

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH MOLTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GARDEN ROOM, THE AMORY CENTRE, SOUTH MOLTON ON TUESDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2022 AT 7.00PM

Present: In the Chair: Town Mayor Cllr S. Lock
 Cllr M. Bushell Cllr M. Cornelius
 Cllr J Footman Cllr R. Herniman
 Cllr P. Henderson Cllr M. Hulland
 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**

Cllr Kingdon.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Peter Bishop onto the Council as the new Councillor.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Town Council

27th September 2022

It was unanimously RESOLVED that these minutes be approved

6. **DCC TO REPORT TO MEMBERS**

Nothing to report as Cllr Yabsley was not present.

7. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Emily Abbott from Skate Molton thanked the Council for permitting Skate Molton to hold skating events on Tuesday evenings in the Pannier Market. She did mention that there had been some concern regarding the YMCA adverts for the new post of Youth Worker and that there had been no communication with the YMCA recently.

8. **NHS DENTIST CLOSURE**

It was unanimously RESOLVED that the Town Clerk writes to the Local North Devon MP and the Health Secretary regarding the difficulty in registering with an NHS Dentist in North Devon. Currently the NHS Dentist in South Molton has been closed until renovations on the building have been carried out.

9. **MOTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

- a) It was unanimously RESOLVED that the Town Clerk writes to North Devon Council requesting that they adopt the National Described Space Standards 2015 as part of their Planning system.
- b) It was unanimously RESOLVED that the Town Clerk writes to the Government expressing the need for more affordable housing in future Planning Developments.

10. REPRESENTATIVES TO REPORT ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a. Cllr S Lock mentioned the following about the Woodlands:
 - i. The Woodlands Committee have purchased a rubber dingy to assist in removing the parrotfeather from the pond.
 - ii. The fencing around the pond area will be commencing soon and the work will predominantly be carried out by the Probationers. Cllr S Lock expressed his thanks to the Probationers for all their help
- b. Cllr Worden read out the following report:

The reason I put this on the agenda was because of the comments on social media from many residents who are totally dismayed at the closure of the NHS Dentist in Duke Street. Many had not been notified of its closure until they went seeking treatment.

One emailed me the correspondence he eventually received.

Thank you for your e-mail and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding, this is due to us working through a high volume of email. I do understand the concern that you have expressed to us about dental services in South Molton.

The South Molton practice as you are aware, had to close temporarily to allow some essential building work start. An agreement was reached with our Barnstaple practice to allow a dentist to treat from South Molton there. Unfortunately, that dentist then left the business and the Barnstaple practice themselves have had clinicians move from NHS dentistry to Private dentistry. This has meant that the Barnstaple practice has had to suspend routine appointments under the NHS.

Recruiting an NHS clinician in the current climate is extremely challenging. We are very concerned about the lack of NHS dentists and are offering enhanced packages in many of our practices to attract NHS dentists, however, despite our best efforts, we have still not been able to secure any NHS dentists to your location.

As you may know via extensive recent media coverage, NHS dentistry is under severe pressure right now: more than 90% of dental practices nationwide are closed to new NHS patients, more than 3,500 dentists have given up NHS dentistry altogether since the pandemic, and 73% of clinicians are considering doing the same in the years ahead. We have seen these challenges first-hand at many dentist practices.

Barnstaple are able to triage you and try and book you an emergency appointment if you need urgent dental care. Alternatively, you may be able to be seen at either of these practices for routine care, however these appointments would be as a private patient.

Northam Dental Centre Bay View Road Northam EX39 1AY

Motions.

- a) Unless we have a SM Neighbourhood plan that adopts the suggested National Described Space Standards nothing will change. The reason being developers will continue to put in their plans, use the viability card and if NDC refuses the application will go to appeal. If the plans are sensible as far as the inspector is concerned then they will get planning permission and costs are likely to be

awarded against NDC. For example, NDC opposed the Yelland Power application and are facing a bill of over 100,000 for doing so. If we have a SM Neighbourhood Plan which has these standards in it, it would help defend a refusal at appeal. Bear in mind that it will have the effect of putting up house prices if they are larger which are already out of reach of many residents.

- b) NDC's policy is already that new housing should be 30% affordable. The problem is not the council but developers are able to say that the development will not be viable at 30% and although the District contest it by getting an Independent advice to check their figures we cannot do anything about it. We have been lobbying the Government direct and also through Team Devon to change the system but so far haven't been successful. As Tim Jones recently reported in the ND Gazette it appears that affordable housing is gradually disappearing and becoming a thing of the past. I suggest that the best way to progress this is for the Town Clerk to write to the Government expressing the need for more affordables and also asking for the resumption of money to be donated for Community Land Trusts.

South Molton in Bloom.

Andrew and I joined five ladies from the South Molton in Bloom committee at the South West in Bloom competition results. As you are no doubt aware we won as a town a GOLD award for our category and five businesses in town also won awards ranging from gold to bronze. Our Community Gardens also received outstanding again, the highest ward for Community Gardens and the wildlife meadow was categorized as thriving. The SMIB has been busy organizing events in order to buy winter bulbs. News from NDC.

North Devon was donated a tree from Buckingham Palace which was one of the 350 that were planted for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Lady Arran and I planted the Alder tree in Biclescombe Gardens, Ilfracombe this morning in memory of our late monarch. The Pannier Market in Barnstaple is currently closed and will reopen on November 9th. We have started preliminary work regarding the regeneration of the centre of Barnstaple as part of the High Streets for the Future and when we started sand blasting the paint it was found to have lead content. So that is currently being sorted out.

The Government wanted to take over the largest hotel in Ilfracombe for the immigrants who have crossed the channel illegally. That would have meant over 100 immigrants coming to Ilfracombe where the support services are extremely stretched and the 30 staff were being made redundant. NDC opposed this, although we understand immigrants have to go somewhere and the Government has changed it's mind. With the resignation of Cllr. David Luggar from NDC there will be a by-election for the Landkey Swimbridge Ward unless someone is elected unopposed or no one stands.

11. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

The Town Clerk advised the following:

- a) The Remembrance Service will be held on Sunday 13th November in the

Pannier Market and on 11th November there will be a service at the Memorial.

- b) The Firework Display will be held on Friday 4th November at 7.00pm.
- c) The Christmas Light Switch-on is on Friday 18th November at 7.00pm
- d) The Social Housing proposal will discussed by NDC on 7th November, after which more details of the funding will be available for Councillors to make a decision.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.01pm

Chairman.....

Date.....