

AGENDA ITEM No 3(a)

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY 3rd MARCH, 2015** at **6:30pm**

PRESENT Councillor H Smith (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs S Bailey (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors R Eberlie, Mrs M Ewings, Mrs A Johnson, Mrs J Metcalf, J Moody, C Rogers, E Sanders, P Sanders, J Sheldon, E Sherrell, B Trew, D Whitcomb, Mrs J Whitcomb.

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk

Note - Prior to the Meeting there was an opportunity for quiet reflection, to receive a report from Borough Councillor Mrs M Ewings and a written report from the County Councillor (who had sent her apologies).

In addition a question was received from a member of the public regarding Council practice in relation to tenancies and the availability of information. A Council statement in connection with the matter had previously been circulated and was available to the public present.

The recent death of former West Devon Borough Councillor Mr D Horn was noted with sadness.

383 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor J Sellis.

384 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

385 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tavistock Town Council held on Tuesday 20th January, 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

386 REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The Council considered the following Reports of Standing Committees:-

a) Plans Committee – 27th January, 2015

The notes of the informal Meeting of the Plans Committee held on 27th January, 2015 were received – it being noted that the views expressed therein were advisory only in the absence of a quorum.

b) Plans Committee – 17th February, 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Plans Committee held on 17th February, 2015 (Minutes No's 359 - 367 inclusive).

c) Properties Committee – 24th February, 2015

Subject to the deletion of the second recommendation in Minute No 371(a) and its replacement with the following resolution:-

RESOLVED THAT officers put in place arrangements to conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis to produce a strategy for the marketing of the Town Hall complex'

the Minutes of the Meeting of the Properties Committee held on 24th February, 2015 (Minute No's 368 – 371 inclusive).

Noted That in the discussion arising from consideration of the above particular reference was made to:-

- i. Options and issues associated with the development and marketing of Town Hall services;
- ii. An operational decision to install a further five dog waste bins at key locations upon Whitchurch Down;
- iii. The basis of available support (from English Heritage) as recently considered by the Committee in relation to Betsy Gimbals Tower.

d) Finance and General Purposes Committee – 24th February, 2015

Subject to:-

- i) The deferral of Minute No's 356 – 358 (Forward Planning, Policy & Programme Sub-Committee) and 381 – 382 to a

later point in the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted; and

- ii) The separate consideration of Minute No 354 (Communications and Media Policy) as outlined below and consequential amendment to Minute No 378(a) (Standing Order Revision Working Party) insofar as it relates to an addendum to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of same.

the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24th February, 2015 (Minute No's 372 – 380 inclusive).

Noted That

- a) In connection with the recommendation included within Minute No 372 a proposal that the Council record the names, in the Minutes, of those who had not tendered apologies for absence, but were absent from Meetings was defeated.
- b) In response to a question regarding Minute No 377 (Guildhall refers) it was noted that proposals submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund included extensive measures to bring the former Courtroom back into meaningful and sustainable future use, together with appropriate arrangements to secure disabled access.
- c) In response to Minute No 377 (Communications and Media Policy refers) consideration was given to whether or not the Council should appropriately put in place a policy for Councillors and Staff covering, for example, rights and responsibilities arising from the law and good practice. It was noted that there had previously been an instance of the inappropriate publication of photographs of a minor upon a Councillor managed website which had required removal.

A view was expressed that were such a policy to be introduced a Member(s) would not adhere to it. However it was also suggested, in the alternative, that it was appropriate to have clarity around good/proper practice regarding how Councillors and Officers should conduct

themselves. Reference was made to practice in other authorities and issues arising in connection with defamation.

Arising from consideration of the foregoing it was

RESOLVED THAT Tavistock Town Council adopt a Policy in relation to Communications and Media for application to Councillors (ie separate from the staff policy).

- d) Appreciation was expressed for the deliberations of the Forward Planning, Policy and Programme Sub-Committee in relation to an application for financial assistance.
- e) The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee expressed appreciation to those Councillors who had contributed toward the work of the Standing Order Revision Working Party on Tuesday 17th February, 2015.
- f) By way of clarification (Minute No 378(a) refers – Code of Conduct) it was clarified that the proposed change to withdrawal arrangements for 'other' interests conferred a discretion upon Councillors as to when/if to withdraw, according to their assessment of the significance of the interest concerned. The potential difficulties associated with double/treble 'hatters' were noted.

RESOLVED THAT subject to any amendments listed above the recommendations including in the foregoing reports of Committee Meetings be approved and the reports be received.

387 COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS OF THE TOWN MAYOR

- a) **Tavistock Farmers' Market**
The Council expressed its appreciation to Ms Maria Jones for her work on behalf of the Tavistock Farmers' Market over many years and agreed that a letter of appreciation be sent to her.
- b) **Plans Committee – Membership and Participation**
Reference was made by Members to the continuing low attendance at Meetings of the Plans Committee and limited

involvement of some other Councillors and problems arising therefrom.

388 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was:-

RESOLVED THAT - The Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

389 COMMITTEES (CONTINUED)

(**Confidential** – by virtue of relating to legal matters and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council).

The Council considered the outstanding Report of the following Standing Committee held on 24th February, 2015, consideration of which had previously been deferred (Minute No's 381 – 382 and 356 – 358 (Forward Planning, Policy & Programme Sub-Committee) refer).

Noted That

- a) Further reference was made to a petition received (by the Finance & General Purposes Committee) and the extensive consideration already given to the matter at the last Meeting of same (Minute No 381(a)) refers.

The matter was further considered at some length, the consensus being that Council concurred with the views of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held previously. A further statement had been issued which was distributed to all Members present and had been made available to those members of the public in attendance.

- b) In response to a Member's question regarding Minute No 382 the background to the deliberations of the Forward Planning, Policy and Programme Sub-Committee regarding long leases were outlined.

RESOLVED THAT - subject to any amendments listed above the recommendations included in the foregoing report of the Committee Meeting be approved and the report be received.

The Press and Public were re-admitted to the Meeting.

390 COUNCIL SEAL

RESOLVED THAT - The Seal be affixed to the various deeds and documents to be made or entered into for the carrying into effect of those decisions or matters approved by the Council this day.

The Meeting closed at 8:28pm.

Chairman_____

Date _____