



Minutes of Full Council of Holsworthy Town Council held in the Market Hall, Holsworthy
On Wednesday 7th September 2022 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr. Parker, Cllr. Kenneally, Cllr. De ste Croix, Cllr. Hutchings, Cllr. Piper,
Cllr. Shepherd, Cllr Stone, Cllr. Stroud, Cllr. Tadman

In attendance: Town Clerk (TC), Assistant to the Town Clerk (ATTC)
Colin Wells, Emma Hosie, Hjalmar Dentlinger

4961. Apologies for absence

TDC Cllr. David Jones, DCC Cllr. James Morrish

4962. Declaration of Interest - *To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in respect of items on this agenda.*

Cllr. Parker asked Councillors to declare any relevant interests as they arose.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders.

4963. Public Question Time - *To receive questions from the Public.*

There were no questions.

4964. Police Report

Councillors were given a copy of an online report which was dated June 2022, this was the latest update available. PC Morgan has suggested that an informal meeting is held the following week to discuss any matters.

Cllr. Kenneally, Cllr. De ste Croix, Cllr. Stone & Cllr. Tadman would like to be present.

4965. County Councillor's Report.

The Town Clerk was provided with a verbal update from County Councillor James Morrish to inform Councillors.

Cllr Morrish had mentioned the following:

- Pleased to see the new road surface had been completed between the entrance to the roundabout to the Livestock Market.
- He had been working with partners to make sure that some of the services provided by the Link Centre were now being provided at the Youth Centre.
- DCC are unfortunately having to divert funds from the Budget in other areas to help to fund the shortfall in the Social Services Budget.

4966. District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Jones provided a written report:

We are all aware of the financial pressures which our residents are experiencing. These pressures are being felt just as much by our businesses and our local authorities.

Going into the pandemic (TDC) was considered, particularly when considering the situation others found themselves in, as being in a rather good financial state. However, since then we have been overtaken by events. The effect of rampant inflation and the war in Ukraine have been evident for some time. TDC's financial prospects have not been helped by the poor settlement which we received from central government. There are 4 major pressures on the budget which are proving a cause of serious concern: inflation; a huge overspend on temporary accommodation as a result of the 'housing crisis'; a larger pay award for staff than was budgeted for; and the cost of providing leisure facilities.

Of these four points, 2 and 4 are most within our control. Just by way of reference:

- a. there has been an £890,000 temporary accommodation overspend in the first quarter, due to there having been a reduction in properties available to rent by 70% (TDC is treating the sourcing of its own temporary accommodation as a top priority);
- b. the wage bill has increased by £481,000;
- c. a fuel overspend (used by the refuse fleet) of £120,000; and
- d. the cost of delivering leisure facilities is estimated to be £811,000 this year (by comparison our next biggest discretionary spend is £140,000).

We have started to take steps to turn this around and to mitigate the exposure of the council. Without taking the following steps (and further steps in the next few months) we would be unable to set a balanced budget as we are required to do by statute.

Some of the proposals which have been adopted are unpalatable but they are necessary to prevent an immediate reduction in services:

1. parking charges will increase in 2023 - this will be district wide and will seek to cash in on the tourist areas of Westward Ho! and Appledore;
2. Once able to, we will levy the maximum amount we can on empty and second homes by way of additional council tax. In the current situation where our young people can't afford to buy their own home and there is even a shortage of rental properties, I do not think this measure is disproportionate as a means to raise further revenue to fund our local services. This approach may also incentivise some of those properties to be put on the market;
3. The cost of garden waste collections will increase;
4. We are removing the discretionary 20% business rate relief which village halls benefit from. This is being phased out at 5% per year, with the statutory 80% relief still being available. However, there has been an agreement to protect food banks against any increase.
5. Reduction of the councillor grant to £1000 per year. This is a reduction back to the previous level of funding which was available. As a signal of how serious things are, DCC has removed their members' grants altogether.

These changes will only buy us some breathing space, further review will need to be undertaken. I made it very clear during the meeting that when looking at balancing the books everything must be on the table, this includes: Leisure, Discretionary Services, the Structure of the Council itself; and the potential to increase these charges further.

TDC needs to produce a balanced budget in order to be able to meet its statutory obligations and to deliver its mandatory services. Presently, unless further steps are taken we will not be able to do this.

The tc previously pointed out to me that Holsworthy had been left out when considering a grant funding bid relating to culture. During the meeting it was mentioned that there is more 'culture' in rural areas than people initially consider - I know there was talk about the various art enterprises in the Hartland area. However, it was felt that for this bid (which in my personal opinion it did not seem that TDC were in a strong position to succeed on although I wish our officers the best of luck) the focus needed to be on the larger areas like Bideford where there is a more established cultural offering to stand any chance of being successful.

If anyone has any questions please feel free to contact me councillor.jones@torridge.gov.uk) or to give me a call to discuss.

Councillors stated their queries to Councillor Hutchings, Councillor Hutchings addressed as much as he could.

The Chairman returned to Standing Orders.

4967. Council Meeting Minutes – To approve and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 13th July 2022

Cllr. Stroud proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13th July 2022 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr. Tadman and agreed. (6 For, 3 Abstain, 0 Against)

4968. Matters Arising - To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the 13th July 2022 Meeting, not already covered by the Agenda. For information only.

Item 4946 The TC is still chasing permission for TDC to place the picnic bench and bin outside the Manor Offices

4969. Mayor's Announcements – To receive a report from the Mayor

Firstly, I wish to announce the resignation from Council of Councillor Natasha Hewitt. I wish to thank Natasha for her service to council and the community.

Back in July I attended the award evening presentation for Students from Year 7- 10. It was held in the Church due to the extreme heat. It was a lovely evening and a joy to share the excitement as the students were presented with their citations & awards.

End of July I along with a number of fellow Councillors attended the meeting where the future of the Community Transport was discussed.

In August Ian and I hosted a charity cream tea at our cottage. We were blessed with beautiful weather. This event was wonderfully supported by Councillors, Visiting Mayor's, Organisations and my neighbours and friends.

Thanks go to Vanessa, Tegan, George and many others who helped during the day. We raised £830 for the Charities- Lymphoma Action & Breast Cancer Now. We were also able to present cheques to last years charities – Cancer Research UK & Blood Cancer UK which was a total of £1033.

Last Sunday the Bowling Club hosted a charity bowling event – A lot of fun was had by all, and my thanks go to the Bowling Club for a lovely afternoon. £320 was raised on the day and a donation of £100 has been pledged by a member for Lymphoma Action. The Council B Team of George, Tegan & Stephanie won.

On Sunday Ian and I attended Great Torrington's Civic Service, we were made very welcome from Mayor Doug & Great Torrington's Council.

4970. Account Due for Payment and Budget Review – to receive and approve the accounts due for payment

The Town Clerk addressed some new payments such as a replacement plaque for a tree within Stanhope Park and for a tree survey which took place in August. The TC also mentioned a payment for a Councillor training course some of the cost of which is due to be repaid by another Council which attended the training alongside Holsworthy Councillors.

Cllr. Parker proposed that the accounts for payment be approved. This was seconded by Cllr. De ste Croix and agreed. (Unanimous)

4971. To Receive, and to Note, the Minutes of the following Committee Meetings:

a) Planning & Highways	20 th July 2022
b) Parks	20 th July 2022

4972. To give an update on the plans for the Christmas 2022 Switch On Event

The TC expressed the plans discussed at the Christmas Event Planning working group prior to Full Council. It was decided that the working group would like the event to be free as much as possible to those that attend. A date has been set for the Switch on, 3rd December. There will only be 1 Christmas market that will take place on the day of the Switch on. 1 hour at the beginning of the event will be a quiet hour to provide an inclusive

event to all residents and visitors of Holsworthy. Many things were agreed; face painting, children rides & Christmas market. Councillor Hutchings will be contacting a lighting company to discuss options for the Christmas lighting for the next meeting to allow councillors to come to a decision. The Working Group will be looking into other options for the event and reminded Councillors of the dates for the putting up and taking down of the lights as well as for the Christmas Switch on as a lot of help would be required.

4973. To give an update on the works at Badock Gardens

The path at Badock Gardens has been finalised- the railings are due to be placed toward the end of September. The next stage for this project is lighting and for the future the sun lounge. Initially, a social media post will be made once the railings have been fitted to advertise the progress and works completed. Councillors briefly discussed the potential uses for Badock Gardens once safe to hire the out.

4974. To consider a request for additional grant funding from the Holsworthy Rural Transport

The Mayor Cllr Parker went through what had happened at the meeting that the Holsworthy Rural Transport had held regarding their funding issues. Martin Prentice had also emailed all surrounding Parishes as some did not provide funding despite their parish's usages of their services. He has also decided to contact Cornwall Council for additional funding.

Cllr Hutchings stated that the Holsworthy Community Involvement Group Questionnaire had highlighted that one of the main needs of the community was for transport. A suggestion was made to create a flyer to advertise the opportunities Holsworthy Rural Transport can provide.

After a discussion it was agreed that the Reserve that was earmarked for outcomes arising from the Holsworthy Community Involvement Group be granted to the Holsworthy Rural Transport Group.

Cllr. Hutchings proposed that the Earmarked Reserve of £2,500 for the work coming out of the Holsworthy Community Involvement Group be granted to the Holsworthy Rural Transport Group. This was seconded by Cllr. Parker and agreed. (Unanimous)

4975. To receive the external auditors review of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2022.

The TC discussed the process to the review and the work that had been done to comply with the requirements.

Cllr. Hutchings proposed that the external auditors review of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial Year ending 31st March 2022 be noted. This was seconded by Cllr. De ste Croix and agreed. (Unanimous)

4976. To discuss a possible ' Warm Space ' provision.

A warm space is a safe area or areas for local residents to visit and utilise to reduce their at home energy bills. The TC suggested speaking with the Mutual Aid to understand if there is going to be a demand for a Warm Space in Holsworthy.

The TC and the Mayor Cllr Parker had attended an online meeting with One Northern Devon where a shared database was discussed which would allow for councils to access information to provide aid and support. Councillors discussed many options for Warm spaces areas such as the Youth Club and Library due to them being locations which residents would be able to access anyway. It was considered that the council could provide grants to those that will be open to assist them with the heating costs.

4977. To Receive External Committee Updates

There were no external committee updates.

4978. To Receive Correspondence

The Town Clerk provided a list of correspondence to the Councillors. Each item on the list was addressed. Several outcomes were created in response. Cllrs. Hutchings & Kenneally will attend a meeting to discuss Wildanet's upcoming fibre network build in and around Holsworthy. Issues regarding neglected buildings along with photographs will be sent to Torridge District Council. Defibrillator Training was discussed and potential locations for the sessions were provided.

4979. Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk had no additional information to report to the Council,

4980. Exchange of information

Cllr. Hutchings updated the meeting with the progress on the Banners. Unfortunately, there are currently some technical issues providing the photographs for mock up. Councillors discussed placing mini-Christmas trees in the planters within Holsworthy. Councillor Parker stated that she is very impressed with the Maintenance Operatives work with the floral displays. Councillor Stone thanked all councillors that attended to put the bunting up.

It is recommended that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

4981. To discuss and ratify. If appropriate the co-option of new councillors

Five applications had been received for the two available vacancies and the applications had been provided to the Councillors prior to the meeting. The three applicants that attended the meeting were interviewed, and councillors then discussed the 2 available spaces. Councillors then came to a decision.

Cllr. Stroud declared a Financial Interest regarding one of the candidates and left the meeting when this candidate was being discussed and did not vote.

Cllr. Hutchings proposed that Mr Hjalmar Dentlinger & Miss Sandra Preston be co-opted as Councillors of Holsworthy Town Council This was seconded by Cllr. Tadman and agreed. (Vote: 6 For, 2 Against, 0 Abstentions

4982. Close

Cllr. Parker closed the meeting at 21:37

Signed

Dated