



Barnstaple Town Council

FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2016



BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Mr W Austin BA (Hons)
Town Clerk



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

BARUM HOUSE
THE SQUARE
BARNSTAPLE
DEVON EX32 8LS

Telephone: (01271) 373311
Fax: (01271) 321987

E.Mail: admin@barnstapletowncouncil.co.uk
www.barnstapletowncouncil.co.uk

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

A Pre-meeting for Chairman of Committees will be held at 6.30pm in the Mayor's Parlour.

Prayers will be held at 6.55pm in the Council Chamber for anyone wishing to attend.

There will be a meeting of **BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL** on **MONDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2016** at **7.00 pm** in the **Main Hall, Castle Centre, Castle Street, Barnstaple**, to which you are summoned for the transaction of the undermentioned business.

There will be a period for questions by the public at a time to be determined by the Chairman. Anyone wishing to ask questions is requested to notify the Town Clerk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

Will Austin, Town Clerk
18th October 2016

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence.**
All apologies must be notified to the Town Council offices by 5pm on the day of the meeting.
- 2. To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary interests.**
- 3. Minutes.**
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th September 2016 (pages 71 to 75).
- 4. Mayor's announcements.**
- 5. To receive a presentation from Hilary Burr of North Devon Voluntary Services (NDVS) on the work of the organisation.**
The presentation will be followed by any questions from councillors.

6. To receive a presentation from Alison Mills of the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum Development Trust, and to consider a request for funding.
7. To receive reports (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary.
8. To receive reports (if any) from Devon County and North Devon District Councillors.
9. To receive reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies.
10. To receive and adopt the minutes of committees and the resolutions contained therein:

Planning & Transportation	29 Sept 2016	Pages 76 to 80
Staff Committee	3 Oct 2016	Pages 81 to 82
Heritage, Culture Committee	3 Oct 2016	Pages 83 to 86

11. **Rock Park Trust Management Committee.**
To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of Rock Park Trust Management Committee held on 5th October 2016.
12. **Local Government Finance Settlement 2017 to 2018.**
To consider and agree a response to a technical consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2017 to 2018 in relation to questions about referendum principles.
13. **To consider any questions asked by:**
 - a) Members of the Council (SO.26); and/or
 - b) Public Registered Electors in the Town (SO.83).

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of FULL COUNCIL meeting held on 19TH SEPTEMBER 2016 at 7.00pm in the GUILDHALL, BUTCHERS ROW BARNSTAPLE.

Present: Cllr I Roome (Deputy Mayor) took the chair in the absence of Cllr Mrs J Hunt (Mayor).

Councillors: Mrs V Elkins, A Windsor, Mrs S Haywood, C Haywood, J Phillips, Mrs J Wilsher, F Jefferies, Miss M Lovering, I Williams, Ms T Haywood, M Kennaugh, C Perkins-Beard, M Chamings, G Langford, and A Rennles.

Also present: County Councillors B Greenslade and J Mathews, Mr and Mrs Wiseman, and 38 members of the public.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Gavin Lane of Barum Boxing Club introduced the club to members, and advised that he expected to seek funding in future. The Deputy Mayor thanked him for his address.

TC37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S Upcott, Mrs V Monk, F Vernon, Mrs J Hunt (Mayor), Mrs E Davies, Mrs A Dawson and L Dawson.

TC38 DISPENSATIONS AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllrs Mrs S Haywood and I Roome, as members of North Devon District Council, declared dispensations under S.O. 66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllrs I Roome and Miss M Lovering declared disclosable pecuniary interests in item 6 on the agenda in respect of North Devon District Hospital, as employees of the Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust.

TC39 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(NC)

TC40 PARISH PATH INSPECTIONS

The Chairman introduced Mr and Mrs Wiseman, whom he reported had for the last thirteen years supported the work of the Town Council's Environment Committee in maintaining parish paths. They had spent a huge amount of time inspecting the paths so that they are kept in good condition, and had decided that this was the right time to pass on the

role to someone else. The Environment Committee had resolved at their last meeting to honour Mr and Mrs Wiseman's work at the Full Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr and Mrs Wiseman on behalf of the town, and offered the Council's sincere gratitude for their efforts over such a long period.

Cllr Windsor, Chairman of the Environment Committee, offered the thanks of the committee and expressed his personal gratitude.

The Chairman presented Mr and Mrs Wiseman with a gift in recognition of their work. Mrs Wiseman advised the meeting that she and Mr Wiseman were retiring from the role only due to ill-health.

TC41 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Chairman proposed that in the absence of the Mayor, this item be deferred.

RESOLVED: That the Mayor's Report be deferred to the next meeting.
(NC)

TC42 ADDRESS BY PETER HEATON-JONES MP

Peter Heaton-Jones MP addressed the meeting on the matter of health services at North Devon District Hospital, and the work to review services being undertaken by the Devon Success Regime.

Mr Heaton-Jones reported that North Devon would not accept cuts in services, and that he had said this to the Success Regime, the Minister, the Health Secretary and NHS England managers. He reported on his understanding of the work carried out to date by the Success Regime. He expressed concern about draft proposals to locate maternity units in the south of the county, and said this was not acceptable. He and a cross-party group of MPs had discussed this with NHS management and the Chair of the Success Regime the previous week. He and the group had also expressed concern about travel times if services moved to centres in Exeter and Plymouth, and that healthcare in North Devon had been underfunded for decades. He said that we would not put up with services moving. He encouraged the community to come together without making the issue party political to highlight the failings of the planning process for Sustainability and Transformation Plans, which were due for publication in January or February 2017.

Councillors commented and raised questions on the following:

- The impact of insufficient funding for healthcare provision

- The waste and bureaucracy associated with the Success Regime, and flaws in the process it was following
- Concerns about a possible two-tier service
- The possibility that both acute and non-acute services would be taken away from North Devon
- The problems of travelling to centres in Exeter and Plymouth
- The need for provision to match the increasing population of North Devon
- The dangers to life for stroke and other acute patients if acute services are removed from North Devon
- The consequential impact of cuts to hospital services on GP services
- The possibility of babies being born, or worse dying, on the North Devon Link Road

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 84 be suspended for a maximum of 30 minutes to enable public participation in this agenda item.

(NC)

The Chairman read a letter from the doctors of Northam Surgery expressing grave concern over under-funding of services and possible reductions in hospital services in North Devon, particularly given its rural setting.

Cllr Greenslade reported on discussions at the County Council's Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, and raised concerns about funding, the funding distribution formula, NHS staff morale and a threat to the vital 'golden hour' for acute treatment.

Members of the public commented and asked questions of Mr Heaton-Jones for 30 minutes.

****Cllr Phillips left the meeting at this point****

TC43 REPORT FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

Cllr Greenslade advised that he had intended to report on health matters but that this had been covered in his input to the previous agenda item.

Cllr Mathews reported on:

- Flooding in Newport, where the surface water had thankfully not been sewage and was due to a collapsed water main.
- The restoration of bus services between Whiddon Valley and the town centre, which would include one via the Newport Litchdon Medical Centre.
- Works to the Iron Bridge in Rock Park were due to be completed by November.

****Cllr Phillips returned to the meeting at this point****

Cllr Roome reported that the closure of Goodleigh Road had been reduced to two weeks.

Cllr Mrs Haywood reported that tree problems in Westacott were being dealt with.

RESOLVED: That the reports of County and District Councillors be received and noted.

(NC)

TC44 REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Roome reported that the Devon Association of Local Councils was considering and providing information on a Government consultation on referenda for Council Tax increases by larger town and parish councils.

Cllr Phillips reported on a meeting of the Record Office, Athenaeum and Library to discuss risks to future service provision arising from possible staffing changes.

Cllr Chamings reported from the North Devon Archaeological Service that North Devon District Council was looking to carry out works in Castle Green, which could provide improvements to the castle.

RESOLVED: That the reports of representatives to outside bodies be noted.

(NC)

TC45 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Heritage, Culture and Community Committee of 28th July 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Heritage, Culture and Community Committee meeting held on 28th July 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be received and noted.

(NC)

Planning and Transportation Committee of 4th August 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 4th August 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be received and noted.

(NC)

Planning and Transportation Committee of 1st September 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 1st September 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be received and noted.

(NC)

Environment Committee of 5th September 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 5th September 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be received and noted.

(15, 1abs)

Cllr Phillips asked that his abstention in respect of this resolution be recorded.

TC46 QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from members of the Council under Standing Order 26, or public registered electors in the town under Standing Order 83.

Meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated:

Barnstaple Town Council

Planning and Transportation Committee

MINUTES of a PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE meeting held on THURSDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2016 at 7.00pm in the Main Hall, The Castle Centre, 25 Castle Street, Barnstaple.

Committee Members Present :- Councillor S Upcott
Councillor Mrs J Hunt
Councillor C Haywood
Councillor C Perkins-Beard
Councillor I Williams
Councillor A Rennles (Chairman)

Also in Attendance :- W Austin, Town Clerk

34 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors F Vernon, I Roome and L Dawson.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

Councillor Mrs J Hunt, a District Councillor, has a dispensation under Standing Order 66 to participate and vote on any matter relating to the Town and District Councils, except where the matter is contractual/legal.

36 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
(NC)

37 DEPOSITED PLANS

37- 1	61119	Plot Ref :-	Type :- Full
	Applicant Name :-	Mr Tom Biddle	Date Received :-19-09-2016
	Location :-	Larkbear Tawstock Barnstaple EX2 7LD	Date Returned :-04-10-2016

Proposal : Erection of 244 dwellings, access of Old Torrington Road & associated works.

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Refusal due to:

- The resulting pressure on health services, particularly in light of current proposed service reductions;
- The unacceptable impact of the development on the surrounding highway, which will add to existing under-capacity;
- The impact on traffic on Sticklepath Hill, on access to and from Petroc College, and on bus services;
- The addition of an estimated 2,000 additional traffic movements daily arising from residential development, plus school traffic;
- The poor design and layout of the residential development, which should not be in straight rows of an unsuitable design;

- The inadequate access to and from the development;
 - The need to remove the Shorelands roundabout and to upgrade the Top of Town roundabout prior to any development in this area; and
 - The need to provide for adequate infrastructure prior to the delivery of additional housing.
- (NC)
-

37- 2 61417 Plot Ref :- Type :- Full
Applicant Name :- Ms Nicola Rickford Date Received :-19-09-2016
Location :- Lidl Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Old Station Road
Barnstaple
EX32 8PB

Proposal : Advert application for siting of 1 illuminated 7.5m totem pole
Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval, subject to the sign being closer to the entrance at Old Station Road, that the sign is reduced in height, and that illumination is only during store opening hours.
(4, 1abs)

37- 3 61571 Plot Ref :- Type :- Full
Applicant Name :- Mr K Stimpson Date Received :-07-09-2016
Location :- 13 Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Priory Gardens
Barnstaple
EX31 1PT

Proposal : Erection of garage.
Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval, subject to comments from neighbours.
(NC)

37- 4 61580 Plot Ref :- Type :- Full
Applicant Name :- Mr & Mrs Jenkinson Date Received :-02-09-2016
Location :- 1 Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Foxglove Close
Barnstaple
EX32 8RE

Proposal : Conversion of garage to form additional living accommodation, conversion of car port to form garage & creation of additional car parking space
Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval of conversion of garage to kitchen/diner, but refusal of change of carport to garage, as this removes the open aspect. The Town Council would prefer to the existing drive and car port used as access to the new external parking space.

(NC)

37- 5 61722 Plot Ref :- Type :- Listed
Applicant Name :- Mr Mark West Date Received :-01-09-2016
Location :- 87 The Riser Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Boutport Street
Barnstaple
EX31 1SR

Proposal : Listed building application for siting of externally illuminated fascia sign & 3 externally illuminated hanging signs together with 4 fascia poster frames/ chalkboards

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval, subject to the exterior of the property being brought back to a good standard, particularly the Church Walk elevation.
(NC)

37- 6 61757 Plot Ref :- Type :- Full
Applicant Name :- Ms Judi Scholey Date Received :-15-09-2016
Location :- Asda Stores Ltd Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Anchorwood Bank
Sticklepath
EX31 2AA

Proposal : Amendment of previously approved (planning permission 29837) petrol filling station design to incorporate a manned kiosk.

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval.
(NC)

37- 7 61775 Plot Ref :- Type :- Listed
Applicant Name :- Mrs J Howard Date Received :-23-09-2016
Location :- 10 Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Boutport Street
Barnstaple
EX31 1RJ

Proposal : Listed building application for extension to & conversion of dental practice with accommodation to form four flats (amended plans & additional information to those approved by listed building consent 60202)

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Refusal of permission for boundary fence. The fence was only ever intended to obscure a construction site. If the Plannign Authority is minded to approve, there should be a three-year time limit.
(NC)

RECOMMENDS: Approval of garden room subject to a three-year time limit, and conditions requiring that the structure is properly

maintained and removed if the current occupant leaves the property.
(NC)

37- 8 617901 Plot Ref :- Type :- Full
Applicant Name :- Mrs Titmus Date Received :-15-09-2016
Location :- 4 Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Woodland Close
Barnstaple
EX32 0EG

Proposal : Application for consent for work to tress covered by a tree preservation order in respect of removal or ne oak tree

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Refusal. The documentation for this application is incomplete as it does not provide an expert report justifying the request to fell the tree. This is a requirement stated on the application form. In addition, the tree pre-dates the surrounding houses, and every effort shoudl be made to retain it.
(NC)

37- 9 61791 Plot Ref :- Type :- Listed
Applicant Name :- Mr Bill Harwood Date Received :-27-09-2016
Location :- 11A Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Litchdon Street
Barnstaple
EX32 8ND

Proposal : Listed building for internal alterations to form a disabled toilet, entrance lobby & first floor flat

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval, subject to the comments of the Conservation Officer.
(NC)

37- 10 61793 Plot Ref :- Type :- Listed
Applicant Name :- Mr Bill Harwood Date Received :-26-09-2016
Location :- 11A Date Returned :-04-10-2016
Litchdon Street
Barnstaple
EX32 8ND

Proposal : Listed building application for internal alterations to form a first floor flat, including fire separation of staircase on ground floor

Observations : RECOMMENDS: Approval, subject to the comments of the Conservation Officer.
(NC)

No concerns were reported to the committee.

39 NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

Members considered a consultation document in respect of the scope of a potential Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred.
(NC)

The Meeting closed at : 8.33pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Barnstaple Town Council

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the STAFF COMMITTEE meeting held on 3RD OCTOBER 2016 at 6.30pm in the MAYOR'S PARLOUR, GUILDHALL, BARNSTAPLE.

Present: Cllr I Roome (Chairman)
Cllrs Mrs V Monk, Mrs V Elkins, Mrs S Haywood, and Mrs J Hunt (Mayor ex-officio).

Also present: W Austin (Town Clerk)

ST09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

ST10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS RECEIVED

Cllrs Mrs S Haywood and I Roome, as members of North Devon Council, have dispensation under S.O. 66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

ST11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(4, 1abs)

ST12 PART 2 – ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the following items be taken in the absence of the press and public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960 as the items contained exempt information as defined by S.O. 80(a).

(NC)

ST13 STAFF HOURS REPORT

RESOLVED: That the Clerk consider and address committee concerns over excess lieu time accrued, and report back to the committee.

(NC)

RESOLVED: That the Staff Hours Report be noted.

(NC)

ST14 LGPS DISCRETIONS POLICY

A draft LGPS Discretions Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the LGPS Discretions Policy be approved as drafted.

(NC)

ST07 POST NUMBER 63-1309

RESOLVED: That further actions in relation to this post be delegated to the Town Clerk.

(NC)

ST08 CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk introduced a report on staffing matters, covering staff qualifications achieved, Heritage, Culture and Community Committee duties, recruitment to vacant posts, and the committee budget for 2017/18. Members considered the content, and

RESOLVED: That media coverage be given to staff achievements.

RESOLVED: That a 'standstill' committee budget be recommended to Finance & General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's report be noted, and actions taken under delegation be approved.

(NC)

Meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Chairman.

Signed

Dated

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of HERITAGE, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY, 3rd OCTOBER 2016 at 7.00pm in the GUILDHALL, BARNSTAPLE

Present: Councillor Mrs E Davies (Chairman)
Councillors: Mrs V Elkins (Vice Chairman), F Vernon, I Roome (Deputy Mayor Ex Officio), Mrs J Hunt (Mayor Ex Officio), M Chamings, Ms N Haywood, F Jefferies, I Williams, G Langford and Miss M Lovering.

Also present: Mrs K Graddock (Deputy Town Clerk) and Mrs M Sanders (Administration Officer).

HCC15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence, as recorded on the attendance sheet were received from Councillor A Rennles, Mrs A Dawson and C Haywood.

HCC16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

Councillors I Roome and Mrs J Hunt declared interests as members of North Devon Council but have been granted a dispensation to discuss all items on the agenda, in accordance with SO66.

HCC17 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(9.2abs)

HCC18 BARNSTAPLE GUILDHALL

Members were informed that the proposed opening of the Guildhall on a Friday was a concern as there were no volunteers that were able to accommodate the day and time.

Cllr N Haywood offered to support the opening of the Guildhall when she can. Members were reported that two volunteers were needed at any one time when opening the Guildhall.

Members agreed that the opening should start at one Friday a month instead of weekly. It was therefore

RESOLVED: That the Guildhall should be open once a month and volunteers are contacted as well as councillors for any availability.

(NC)

HCC19 WEDDINGS

Members were asked to consider the current fee structure for Guildhall weddings, and in particular the arrangements for out of hours' support.

RESOLVED: That the out of hours' fee is actioned when the wedding ceremony is after 6.00pm Monday – Saturday inclusive and a Sunday.
(NC)

HCC20 TOWN TOURS

Members were asked to consider the arrangements for Town Tours from Spring 2017. The Clerk reported to member that Tom Evans had kindly provided Town Tours for the summer and they were well received.

Tom Evans had said that he was happy to provide training for Town Tours for any volunteers that would like to learn how to complete a tour however, felt he was unable to accommodate all tours for 2017 free of charge.

Members considered what we are able to offer volunteers and what is expected of them. Some members felt that providing a uniform would be beneficial as it clearly divines them as a tour guide and encourages them to be seen. After some discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

1. That thanks are given to the existing Town Council volunteers for their help and support over the past few months whilst changes were taking place to Heritage services.
2. That the Deputy Town Clerk and Heritage Manager be permitted to produce a new volunteer pack and advertise for additional volunteers.

(NC)

HCC21 CLERKS REPORT

Heritage Open Days

Members were reported the Heritage Open Days were a great success. Over 200 people attended the events over the 3 days of activities. Members felt the re-enactment should have been on an evening or weekend to allow more people to attend.

RESOLVED: That thanks are given to the individuals, staff and councillors who organised and supported this year's Heritage Open Days.

(NC)

Members felt that the Heritage Open Days should take place during school holidays, even though the event is part of a national campaign to open historic sites of interest for a particular weekend.

RESOLVED: That the 2017 Open days take place during the summer holidays and the item is brought to the next meeting for further discussion.

(NC)

Summer Fun in the Guildhall

Members were reported that the Summer Fun activities held in the Guildhall were supported and well attended. Over 400 people took part, which was a great achievement considering the timescale of organisation. Members were particular happy with the Plough Arts Centre for their drama workshops which has had a number of positive comments from attendees.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk investigate the opportunities for the Summer of 2017 for activities in the Guildhall.

(NC)

Half Term workshops

Members were submitted the workshop schedule for the workshops that are being held in the Christmas holidays and February half term. Members agreed that the workshops were a good way of the building being used and looked forward to supporting them in the future.

Volunteering

The Heritage Manager reported to members that a meeting of the volunteers was scheduled for Friday, 7th October at which discussions of potential volunteer opportunities would be sought.

Some members felt that the Town Council does not complete enough to recognise the volunteers and felt that there was little communication between them and the committee. After some discussion it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the volunteers are thanked for their support.
2. That the Clerk organise a cream tea afternoon closer to Christmas to officially thank the volunteers and all Heritage Committee members are invited to attend also.

(NC)

Heritage Centre

Members were informed that a meeting with North Devon Council to discuss the relinquish of the Heritage Centre would take place shortly and further details would be available after then.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk submit a draft budget to the next Heritage meeting for consideration.

(NC)

Meeting closed at 7.44pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated:

ATTACHMENTS

Item 11: Rock Park Trust Management Committee minutes 5th October 2016

Item 12: Devon Association of Local Councils
Response to consultation on referendum principles

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ROCK PARK TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE meeting held on WEDNESDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2016 COMMENCING AT 1.00PM in the Guildhall, Barnstaple.

Present: Cllr I Roome (Deputy Chairman) assumed the chair in the absence of the Chairman
Cllrs S Upcott, Mrs V Elkins, Mrs E Davies, M Kennaugh, I Williams, G Langford, L Dawson and Mrs A Dawson.

Also present: W Austin (Town Clerk)
Mr R Knight (Friends of Rock Park) joined the meeting from minute number RP107.

RP104 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

RP105 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

Cllr I Roome, as a member of North Devon Council, has dispensation under S.O.66 to discuss and vote on all items on the agenda unless the item concerns a legal or financial agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

RP106 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13TH JULY 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13th July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(7, 1abs)

RP107 REQUESTS FOR THE USE/HIRE OF ROCK PARK

The Clerk reported that no new applications had been tabled with the agenda for consideration, but that the following had been authorised under delegation:

- 2nd July 2017 – Race for Life (subject to up-to-date public liability insurance and risk assessment). Organiser: Cancer Research UK

RESOLVED: That the delegated decisions be noted.

(NC)

RP108 CLERK'S REPORT AND BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT

The Trust's draft annual accounts and report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised that this would need committee approval before submission to the Charity Commission.

The budget monitoring report for August had also been tabled prior to the meeting. The Clerk reported that he had no issues of concern to raise.

The Clerk further reported on the following maintenance issues:

- **Pirate Ship** – Quotes for the cost of replacement were significant and members might want to consider an alternative installation. Options would be reported back to the next meeting.
- **Sandpit** – Sand was being taken from the sandpit and redistributed elsewhere in the play area, and the cost of refilling was estimated at £600 to £700. This would be monitored and if no solution could be found members would be asked to consider whether to maintain provision.
- **Adult gym** – A quote for repair of the skiing equipment had been received and this would proceed.
- **Boundary protection** – Two drop posts remained to be installed and a request from the Bowls Club to move two logs to allow a greater turning circle was being considered.
- **Water play** – The new equipment had been installed.
- **Football pitches** – These were now in use by Devon Youth League teams.

Mr R Knight asked that his apologies for the previous meeting be noted. He also reported problems with parking at the skate park despite the mound that had been installed, and tree roots affecting the cycle path. He suggested that the committee should consider the employment of a park keeper.

RESOLVED: That the annual accounts and report for 2015/16 be approved. (NC)

RESOLVED: That the budget monitoring report be noted. (NC)

RESOLVED: That the Clerks report on maintenance matters be noted. (NC)

Meeting closed 1.28pm

Chairman.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement

Technical Consultation Paper – response by Devon Association of Local Councils

Question 4: Do you agree that referendum principles should be extended to larger, higher-spending town and parish councils in 2017/18 as set out in paragraphs 3.3.3 to 3.3.4?

No – Although the number of “larger” councils is small, these will tend to be very active councils likely to be the main providers of local quality of life services in their area. Such active councils are being asked to think more and more about keeping people in their communities fit and healthy, and to encourage economic growth in their areas.

The whole basis for the concern about increased precepts needs careful thought, whether it is in relation to larger councils or the whole body of precepting authorities. In the last financial year all local councils have faced increased costs – the effect of withdrawal of localisation of council tax grant which in itself has led to a smaller tax base to support local council precepts – a factor recognised by government itself when doing the original consultation on this proposal; auto enrolment provisions being applied to small employers; national living wage increases; payment of business rates on assets taken on from principal authorities.

Question 5: Do you agree with the proposed approach to take account of the transfer of responsibilities to town and parish councils as outlined in paragraph 3.3.5?

No – because it is very hard to see how this can be workable. Although one major reason local councils are becoming more active is because of the withdrawal of services and disposal of assets by local authorities and other local bodies, it is not a straightforward, easy to measure process.

Services and assets are not necessarily transferred from the beginning of financial years; transfers are a matter of negotiations which may or may not be successful – local councils may have to budget on the basis of taking on a service but then find negotiations collapse – would a referendum be held retrospectively? What sort of evidence would a principal authority need to give of a transfer – when would it be given (bearing in mind the above point). Also many assets are transferred in need of renovation or remodelling to best serve local needs – is this work covered in the transfer value – even assets transferred for a nominal £1 can mean considerable capital investment to make them fit for purpose – will this be taken into account when allowing an increase in the precept – and if so – how.

Question 6: Do you agree with the suggestion that referendum principles may be extended to all local precepting authorities as set out in paragraph 3.3.6? If so what level of principle should be set?

No – this has to be completely disproportionate to any public benefit to be gained. There will need to be a system of monitoring about 9000 local precepting councils, and such systems always come at a cost. Any referendum being held – even if local people are very much in favour of the proposed project of the council – will be a great expense to small communities and thus to the public purse. In cash terms even a £5 increase to an average precept amount is a low figure to pay for a whole year’s local service provision. Local Councils give excellent value for money for citizens, especially as they often bring in added value through mobilisation of local good will and volunteering effort. This is often given by local councillors themselves who receive either no allowances or very small allowances which often do not cover the costs of being a councillor (printing paperwork, additional phone calls, travel around the parish etc).

Question 7: Do you have views on the practical implications of a possible extension of referendum principles to all local precepting authorities as set out in paragraph 3.3.7?

DALC believes that extending referendum principles to all precepting authorities undermines the positive effects of decision making and action being taken at local level. It is an active discouragement to growing capacity and capability to take on responsibilities for local communities, since with the best will in the world additional functions require a certain amount of additional resource. This may be just a matter of provision of a few more hours of work to the clerk and additional training, but this investment still needs to be made to maintain effective and efficient local organisations. Small councils are starting from a low financial base, so are just now putting in place effective precepting strategies to meet the needs of their communities.

As an example of the value of the work being done, Local councils are instrumental in looking after much valued and important open spaces. These spaces enable people of all ages to have access to healthy open air activities, and to community events and celebrations of all kinds. The value of social pride in place and being able to mix with other people is very great, and the lack of these opportunities comes at a social and financial cost.

Local councillors are prepared to work hard for their communities, using locally raised money to be spent in accordance with local wishes in the local area. With referendum principles in place many will feel there is little point in serving on a local council. Local projects more often than not require persistence to see through – national imposed financial constraints will mean many councillors will be reluctant to take on projects. The nation will then have lost a most valuable resource – local enthusiasm and harnessing of much voluntary effect – for minimal financial return when set against other local government or national government budgets.

Lesley Smith MBE – County secretary DALC