

SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Services Committee held in The Guildhall on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors: J Brady (Chairman), R Bickford, S Miller, M Parker, S Thorn, J Dent (Mayor, ex-officio voting), D Yates – Vice Chairman, (Deputy Mayor, ex-officio voting).

ALSO PRESENT: 2 Members of the public, J Virgo – Grounds and Premises Warden, R Lane, Town Clerk.

APOLOGIES: Councillors: G Challen, J Rance, G Taylor.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed those present of the actions required in the event of a fire or emergency.

25/17/18 **RECORDING OF MEETINGS – PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHAIRMAN IF YOU ARE INTENDING TO RECORD THIS MEETING**

26/17/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a. To receive any declarations from Members of any registerable (5A of the Code of Conduct) and/or non-registerable (5B) interests in matters to be considered at this meeting.
- b. To receive any declarations from Members of Matters of Public Interest regarding matters to be considered at this meeting.
- c. To consider dispensations required.

Councillor	Item	Pecuniary/Non-pecuniary	Reason
None			

27/17/18 To note an ongoing dispensation for Councillors Challen and Miller for Full Council and all associated Committees in relation to their roles as representatives of Saltash Town Council on the Chamber of Commerce.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

28/17/18 To note an ongoing dispensation for Councillor Rance to act as Chairman of the Saltash Team for Youth and commissioning of Youth Work.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

29/17/18

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public registered to ask questions on two agenda items.

Virtual War Memorial

The member of the public asked a question about the current status of the Virtual War Memorial S106 funding and stated that the Genealogist has requested the reasons for her withdrawal from the project be accurately recorded by the inclusion of her letter of withdrawal from the project in the minutes.

From:

Subject: Withdrawal from war memorial research project

Date: 24 July 2017 at 09:45:22 BST

To: g.taylor@saltash.gov.uk

Cc: j.dent@saltash.gov.uk, Townclerk<Townclerk@saltash.gov.uk>, Catherine Thomson <catherine.thomson@cornwall.gov.uk>

Dear Garry

Further to our conversation on 18.7.17, I am writing to confirm withdrawal from the war memorial research project and summarise reasons for making this difficult decision.

My key concern is that work of such gravity and local importance has become contentious and divisive. It is particularly disappointing that, with so much support from a pre-election Council and the wide range of Saltash residents I've discussed it with, the project should be subject to a recent motion to withdraw approval. This was based purely on alleged mistiming of the approval, went against expert advice on such reasoning, and gave rise to a suggestion the project doesn't justify the grant funding allocated to it. I am deeply saddened by the implication that £50 per name is too high a price to pay for researching and publishing the stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. It shows an alarming lack of respect for the fallen that I struggle to understand and would struggle to work with.

The motion was defeated by only a narrow majority which implies the project has a fair degree of opposition within the Council. It is difficult to fathom reasons for this given the work would deliver extensive information about the fallen of Saltash, provide a permanent registry of honour for their stories, and be an accolade to the Council that promoted it. The end-date was timed to coincide with the centenary of the end of WW1 and integrate with potential commemoration events, a further opportunity for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to civic duty and community engagement. There may be misunderstanding amongst some Councillors about these outputs, although the project proposal describes them in detail and I would have been happy to explain had I been asked. The significant research effort would have drawn on all available historical records and archive documents, and culminated in full life histories for an estimated 300 fallen.

The virtual memorial (possibly to be created by a recovering service person) would be a vehicle for publishing these life stories in the worldwide public domain, along with photographs, letters and other artefacts submitted by their families and the wider community (who would be encouraged to do so, as per the 'community involvement' element of the S106 that funded it). This would take knowledge of the fallen a great deal further than the simple list of names that predated the project.

It is important to bear in mind that I am not a professional genealogist but a local family researcher with 17 years experience who took on a one-off commemoration project because of a strong belief in remembrance. I gave up two unrelated part-time jobs to carry out the work and intended to put in voluntary time in addition to this. The costs involved would have been considerably higher had a full-time genealogist been used.

I did not approach STC about the work but was invited to do so after full Council resolved (on 5.1.17) to consider paid research into the Saltash fallen and to honour those 'whose names are not currently recorded on any war memorial.' I completed many voluntary hours assessing the scale and type of work required, prepared a fully costed proposal for this, identified funding options outside of precept, and wrote the S106 application that was approved unanimously by STC and then the S106 panel.

When an issue arose with professional indemnity for self-employed research (raised by me in good faith), a fixed-term employment contract was discussed as a possible solution to this and I hoped a Staffing Committee extraordinary meeting might be called to review the matter. Before this could happen, however, the motion to withdraw approval was submitted, and by members representing half of the Staffing Committee, including the Chair with a casting vote.

My concern is that these committee members will not support an extraordinary meeting to discuss the item and it will be left until the next ordinary meeting in mid-September. At best, if an employment contract is agreed at this time, the November 2018 end-date will be impossible to achieve. At worst, if an employment contract is refused, the project may be terminated and I will be left without a job.

The uncertainty surrounding the project, and the fact that many do not wish to see it move forward, has pushed me into making the difficult decision to withdraw, not least to mitigate potential loss of earnings.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind and objective support over the last few weeks and assure you that any misgivings I have about my short-lived involvement with STC are no reflection of your own dealings with me or the project. I am happy for this email to be circulated to Councillors (with my email address redacted) so that those who have supported the project are aware of my reasons for withdrawing from it.

Kind regards, Christine.

The Chairman stated that the S106 fund is currently being assessed and that her other related questions on the subject will be responded to in writing.

Councillor Yates arrived.

The Mayor gave a report on the current activity of the S106 fund status review being co-ordinated by the Community Network Manager.

The Town Clerk informed the member of the public in response to a question about funding applications that if any Councillor had an interest in an S106 funding application that they have a responsibility under the Code of Conduct to declare an interest.

Councillor Miller arrived.

Councillor Parker requested it be minuted that he has every respect for all those fallen in war and required an apology from the member of the public for a comment directed at him.

In response to a further question about the future of the memorial records the Chairman stated the recording of virtual and digital memorial records is being investigated by various national bodies and organisations and it was noted that the Cornwall Records Office could be a potential host.

Christmas Lights

The member of the public asked what support and how had the Chairman ensured value for money with regard to the procurement of Christmas lights this year.

The Chairman informed the member of public that financial regulations had been followed.

Councillor Parker and the Mayor reported on councillor team work and the process undertaken by the working party to select the lights.

30/17/18 FINANCE

- a. Current Committee budget statement.

It was **RESOLVED** to note. (Appendix A)

31/17/18 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS & SUB- COMMITTEES

- a. Green Infrastructure for Growth Working Party.
To note that the Working Party will be meeting with Lisa Pender – Green Infrastructure for Growth Project Officer, Cornwall Council on 26.09.2017.

The Chairman reported that it was necessary to re-schedule the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** the meeting be re-scheduled.

b. Waterside Management Sub-Committee.

Please see a copy of the minutes on STC website or request to see a copy at the Guildhall.

The minutes of the meeting of the Waterfront Management Sub-Committee held on 19th July 2017 and 16th August 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

32/17/18 GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARING – COUNCILLOR YATES

Appendix B

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Waterfront and Town Wardens will conduct regular checks on the condition of the grit bins to ensure their ongoing serviceability.
2. The Grounds and Premises Warden will manage location records and survey the bins for repair and replacement requirements.
3. Councillors will survey their wards and report any additional bin requirements to the Grounds and Premises Warden.

33/17/18 SURVEY OF FOOTPATHS AND FOOTWAYS TO IDENTIFY WEEDING AND ACCESS SHORTFALLS – COUNCILLOR YATES

Councillor Thorn informed members of difficulties being encountered by blind people with overgrowth on footpaths and footways that he had highlighted on social media requesting property and land owners maintain their overgrowth.

He further stated that he had received an unprecedented number of positive responses to his request on social media and has witnessed an improvement by property and land owners managing their overgrowth

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The STC letter to property and land owners regarding overgrowth onto footpaths and footways be circulated to all councillors.
2. The issue be highlighted on all STC social media and an article be included in the next issue of the Messenger.

34/17/18 REVIEW OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES COMMITMENTS AS A RESULT OF NEW PROPERTY AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTING FUNDING REQUIREMENTS INCLUDING:

- a. Waterfront and Waterside issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to note finance will follow function with regard to the devolution of facilities and land.

- b. Station Building and platform issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Chairman and Councillor Bickford are progressing the issues.

- c. To consider ownership and future responsibility of highway verges, roundabouts and open spaces – (Councillor Yates).

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Town Clerk will be reviewing all service contracts and STC responsibilities to ensure value for money prior to any new contract engagement or renewal before the setting of the precept.

35/17/18 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STAFF TRANSPORT – COUNCILLOR PARKER

Councillor Parker reported that a van had now been procured and a trailer will soon be in service.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

36/17/18 S106 FUNDING

- a. Virtual War Memorial – to receive a report from Councillor Taylor.

Members received the report and considered the item had been discussed sufficiently under public question time.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report. (Appendix C)

37/17/18 OTHER AREAS THAT THE SERVICES COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

The following items will be taken upon notification by members to the Chairman prior to the meeting with a short written report summary.

- a. Street furniture.

The Grounds and Premises Warden reported that works are ongoing by the Waterfront and Town Wardens and that the refurbishment works to the

Waterfront furniture had been completed with the town benches being scheduled for refurbishment next.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

b. Community toilet scheme.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors monitor usage levels in order to review the continued viability of the scheme at the next meeting.

c. Additional litter bins in outer areas.

It was **RESOLVED** the Grounds and Premises Warden will report any requirements.

d. Public toilets.

The Grounds and Premises Warden reported that the Waterfront and Bell Vue toilets are being subject to excessive levels of vandalism.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Mayor will issue a press release and article in the Messenger to highlight the issue.
2. The Grounds and Premises Warden will cost up works to make the toilets vandal proof reporting to the Property Maintenance and Marketing Sub Committee.
3. The Town Clerk will re-engage with Network Rail regarding proposed works to the Waterside toilets.

e. Bus shelters & stops.

No report.

f. Industrial estate issues.

No report.

g. Elwell Woods/Cornish Cross

No report.

h. Notice Boards

It was **RESOLVED** to note Councillor Yates is reviewing future requirements and replacements.

To resolve that Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press leave the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

39/17/18 AS REQUIRED OR IF NECESSARY

40/17/18 PUBLIC BODIES (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

To resolve that the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting.

41/17/18 URGENT NON-FINANCIAL MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

None.

42/17/18 PRESS RELEASES

It was **RESOLVED** the Mayor will issue a press release regarding vandalism to public toilets.

43/17/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

Rising at 8 p.m.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____