Dulverton
Town Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of Dulverton Town Council

Held on Monday 12th April 2021 at 7.00pm, using remote video conferencing.

Present: Chairman/Mayor: Mr Gerry Lewis. Councillors: Mrs Christine Dubery; Mr Alan Ottey; Mrs Louise Parrish; Mr John Preston; Mrs Margaret Rawle: Miss Kathryn Vellacott; Mr Piers Wood; Mr Nick Thwaites, DTC & Somerset West & Taunton (S.W.T.) Cllr. Mrs Frances Nicholson, Somerset County Council (S.C.C.).

Deferment of Business for Comment by the Public: None

Apologies for absence and acceptance of any reasons offered if agreed:
None

Declarations of Interest:
Cllr. Dubery with regards the Sports Field.

Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management:
On behalf of our residents, and the members and staff of Dulverton Town Council the Chairman offered his deepest sympathies to the Royal Family on the passing of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Questions for County and District Councillors:

Cllr. Mrs Frances Nicholson - S.C.C.

Local Government Re-organisation: Cllr. Mrs Nicholson urged members to respond to the consultation exercise. She doesn't consider that the proposal from the District Council's to hold a referendum is legal.
She assured members that the proposal to have 'local community networks', involving parish representatives who will be involved with regards the setting of the agenda, will be written into the constitution of a Unitary Council. This would provide Parish & Town Councils with decision making powers which she believes will ensure that local priorities are considered and met.

Dunster to Timberscombe Road and Park Street, Dunster - Temporary Road Closure**:** Members raised concern that it is a major diversion in the middle of the vaccination program, and a key period for elderly second jabs.
Cllr. Nicholson responded by stating that she had been informed that the work is urgent and cannot be delayed. However she is concerned that further signage at Machine Cross is required for those travelling from Dulverton, which she intends to pursue.

Devon Temporary Road Closure - TTRO2139504: Members requested that among the signage for road ahead closed there should be signage to say that Dulverton is open for business and accessible.

Leat Sluice Gate Wall: – Cllr. Mrs Rawle has reported to S.C.C. that the wall has sustained damage as she was advised.

Cllr. Mr Nick Thwaites - S.W.T:

Kemps Way Drainage: Members were informed that contractors have cleared the drains. Some further work is to be undertaken by a private contractor employed by Hanover House.

Local Government Re-organisation: Cllr. Mr Thwaites questioned as to the source of funding with regards the employment of consultants and the proposed cost of a referendum.

Lion Stables Car Park: Members reported that damage to a boundary wall has resulted in a parking space being coned off. It is hoped that the necessary repairs will be undertaken before the Farmers Market events commence.

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021 circulated: were approved and signed. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

6657 Update of action points resulting from the last meeting:

6649 Emergency Town Centre Grant:
The Chairman provided members with an update concerning the progress made with regards the installation of a bandstand and the development of the new website 'Visit Dulverton' to be launched during May 2021.
There have been considerable increases with regards public use of social media platforms advertising Dulverton as a holiday destination.
Local traders are to be kept informed of developments.

6649 Somerset Emergency Community Fund:
The application was partially successful. A grant has been awarded with regards 'plastic free' shopping in Dulverton.

6649 All Saints Church – North Wall:
Members were informed that three structural engineers had been contacted, two of which had provided quotes.

6658 Accounts:

Financial Statement: See Appendix A

RESOLVED: That the Financial Statement as per Appendix A is approved. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

Payments for approval: See Appendix B

RESOLVED: That the payments as per Appendix B are approved. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mrs Rawle and carried.

6659 Committees:
Minutes to be approved by the relative Committee members and be adopted as part of this meeting:

Grounds Committee Meeting – 16th March 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Grounds Committee meeting held on 16th March 2021 are approved. Proposed by Mrs Parrish, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

RESOLVED: That £4,000 is ring fenced to meet the costs of necessary maintenance work to be undertaken to combat problems regarding moss on the sports field. Proposed by Mr Preston, seconded by Mr Thwaites and carried.

Members were informed that a Grounds Committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday 22nd April at 4.14pm.

Planning Committee Meeting – 18th March 2021 & 12th April 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18th March 2021 are approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Wood and carried.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12th April 2021 are approved. Proposed by Mrs Rawle, seconded by Mr Preston and carried.

6660 Co-Option:
The Clerk informed members that SWT had not received any requests for an election and that she had failed to receive any applications to fill the vacancy.

6661 All Saints Church Wall – Lady Street:
The Clerk informed members that work had commenced as a matter of urgency. The Contractor has been requested to access the remaining length of wall and submit a report for member's consideration.

RESOLVED: To approve the cost of urgent maintenance requirements amounting to £620. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

6662 Purchase of Two Marquees:
Members were informed that The Dulverton Partnership had at its meeting held on 7th April 2021 approved the purchase of two marquees at a cost of £500.

6663 A Rural Market Town Group:
After discussion members:

RESOLVED: Not to join the Rural /Market Town Group. Proposed by Mr Ottey, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

6664 Winsford Hill - Speeding & Signage:
Members were informed of concerns raised by Cllr. Mrs Margaret Rawle at the last few Exmoor Panel Meetings, regarding accidents involving livestock on the moor, many of which are caused by people driving too fast.

There have also however, been incidents of collisions with livestock after they have been hidden by gorse, where the vehicle has not always been speeding. Clearance of roadside gorse to improve visibility seems to be effective and should be encouraged. However, there has been a huge increase in the volume of delivery vans travelling across the moors at speed and it is envisaged that there will be an influx of visitors coming to Exmoor this summer.
A response from West Somerset Highways to a lengthy enquiry submitted through the Exmoor Panel from Cllr. Rawle in which Highways were requested to re-visit the signage issue, undertake a site visit, and consider a request to implement a 40mph speed limit, has still not been responded to. In her view such action will be cost effective, sustainable and save animals' lives.
Members agreed that a letter from DTC in support of the above is sent by the Clerk.

6665 Remote Meetings:
Members were requested to consider their response to the Governments 'Call for Evidence' on the use /provision of remote meetings:
Following discussion it was agreed that:
1) Remote meetings have worked well and have been well attended.
2) That local authorities should have the express ability to hold at least some meetings remotely on a permanent basis.
3) The benefits being:
   a) More accessible for members particularly when the weather is bad.
   b) Reduction travelling time – more environmentally sustainable.
   c) Easily accessed by local residents, most of whom are now familiar with video conferencing.
   d) Documents are easily accessible to all.
   e) Easier to chair meetings in an orderly fashion.
   f) Reduction in costs.
4) A hybrid solution would be ideal.

The Clerk was requested to respond to the consultation accordingly.

6666 Staff Annual Leave:
In consideration of the extra-ordinary events of last year members:

RESOLVED: To authorise that in addition to the contractual agreement that five days (pro rata) may be carried forward to the next leave year, on this specific occasion a further 5 days (pro rata) may be carried over for year commencing 01/04/21. Proposed by Mrs Parrish, seconded by Mr Ottey and carried.

Furthermore it was:

RESOLVED: That the remaining hours worked, in lieu of annual leave, will be reimbursed at the normal NJC rate. Proposed by Mrs Dubery, seconded by Mr Lewis and carried.

6667 Correspondence:
Correspondence noted by members.

6668 Questions for Members who have attended additional meetings:
None

6669 Issues to be raised with permission of the Chairman:

Leat Path adjacent to Lady Street:
Members were informed that since the gate at the Weir end of the Leat Path was removed to create wheelchairs/ pushchair access by E.N.P.A., horses are using and fouling the footpath causing access problems for pedestrians.
Cllr. Mr Thwaites suggested that either Public Rights of Way and Access Officer, Sue Applegate (E.N.P.A.) or alternatively Ceri Rapsey (E.N.P.A.) are contacted for advice. Cllr. Mrs Rawle to pursue.

Oldberry Lane: Members of the Town Management Committee were asked to consider the provision of a dog poo bin at their next meeting. The Clerk will obtain costings for both the purchase and emptying of the facility.

Kings Corner Recreation Ground: Members were informed that the shelter situated in the recreation ground is being used late at night, and there have been incidences of broken glass left for the grounds staff and members of the public to clear away.
It was agreed that the information should be shared on social media and that a crime report is submitted to Avon & Somerset Police.
The situation is to be monitored and further action, if required, considered at the next Grounds Committee meeting.

High Street/ Bridge Street – Clearance of Drains: Cllr. Mr Wood wished it minuted that he has been reporting to S.C.C. the blockages and requesting clearance of the drains for over two years. He maintains that he rarely receives an acknowledgement and to date no action has been taken.
Local residents have expressed concerns that the situation will increase the risk of flooding as a result of the blockages. Cllr. Dubery offered to seek advice from the Environment Agency regarding the issue.

Chairman .....