



Minutes of Crediton Town Council's Council Affairs held on Tuesday, 29th September 2020 at 6.00pm, via Zoom

Present: Cllrs Miss J Harris (Chairman), Mrs Brookes-Hocking, Mr F Letch, Mr J Cairney, Mr J Ross, Mrs H Zorlu and Mrs L Martin

In Attendance: Mrs R Avery, Town Clerk

16 To receive and accept apologies

None received.

17 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Cairney and Letch declared that as a member of more than one authority, any views or opinions expressed at this meeting would be provisional and would not prejudice any views expressed at a meeting of another authority.

18 Public Question Time

No members of the public were present.

19 Order of Business

There were no changes.

20 Chairman's and Clerk's Announcements

There were no announcements.

21 Council Affairs Committee Minutes.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Council Affairs Committee meeting held on 23rd June 2020, as a correct record. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

22 To consider and agree the Website Accessibility Statement, report, and action plan.

A copy of the documents had been issued with the agenda. It was **resolved** to approve the Website Accessibility Statement, report, and action plan. (Proposed by Cllr Ross).

23 To consider and approve the following policies:

- Co-option Policy
- Protocol on Member/Officer relations
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- FOI Model Publication Scheme
- Scheme of Delegation
- Communications and Media Policy
- Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Safeguarding Policy
- Training and Development

- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Maternity, Adoption, Paternity Policy

A copy of the documents had been issued with the agenda. It was **resolved** to approve the policies. (Proposed by Cllr Ross).

24. To review and amend Standing Orders, for approval by Full Council.

A copy of the document had been issued with the agenda. Standing order 3s (voting by show of hands) was discussed. It was noted that councillors would prefer to vote using a paper ballot when co-opting new councillors, however a secret ballot was not acceptable. It was **resolved** that co-option votes would be undertaken by signed ballot, with votes being discounted if they are not signed appropriately. (Proposed by Cllr Letch).

25. To consider whether a policy for the community noticeboard is required.

It was agreed that town council staff are impartial when deciding whether notices should be added to the community noticeboard and it is appropriate for the council office to hold the key. It was **resolved** that the town council does not require a policy for the community noticeboard. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

26. To discuss the efficiency of the current Council committee structure and to consider a review.

Consideration was given to the current structure. Cllr Brookes-Hocking expressed concern that there is a lack of financial control and flexibility due to there not being a committee with delegated financial responsibility and Full Council meetings being held bi-monthly. Cllr Ross stated that he would support Full Council being reinstated to monthly meetings. It was **resolved** that the town clerk would undertake a review of the committee structure, for consideration at the next meeting. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

27. To consider a review of committee Terms of Reference, in line with a possible committee restructure.

It was **resolved** that the town clerk would undertake a review of the Terms of Reference, for consideration at the next meeting. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

28. To discuss the administration of the Climate Change and Sustainability Sub-Committee and to consider whether Town Council staff have the capacity to undertake the support work required.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking provided an overview on why the sub-committee should be a clerked committee of the council, allowing for it to be run in the context of the wider council and ensuring that the minute taking and running of the committee is undertaken to ensure that progress is made. Cllr Ross asked that it be turned into a committee, rather than a sub-committee. It was **resolved** that this would be reviewed alongside the committee restructure for consideration at the next meeting. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

29. To receive a verbal update on the Council's home working arrangements whilst the current COVID-19 restrictions are in place and to agree any actions.

It was noted that staff are in the office every day, but a degree of flexibility will be required to ensure that government guidance is adhered to.

30. To consider the purchase of additional computer equipment.

The town clerk outlined the requirement for two new laptops to enable staff members to work from home as required. It was **resolved** to purchase two new laptops. (Proposed by Cllr Letch). The town clerk advised that the office network is very slow and may require additional equipment or upgrades. It was **resolved** that the IT company would be requested to undertake a review of the network. (Proposed by Cllr Letch).

31. To receive a verbal report on the Local Council Award Scheme.

The town clerk advised that the current award is due for renewal, expiring in November. She would speak to DALC and NALC regarding an extension due to the change of clerk and Covid-19 situation. Cllr Brookes-Hocking had offered to support the clerk in updating some of the required documentation.

PART TWO

32. It is recommended that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items as it involves the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information.

It was **resolved** that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items as it involves the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information. (Proposed by Cllr Letch).

33. To consider and agree that the Town Clerk has successfully completed a probationary period of 14 weeks.

A copy of the report had been issued with the agenda. It was **resolved** that the report be approved, subject to amendments that there are no concerns, rather than no general concerns and that a further appraisal should take place by the end of the municipal year, not the end of this year. (Proposed by Cllr Letch).

It was **agreed** that a standing agenda item would be included to provide the town clerk with the opportunity to discuss concerns with the Council Affairs committee. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

34. To consider and amend, for approval by Full Council, the Staffing Review Report.

A copy of the report had been issued with the agenda. It was noted that the job description would be circulated to members. It was resolved to accept the report for approval by Full Council. (Proposed by Cllr Letch).

It was **agreed** that a standing agenda item would be included to provide the opportunity to discuss any staffing issues with the Council Affairs committee. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

35. Close.

The meeting was closed at 6.58pm.

SignedChairman

Dated.....