

# Seaton Valley Council

## A Community Council

Minutes of a Zoom On Line Meeting held on Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting started at 7.02 p.m.

<b>PRESENT:</b> Councilors:	S Stanners (Chair), S Dungworth, K. Collier, L Bowman, D Nesbitt, B Burt, A Stanners and S. Hartland
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b> S Potts – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer	
Two members of the public were present.	
<b>CO032/21</b>	<b>1. Apologies for absence</b> Cllr E Coulson had submitted her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.
<b>CO033/21</b>	<b>2. Disclosure of interests</b> There were no declarations of interest.
<b>CO034/21</b>	<b>3. Chair's Welcome and Civic Announcements</b> The Chair announced that Agenda item 7 – Vote of Thanks to Councilors would be moved to the end of the meeting  There were no further civic announcements.
<b>CO035/21</b>	<b>4. Public Question Time</b> A member of the public had submitted a question and was in attendance. Rob Curran raised concerns about the number of disabled bays that have been created on Astley Road as part of a larger parking space marking scheme in the same area.  The resident felt that the bays took up too much space and have resulted in some residents not being able to park near their own homes. The resident also said the disabled bays are hardly ever used, especially at night time. He hoped that the County Council could review the scheme and consider moving some bays to the opposite side of Astley Road and to near the Scotmid Co-Op on the Avenue Head roundabout. He also asked if it was possible to make the bays free for all to park after 6pm in the evening.  Councilors had a great deal of sympathy with the residents' views and said they would approach the County Council on his and other resident's behalf.  There were no further questions from members of the public.
<b>CO036/21</b>	<b>5. County Councillor Update</b> Cllr Dungworth provided a brief verbal report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCC's Member's Services Working Group has recently agreed a new Induction Pack for Members which has been sent to all candidates in the upcoming County Elections, and</li> <li>There would appear to be a large number of outstanding complaints for the incoming Standards Committee to deal with as these have been unable to be</li> </ul>

	concluded by the current administration.
<b>CO037/21</b>	<p><b>6. Minutes of the Council's last Meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Council's meeting held on 24 March 2021 were agreed and accepted as a true record of that meeting with the exception on Minute No CO27/21 where it was agreed to add the following paragraph to the end of that minute – 'Additionally, Councillor Dungworth suggested that we use the experience of continuing to deliver Council Services during the pandemic to develop a series of actions/procedures to mitigate the risk of facing a further pandemic like event in the future i.e. plan for Business as Usual as far as practicable'.</p> <p>With regard to Minute No. CO23/21 The Clerk reported that he had just received word back from the Independent Examiner that apart from a few minor amendments the Council's Neighbourhood Plan is now just about ready to go out to referendum.</p>
<b>CO038/21</b>	<p><b>7. Internal Auditors Report and Summary of Findings 2020/21</b></p> <p>The Clerk spoke to the Internal Auditors report and firstly gave his personal thanks to Mr Ainsworth for continuing to carry out his audit work in difficult circumstances. The auditor is generally happy with the systems and a procedure operated by the Council and has signed off the Internal Audit Section of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return.</p> <p>Mr Ainsworth drew attention to a minor breach in the Council's Financial Regulations whereby officers use local preferred contractors for certain works to standardise the quality of works/equipment and/or for works where it is difficult to get more than one supplier to quote. He asked that such instances be reported to Council as and when they occur.</p> <p>In reviewing the Internal Auditors report and the accompanying appendix detailing the Audit Work Carried Out by Mr Ainsworth, Council <b>RESOLVED TO: receive and note the content of the Internal auditors report.</b></p>
<b>CO039/21</b>	<p><b>8. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21</b></p> <p>In presenting his report the Clerk drew attention to the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the accompanying Annual Governance and Accountability Return which contains a number of statements about the controls the Council has in place to ensure that it has a sound system of internal control. The Clerk reminded Councillors that both they and the Clerk are jointly responsible for signing off this statement.</p> <p>In receiving the Clerks report, Council <b>RESOLVED TO:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note the contents of the Annual Internal Audit Report included at page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return attached at Appendix 3A.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approve the Annual Governance Statement included as Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return attached at Appendix 3A, and</b></li> <li>• <b>Approve the Accounting Statements included as Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return attached at Appendix 3A.</b></li> </ul>
<b>CO040/21</b>	<b>9. Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2021</b>

	Council agreed to receive the report, and noted that the Council's bank accounts had been successfully reconciled to its financial records.												
<b>CO041/21</b>	<p><b>10. Budgetary Control Update</b></p> <p>In presenting his report the Clerk said that the projected underspend on this year's accounts was likely to be in the region of about £10,000 after adjusting for required budget carry forwards, which is a little bit less than previous estimates. The Clerk said that he was very happy with this level of variance on a gross budget of over £600,000.</p> <p>His report identified the main reasons for the under spend, all of which had been previously drawn to Council's attention. The Council's overall reserves stand at £236,000, £90,000 of which is the agreed minimum reserve level. The balance is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgets carried forward to 2021/22 - £56,000</li> <li>• Earmarked Reserves £66,000</li> <li>• Unallocated Reserves - £24,000</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED: to note the budgetary control position presented in the Clerks' report and agree to carry forward the budgets identified at paragraph 4 of the Clerk's report.</b></p>												
<b>CO042/21</b>	<p><b>11. Vote of Thanks</b></p> <p>The Chair introduced this item and immediately thanked all Councilors for their work over the last 4 years; he particularly thanked those Councilors who are not standing for reelection: Cllr Barbara Burt (8 years of service with the Council), Cllr Simon Hartland (5 years of service) and Cllr Dan Nesbitt (4 years of service). He went on to wish all those who are standing for reelection best wishes for the forthcoming election on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</p> <p>Cllr Dungworth responded on behalf of the Council and in turn thanked the Chair, Cllr Stephen Stanners for all of his hard work over the last six years. Cllr Stanners has moved out of the area and is not standing for reelection either.</p> <p>The discussion ended with all Councilors agreeing that Councilors and staff had worked very well together over the last four years and delivered a variety of exiting projects and initiatives.</p>												
<b>CO043/21</b>	<p><b>12. Dates of Future Scheduled Meetings</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2020</th> <th>Committee/Council</th> <th>Time</th> <th>Venue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wednesday 19 May</td> <td>Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting</td> <td>6.30pm</td> <td>To be agreed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 28 July</td> <td>Full Council Meeting</td> <td>7.00pm</td> <td>To be agreed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In discussing the dates for future meetings the Chair informed the meeting that the legal challenge to allow virtual meetings to continue after the 7<sup>th</sup> May had been defeated. At the time of writing these minutes, therefore, it would appear that the Council will be required to hold a physical meeting for its Annual Meeting on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. In the meantime the Chair asked the Clerk to respond to a consultation paper that is soon to be released on the future role of virtual meetings in local democracy – the Chair asked the Clerk to relate the Council's positive experience of such meetings.</p>	2020	Committee/Council	Time	Venue	Wednesday 19 May	Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting	6.30pm	To be agreed	Wednesday 28 July	Full Council Meeting	7.00pm	To be agreed
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There being no other business on the Agenda the meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed by the Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_