



# Brixham Town Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Evaluation Committee held via ZOOM on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 10am

<b>Present</b>	Cllrs P Addison, D Giles, S Laurie and A Massey
<b>In attendance</b>	Tracy Hallett, Town Clerk and Cllrs E Hoggart and S Leech

<b>20038</b>	<b>Apologies for absence through the Clerk</b> None. Cllrs Hoggart and Leech were substitutes for Cllrs Carr and Regan.
<b>20039</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b> None. The declarations book was available to sign.
<b>20040</b>	<b>To confirm and sign the minutes and confidential notes as a true record of the meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b> The minutes of 26.10.20 were <b>resolved</b> and signed as a correct record with the following amendments changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Addison had given his apologies</li><li>• The numbers were out of sequence</li><li>• The meeting location and time were incorrect</li></ul>
<b>20041</b>	<b>Council Committee Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Addison asked how any new co-opted Councillors were going to be invited to join any committees. He further asked for clarification of what is meant by a scheme of delegation.</li><li>• Cllr Massey suggested that Cllr Carr should be contacted to seek clarification if he is able to continue with some of his committee commitments.</li><li>• Cllr Hoggart advised that she had not received the draft Scheme of Delegation with the agenda pack.</li><li>• Cllr Giles suggested that there should be more regulation on how items are added to the agenda and suggested that the Chair of each committee should co-ordinate with the Committee Members to support the clerk of the committee.</li><li>• Cllr Leech felt that the committee structure was not clear and agreed with David. He also advised that he is unsure of the process of how to respond to complaints received direct from residents and felt that it would be helpful if the Chair of the Committee could take responsibility to respond to the emails with the support of Officers to ensure that the response is factual.</li><li>• Cllr Hoggart advised that she initiated this because she felt that the Officers were overwhelmed with meetings with poor Councillor attendance. The concept was to merge committees together so the Council could be more proactive. She advised that she felt that the Town Hall and Evaluation Committee should be merged into another Committee. Need to agree a broad structure and approach of dealing with major projects.</li></ul>

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the revised draft scheme following suggested changes made at the last Evaluation meeting. She advised that the Council is lacking in direction without an adopted Strategy Document and whilst focus has been on COVID, she hoped that with the adoption of the scheme will give direction and less conflicting messages from Councillors.

- Cllr Giles agreed with Cllr Hoggart that the biggest change would be the way in which the Council considered planning application but raised concern that the volume of work had not changed but decisions were being directed at a smaller number of Councillors.
- Cllr Hoggart suggested that the volume of items going to committee could be reduced to ensure the committee and Full Council meetings are focused on important issues. She suggested a forward planning agenda process to counteract which can be incorporate the strategy and recovery plan. She advised that she agreed with Cllr Haddock that the Council should consider a scrutiny type policy.
- Cllr Giles agreed with Cllr Hoggart with committee agendas being more focussed. He also advised that he agreed with the need for a Council Strategy, but acknowledged the community recovery plan covers elements of the strategy document.
- Cllr Leech agrees with the discussions, but feels that the Council needs to consider putting a traffic light system in place to ensure progress with the Councillors, staff and members of the public to understanding to progress and monitor the slippages.

A discussion took place on the failure of the Council to give clear direction for the Town Hall Regeneration with the result that each Councillor had a different understanding of what had been decided.

A discussion took place on the need to ensure that the Task and Finish Groups have a clear direction and the Town Council are strong to dissolve the groups when they are no longer required.

- Cllr Giles asked if there was mechanism to discuss the Town Emergency plan with the Brixham Stronger Together.
- Cllr Leech felt that this should be with Torbay Council and the Town Council should bind into their work.

A discussion took place on the need to ensure that Councillors take ownership of any proposals that they are making to Council.

Overview of the discussions:

- Reduce the number of Council meetings
- Committees to have a forward plan for agendas
- Traffic light system to show when actions should / have been carried out
- Rename working groups to task and finish groups
- Introduction of a statement of intent of how items can be added to agendas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scheme of Delegation to become a regular Full Council agenda item</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>resolved</b> to recommend the adoption of the scheme to Full Council.</p> <p><b>Planning policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Hoggart advised that the old process was not best use of Council time.</li> <li>• Cllr Massey advised that the planning application process had worked well during lockdown and agreed that this could work well going forward as part of the new scheme of delegation.</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>resolved</b> to recommend the adoption of the policy to Full Council.</p>
<p><b>20042</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Structure</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk reminded members of the staff structure. She reported that due to the number of conversations that had recently taken place at F&amp;GP within the budget discussions, she had taken the liberty of listing each staff member, what their job roles are, when they commenced at the Council, their payscale and the date of the last pay awarded by the Council. She reported how the salary budget is made up and whilst the Government were considering whether or not to freeze pay for public sector workers, there was still an unknown on possible changes to Employers National Insurance and Pension contributions. She urged for the Council to retain the 5% increase in the staff salaries budget.</p> <p>Cllr Leech raised concern that the Council had not considered the Town Clerks payscale since April 2016 and it was agreed that this should be discussed at the next Evaluation meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk further advised Councillors the staff salaries budget percentage comparison to the precept dating back to 2016/17. Councillors were advised that there had also been an increase in staff numbers, changes to SCP values due to National Employers decision and some staff hours have increased over that period of time.</p> <p>Cllr Hoggart raised concerns that the percentage is too high in comparison to the services offered by the Council and there was a need to balance this out.</p> <p>Cllr Massey raised concerns that no one would support the Council in its current budget format and suggested that the Council should look at staff hours because she would not vote for an increase more than Torbay Council are considering.</p> <p>Cllr Hoggart reiterated her comments from the F&amp;GP Committee that the Town Clerk should provide a document listing where staff are providing services for the Council.</p>

	<p>Cllr Leech stated that he was 100% behind staff and would be against reduction of staff hours and that the Council could not operate without staff. There is a need for the Council to have support from the staff.</p> <p>Cllr Addison advised that the Town Council is one of the lowest Town Councils in this area. The proportion of staff salaries will be high because of this. He said that he felt that the staff were good value for money and that the Council should be looking at increasing the precept based on the cost of living index.</p> <p>Cllr Laurie advised that Councillors know how hard the staff work, but residents may not necessarily understand this.</p> <p>Cllr Massey felt that the Council only offered three services and Torbay Council offer 100s of services and the staff salary percentage is less.</p> <p>Cllr Giles felt the staff did a good job but this is not something that can be proved on the street.</p> <p>Cllr Addison reminded Councillors that the actual costs were low in comparison to other Town Councils and Torbay Council. He stated that the Town Council were the sixth lowest precept in the South West in 2019/20 among Councils raising in excess of £100,000.</p> <p><i>Cllr Regan joined meeting.</i></p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that staff have had to adapt to big changes this year, predominantly working from home. The staff have, under unusual circumstances, adapted hugely because of the circumstances and taken on work that is above and beyond their roles. The Town Clerk suggested that the Council should be proud of the team they have because they all want to see new projects, want to achieve more as a Council. Any new equipment comes with suggestions of how the Council could offer a service to increase income.</p> <p>Cllr Hoggart stated that she believed it was naive to equate wanting to make sure the Council runs efficiently and uncomfortable to be interpreted as not supporting a hard working staff team.</p>
<p><b>20043</b></p>	<p><b>Budget</b>  <b>2020/21 Training and 2021/22 Training</b>  It was resolved to accept the recommendations in report 36-2016 r1 which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval is given to the Lengthman to undertake the chainsaw training</li> <li>• Approval is given for the Deputy Town Clerk to take the Community Governance course. The Town Clerk to write a report to Full Council for a proposal for a virement of funds to cover the first half of the course fees.</li> <li>• The 2021/22 Courses budget is increased £6,125.</li> </ul>
<p><b>20044</b></p>	<p><b>Policies</b>  It was <b>resolved</b> to adopt the Flexible Working Policy.</p>

20045	<b>External Meetings</b> <b>Report on recent meetings with Torbay Council</b> The Town Clerk reported on the number of meetings she is now attending.  <i>It was <b>resolved</b> to extend the meeting for a further 5 minutes</i>
20046	<b>Date of next meeting</b> It was agreed to hold a meeting in about one months' time.
20047	<b>Items for future agendas</b>

Item	Reason	Proposed by
Assets	Consideration of Assets of Community Value	

20048	<b>Part B</b> It was <b>resolved</b> to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting.
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The meeting closed at 12.02pm

Chairperson ..... Date.....