

# NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk:  
Mrs R Rice

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EX20 2EP  
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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council at the Town Hall on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

Present: Cllr Mrs C Burrow Cllr K Hodge  
Cllr Mrs G Hoggins Cllr N Morgan (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs J Morgan Cllr I MacLeod  
Cllrs Mrs A Ponsford Cllrs Mrs D Rice  
Cllr Mrs J Rosser

Members of the public were present.

## **AGENDA**

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr. Dr. P Brickley.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr I MacLeod declared an interest in Planning Application 02914/2012.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**  
The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Council Offices on 17<sup>th</sup> July 201, previously circulated to all Councillors, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
4. Sgt. Corrine Sargent and PCSO Coleman from the Devon and Cornwall Police introduced themselves and asked if any members of the public had any particular concerns; the question of parking on road junctions was raised. It was pointed out that problems of this nature are the responsibility of the Civil Enforcement Officers from WDBC. The Police and Civil Enforcement Officers were working together to carry out target patrols, but sometimes this was difficult due to shift working patterns. Barton Street and Butts Way, as well as parking outside of the Spar Shop were particular problems. The question of whether parking within 10m of a junction was raised. It was pointed out that it was an offence to park within 10m of a junction if it causes an obstruction. Cllr N Morgan raised a question regarding crime figures that had been presented to the Parish Links Committee; 75% increase in crime, which he felt was due to the reduction in police patrols in rural areas. Sgt. Sargent replied that her beat area was large and the priority for patrols is towns, sometimes staff from Okehampton and Tavistock are called to other areas, but she made assurances that should a problem arise in North Tawton that staff would be dropped back. Cllr N Morgan asked Sgt. Sargent to pass on his concerns to her superiors. PCSO Coleman said that during the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012 there had been 19 crimes recorded in North Tawton. Three of these crimes related to matters of North Tawton Town Council. Restorative Justice Procedures had been carried out and three letters had been received by the Town Council, including one with a payment for the damage caused. Others crimes in North Tawton included, car theft, burglaries, and one harassment. PCSO Coleman said she would forward the

crime data for the previous year for comparison. One member of the public asked if there was a drug problem in North Tawton. PCSO Coleman said she was not aware of any drug problems in the Town but asked if any members of the public were concerned they should contact her. The Clerk has contact details.

The Chairman thanked Sgt. Sargeant and PCSO Coleman for attending the meeting and answering questions. Sgt. Sargeant and PCSO Coleman then left the meeting.

5. Richard Sheard, Chief Executive, West Devon Borough Council introduced himself and said he was impressed with the turnout of members of the public. He came to a meeting in 2011 when he was relatively new to the role of Chief Executive at West Devon. He was still enjoying the role, which has involved tremendous change in all areas of work at West Devon and South Hams. He said he was going to talk on three topics.
  1. Localism Act
  2. Changes in Welfare
  3. Finances

#### Localism Act

Richard Sheard said that there has been a lot of talking about this new Act for a long time, now it has become legislation. WDBC are keen to comply and use the act in a positive way. If the Town Council wants more influence in services, like road sweeping then precept would be increased. He envisaged over the next 4 – 5 years more services would be devolved to parishes. The Localism Act also includes planning powers, a new framework which is a lot more simpler and straightforward with a presumption to growth, but there would still be debate, Neighbourhood Planning is an opportunity for local people to develop their own Neighbourhood Plan, but it has to comply with the Core Strategy and development a Neighbourhood Plan is a very long process.

#### Changes in Welfare

Richard Sheard said it was a fundamental change – Universal Credit it to replace the current system. Council Tax Credits will change – they will be reduced if you are working age – retirement age will stay the same. These changes in the welfare system will mean a significant reduction in what people will get. WDBC are working hard and are concerned that some people will be really affected which will put more pressure on families. The new system is aimed to try and get people back into work, payments will be made monthly in arrears. The system is to be “digitalised”, you can only apply on line, and he was not sure how this will affect people who do not have access to the internet.

#### Finances

Richard Sheard explained that the past year has been difficult, but WDBC have managed well, there have not been any direct cuts to services, the cuts have been “back room”. This year he is more optimistic, there are proposed increases in planning fees, which will help to provide a better service. The Government has realised that to provide services in rural areas is more costly that in towns. Refuse collection in WDBC area is 60% more costly that in the Borough of Westminster. A 9% increase in Government grant may be

available, but this is only in the consultation process at present. WDBC's accounts were closed in June, with a reasonable underspend. He is quietly confident that when the budget is set for 2013/14 there would not be any cut in services.

Richard Sheard then answered questions from the public.

Would there be a rise in Council Tax? – cannot promise there will be no increase, but he assured the public that Councillors did not take setting the budget lightly; there were difficult debates before decisions are made.

What is the difference between affordable housing and social housing? Generally they are both the same, they are to meeting the needs of people that cannot meet the needs in the open market.

Comment from Highways Department that traffic congestion is a good thing, as it slows down the flow of vehicles? Richard Sheard could not answer for the Highways Department but he thought that the thinking of highways officers now is that traffic congestion is another form of traffic calming, but without the speed humps. Richard Sheard said he was well aware of the concerns of people in North Tawton about congestion and housing. He would speak to DCC about the Bridge at the bottom of Fore Street.

Questions regarding planning application Land off Barkers Way, potential risk of flooding, highways issues, applications refused in the past, exception site, affordable homes available in Okehampton – why is WDBC even consider this application? Richard Sheard explained that all applications submitted have to be considered. This will be a committee decision, decided by elected councillors on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012. All the consultations have been carried out, everything has been considered and a committee report will be presented to Councillors. WDBC key priority is affordable housing. If approved the planning permission will include numerous conditions. The decision will be made by Councillors and he appreciated it was finally balanced.

The Chairman thanked Richard for attending the meeting and for answer the questions raised.

### **Open Forum**

Ms I Wareing spoke on behalf of North Tawton Women's Institute. Ms Wareing asked the following questions:

In 2008 there is clear evidence that Dr Downey was given approval from the Devon Primary Care Trust for the funding of new premises and land in connection with the North Tawton Medical Practice.

- Q.1(a) Was the North Tawton Town Council aware of this at that time?
- Q.1(b) Could North Tawton Council clarify their involvement in this matter?
- Q.1(c) Why was the community not informed of this issue?

The approval of current funding from the NHS Devon (Plymouth and Torbay Cluster Premises Group) to Wallingbrook has been decided by Wallingbrook to update and modify the interior of the present premises.

Q.2(a) Should the use of this funding have been subject to community debate prior to this decision being made?

Cllrs Mrs G Hoggins, being Chairman of the Town Council in 2008 answered questions:

“Mrs Downie has clarified the situation for us today.

In 2007 she made an application to the P.C.T. for funding for land purchase and new building. In 2008 approval was given.

The approval of funding however not a “blank cheque” is it is actually the agreement to pay a percentage of the mortgage which the doctors will need to secure to go ahead with the scheme.

To afford the mortgage (probably for 25 years) they needed to find a partner for the practice, but this did not happen. Therefore the project was abandoned.

Land Search – North Tawton Town Council was not involved in a search for land as a site for new premises. Mrs Downie said she had spoken to a planning officer at WDBC and that she and Doctor Downie had made personal approaches to landowners by speaking to them.

So I repeat North Tawton Town Council was not involved and was not aware of the situation in 2008, and if it had been, the Councillors would have done everything within their powers to help to bring a much needed new doctor’s premises into the town for the residents of North Tawton.

I hope that answers your questions”.

In relation to Q.2(a) it was pointed out that funding from the NHS Devon (Plymouth and Torbay Cluster Premises Group) is a matter for them and the Town Council were not consulted.

## **6. Updates**

6.1 The Chairman to update the Council on the following issues  
West Devon Connect would be visiting North Tawton on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August 10.00 am – 1.00 pm. Members of the public were urged to attend. West Devon Connect was a useful service and North Tawton is the only larger parish in West Devon that does not have regular visits, this is due to the fact that not many people were attending;

Dog fouling – PCSO’s and WDBC Monitoring Officers were now able to enforcement officers with regard dog fouling together with the Dog Warden.

6.2 Cllr Mrs J Rosser updated the Council and explained the role of the Denbrook Community Council. RES are intending on submitting and application to vary the noise condition. It is RES’s intention to commence work on site at the beginning of 2013.

6.3 Cllr I MacLeod updated the Council on the Patients Participation Group for Wallingbrook Health Group. Suggestion boxes had been placed in the Chemist shop and the Surgery. Cllr I MacLeod urged people if they had any concerns they should use the suggestion boxes.

**7. Ongoing issues**

The 'Action Log' was updated:

Barton Street Lights – the Clerk was requested to contact Cllr McInnes again;  
Access gate to the infant play park – the Clerk was requested to contact Geoff Cawse;  
Trees in the churchyard – when a Tree Surgeon inspects the churchyard the roots to the trees on the banks coming up from the Lych Gate should be inspected;  
Working with neighbouring parishes – week spaying – Cllr N Morgan said that we should rethink this, as TAP funds were available;  
Stone walling opposite Gregory's Yard and Essington next to the Old Doctor's Surgery - – the Clerk was requested to contact DCC again.  
St John's Ambulance Defibrillator – this had been considered by the Wallingbrook PPG with reference to a site for a defibrillator, the Fire Station was suggested, the Town Council should consider the funding for a defibrillator.

**8. Co-Option of Councillors**

Two applications for the two vacancies for Councillors had been received: Mr S Blood and Mr S Whiteley.

It was therefore resolved by Co-Option that both Mr S Blood and Mr S Whiteley be co-opted as Councillors.

**9. North Tawton Community Games and Culture Week**

It was noted that as there were insufficient entries for the Photographic Class at the Marquee Event the cup was not presented. The Chairman also wished to congratulate the North Tawton Community Games and Culture Week committee on the excellent organisation and hard work they had put in to making the week a great success.

**10. Funeral Bier**

After discussion it was resolved that the Funeral Bier should be donated to Morwellham Quay Trust.

**11. Dog Waste Bin – Orchard Court/Gostwyck Close**

After discussion it was resolved not to purchase Dog Waste Bin to be sited in the Orchard Court/Gostwyck Close area.

**12. Golden Leaf Landscaping report for July**

The Golden Leaf Landscaping report for July was received. Cllr G Hoggins informed the Council that a recent meeting with Golden Leaf Landscaping had been held when various matters were brought to their attention.

**13. PLANNING MATTERS**

**To consider the planning applications received from West Devon Borough Council and to make recommendations.**

**13.1 02792/2012** Cider Cottage, Yeo Farm, Yeo Lane, North Tawton, EX20 2DD

Change of use of first floor garage level to form bedrooms and bathroom to serve existing holiday let.

After some discussion it was resolved to hold a Site Inspection on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012, followed by a Planning and Estates Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

**13.2 02862/2012**

Lower Yeo, Yeo Lane, North Tawton, EX20 2DD

Alterations to garage building to facilitate use of proposed mezzanine over garage as a studio.

After some discussion it was resolved to hold a Site Inspection on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012, followed by a Planning and Estates Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

**13.3 02875/2012**

The Anchorage, 33 High Street, North Tawton, EX20 2HG

Retrospective householder application for addition of Upvc cladding to property.

After some discussion it was resolved to hold a Site Inspection on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012, followed by a Planning and Estates Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

**13.4 02914/2012**

Land Adjacent To Shellsley, Webbs Orchard, North Tawton

Erection of 3 detached dwellings, access and external works

After some discussion it was resolved to hold a Site Inspection on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012, followed by a Planning and Estates Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

**To note decisions of West Devon Borough Council on the following planning applications.**

**13.5 02611/2012** 8 Bouchiers Close, North Tawton, EX20 2DB

Householder application for addition of garden room to dwelling.

Conditional Consent – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Noted.

**13.6 02639/2012** Moor Edge, Exeter Street, North Tawton, EX20 2BZ

Householder application for the erection of a single storey sun room extension and alterations.

Conditional Consent – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Noted

**13.7 02663/2012** Rambles, Exeter Street, North Tawton, EX20 2BZ

Householder application for single storey rear extension

Conditional Consent – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Noted

**14. Finance**

**14.1** Members inspected the invoices and bank statements and appropriate payments were made in accordance with bank mandate.

**14.2 Monthly statement** – Members received the monthly statement and agreed to make the appropriate transfer from the reserve account to the current account to allow payments to be made.

**15. North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team**

After some discussion it was resolved to refuse the request from the North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team for a grant. The Clerk was requested to inform North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team of the Council's decision.

16. **Urgent matters at discretion of Chairman** – No decision may lawfully be made under this item but matters may be discussed which involve no more than an exchange of information.
17. **Date of next meeting**  
The next meeting of the Council shall be 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012. (Minute 8/3.12 refers).

The meeting closed at 9.15 am.