

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2009
AT 7.30PM IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE, TOWN HALL,
ASHBURTON**

Present: Cllr Gill, chairman; Cllr Baker, deputy chairman; Cllrs Posner, Brewer, Pugh, Parker

066/09GP Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Hitchcock who was on holiday.
Cllr Distin who is on holiday and Cllr Slater who has a work commitment
Acceptance of these apologies was proposed by Cllr Posner, seconded
by Cllr Brewer and carried unanimously.

067/09GP Minutes of the previous meeting

These were signed as a true record and carried unanimously.

068/09GP Matters arising from the previous minutes

There were no matters arising

069/09GP Web site re: food

Cllr Posner stated that the website front page had been changed to accommodate a special food section and the wording needs more of an impact and possibly links to back up the statement and this was on-going.

070/09GP Officer's report/Terms of Reference/Agenda Items/Communication

The Clerk stated the following the recommendations regarding the terms of reference as recommended by the DAPC to be included. The Clerk stated that as indicated at the recent Town Council meeting As stated at the recent town council meeting it has always been the case that a councillor is able to go to a chair of a committee who in turn speaks to the chairman of the town council, or this can be done, as Cllr Hitchcock said, via the Clerk, and they are informed of the request of an additional agenda item. The chairman may decide that the issue may be better served at some other committee meeting, it should be noted that chairmen do not have the powers to veto agenda items but do have the powers to make decision as to which would be the better committee to deal with an agenda item. Whichever way, between the two chairs a decision is then reached and the Clerk is instructed to act accordingly.

There does need to be a terms of reference for an addition to the standing orders and therefore these are my suggestions for discussion.

Agenda Items – any councillor wishing to have an item placed on an agenda for discussion should, as early as possible, make contact with the chairman of the committee, who in turn will speak to the chairman of the council or via the Clerk who will also contact both the chairmen of the committee and town council. Between the chairmen a decision will then be reached as to which is to be an appropriate agenda for such an item to be placed.

Committees – committees are set in place to deal with many issues and recommendations are then made to the full town council and, where necessary to discuss the issue, ratify the same, and thereby resolve.

Planning – all matters to deal with planning should be placed before the planning committee

Finance and Town Hall Buildings – any issue concerning finance or town hall buildings, should be placed before this committee only

General Purposes Committee – all other issues not covered by the previous two committees should be placed on General Purposes

Information Centre – the chairman of the information centre shall be elected from the town council and that chairman will liaise with Mrs Connors, the administrator, and via the Clerk regarding agenda items.

Some items of expenditure from this committee would have to be referred to the finance and town hall buildings committee accordingly.

CIVIC EVENTS

This will be at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council who will decide what events they wish to arrange, if any.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAPLAIN TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman of the Town Council shall invite a Minister of the Clergy to become the Chaplain to the Town Council. This can be a representative from any denomination and is resolved at the May (AGM) Annual meeting.

The Clerk stated that the terms of reference listed above are purely and simply highlighting what has already been in existence long before his time and appears to be working fine. The committee agreed that this looked acceptable and this would be discussed at the next Full Town Council Meeting under the Matters Arising of the General Purposes Committee Chairman's Report.

CLERK TO ENSURE ALL COUNCILLORS HAVE A COPY OF THE PROPOSALS

071/09GP Swimming Pool

Cllr Posner stated that he had been approached by a resident who was very involved and interested in swimming issues and commented that in her opinion it would be very nice if Ashburton Town swimming pool could be covered and therefore used all year round. Cllr Posner stated that he felt it would be an excellent idea to cover the swimming pool but obviously, great consideration must be given to the costs of running such a venture all year. TDC have suggested that perhaps ATC could take over the swimming pool but obviously, all financial aspects would have to be considered and it should also be considered what level of interest would members of the public have in such a project. Cllr Posner reported that the head of the swimming association had visited Ashburton swimming pool and felt it certainly could work. He also noted that there are grants available and in particular, for the development of rural swimming pools. It was noted that this was brought to the notice of the Town Council to initiate discussions as to what Councillors feel and whether it is worth proceeding, Cllr Posner said it was important to prove that there would be an income stream to support this venture and TDC had indicated that the car park could possibly be taken over as well if the swimming pool was taken over by the Town Council. It had been indicated by TDC that they might possibly be able to give some funding. Cllr Parker stated that this was fine, that funding was available so long as it continues and not ends up as the grants have in connection with the Information Centre ie after a few years the grants are withdrawn. Cllr Pugh stated that this was talked about several years ago, appeals went out to see who would be interested but there was not a good response but perhaps, with the right contacts for funding and if the funding could be found, people may be interested. Cllr Baker questioned if this went ahead, where would people park. It was suggested that there was an ample car park in the centre of town at Kingsbridge

Lane but Cllr Baker stated that obvious concerns would be the lighting down in the area of Love Lane and consideration would have to be given to this if it did go ahead.

072/09GP Officer's Report

1. Electrical failure. The Clerk reported that whilst on holiday, the Town Hall experienced a complete electrical failure. Western Power Distribution has been called and the engineer reported that the Town Hall was off supply for Monday 14th September following reports of arcing from a cable. Upon further investigation they discovered a damaged cable leading from the first fuse unit in the Clerk's old office to the multi wave board in the new office, it appears as if the builders went through the cable with a nail when they built the cupboard. The Engineer requested a site meeting to discuss the possibility of renewing the cable from outside, directly into the new metre position so that they can abandon the cable, which snakes through the building and has currently got a temporary repair to it inside the cupboard. It was agreed that Cllr Posner and Cllr Distin would be asked to attend a site meeting and upon Cllr Distin's return a suitable date would be arranged. In the meantime, the Clerk was requested to respond to Western Power stating these details.

CLERK TO CONTACT WESTERN POWER

2. Cllr Baker had enquired who is responsible for the gullies, known as the Ashburton Gullies, in the town as there seems to be quite considerable confusion as to who is responsible for cleaning them out. Would it be TDC or the Highways Department? Cllr Brewer stated that when he lived in East Street the same question arose and he had been informed that the house owners are responsible for cleaning these gullies as it is rain water that comes from their roofs down a down pipe and out across a public path. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact both authorities and ascertain who is responsible.

CLERK TO WRITE ACCORDINGLY

3. Casual Vacancy for the Town Council. The Clerk reported that four application forms had been requested and only 1 had been returned completed and an interview would need to take place. Cllr Prince had asked the Clerk to suggest that Tuesday 6th October 2009 at 7.30pm in the Clerks office would be a suitable time and Cllr Prince suggested that Cllrs Brewer, Gill and himself should interview the applicant. The committee agreed unanimously.

CLERK TO WRITE TO APPLICANT INVITING HIM TO AN INTERVIEW

073/09GP Correspondence

1. An invitation received to Ashburton's Inaugural Green Living Open Weekend which will take place on the 10th and 11th October 2009 in and around Ashburton. It was noted that copies have been issued to Councillors.

2. Guild of St Lawrence. An invitation to Council members to a gala celebration evening to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the setting up of the present guild of St Lawrence whose aims are to preserve the ancient St Lawrence Chapel and develop its use for the community and as a heritage centre. The event will take place at St Lawrence Chapel on Friday 4th December 2009, commencing at 7pm and tickets will cost £10.00. It was hoped that as many councillors as possible would attend this event.

Noted that copies have been issued to councillors.

3. Housing Strategy Survey Interim Analysis received from TDC, copies have been issued to Councillors for their information

4. Email received from a resident regarding the brown sign for the A38 and the Clerk read the letter, which stated on the subject of the brown sign for Ashburton that went missing during last year's road works. The sign was paid for on a three way split with Teignbridge District Council, Ashburton Town Council and the Ashburton

Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The Town Council did not have a chance to say that the first the Town Council knew of its demise was when the road works were completed. As for Devon County saying they informed the Town Council, seems to be in dispute in this day and age, this cannot happen and they must have a copy of the letter and when they did not get a response you think a telephone call could save an awful lot of money. So, come on Devon County, admit you've got it wrong and put the matter right so that Ashburton can have the visitors it deserves. To say we don't need a sign is rubbish as the famous Railway Museum in Didcot has a brown sign on the M4 motorway, the email did have a name and address.

074/09GP Any Other Business

- Cllr Baker noted that regarding the Orchard Initiative at the swimming pool, they have been told there are tanks and pipes underground at the proposed Orchard area and therefore no planting would be allowed. Cllr Posner suggested that Cllr Baker contacts TDC and ask for a plan of the pipes etc to ascertain whether there are any possibilities of planting at all.
- Cllr Brewer wished to raise again the issue of kerbstones in North Street near the Victoria Inn car park. East Street, there are stones that are dislodged and also noted in St Lawrence Lane there are several kerbstones dislodged. Regarding the area entrance to the car park to the Victoria Inn, there was mention of the possibility of double yellow lines being placed outside of Thornings flats on the corner area because cars park there and this creates a problem due to the narrowness of the road and vehicles having to mount the pavement which a) is dangerous and b) keeps dislodging the kerbstones. It was noted that this was mentioned at the recent full town council meeting and Cllr Barker noted the comments.
- Hedge at Westabrook. The Clerk confirmed he has emailed again regarding the hedge at Westabrook and has been told via email that the area has been inspected but the inspectors opinion was that although the hedge has grown it is not so intrusive that people cannot get by and therefore he would review this again in a few weeks time. Cllr Posner stated that one of the residents at Westabrook informed him that the hedge is circa 1947/8 and was put in by an Ashburton Urban District Council to enhance the newly erected Westabrook. The hedge was donated by Mr Fallows.
- Cllr Baker stated regarding East Street. Prior to the resurfacing, lines had already been painted. She had spoken to the Highways Department at Newton Abbot and was amazed that the department did not appear to know anything about the lines being painted, again Cllr Baker said she would follow this up with DCC as someone must have known.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm

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signed
Wednesday 28th October 2009