



# Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the **EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE OLD CONVENT, 8 BROAD STREET, OTTERY ST MARY** on **MONDAY, 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2020** at **10.30am**

**PRESENT:-** Cllr Giles (Mayor), Cllrs Faithfull, Copus, Lucas, Johns, Christine McIntyre CEO and Liz Graveney Deputy CEO

**APOLOGIES:-** Cllr Pratt, the Deputy Mayor, Cllrs Dobson, Grainger, Harding, Stewart and Pang

20/3/34

## **TO AGREE EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS AND A SCHEME OF DELEGATION DURING THE CORONAVIRUS TO ENSURE CONTINUITY OF THE COUNCIL FUNCTIONS (AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE)**

The CEO advised that the Scheme of Delegation was a document to be used by the Council now and in the future. However the Business Continuity Plan was specific to the Corona Virus and was designed to keep the Council functioning during the pandemic as far as practicable. It was understood that all councillors were 100% supportive of the Plan

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Business Continuity Plan (‘the Plan’) and the Scheme of Delegation subject to the following amendments/additions to be incorporated in the Plan. It was also noted that the General Power of Competence, which the Council had, allowed the Council *“the power to do anything that individuals generally may do as long as they do not break any other laws”*. It is a power of first resort.

**1. Para 17.1 Community Action Plan** – the amount of £5,000 to be increased to £10,000. All expenditure to be invoiced in the name of Ottery St Mary Town Council. Items required and agreed to be purchased from the fund initially, included an inkjet printer, coffee maker and pump action urn. The coffee maker would be in constant use by the volunteers and it was agreed that it had to be fairly substantial, thus a cost of up to £250 was agreed. Cllr Lucas advised that a number of elderly persons may not have available cash to purchase shopping etc so temporary loans may have to be provided. Tickety Boo was looking to provide meals for front line staff and Cllr Lucas would be having a meeting today with the proprietor to progress further. There may be some up front costs required

**2. Paras 7.1 and 7.3 Commercial Tenants in the Station and Council Offices** - It was agreed that a rent freeze would apply but this would be subject to review for the period they were unable to use their premises. All tenants would need to cease using their offices from 23<sup>rd</sup> March. This requirement would not apply to the Help Scheme because of its work in delivering the Community Action Plan

**3. Para 10.1 Office Cleaner** The first floor (kitchen/toilets/corridors) would no longer be used as the tenants would cease their occupancy from 23<sup>rd</sup> March. In addition the Council office would not be used after 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The ground floor, particularly the toilet would be in constant use from the volunteers. It was suggested that the cleaner (who was self employed) should come in twice a day, 7 days a week to keep the toilet area clean and to clean the interior and exterior door knobs. However the CEO believed that the cleaner may be at the ‘at risk’ category. The CEO would make enquiries. It was suggested that if the cleaner did not wish to undertake this work, then it would be necessary to look at other options ie another cleaner or volunteers to carry out this work

## **4. Other Items agreed to be incorporated in the Plan**

- a. To get the phone line in the meeting room upgraded to VOIP/fill fibre full speed broadband
- b. To provide an allowance for Council staff up to a max of £700 for software and IT equipment to enable them to work from home. Call divert would be operational so calls would be diverted to the CEO

- c. It was acknowledged that in both employment contracts, the Council would be required to reimburse staff for office sundries, office equipment, connection, rental or use of telephone line and Internet/broad band; an allowance for using home for business purposes and any increase in insurance premiums for homes being used for home working
- d. To arrange for 'gofers' to assist staff (eg placing notices on noticeboards, purchasing stationery etc) and IT support
- e. It was noted in the NALC guidelines that although it was not yet legal for meetings to be skyped, it was unlikely that councils would be open to legal challenge if they were to go ahead with this method of meetings. It was agreed that Skype should be set up by Al Findlay. Members of the public could be invited to join in the meetings. It was essential that there was one administrator and that the Protocol, which the CEO had e-mailed to all councillors, be followed

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**MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Planning

To ascertain from EDDC as to what action they are taking re new planning applications, Cllr Johns had asked for EDDC to put a hold on planning applications temporarily as it was likely some controversial applications would be submitted during this period. She was concerned that they would not be subjected to full scrutiny and could be passed with little opposition. However Cllr Faithfull advised that EDDC were taking the view that the planning system should continue regardless. Liz would provide all councillors with instructions on how to use EDDC's Planning Portal as there would now be a requirement for councillors to be more self sufficient. The suggested planning protocol in the CEO's Scheme of Delegation and duplicated in the Business Continuity Plan was unanimously agreed.

2. Insurance for Volunteers

It was noted that the Ottery Community Volunteers was not a group set up by the Council but a group which was working in conjunction with the Council, The question of public liability insurance was discussed and that steps be taken for all volunteers to be included under the Council's insurance policy. The CEO had already made this request to the Council's insurers and was waiting to hear. However as the Group was not a Council constituted group, it was likely the insurers would refuse. In this eventuality it was agreed that 'stand alone' insurance should be taken out and the premium paid from the Community Action Plan fund

3. The Museum

The CEO had been advised this morning that a recent survey had confirmed that asbestos was situated in a cupboard in the Museum which required removal. The CEO advised that as the Council was the landlord of the property it was a legal requirement that the Council should deal with it. It was **RESOLVED** that the CEO take the necessary steps for its removal.

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**IN CONCLUSION**

The Mayor advised that the cancellation of future meetings was likely to include the Annual May Town Council meeting and if so, then this would result in the delay of a new mayor being elected which he considered was not ideal. He also advised that in view of the circumstances, the agenda had not been followed to the letter but all the pertinent issues had been covered. It was the unanimous wish of councillors to place on record their great appreciation for all the expert work carried out by Chris and Liz in connection with the Coronavirus epidemic. Councillors also agreed to record their appreciation of the work carried out by all those helping deliver the Community Action Plan'

**The meeting ended at 11.30am**

<b>SIGNATURE OF MAYOR</b>	
<b>DATE OF SIGNATURE</b>	
<b>DATE/VENUE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	<b>TBA</b>