Council could consider granting some monies towards this – Town Clerk advised her that she will put this on the agenda for next month.
- **2 flats are available** on Devon Homechoice at Chandler Heights (over 55s)
- The defibrillators recently purchased by the Council have yet to be installed as there is a backlog on orders for the cabinets to house them in.
Cllr Caroline Bricknell to keep under review and chase

Cllr Andrew Reed reported:

- He has spoken to Graham Swiss from SHDC, who is in charge of **Neighbourhood Plans**, who advised him that there is no actual requirement for these to be reviewed at 5 years. His advice is not to do anything for at least another year due to changes in National Development Policy and that the Local Plan is due to be reviewed in March 2024.

○ **Town Clerk – see Appendix 6**

Town clerk reported:

- **VAT registration confirmation now received from HMRC**, with Council being VAT registered from 1st August 2016. She reiterated again that this needs to be a Council priority and that she needs to be given time to look at this ahead of the 1st VAT return – again lot more work involved.
- New action log now available for Councillors, which just records all matters arising from the Council meetings, rather than all the actions that the officers are dealing with.

○ **HR & Staffing Committee**

None

17) COUNCIL'S PRIORITY LIST & PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS

Town Clerk advised that she has sent this report to Council with HR & Staffing Committee to lead, with new priorities added to the list:

- HMS Magpie visit – 9th-10th March
- Setting up of Payroll for January pay
- P3 project information now received from DCC, which has a deadline of 15th March 2024
- Tozers agreement (CLAS) – she requested if **Cllr Jasper Evans** could cast his eye over, which he agreed to do.

Cllr Craig Niven asked members to say if there were any additional actions they wanted to add or reprioritise. None forthcoming.

Council **RESOLVED** for the priority list to remain as it is, with the above actions to be prioritised within this due to the deadlines.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: Town Clerk**18) FINANCE**

- i) Council received and **RESOLVED** to approve the invoices and payroll for approval and payment – **see Appendix 7**
Town Clerk advised she is still liaising with SGW Payroll in setting up the payroll for Jan; **HR & Staffing Committee** will need to approve figures.
Bank payments to be authorised by **Cllr Kizzy Sims Stirling**

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

- ii) Council received and approved finance report/bank reconciliation
Lloyds Bank balance: £4,692.65
CCLA balance: £518,177.85
- **See Appendix 8**
- o **Cllr Jasper Evans** asked if the transactions with Desmond Rex Ltd have been fully reconciled. Town Clerk advised that they have; just waiting on the original noticeboard that Desmond Rex Ltd arranged to be returned, to be collected from the Council office. **Cllr Andrew Reed** liaising with Jess Denny to arrange collection of this.
 - o **Town Clerk advised that she has chased DCC again for the parking income from DCC for July-Sept 2023.**
- iii) Council considered Cllr John Cooke's request to subscribe to **Table Builder Pro to help with the Council's website** at a cost of \$59pa and **RESOLVED** to go ahead with this.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Jasper Evans left the meeting for the next agenda item

- iv) **CONSIDER MARITIME MUSEUM'S GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR 2022/23 AND 2023/24**
Cllr Craig Niven led on this advising that the Finance Working Group had reviewed the grant applications for both years **from the Maritime Museum, for £3K per year** to offset against their rent, with their recommendation being to approve both grant applications. Town Clerk advised that the Museum will be looking to offset the grant against their rent so, rather than the Council paying them the grant monies, they will reduce their monthly rental payment.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve both grant applications and for the Maritime Museum to reduce their monthly rental payments accordingly.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Jasper Evans returned to the meeting.

19) EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Council considered and **RESOLVED**, in view of the nature of the business about to be transacted at agenda item 20, in the public interest, that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

20) SALCOMBE'S ASSETS

Council considered and **RESOLVED** to arrange a meeting between Salcombe Town Council and SHDC to discuss the transfer of assets from SHDC to Salcombe.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

21) NEXT MEETING

Council resolved that the **next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28th February 2024** commencing at 6.30p.m. in the library at Cliff House.

Against: 0
Abstain: 0
For: 10

Minutes approved:

M Goodey
Town Mayor

28th February 2024