

**Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report March 2024**

For Council Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

1. Key Dates for all Councillors’ diaries for this Civic Year;

Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Civic Ball 2024
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Grants Presentation Evening
(please note change of date)	(Grants Panel members only)

2024 – 2025 Civic Year

Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Civic Service
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2. Royal Garden Party

DALC recently forwarded its annual invitation inviting nominations to enter the draw for 2 tickets to the Royal Garden Party, due to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024. As Councillor Paul Ward (as past Mayor) is unavailable to attend, should he have been successful in receiving tickets, Councillor Andy Hutton was nominated this year. Councillor Ward will be nominated next year, due to being unavailable this year. A further update will be provided, once the outcome of the draw is known.

3. 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

The Town Council has acquired a special commemorative 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day flag. This will be flown on the Town Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup> June, beneath the Union Flag, which forms part of the Council’s Flag Flying Protocol.

4. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG  
CIVIC YEAR 2023-2024

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 6<sup>th</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND
				<i>N.B. Councillors’ names in italics indicate that these were a ‘no show’</i>
Booked 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Cyber Awareness Training	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding – Cllr Ms M Ewings  N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking
Booked 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Personal Safety Essentials	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding - Cllr Ms M Ewings  N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking

N/a	Introduction to Local Councils	(E-learning)	Via DALC	None
N/a	Standards in Public Life	(E-learning)	Via DALC	None
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 1.00pm – 2.00pm	Being a Good Councillor Part 1 – Roles & Responsibilities	Virtual	DALC	None
26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 6.00pm – 8.00pm	Responding to Planning Applications	Virtual	DALC	None
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 6.00pm	A Devolution Deal for Devon	Virtual	DALC	Cllr B Smith
29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 4.00pm – 7.00pm	Planning Training for Town & Parish Councils	Virtual	WDBC	<u>All Councillors were encouraged to attend</u>  Cllrs Mrs A Johnson, B Smith, P Squire, P Ward  Assistant to the Town Clerk & Administration & Democratic Support Officer  N.B. Cllr U Mann confirmed she has already received this training via WDBC
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 1.00pm – 2.00pm	Being a Good Councillor Part 2 Powers, Duties & Precept	Virtual	DALC	None
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 6.30pm – 8.30pm	Finance for Councillors	Exeter Court Hotel Exeter	DALC	None
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 6.00pm – 8.00pm	Code of Conduct	Virtual	DALC	None

## 5. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 6<sup>th</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024:

- 15 non-chargeable meetings (internal meetings, or a TTC representative attending on behalf of TTC, partner organisations or Mayoral events)
- 0 chargeable meeting/training session
- 1 training sessions (non-chargeable)

## 6. Property Units Update

Residential – there is currently one vacant residential property:

- 1 Market Road – as previously reported, this property is currently being used as a welfare facility during the Town Hall works period. It is anticipated that this will continue to extend somewhat into the New Year, in view of the additional works being undertaken on the Town Hall. Discussions are ongoing with WDBC regarding its application of a double Council Tax charge.

However, notice has been received on the following property:

- 2 Market Road – the premises will come vacant on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Note - As outlined at the Budget & Policy Committee Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024, a Councillor visit to the two properties above will be arranged by the Works Department, once they are both accessible.

Commercial –

- Duke Street – we are aware that the tenant in one unit does not plan to renew their Lease when it expires in June 2024. Therefore, marketing of this unit will start shortly;
- 15 Duke Street - as previously reported, the property became vacant on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The unit is being actively marketed by the Council's Surveyor.

Note – any further information of a more specific nature as might relate to any particular tenant(s) will need to be picked up under the relevant part of the next section (confidential) of the Agenda.

## 7. General including ongoing activities in the Admin Office

The Office continues to support the organisation across the range of Civic, administrative, financial and corporate activities. By way of trial the Council has taken up Associate Membership of the LGA for 2024-2025, which is discounted through NALC.

Also, notification has now been received from West Devon Borough Council in connection with the toilet cleaning costs for the annual contribution to the running of the Guildhall toilets, which is being progressed.

Further to recent discussions regarding the Police and related updates, an invitation has been extended (and accepted) to attend and present at the Annual Town Meeting.

## 8. Website & Accessibility update

Booking forms/schedules of charges for various Council activities and other postings are assessed on an ongoing basis and will be updated, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the regulations. Overall site compliance is reviewed annually.

The Council has been advised that the current host platform service for our website is being upgraded in January, 2025. Therefore, we have transferred our service to JISC Domain Services in anticipation of this change and will be actively tendering website replacement prior to then.

9. Legal Services

In the early part of 2024 arrangements will be made to either re-tender or renegotiate legal services for the Council, in view of the timeframe for current arrangements. A review of present arrangements, including with our provider, will be undertaken in the New Year to help inform next steps.

10. Lettable Properties and Energy Performance

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and Display Performance Certificates (DPC's) are in certain circumstances a requirement for the letting of properties. However, the position lacks clarity regarding certain classes of Listed premises. Further information is being sought prior to upcoming changes in minimum thresholds for eligible premises in light of recent Government announcements.

11. Staff Handbook

The Staff Handbook is currently being reviewed to ensure that various sections continue to represent current legal and other relevant standards. This will be undertaken on a modular basis, with an initial focus on those areas where most change is anticipated.

Report prepared by  
Jan Smallacombe (Assistant to the Town Clerk)