

**MINUTES**

of the Meeting of the **TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2017** at **6.45pm**

**PRESENT**

Councillor P Sanders (Mayor)  
Councillor P Ward (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors Mrs M Ewings, Mrs A Johnson, A Lewis, Mrs L Roberts, E Sanders, J Sheldon, H Smith, P Squire, A Venning, Mrs J Whitcomb, P Williamson.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

Note – Prior to the Meeting there was an opportunity for quiet reflection led by The Very Reverend Dr Christopher Hardwick, of St Eustachius Church. Apologies for absence had been received from West Devon Borough Councillor G Parker and County Councillor Mrs D Sellis.

**70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors T Gibbins and P Palfrey.

**71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor P Sanders declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Minute No. 74 by virtue of serving as a Trustee of a partner organisation.

**72. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tavistock Town Council held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION**

**73. GENERAL FINANCE**

The Council considered the following:

**a. Schedule of Payments**

The Council received and considered, copies of the monthly accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 (Appendix 1)

## **b. Budget Monitoring Report**

The Council received and considered, copies of the Budget Monitoring report as at 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2017 (Appendix 2)

### **74. TAVISTOCK GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE PROJECT**

The Council considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer in connection with the above (Appendix 3) including review of a prospective 'Round 2' grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Attention was further drawn, amongst others, to the significance of changes in projected capital and revenue costs (increased) to the Council, the role of/extent of progress in the formation of Tavistock Heritage Trust (THT) and the potential impact of related liabilities including affordability and risk. In particular:

- a loan in the order of £350,000 would be required to meet additional capital costs;
- substantial on-going revenue adjustments would be needed to meet the cost of servicing the loan and also the considerably increased projected annual revenue costs vis a vis those anticipated at the time of the 'Round 1' application;
- there was a necessary view to be taken regarding the resilience of THT as anchor partner with associated risks to the sustainability of Council funding streams should it be necessary for it to fund the associated underwriting commitments, either in part or in full.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to a range of issues including:

- a) The circulation of a wide range of background papers associated with the proposal previously to enable Members to evaluate same – including Business Plan, Management and Maintenance Plan, Activity, Interpretation and Learning Plans, links to the Planning Application, etc;
- b) The potential that the project represented the single most significant financial commitment that was likely to be made by the Council for the foreseeable future, together with the long term (20 year) contractual obligations to Heritage Lottery Fund;
- c) The nature of the changes in costs, a lack of clarity regarding the appointment and intentions of the new (to be appointed) Members of Tavistock Heritage Trust Board and potential impact upon local levels of taxation (Precept);
- d) The disappointing level of Member involvement at a recently held Informal Meeting to provide opportunity to discuss the detail of the Scheme with the consultants;
- e) The reliance of the project operating model upon a large pool of volunteers;

- f) The application of the principle of collective responsibility to all Council decisions;
- g) The extent to which there was/was not a public appetite for a scheme of this type;
- h) Benefits which could accrue from the promotion of visitor footfall;
- i) The involvement of Council/Councillors over a long period of time during the development of the project;
- j) The potential benefits associated with providing a "Gateway" to the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site;
- k) The role of the Town Council in underwriting the revenue costs of the premises (including THT and Gateway Centre);
- l) The possibility/likelihood that Government might impose a "cap" upon the Precept that could be raised by larger town/parish councils with associated impact on future availability of funding;
- m) The extent of the commitment in connection with Grant monies (20 years) – notwithstanding that the Council could potentially repay the HLF grant monies should it wish to/need to seek early termination;
- n) Recognition that a decision made at this time would not be final and, if to progress the scheme, would need to be revisited with a view on how/if to proceed in light of any Heritage Lottery Fund permission to start requirements, the status of Tavistock Heritage Trust and a further informed assessment of scheme costs/benefits

Arising from consideration of the foregoing it was:

RESOLVED THAT

- a) the Council
  - i. Subject to (ii) below:-
    - Agree and endorse the emerging Business Plan and supporting information as a basis for submission to Heritage Lottery Fund;
    - Approve the submission of a Round 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund consistent with the information brought before Council (including the possibility the Partnership Agreement previously referred to might be required to take the form of a lease)
  - ii. Identify a series of targets for Tavistock Heritage Trust to meet prior to the decision of Heritage Lottery Fund in December 2017, and to any subsequent decision by Council to let the scheme, by way of assurance regarding resilience and sustainability. Same to include:-

- The completion by the Trust of the “Resilient Heritage”, “Trust Health Checker” and sharing of the results with the Town Council;
- Providing to the Town Council a copy of its Funding Strategy and Funded Work Programme;
- Securing actual/fully committed income from new sources excluding the Town Council (and monies already promised) of £10,000 or more;
- Providing to the Council a copy of its Volunteer Recruitment Strategy;
- Providing to the Council a report indicating the number and nature of expressions of interest from volunteers;
- Having a new Board in place and operating for a sufficient period of time (not less than 3 months) prior to any grant of permission to start.

b) In the event that a Heritage Lottery Fund Round 2 pass be subsequently received by the Council (anticipated December, 2017) it then re-assess the Project on an evidence based assessment including against the following tests, namely whether the Council is then assured:-

- i) that scheme costs would not exceed that projected in the “mid-case” scenario and such was acceptable to Council;
- ii) that Tavistock Heritage Trust represented a strong and resilient delivery partner both then and for the future;
- iii) that the scheme itself was affordable, desirable and deliverable;
- iv) that Council would be able to sustain the increased costs and would reduce/tailor other organisational goals accordingly both then and in the future.

c) Council then determine how/if to proceed in light of same and any conditions applied by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **75. BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget and Policy Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (Minute No’s 48-58 (Appendix 4)).

RESOLVED THAT subject to:-

- a. The deferral of Minute No’s 59-60, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted; and

- b. The amendment of the Recommendation included in Minute No. 53(ii) to include the insertion to follow "Members" and precede "to" of the following words - "comprising not less than one Member from each Tavistock Ward"

the Recommendations included in the foregoing report of the Committee be approved, and the Minutes be received.

Noted That – particular reference was made to the arrangements in connection with Minute No. 53, lines of reporting, representation, public/sector involvement and associated arrangements.

## **76. PLANS COMMITTEE**

The Council considered the following

### **a) Plans Committee – 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017** (Appendix 5)

The Minutes of The Meeting of the Plans Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 (Minute No's 39-47 inclusive)

### **b) Plans Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2017** (Appendix 6)

The Minutes of The Meeting of the Plans Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (Minute No's 61-69 inclusive)

Noted That arising from consideration of the above reference was made, in particular, to various views expressed in relation to Minute No. 67(a)

## **ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

## **77. Service Reports**

The Council received and noted the reports of the General Manager, Works Department, Town Hall and Pannier Market (Appendices 7-11).

Noted That

- a) a further update would be provided by the General Manager in connection with the outcome of a recent National Association of British Market Authorities event;
- b) The Market Reeve would re-circulate information confirming the position regarding Pannier Market not having Monday opening in 2017.

## **78. FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS**

The Council received and noted the following:

- a. Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 12)

Noted That

- i. pursuant to the provisions of Minute No. 28 previously attention was drawn to training (finance) being arranged in the Autumn by the Devon Association of Local Councils which was open to attendance by all Members – bookings to be made through the Assistant to the Town Clerk;
  - ii. Attention was drawn to the upcoming Memorial Day event scheduled to be held 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2017 to which all Members were invited.
- b. Tavistock Bid Company – Minutes of the Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2017 (Appendix 13).
  - c. Tavistock Chamber of Commerce – Minutes of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (Appendix 14).
  - d. There were no updates from or to Council representatives serving on other outside bodies in connection of the work of those bodies or the Council

**79. COMMUNICATIONS OR REPORTS OF THE TOWN MAYOR**

It was reported that the Notice of Election in connection with the by-election for the Tavistock North Ward was shortly to be published, with the close of Nominations scheduled for 4pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Nominations should be returned to the Returning Officer of the Borough Council and any election held was scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2017.

**80. 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

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION**

**81 BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE – CONT'D**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget and Policy Committee held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (Minute No's 59-60 inclusive) as further identified in Confidential Minute No. 81(a)

RESOLVED THAT

- a) the Recommendations included in the foregoing report of the Committee be approved, and the Minutes be received;

- b) With regard to Minute No. 59 and subject to the satisfactory outcome of Survey and Valuation the Council proceed with the acquisition in the sum stated.

## **82 PROPERTY AND FINANCE MATTERS**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

### **a. Guildhall Project**

i. Former Tourist Information Centre Lease

The outcome of discussions between the tenant, landowner and Tavistock Heritage Trust were outlined

Noted That pursuant to same a question was raised regarding future lease security beyond the extant termination date

ii. Guildhall Lease/Partnership Agreement

It was reported that the Council had received clear legal advice that a lease represented the most appropriate form for such an agreement.

### **b. Debtors**

The Council considered and noted a list of all those with debts to the Council dating from earlier than the last quarter day and received updates, where appropriate, in respect of same.

Noted That arising from consideration of the above it was;

#### RESOLVED THAT

- i. in accordance with a previous decision of Council that the Town Hall debt in the sum of £ 57.18 be written off;
- ii. that three of the Town Hall debts listed, which had been unsuccessfully referred to a Debt Recovery Agency, be referred to the Small Claims Court for action, with the intention of also recovering the Court Fees associated with these Claims

### **c. Town Hall Bar Stock Audit**

The Bar Stock Audit was noted

### **d. Update**

It was reported that the Solicitors of the Council would be in attendance at the next Meeting to provide updates in connection with outstanding legal matters

Noted That

- a) the General Manager would investigate the possibility that unauthorised access had been gained over Council land to enable what appeared to be engineering test works to be undertaken by a third party in the Meadows.
- b) In connection with legal costs incurred by the parties to lease arrangements at Meadowlands there was consensus that the Town Council could appropriately forego receipt of costs relating to a restriction (up to £2,500) subject to the tenant meeting the reasonable remaining legal costs of the landlord. There was also agreement that completion by mid-August would be desirable subject to satisfactory resolution of all other matters.

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

**83. COUNCIL SEAL**

RESOLVED THAT the Council 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 **8.38pm.**

Chairman .....

Date.....