

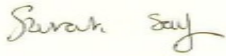
_____NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk
Mrs Sarah Say
Assistant Town Clerk
Stephen Webb

14a The Square
North Tawton
EX20 2EP
Tel 01837 880121

You are hereby summoned to the Extraordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council to be held at the Council Offices on: **Monday 23 March 2020 at 7.30 pm.**

Dated this 16 March 2020



Town Clerk

AGENDA

An opportunity for the Electors and others to address the Town Council.

The Council encourages the use of an Open forum. This will allow Members of the Public to address the Town Council. Members of the public wishing to speak in the Open Forum should notify the Clerk 7 days prior to the meeting. If appropriate an item will be placed on a future agenda. A brief note will be made of any discussion at this point. Please note that Councillors are not obliged to give their opinion or answer questions. The maximum time allowable for the Open Forum at this meeting will be up to 45 minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman.

Health & Safety Notice

1. **Apologies for Absence** - To receive apologies from Councillors unable to attend.
2. **Declarations of Interest** - Councillors are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Clerk in the first instance.

3. Necessary Amendment to NTTC Financial Regulations

3.1 With reference to Section 5 'Banking' of the Council's Financial Regulations, paragraph 5.3 is out of date in that procedures for signing of cheques have, for at least 4 years, in practice been that they are signed by 2 Councillors. The current paragraph 5.3 reads as follows:

5.3 Cheques drawn on the current bank account, in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be signed by four of the following officers—the RFO and any three Councillors or any four Councillors.

It is proposed that this paragraph be reworded to confirm the signatory requirement, and also to include a similar requirement for authorisation of online payments, and that the relevant paragraph should therefore read as follows:

5.3 Cheques drawn on the Council's current bank account(s), in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be signed by two approved and authorised Councillors. Online payments from the Council's current bank accounts shall be prepared by the authorised staff or Councillors and authorised by 2 approved and authorised Councillors.

3.2 Similarly, paragraph 5.4 of the current NTTC Financial Regulations should be reworded to reflect updated bank accounts. Paragraph 5.4 currently reads as follows:

5.4 The Council shall determine at each meeting at which it is desired to pay amounts by cheque from the current account what amount, if any, shall be transferred from or to the business reserve account and also what amount may need to be transferred into or out of the capital projects account. The RFO shall prepare a form of transfer to be signed in the same form as stated at 5.3 above.

It is proposed that this paragraph be reworded as follows:

5.4 The Council shall determine at each meeting at which it is desired to pay amounts by cheque or online from the current account(s) what amount, if any, shall be transferred from or to the Nat West business reserve account(s) or the Unity Trust account(s). The RFO shall prepare a form of transfer to be signed in the same form as stated at 5.3 above.

4. Emergency Scheme of Delegation

At the time of publication of this agenda, the situation regarding future meetings of the Council is not something that has been directly addressed by local associations or by central Government. However, it is likely that there will at least be some disruption. Some local government associations are recommending that Parish and Town Councils put into place some delegation to the Clerk to make decisions in order to allow the workings of the Council to proceed as far as possible. This should extend, for example, to a delegation to authorise payments for invoices. Suitable checks can be achieved by emailing copies of invoices to the Councillors who will either sign the cheques or approve the online payments, or to all Members for information. If the payments are for items outside of the regular monthly payments to our contractors, then order numbers for the relevant works can accompany the invoice copies. There may be other decisions to be made, and these should perhaps be made in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council. Some local associations have circulated the following proposed wording for a temporary scheme of delegation: *"In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place"*. The Council should decide whether to put a temporary scheme of delegation into place, and decide on what caveats they wish to include within such a scheme.

5. Coronavirus Emergency – assisting vulnerable members of our community

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council, together with Cllr Mrs C Burrow and the Town Clerk, met informally on Monday 16 March to come up with some ideas as to how the Council should respond to the Coronavirus Emergency with regard to future meetings of the Council, the Annual Town Meeting, and also how, as a Council, we could assist vulnerable residents. Information at the time of publication of the agenda suggests that Parish and Town Councils may be asked to assist in plans formulated by the Government and/or the District and County Councils. In the short term, it was agreed to print enough 'H' or 'Help' signs, as in the NTTC Emergency Plan, to distribute to each household in the NT parish. These signs are for residents to display in their window where they can be seen, if they need assistance. Beyond this measure, it is the recommendation of the Clerk that the Council for the time being await specific instruction or advice as to what can or should be undertaken locally in regard to this emergency. The situation is changing on a daily basis and it is recommended that the Council keeps up to date with bulletins from central Government, WDBC, DCC and DALC, with regard to any future actions that the Council can or should undertake.

6. NTTC – Temporary Committee Membership Proposals

With regard to the current health emergency situation and the uncertainties as to who will be able or feel able to attend Committee Meetings it is proposed that the Council consider a temporary measure whereby all Councillors become members of all committees and thus have the relevant voting rights for each committee they attend. The Council should also decide on a period of duration for this measure.

6. NTTC Business Plan

The Council is to continue formulating its draft business plan. A copy of the initial draft will be circulated at the meeting.

4. Date of next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council shall be Tuesday 7 April 2020.

PART II - EXEMPT REPORTS:

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by S.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.