

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Environment Committee

Monday 25th January 2021 at 7.00pm By Video Conference Call.

Present: Councillors:

Cllr L York (Chair), V Elkins, I Roome, R Knight, J Carter, M Lovering, A Rennles, R Mack, J Orange, J Coates (Vice-Chair) & G Marchewka.

Also in attendance:

Mr Robert Ward (Town Clerk),

S Petters (Assistant Town Clerk)

Cllr V Monk

Members of the Public:0

21. Apologies for absence

None received

22. Appointment of a Committee vice-chairman

Following the resignation from the committee by Cllr Slee the following nominations were made:

Cllr R Mack proposed that Cllr R Knight be elected. This proposal was seconded by Cllr J Carter

Cllr A Rennles proposed that Cllr J Coates be elected. This proposal was seconded by Cllr L York

- Cllr Knight 5 votes

- Cllr Coates 6 votes

23. Dispensations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs I Roome, M Lovering, L York, R Mack & J Orange as members of North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 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.

24. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2020, are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (NC)

25. Budget Monitoring Report

Councillors asked questions about nominal code 5577 Street Furniture – Benches & Bins to understand better the allocation of these funds.

The Town Clerk explained that the budget has been used to replace bins within the town but in consultation with North Devon Council who are responsible for emptying.

RESOLVED: To note the budget monitoring report (NC)

26. Allotment Report

- Security issues have been raised at several sites due to the condition of some of the boundary fences. Officers will be reviewing the condition of fences to plan repair works.
- Cllr Lovering said that Mill Road allotment seems to not have paths to all of the plots. The Town Clerk explained that the ridings (paths between plots) do not always get maintained correctly and sometimes get consumed into plots. Officers will investigate.
- Cllr Elkins pointed out that when Mill Road allotments were received from North Devon Council, they were not in good condition including the boundary fences.
- Plot inspections that are planned for February will probably now take place in April / May to allow tenants time to cultivate their plots. Plot holders who successfully appealed the decision to end their tenancies in October were given until June to improve their plots.
- Allotments Working Group has not met yet. Cllr Coates expressed an interest to join the group.

RESOLVED: To note the Allotment Report (NC)

27. Update from the Climate Emergency Working Group.

- The next meeting will be on Wednesday 24th February at 12.00 midday.
- The Action plan will be published on the new Town Council website and the plan is to start prioritising actions and decide on five to focus on initially.
- The Carbon Savvy Action Week is planned for 6th March, the Town Council may look to get involved.
- We will be responding to the Interim Devon Carbon Plan survey which is due in by 15th February.
- Cllr York and the Assistant Town Clerk attended the Devon Climate Emergency webinar.
- Cllr Rennles indicated that Fremington and other local Parish Councils have also declared a climate emergency and he is concerned that there will be duplication of efforts. Cllr Roome said he would raise this with DALC.

RESOLVED: To note the Allotment Report (NC)

28. Recommendation from the Town Council meeting 18th January to provide support to the group planning to relaunch Barnstaple in Bloom

- The group is in its infancy and establishing itself with a constitution, committee member and bank account.
- The consensus of the Environment Committee is that the group should be supported.

- The Town Council has been holding an earmarked reserve following a donation to support floral displays in the town. This can be used to support the group.
- The new group have been in contact with the Royal Horticultural Society and are will be working in line with sustainable practices with planting, the types of plant used to ensure that pollinators are supported, and water use minimised.
- Cllr York asked if the group could make a presentation to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: To invite the group to present to the next meeting and to make a commitment work alongside them to support their work.

29. An update on the provision of highway verge maintenance

The Town Clerk explained that at the Finance & General Purposes Committee 11th January 2021 the decision was taken to direct deliver the grass cutting of the highway verges.

As a result of the decision an additional Town Ranger has been appointed, taking the total to four.

The team will be developing new working practices over the coming season and it may be necessary to purchase additional equipment and machinery, decisions on what is needed will be taken as a better understanding of the extent of the work is developed.

RESOLVED: To note the update (NC).

Meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated: