

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH MOLTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GARDEN ROOM, THE AMORY CENTRE, SOUTH MOLTON ON TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.00PM

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Present: In the Chair: Town Mayor Cllr S. Lock  
Cllr P. Bishop Cllr M. Bushell  
Cllr M. Cornelius Cllr J Footman  
Cllr R. Herniman Cllr P. Henderson  
Cllr Mrs. C. Lock Cllr. M Way  
Cllr. D. Worden

In Attendance: Mr. A. C. Coates – Town Clerk

1. **PRAYERS**

The meeting was opened in prayer by Rev. Grandey

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Peter Bishop to his first Town Council Meeting.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Town Council

25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes be approved. Cllr Bishop abstained as he was not present at that meeting.

6. **DCC TO REPORT TO MEMBERS**

On behalf of Cllr Yabsley, the Town Clerk informed Councillors that he had had a meeting with Richard Sables (DCC Highways) together with Cllr Yabsley discussing the following items:

1. Queen Street closure – to be progressed further by Cllr Yabsley.
2. Double Yellow Lines for the North Road/Parsonage Lane junction – Cllr Yabsley progressing this further
3. DCC to review the land area in North Road in front of the old Police Houses – Potential car parking area.
4. Puddle opposite Church Walk Steps – DCC have now said it may be possible to alleviate puddle.
5. Road closure in Exeter Road – Traffic order only put on the DCC traffic computer system at very late stage.
6. NDC to clear up mess on the first right hand bend on New Road after Poltimore Road.

7. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Richard Toller spoke about the Ukrainian family that has recently settled in South Molton and the sad news that the Grandfather had passed away within two weeks of entering the UK. The Grandfather had brought earth and some seeds from Ukraine and it was suggested that these be planted somewhere in South Molton as a tribute to the Grandfather. The Town Clerk said he would liaise regarding a suitable site and investigations into whether this is permissible.

8. **UPDATE ON SWIMMING POOL**

The Town Clerk reported to Councillors that very little progress had been made with 1610 and interested third parties, but that the valuation report for the Swimming Pool building should be completed within the week. The Town Clerk did say that the valuation of the building could be the financial hurdle of future negotiation. The Town Clerk also said that he would investigate the negotiations between 1610 and Torridge District Council to establish if there was any link that could be useful for South Molton Pool. It was generally agreed that at the moment there was very little that the Council could do to progress matters.

9. **UPDATE ON SKATE MOLTON AND YMCA**

The following report was read out by Cllr Footman:

The popularity of the Tuesday evening in the Pannier Market is growing fast. Skate Molton are now getting training support from SPACE Youth Service. Many families are present and it is growing as a community event with some parents discussing the possibility of providing hot meals for kids from Assembly rooms kitchen once a month on a Tuesday.

Skate Molton personnel have expressed regret that YMCA has continuously over time not responded to invitations to be involved jointly in activities for South Molton's young people, nor has anyone from YMCA shown interest in seeing what is going on on Tuesdays in the Pannier Market. Hence Skate Molton have reached out to SPACE Youth Service for guidance on youth work elements of their offering.

Both Skate Molton and several Town Councillors have expressed concern at the limitations and restrictions imposed by the strongly religious nature of South Molton YMCA. This was highlighted when YMCA published their advert for the new Youth Worker posts that the Town Council is sponsoring. YMCA Youth Workers must be "committed Christians" and the application form asks how often they attend church and for a reference from the applicant's pastor. Based on figures from the Evangelical Alliance, this excludes 90% of the population from applying. A meeting was held with YMCA representatives, Gareth Sorsby and someone introduced as "Sci" where they confirmed that the expectation of all staff in leadership roles (and they include Youth Worker as a leadership role) is that they are in daily communication with Jesus/God, asking His guidance on any decisions in their life. Many Councillors were hitherto unaware of this when the decision was made to work with YMCA for our Youth provision. Some Councillors question whether, with this limitation, YMCA will be able to recruit for and successfully carry out a secular Youth service that will meet the needs inclusively of ALL our town's youth. It may be too late now to rescind our decision to work with YMCA and to work with SPACE instead, but we need to remain watchful that our money is being put to use in a way that delivers the service that we need.

(I forwarded a sample SPACE service agreement to Andrew for cost comparison)

YMCA: some wider concerns expressed by South Molton residents. We already have anecdotal reports of proselytising at YMCA and of restrictions imposed on those wishing to use YMCA for community activities. YMCA report on their Facebook page about a religious youth activity, the Alpha course, but not on any other youth activity.

10. **REPRESENTATIVES TO REPORT ON MEETINGS ATTENDED**

- a. Cllr S Lock advised Councillors that the fencing around the pond in the Woodlands was not going very well and had not been completed. However, it was anticipated that the Probationers would start the fencing within the next couple of weeks.
- b. Cllr Worden read out the following report:  
The North Devon Full Council is meeting tomorrow evening and one of the items is to consider the car parking charges. Car parking charges were last increased throughout North Devon in May 2016. Since then the annual costs of running the car parks has risen by over £400,000. So the proposal is to put the charges up to be effective from 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023. For South Molton this would mean ...

The 50p an hour would increase to 60p

The all day charge would increase from £1.50 to £2.50

The coach park from £1.50 to £1.70 an hour

The all day coach park from £8.00 to £10.00.

South Molton Resident permit would increase from £72.50 to £100.00 for the year.

I am currently talking to officers about the practicality of having free car parking in the central car park at set times during Christmas week.

Last month I reported that the Home Office had told NDC that they weren't going to send any immigrants to Ilfracombe. However, as you will have heard they have taken over a large hotel in Ilfracombe and around 150 of those who came across the channel in small boats are now there. In addition under the dispersal scheme they are expecting North Devon to house another 66 and we have no guarantee that they won't take over another hotel without any consultation. We are extremely concerned that soon or later many of these will come to the Council and report that they are homeless and we won't be able to cope.

On a positive note we are starting to plant 20,000 plus trees in the Yeo Valley Woodland in Barnstaple on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> and have a series of events from 11.00 until 3.30 for families from all over the district to attend.

For information

On a sad note one of the Ukrainians in South Molton died earlier this month. Matt Bushell and I visited the family and their host. It is particularly disappointing as the Ukrainian concerned had only been in the country for a couple of weeks.

On a positive note some Ghanaians from our Sister City of Shama have obtained visas and hope to visit South Molton at some point in the next couple of months.

- c. Cllr Henderson had "Called in" the recent Baker Estates Planning Application.

**11. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT TO MEMBERS**

The Town Clerk advised the following:

- a) A quiet and warm space will be established in the Amory Centre Foyer
- b) The Town Council has applied for monies from DCC to repair paving slabs in the Town.
- c) Councillor Allowance monies have now been transferred for this year

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and staff for the successful recent Town events.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.21pm

Chairman.....

Date.....