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BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Monday 24th July 2023 at 7.00 pm
The Guildhall, Butchers Row, Barnstaple

Present: Councillors:

Cllrs V Elkins, J Hunt, M Lovering, L York, P Leaver, A Shah, J Coates, J Orange, Fowler, I Williams, L Dawson, J Challis, C Brown, K Stevenson, C Horrell, K York and M Pullen

Also in attendance:

R Ward, Town Clerk

Inspector A Wills, Devon & Cornwall Police

Councillor C Leaver, Devon County Council

Members of the Public: 0

Apologies for absence:

Cllrs V Monk, J Phillips, S Jusef, T Clarkson, G Marchewka, G Kennedy and D Clayton

35 To receive and approve apologies for absence.

Apologies and reasons for absence were received and approved. (NC)

36 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests.

Cllrs J Hunt, M Lovering, L York, P Leaver, J Orange & K Stevenson 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.

37 Minutes of the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 19th June 2023, are approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

38 To receive reports (if any) from Devon County and North Devon District Councillors.

Councillors approved to bring this item forward to earlier in the meeting (NC).

Devon County Council

Cllr C Leaver

- The North Devon Link Centres consultation on whether to keep them open has been extended, still an opportunity to respond.
- Devolution deal for the greater Devon region which includes Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is progressing. The Government would prefer an elected Mayor, but this is not the local choice and may mean less funds being allocated.

- The Highways & Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) meets three times a year and considers parking restrictions and other traffic matters. If there are proposals required for Barnstaple it is important to get them in as it can take up to three years for them to be implemented.

North Devon Council

No reports received.

39

Mayor's Announcements.

The Mayor reported the following:

- Tim Steer, Town Centre Ranger and local rail campaigner has been awarded the Best Campaigner and best Social Media awards the Railfuture Rail User National Awards at the University of London, earlier this month.
- At the same ceremony Devon County Council also received a special award for rail development and public transport.

Attended the Barnstaple Regeneration Board last week, the following was discussed:

- The E-Scooter scheme will be receiving upgraded scooters.
- The Pannier Market will be reopening on 1st August, the Guildhall end, the theatre end is due to open mid September.
- The Pannier Market fanlight window is being used as the new logo.
- DCC will be undertaking a consultation for works to change the Longbridge Seven Brethren junction, significantly reducing the number of pedestrian crossings, works proposed to take place February / March 2024. To be funded through S106 funds.
- Also proposed is a widening of the Long Bridge to provide a new pedestrian / cycle lane. This proposal is still at the early design stage and has not yet been costed.
- Petroc College is moving its sports department to the new Tarka Leisure Centre.

Mayoral Engagements:

- Pathway's Pride Festival
- Armed Forces Day event in Rock Park
- Torrington Civic Service
- Warrens Bakery new store opening (Deputy Mayor)
- Bideford Mayor's Regatta Reception
- Barnstaple in Bloom Judging Day
- Holsworthy's Pretty Maid Ceremony Luncheon (Deputy Mayor)
- Exeter's Historic Lammas Fair

- The Mole Resort Launch Event
- NHS 75th Birthday Tree planting (Deputy Mayor)

Diary Dates:

- Councillors Surgeries in The Shambles 2nd August.
- Barnstaple Fair Proclamation, 13th September.
- Charity Quiz Night, 11th October
- The Really Big Quiz, 15th November

40 To receive a report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Inspector A Wills provided his report in advance of the meeting (attached)

He also reported:

- He has made application to the Proceeds of Crime fund to support two local charities, Barnstaple in Bloom and the Veterans Charity.
- He will be attending the Barnstaple Street Cleanliness project meeting this coming Wednesday.

Cllr Questions:

Cllr L Dawson - Recent reports of graffiti on local roads, what is happening?

Insp AW – this can be reported to the Police but for any action to be taken witnesses and evidence are needed.

Cllr C Brown – Has there recently been more instances of suicide attempts on the Taw Bridge.

Insp AW – not recently and there is question as to whether the event are suicide or cries for help, particularly when it is the same person on multiple occasions.

Cllr I Williams – it's good to see a second month of reduction in crime figures, thank you.

Insp AW – there are a significant number of people involved in achieving this including the Town Council, also the Safer Streets funding and the Street Marshalls, the uplift in Police Neighbourhood team. The acknowledgement is much appreciated.

Cllr A Shah – Thank you for the sensitivity and discretion in which the community centre offences were handled.

Councillors thanked Inspector Wills for his report.

41 To receive and adopt the minutes of committees and the resolutions contained therein as shown below, and to consider any questions on reports contained in the minutes of committees, asked by members of the Council in accordance Standing Order 24:

The minutes and resolutions of the following committee meetings were received and considered and it was resolved to adopt them en-bloc (NC)

Committee	Date
Community Development Committee	1 st June 2023
Staffing Committee	12 th June 2023
Finance & General Purposes Committee	12 th June 2023
Planning & Transportation	15 th June 2023
Environment Committee	10 th July 2023

42 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Rock Park Trust Committee of 10th July 2023

The minutes and resolutions of the Rock Park Trust Committee meeting of 10th June 2023 were received and considered and it was resolved to adopt them (NC).

43 To consider the appointment of a representative to Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon

The Mayor Cllr L York has been attending Age Concern committee meetings but had not been formally appointed by the Town Council as representative.

A request for nominations for a Town Council representative to Age Concern Barnstaple & North Devon CIO was taken Cllrs L York and J Challis both put themselves forward.

Cllr J Coates took the Chair for the vote, vote received:

Cllr L York 11
 Cllr J Challis 5
 Abs 1

Cllr York is appointed and it was requested that the Town Clerk contact Age Concern to ask if they would consider a second representative.

44 To consider reports (if any) from Town Council representatives to outside bodies and determine any actions arising.

Cllr L Dawson reported that he has been invited to the next meeting of the ND Archaeological Society and to two digs.

Cllr C Brown reported that he has been invited to the next meeting of the Tarka Rail Association.

Cllr L York informed the Council that the next NDVS Volunteer Awards ceremony will take place on 9th November.

45 Great Western Railway consultation on the proposed closure of

Ticket Offices

Cllr C Brown proposed that the previously circulated letter to Great Western Railway be accepted as the Town Council response to the consultation (copy attached) (NC).

46 Town Council Vision and Strategy

RESOLVED: To appoint a working group to consider and develop a Barnstaple Town Council vision and Strategic Plan, the following Councillors put themselves forwards:

P Leaver, M Pullen, A Shah, I Williams, J Coates, L Dawson, M Fowler, C Brown, K Stevenson, J Hunt, L York & J Phillips (in his absence).

47 Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk reported:

Devon County Council have a proposal for remodelling the Seven Brethren Longbridge Junction, it will:

- Reduce the amount of pedestrian crossing points.
- Change the traffic lanes to simplify vehicle movements.
- Consultation in the autumn
- Funded through S106

Pannier Market

- The Guildhall end reopens next week.
- The Guildhall Arches is closed due to being rewired today and tomorrow.

Historic England Architect visit to Guildhall

- Heritage at Risk Register.
- Potential access to funds
- Condition survey
- Possible link to FHSF funds for exterior redecoration.

Cultural Development Fund – a three year project to provide a collaborate approach to cultural activity in Barnstaple, the project includes:

- A fund of approximately £3M has been awarded through the Arts Council.
- A significant part of the project is renovation of part of the Bridge Chambers by 2026
- Also included is a contribution to the 36/37 Boutport St development that NDC are delivering as part of the Future High Street Fund project.
- Community Development Project
- Festivals and Community Engagement
- Wayfinding, trails and Public Art.

A Boards and Street licences.

Assistant Town Clerk Mr N Hampson updated the Town Council on a project he has been involved in, over the last couple of weeks, working

with Devon County Council and North Devon Council to help manage A-Boards and Street Licences in the town centre.

It had become clear that a significant number of businesses have been putting out A-Boards, tables and chairs and other obstructions within the town centre and not been complying with the relevant legislation and causing significant obstruction.

Following discussions with the two principal authorities the decision was taken to delegate some of the powers to the Town Council and Mr Hampson has been approaching the businesses not complying with the legislation.

The outcome has been a significant decrease in the number of obstructions in the town centre and an awareness by businesses of their obligations, there have not yet been the need to remove any of the obstructions and if this does happen it is likely that the principal authority action this.

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk for their reports.

Meeting closed at 8.13 pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated:

Minute Item 40

Barnstaple Sector Police report
Barnstaple Town Council Meeting
Monday 24th July 2023

Dear Councillors,

During the past rolling monthly period 24/06/2023 – 23/07/2023 overall incident demand reported into the force are as below:

Neighbourhood	Incidents 24/06/2023 to 23/07/2023	Incidents 24/06/2022 to 23/07/2022	% Change	Pop.	Incidents per 1000 pop.
Total - Barnstaple Sector	498	547	-9.0%	47678	10.4
Barnstaple Central Town (North & West Devon)	130	155	-16.1%	5100	25.5
Roundswell, Tawstock & Longbridge (North & West Devon)	95	86	10.5%	8542	11.1
Barnstaple Newport (North & West Devon)	59	49	20.4%	4580	12.9
Pilton, Bratton Fleming & Goodleigh (North & West Devon)	57	75	-24.0%	6865	8.3
Instow, Fremington & Bickington (North & West Devon)	56	40	40.0%	9043	6.2
Bishops Tawton, Landkey, Swimbridge & Whiddon Valley (North & West Devon)	44	57	-22.8%	7293	6.0

Gorwell & Fort Hill, Frankmarsh & St Georges (North & West Devon)	35	61	-42.6%	4449	7.9
Barnstaple Forches (North & West Devon)	22	24	-8.3%	1806	12.2

This data demonstrates a 9.0% overall year on year fall in reported demand across the sector, as well as in 5 of the 8 Neighbourhoods. There have been increases in 3 neighbourhoods. These are predominantly residential areas, and having reviewed the demand there are few trends of series with the exception of a number of neighbourly and domestic disputes which

The trends around incidents defined as antisocial behaviour, being a key driver of the feeling to safety in our community, are as follows:

Neighbourhood	Incidents	Incidents	% Change	Pop.	Incidents per 1000 pop.
	24/06/2023 to 23/07/2023	24/06/2022 to 23/07/2022			
Total - Barnstaple Sector	57	81	-29.6%	47481	1.2
Barnstaple Central Town (North & West Devon)	24	26	-7.7%	5100	4.7
Roundswell, Tawstock & Longbridge (North & West Devon)	10	20	-50.0%	8542	1.2
Barnstaple Newport (North & West Devon)	8	6	33.3%	4580	1.7
Pilton, Bratton Fleming & Goodleigh (North & West Devon)	5	8	-37.5%	6668	0.7

Bishops Tawton, Landkey, Swimbridge & Whiddon Valley (North & West Devon)	5	4	25.0%	7293	0.7
Instow, Fremington & Bickington (North & West Devon)	3	7	-57.1%	9043	0.3
Barnstaple Forches (North & West Devon)	2	5	-60.0%	1806	1.1
Gorwell & Fort Hill, Frankmarsh & St Georges (North & West Devon)	0	5	-100.0%	4449	0.0

Overall, a 29.6% decrease in reported ASB incidents in a marked and impressive change. Whilst this data only records incidents which were successfully reported to police, there are also some significant increases to the same measures recorded elsewhere in the force, whilst using the same contact services.

It's the Barnstaple Pride parade this Saturday, and our officers will be present to ensure it passes well.

I plan to be in attendance at the meeting and will be able to respond to any questions there and thereafter.

Kind regards,

Andy



Minute Item 45

Barnstaple Town Council

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Mr Robert Ward, Town Clerk

Great Western Railway Ticket Office Consultation
Transport Focus
PO Box 5594
Southend on Sea
SS1 9PZ

Via TicketOffice.GWR@transportfocus.org.uk

25th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Consultation Closure of Barnstaple Railway Station Ticket Office

Barnstaple Town Council objects in the strongest terms to the proposed loss of ticket office facilities at Barnstaple station. Our objections are based on the grounds of equality of service, environmental justice and the impact on the economic prosperity of Barnstaple and northern Devon.

Equality of service

Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines or have the means to book a ticket in advance. People with common disabilities such as dyslexia or colour blindness can find ticket machines almost impossible to use.

People with a visual impairment or other disability often need assistance in booking and planning journeys across the network. A staffed ticket office is a recognisable place to get that help and support, disabled travellers know that they can trust that face to face contact. It's next to useless for a visually impaired traveller to know that a member of staff may be floating around the station if they can't find them. As one visually impaired regular traveller has told us "It feels like the safety net is being removed".

In recent decades, so much has been done to create a more inclusive society. Closure of the ticket office will impact on the independence of a huge number of disabled people. It feels like a step backwards.

Environmental justice

Inevitably, cuts of this kind affect those least able to adjust to the changes and least likely to have their voices heard. Here in Barnstaple, we have three of the four most deprived wards in Devon. More than a quarter of our households have no access to a car. So many of our residents rely on public transport in order to be able to access jobs, education and health services in Exeter.

Currently nearly half of the tickets bought for train journeys from Barnstaple are bought at the ticket office, a far higher proportion than from any other station in the south west. Just over a fifth of journeys are paid for by cash. Closure of the ticket office will penalise people who operate in the cash economy, predominantly older people, young people and people who are unable to access traditional bank accounts. People with poor literacy or IT skills will feel even more left behind in an increasingly IT dependant society.

Closure of the service will disproportionately affect those who are the poorest and the most marginalised. They are the most unlikely to be able to find another means of accessing education, work or services outside of North Devon if they feel the railway is not open to them.

Impact on economic prosperity

Barnstaple is the sub regional centre for northern Devon. The station is at the terminal of the line to Exeter and connects the wider northern Devon subregion to the rest of the UK rail network, North Devon Council and the Government are investing millions of pounds in our town centres and facilities for visitors to encourage sustainable tourism in our districts.

Within this context, closure of the only ticket office north of Crediton would go against the trend of improving access and services and seems like a retrograde step. It will be especially keenly felt by our community who have fought so hard to retain services and to rebuild our town centre after the ravages of COVID and the cost of living crisis.

In conclusion, the council believes that closure of the ticket offices will disadvantage many elderly and disabled people. It will disproportionately affect those who are the poorest and most marginalised in our society and will feel like a retrograde step in efforts to create economic prosperity in northern Devon. For those reasons, we urge you to retain a full range of ticket office services in Barnstaple.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Louisa York

Chairperson & Mayor Barnstaple Town Council

CC –

Mark Hopwood, Managing Director, Great Western Railway
Jane Jones, Head of Public Affairs, Great Western Railway