

**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2024 IN THE GUILDHALL**

## Present: Councillors E Price (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Cummings, J Hodgson, D Peters, A Presswell, N Roberts, T Robshaw and M Trant.

Apologies: Cllrs J Hannam and L Smallridge, and District Cllr Allen.

## In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk) and P Bethel (Town Sergeant).

### **1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING**

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

**To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have completed or made any necessary amendments to their Declaration of Interests.**

The apologies were received and accepted. There were no amendments to declarations of interest.

***The Committee will adjourn for the following items:***

**Reports from County and District Councillors.**

1. **County Cllr Hodgson**
2. **District Cllr Allen**
3. **District Cllr Birch**
4. **District Cllr Presswell**

*It was* ***RESOLVED*** *to suspend standing orders.*

a. County Cllr (C Cllr) Hodgson was present and gave a verbal update; Devon County Council pension investment divestment; on the divestment work that is ongoing at Devon County Council.

b. District Cllr Allen was not present and had not submitted a report.

c. District Cllr Birch was present and had submitted a report. Cllrs asked about: the car parking proposals subsequent press release; and the South Hams Festival delay.

d. District Cllr Presswell was present and answered questions on her written report, including: an update on railway bridge safety; waste bin map expected from South Hams District Council; street sweeping; and the problems with the dentistry initiative.

*The Council reconvened.*

### **3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:**

***(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)***

**a. Full Council 4th November 2024.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes.

**To note the following minutes:**

**b. Council Matters Committee 11th November 2024.**

Noted.

**c.** **Planning Committee 18th November 2024.**

Noted.

**d. Town Matters Committee 25th November 2024.**

Noted.

### **4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING**

**To consider any matters arising from the Minutes and to approve any recommendations from Committees:**

***(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)***

**a. Full Council 4th November 2024.**

No matters arising.

**b. Council Matters Committee 11th November 2024**

Item 4 – Councillor use of Council Premises and Equipment Policy. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council adopts the Councillor use of Council premises and equipment policy.

Item 6 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on Remote Meetings.

To be considered under agenda item 5.

**c. Planning Committee 18th November 2024**

No recommendations.

**d. Town Matters Committee 25th November 2024**

Item 5 – VE-Day 80th anniversary commemorations. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council lights a beacon on Kingsbridge Hill as part of the VE-Day 80th commemorations on 8th May 2025.

Item 7 - Reform of Bathing Water Regulations 2013’ Consultation. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council responds to the consultation with the following comments:

Totnes Town Council is supportive of the proposed changes in ‘Reform of Bathing Water Regulations 2013’ consultation including:

• Removal of fixed bathing water season dates (which currently runs from May to September) from the regulations to allow for a more flexible approach to monitoring, extending the dates of the bathing season to better reflect when people use bathing waters.

• Expanding the legal definition of ‘bathers’ to include participants in water sports other than swimming, including paddle boarders and surfers.

• Further considering water quality and public safety when applications for new bathing waters are assessed.

### • Introducing multiple testing points at bathing water sites.

### • Ending the automatic de-designation of bathing water status after 5 consecutive years of a site being rated ‘poor’, which can damage local tourism and businesses. Instead, underperforming sites will be individually reviewed by regulators, taking into account their unique circumstances.

### • Changes to the designation criteria of bathing sites.

### • Removing the fixed dates of the bathing season from regulations

### Item 8 - South Hams Way. It was **RESOLVED** by majority that the Council supports the proposed South Hams Way footpath.

### **5. MHCLG CONSULTATION ON REMOTE MEETINGS**

**To consider the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on ‘Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings’ as recommended by the Council Matters Committee (deadline 19th December).**

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council responds to the consultation as drafted in the papers. In summary, Totnes Town Council supports the proposal to enable remote attendance at local authority meetings as an exceptional option, allowing council operations to continue when in-person meetings are not feasible. However, they recommend that in-person attendance remain the preferred format, with remote attendance used only as a contingency in specific, exceptional situations. Additionally, Totnes Town Council advises against proxy voting to uphold the integrity of the democratic process, and emphasises the need for robust confidentiality safeguards when remote attendance is used for confidential sections of meetings.

**6. LIST OF MEETING DATES** **AND COMMUNICATIONS POINTS**

**To note a list of upcoming meeting dates (including a 2025 meeting calendar), Council communications points and link Councillor/Councillor representatives on outside bodies updates.**

Noted, including the cancellation of the December Strategy Working Group,

### **7. NEXT MEETING**

**To note the next meeting date of Monday 6th January 2025, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

*The Council will be asked to RESOLVE to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.*

### **8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)**

**To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature:** **Council Matters Committee item 12 (legal).**

It was **RESOLVED** to send the draft letter to the leaders of South Hams District Council and Devon County Council with the addition of suggesting the Town Council may be able to assist.

A brief verbal staffing update was noted.

### **9. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TENDER**

**To consider tender documents received for the grounds maintenance contract (commercially sensitive).**

### It was **RESOLVED** to give the Town Clerk delegated authority to appoint one of the top two scoring tender applicants. This will be subject to a meeting with the Clerk and review of references and contingency plans.

### **10. ELMHIRST PROJECT (Standing Item)**

**To consider an update on the Elmhirst project and the delegation of costs associated with the bid process (commercially sensitive).**

Noted.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Cllr Emily Price

Chair