

NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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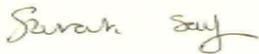
You are hereby summoned to the Extraordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council to be held via Zoom on: **Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 7.15 pm – please refer to the information below re remote meetings – this meeting will be a remote meeting and attendees, including members of the public, should start logging on to Zoom from 7.00 pm to allow the meeting to commence at 7.15.**

Please note: To allow Local Authorities to function during the Covid-19 emergency, the Government has now issued legislation which, amongst other provisions, allows Councils to hold meetings remotely using appropriate technology. NTTC has decided that its meetings will be held remotely until further notice and has adopted the use of Zoom Conferencing software for this purpose.

Members of the Public are welcome to join the meeting if they have suitable equipment to log onto Zoom. Any personal data provided in this connection will be held securely and will be destroyed by 1 April 2021 or at any time as requested by the person concerned.

Members of the public wishing to join the remote meeting can request to join – you need a Zoom account, and when you request to 'join a meeting' the reference number you need is **870 9310 8695**. For security you will be kept in a virtual 'waiting room' until you are admitted to the meeting. The rules for a virtual meeting are the same as for a live meeting in relation to any disruptive behaviour, ie the ability to remove users from the meeting. Background screens and uploading of documents will be disabled.

If you have any problem logging onto the meeting please telephone 01837 880121 for advice (phone diverted to Town Clerk when office closed).



Town Clerk

AGENDA

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. **NTTC Climate Questionnaire**

- 3.1 **Background**

Members will recall that after NTTC declaring a climate emergency in December 2019, a questionnaire was devised to garner the views of residents.

- 3.2 **Councillors response to the results of the questionnaires**

Councillors are encouraged to ask questions and comment on the results of the questionnaires. One of the purposes of this is to highlight any other issues to be brought

forward for discussion that are not included below. Each member will be allowed 2 minutes for this process, which may be extended at the discretion of the chair if necessary.

4. Specific proposals

4.1 Members are to consider suggestions as set out in items 5 – 8 of this agenda.

4.2 The limited public response in terms of the percentage of residents who returned questionnaires should be considered. Whilst the responses can be regarded as a starting point for consideration, the Council has not been given a clear remit for any specific suggestion or proposal, and this should particularly be taken into account for items where expenditure is necessary.

5. Agree the Items to be delegated to the Nature Working Group

5.1 More wildflower areas

- i. **It is suggested** that the Council engage with residents and local businesses (including farms) to seek opportunities for this across the parish. If members are in favour of pursuing this initiative the Nature Group should be tasked to consider this matter in detail, undertake research as to successful similar projects in other parishes, and if it appears viable bring a report with specific costed actions back to the Council for consideration, with a target date being set for this report.
- ii. **Members are asked to consider** allocation of a small budget for purchase of seed and seed packets that can be distributed to all homes in the parish to allow small areas to be sown in gardens. **It is suggested** that this may be a project that could involve children and young people, who could submit photos of their wildflower area in due course, with some small prizes for successful projects.

5.2 Less churchyard mowing

5.2.1 Background - At its meeting in September 2020 the Council approved for the Nature Group to consult the Rector of St Peter's Church, Rev. Nick Weldon, regarding a proposal to reduce mowing in some areas of the churchyard to allow wildflower areas to flourish.

5.2.2 History – Several years ago the Council agreed to leave an unmown strip along the Eastern boundary of the churchyard with a view to encouraging a wildflower area. Unfortunately, this resulted in growth of weeds and brambles which took over the area in question.

5.2.3 Possible objections – The Clerk is aware of a couple of nearby parishes where an exercise of either benign neglect or planting of wildflower areas was implemented. The opinion of the communities was split between support for wildflowers on one hand, and those who perceived the policy to be in effect a neglect of their historic family graves on the other.

5.2.4 Suggested proposal – It is suggested the following points be considered:

- a) The strip of land previously left unmown could be cleared and planted with wildflower seeds. If successful, parishioners could see that this can be an attractive option.
- b) The Rector may be able to suggest older areas of the churchyard which could undergo similar treatment with little likelihood of objection from parishioners.
 - Members of the Nature Group should be requested to speak to the Rector initially. The strip of land on the Eastern boundary should not be controversial if managed properly.
 - For other areas, seek the Rector's advice and arrange consultation with parishioners if necessary.
 - The Nature Group should then bring a report back to the Council with specific costed actions for consideration. It will be necessary to liaise closely with the Council's grass cutting contractor. A target date should be set for this report.

- Members should also consider whether they wish a similar report to be produced regarding the Cemetery, which is of course under the control of the Council.

5.3 Garden sharing for produce - pairing of those without growing space with those who have underused/spare growing space. **It is suggested:**

- the Council act as an initial facilitator for this initiative, rather than being responsible for the setting up and ongoing management of a scheme.
- The Nature Group be tasked with investigating the possibility of the Climate Group or the Environmental Trust taking on this project and/or getting keenly interested residents to form their own group.
- A brief initial investigation be undertaken as to interest from the public in such a project, and as to any support available from other organisations. A report should be brought back to the Council in due course which will have enough information to inform ongoing action. A target date should be set for the report.

5.4 Litter picking/taking responsibility for wilder spaces

Some research is required to put forward suitable proposals for the Council to consider, therefore this item will be postponed until the Council's Ordinary Meeting in February.

5.5 Education and facilitating: The Council could consider holding a series of talks/coffee morning sessions to cover topics including:

- Wild corners in gardens, and how to make a miniature wildlife 'pond' to encourage biodiversity.
- Grants and other assistance available to help make homes more energy efficient and to tackle fuel poverty
- Climate home resilience.
- Setting up of a local co-op for locally grown food,
- How to work out your carbon footprint.
- A regular article in the Roundabout with information on grants, energy saving tips, what can be recycled and where etc.
- A comprehensive Information page on the NTTC website.

This initiative is covid-dependent in terms of actual meetings, but information on some of these issues can be included on the council's website – especially ref home improvements for example.

- The Town Clerk has some relevant information and knowledge and will undertake this part of the task.
- WDBC have a link to how to work out carbon footprint, this can be linked from NTTC website.
- The Clerk or Assistant Clerk can provide limited information and advice within the Council's monthly Roundabout article.

6. Suggested Items to be delegated to the Council's Traffic & Parking Working group

6.1 Public Transport

6.1.1 Buses – interest has been shown in a direct bus route to Okehampton, later buses to/from Exeter, Sunday services, and more frequent smaller buses to local areas. Cllr C Lee will be able to advise members as to the meeting he attended at which this matter was an agenda item. Brief initial research by the Town Clerk indicates that commercial viability will always be the main consideration – presumably, this is why the bus from NT to Okehampton now travels via Hatherleigh. Further to the proposed reinstatement of the train service, and depending on where NT residents would have to travel in order to use this service (ie Sampford Courtenay, or Okehampton – until we find out if we can re-open a station at NT) it may be necessary to lobby for a direct bus service to serve either of the existing stations. **It is suggested** that the clerks be asked to make enquiries as to this matter and be given a remit from members to pursue whatever lobbying is indicated to be

most effective, in liaison with Cllr S Whitely as our Okerail representative.

6.1.2 Reinstatement of trains from Okehampton to Exeter, and possible reopening of NT station. Members will be aware that this matter is now due to go ahead, as has been publicised since this news came out. **It is suggested** that the Transport and Parking group consider what actions the Council can reasonably take to support this project, and liaise with the Clerks as to what powers the Council has in this regard as well as what can be more appropriately and effectively done by other organisations or individuals – eg OkeRail, Devon County Council, our DCC member Cllr J McInnes, and our MP.

6.2 Electric Cars

6.2.1 Electric charging points – NTTC may need to work with DCC and others to enable a network of charge points to be installed over the longer term. Diesel and Petrol vehicles will be phased out from 2030. However, there various issues to be resolved around the provision of charging points. Some councils that have gone ahead and installed them have then found they are completely underused. It may prove to be the case that the advance of other technology, eg self-charging cars, will obviate the need for charging points. **It is suggested** that the Council continue to keep this matter on a longer-term agenda but take no action at this time

6.2.2 It was proposed that NTTC investigate the possibility of a local car sharing scheme for residents – to include Electric Car-Share. Co-Cars are one organisation looking to set up a scheme in Crediton. **It is suggested** that the Transport and Parking Group be delegated to investigate this scheme, and to investigate any other local car sharing schemes, with a view to reporting back to the full council in due course. A target date should be agreed for this report.

7. Other items

7.1 Recycling bins alongside litter bins in public spaces, especially the Park – The Town Clerk was asked to contact WDBC to find out if this would be a possibility. WDBC have responded and advised that, where this has been trialled, unfortunately people have used the recycling bins for general refuse as well, so it has not been feasible to introduce such a scheme. **It is suggested** that the Council could consider an advisory notice asking people to consider taking recyclable items home with them to put in their domestic recycling.

7.2 NTTC should consider working with other local parishes who have declared a climate emergency/are working on a climate plan, to allow us to join together on some of these issues. Enquiries should be made to clearly establish what WDBC are doing, and what help and support they can provide, similarly with DCC. It is suggested that the Nature Group contact other local parishes, also that the Clerks obtain information from WDBC as 6.4.2Council within 3 months.

7.3 Drainage – Further to a suggestion that NTTC investigate what else can be done to keep drains clear, the Town Clerk advises as follows:

- DCC Highways clear all drains on an annual basis.
- NTTC usually pay to have the drains cleared by a commercial company on an annual basis, co-ordinating with DCC as to timing. This is due to be undertaken sometime in the Spring.
- The Lengthsman is aware of certain drains that frequently block, and his workmen clear these on an as-and-when basis. Additionally, they will clear individual drains where a problem is reported to them – as they did recently with a drain near Black Clapper for example.

Taking this into account the Council should consider whether any further action is required reference this issue.

7.4 Creation of a community orchard/growing space requiring land purchase/rental.

7.4.1 It is suggested that the Council's Project Development Working Party take on the

task of looking at the acquisition of a suitable piece of land for a community orchard. This may dovetail with existing draft proposals that the Group is considering.

7.4.2 As an alternative the Council might consider sectioning a suitable piece of land in the cemetery extension for use as a community orchard. This is the only land owned by the Council where there would be space for this – in that the extension area is far larger than would be required for burials for many decades to come. It seems wasteful just to continue clearing the ground or using only for wildflowers, when trees could well be planted there, be it an orchard or another tree project.

7.5 Reduce length of time that streetlights are on – NTTC to feed into any DCC consultations on street lighting, and to input to the Devon Climate Emergency Task Force. It is suggested that this item will need public consultation with residents. The Clerks will make enquiries with DCC Highways Street Lighting Department as to how agreement on a reduced lighting period is reached and find out what actions the Council needs to take. A report will be brought back to a future meeting of the Council.

8. Further Consultation with Residents

The Council should agree how best to take this forward in the short and longer term. For instance, feedback on the questionnaire in the Roundabout and on the NTTC website.

- It is suggested that the Nature Group be tasked with submitting specific proposals and that a time scale be set for this to be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

9. Further proposed actions by the Council

9.1 It is suggested that NTTC consider all council activity in light of its impact on the climate with the intention of seeking only to approve activity that does not contribute to the climate emergency.

9.2 NTTC are to consider signing up to the Devon Climate Declaration (<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-climate-declaration/>)

This would give the Council access to more support, training forums, etc. See appendix for details of the declaration.

10. Okerail – lobbying for support for a local station and improved bus service

Members are asked to consider approval for the Transport and Parking Group, in liaison with the Clerks, to write and email to individuals and organisations who may be able to influence these issues. Cllr S Whitely will update Members and advise further on this matter.

10. Questions/Comments from members of the public

The meeting shall be suspended to allow members of the public to comment/ask a question on any **AGENDA ITEM ONLY – PLEASE QUOTE AGENDA ITEM NUMBER**. Time is limited to 2 minutes per person, up to a maximum of 3 persons, unless the Chairman rules otherwise. A brief record of any points made will be included in the minutes of that meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council shall be **Monday 11 January 2021** at 7.15 pm unless otherwise notified.

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.

No Part II items.