



# Ashburton Town Council

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2011 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL

**Present:** Cllr Gill: Chairman, Cllr Baker: Deputy Chairman  
Cllrs: Slater, Brewer, Pugh, Parker, Distin

**In attendance:** The Clerk

### **001/11GP Apologies**

Apologies from Cllr Hitchcock who was away on annual leave. Acceptance of this apology was proposed by Cllr Distin and seconded by Cllr Baker. Carried unanimously.

### **002/11GP Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2010 were duly signed by the chairman as a true record. Carried unanimously.

### **003/11GP Lottery grants – rules update**

The clerk read a report from the Finance and Town Hall Buildings Committee. The committee decided that it had been considered that the constitution's terms of reference etc are an important factor to establish that it is not an individual applying for the grants. The committee considered that at the present time the regulations do work and the system allows for councillors' discretion but this will be kept under constant review.

**NOTED**

### **004/11GP Committees/chairman discussion**

Cllr Brewer commented that there are currently four committees: Finance and Town Hall Buildings, Planning, General Purposes and Information Centre. Membership of the committees is decided at the annual meeting for the ensuing year. The chairman of all committees is elected from the committee membership at the annual meeting.

We have seemed to have adopted a culture where the chairman of each committee is re-elected each year. The chairmanship of the Information Centre has changed in recent years; the chairman of each of the other committees has remained the same for many years.

Cllr Brewer believed that it is very important that all councillors have the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility and that the Town Council need to devise a strategy that encourages different members to take on the roles of committee chairman if they so wish. He also believed it is important to create a culture where roles are shared

amongst council members and individuals take on different roles. It is the collective wisdom of a committee that is important, the role of the chair is to maintain order, seek clarity and to encourage discussion and debate; the latter is particularly important at committee level as this is where proposals and policies are made before going to full council for ratification.

The strategy Cllr Brewer proposed is that the town council imposes a time limit of two years on the number of consecutive years that a person can remain chairman of a committee. This would foster an expectation of change and actively encourage others to take on the role. He wished to propose that this rule come into effect at the next annual meeting and the previous two years from the date of that annual meeting be recognised as the time limit.

Also, under proposal is that the rule should be included in Standing Orders.

Committees and sub-committees (page 10)

- 1) d) Chairman of committees shall serve no longer than two consecutive years as chairman on the same committee.

An in-depth discussion took place on this. Cllr Gill and Cllr Pugh noted that they are always willing to step aside to allow a chance for another councillor to put themselves forward but, unfortunately, no-one ever comes forward. It was recognised that this proposal is no reflection on the current chairmans, it is an effort to try and encourage other councillors to step forward. Cllr Distin felt this was a good idea as it is also good training for councillors should they ever wish to become chairman of the council and it could well encourage councillors to consider a chairmanship of a committee. Cllr Parker also agreed that he felt it would possibility encourage councillors to come forward.

The proposal by Cllr Brewer was seconded by Cllr Baker, a vote was taken and the vote was six in favour of the proposal with one abstention.

#### **005/11GP Officer's report**

1. The clerk stated that a member of the public had come to him to volunteer themselves for street cleaning. They did not wish any financial reward, they just wished to volunteer but they would need a shovel, broom, flick brush, hoe and, of course, high vis jacket etc. The committee stated that there would, obviously, also have to be additional items such as protective clothing, gloves, etc. It was noted that the volunteer is currently out of work and just wants to help the community. Councillors did raise great concerns regarding the legality as it is not the town council who provide the service of street cleaners. Cllr Baker commented that the volunteers at St Andrew's Church are always looking for people to help with the clean up of the churchyard and perhaps this resident would consider contacting them as they are in desperate need of assistance. It was agreed that the clerk contact the resident and forward the suggestion and recommend that he contacts the churchwardens at St Andrew's Church.
2. Written permissions for events taking place at the town hall involving alcohol. The clerk noted there were four applications to be considered. These were considered and duly signed by councillors.

**006/11GP Correspondence**

1. An email had been received from the chairman of Denbury and Torbryan Parish Council regarding the lack of attendance at TALC meetings and the general comments were that the committee itself of TALC appears to have lost its way and relevance. It was also noted by the clerk that there were no councillors who volunteered to join the committee at the annual meeting but perhaps at the next annual meeting a councillor may wish to consider this.

**RECOMMEND: CLERK TO RESPOND ACCORDINGLY**

2. An email received concerning the possibility of closure by Devon County Council of the recycling centre at Bulley Cleaves Quarry in Buckfastleigh. It was noted that a petition with 500 signatures was taken on the Saturday in Buckfastleigh and the Buckfastleigh Town Clerk believed that approximately thirty percent of the signatures were from residents coming from Ashburton. It was felt that this would be a great loss, not only to Ashburton, but the surrounding district and it would be very sad if it did close. Cllr Baker commented that ecologically to travel to another site, eg Newton Abbot or Totnes, defeats the ecological object and does not make sense. Cllr Parker was concerned at the cost of the site and he personally would much prefer to see it moved to Gilpins site and, which would cost less. There were also concerns raised that this closure could create more fly tipping in the area. Cllr Slater proposed that the town council strongly object to it closing as it is used by many people in Ashburton and the surrounding area and it would be a great loss to the community. This was seconded by Cllr Brewer and a vote was taken accordingly. Six being in favour of the proposal, with one against.

The clerk was also requested to email Cllr Barker to obtain his comments on the suggestion of a possible closure.

**RECOMMEND: CLERK TO FORWARD COMMITTEE'S COMMENTS TO THE CLERK AT BUCKFASTLEIGH ACCORDINGLY AND EMAIL CLLR BARKER**

**007/11GP Any other urgent business**

- Cllr Baker was still concerned at the wall at the entrance to Bowden Hill and its condition.
- Cllr Baker stated that one resident had been told by Teignbridge District Council that Ashburton town council was responsible for gritting the car park. Cllr Baker was requested to ascertain who the resident spoke to so the clerk can follow up on this.
- Noted that the roads in the Westabrook area are pitted with pot holes and are in a very bad condition and need urgent attention.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

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CHAIRMAN  
23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011