



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

14a The Square
North Tawton
EX20 2EP

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**Minutes of a meeting of North Tawton Town Council held in the
Town Council Offices 14a The Square EX20 2EP
On Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr S McKnight (Chairman), Cllr C Lee (Vice Chairman), Cllr M Kennedy,
Cllr S Whiteley, Cllr N Smith and Cllr K Hodge

In Attendance: Caroline Ellis – Town Clerk
9 Members of the public

The Chairman explained to the public the meeting was being voice recorded but would be deleted after the minutes were approved.

215/24 **Apologies for absence** – Apologies tendered by Cllr Burrow (personal reasons) Cllr Watson (personal reasons) and Cllr Palfrey (ill health) on the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Hodge, were approved by the Council.

216/24 **Declarations of Interest** – None

217/24 **Public Participation** – A member of the public spoke regarding item 218/24, the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 22nd January. “Two members of the public left the meeting, as one of those members of the public. I have seen the emails circulated to you all, commenting on the public participation, at that meeting, in them I am personally accused of ‘Childish behaviour and impertinence’ and with one of your own accusing me of being a ‘disruptive member of the public’. A later email to you all, from a different member of the public, states that I ‘chatted at a volume preventing their concentration’. Something certainly disturbed their concentration, as they go on to allege that a conversation with the Deputy Clerk about ‘running shoes’ took place during public participation, when in fact the conversation took place before the Chairman had opened the meeting. Nevertheless, the writer continues asking then, if I hold a ‘special position’ worse though, they allege that I ‘enjoy’ preferential treatment. Madam Chair, this remark impugns the integrity of your Council. I sincerely hope, therefore, you seek reparation for this slur on the Council’s probity”

A member of the public spoke regarding item 22/24. The reserves were currently £204,909 but the bank balance was £191,505 - he wanted to know why there was a difference of £13,404

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Watson, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith*

218/24 **Confirmation of the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 and the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 22nd January 2025**

On the proposition of Cllr Whiteley, seconded Cllr Kennedy, three abstentions, the Council **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt the draft minutes from the meetings held on 7th January 2025 and the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on 22nd January 2025.

219/24 **Matters raised by the Chairman** - None

220/24 **District and County Councillor Reports** – No Councillors present.

221/24 **Planning** –

0086/25/TPO T1: Macrocarpa – fell to ground level – the tree has lost approximately 50% of its crown in recent storms and snow conditions leaving multiple damaged limbs with new potential fail points. 4 Bouchiers Close, North Tawton, EX20 2DB. On the proposition of Cllr Smith, seconded, Cllr Lee, Cllr Whiteley, in support, the Council **RESOLVED** to submit a neutral response to the application, as there was no arborist report, to the application

The Council wished the following comments to be considered.

- Can the tree be saved by removing the damaged limbs?
- If the tree cannot be saved, in accordance with NTTC policy, replacement trees would need to be planted to replace it.

The Council noted the following appeal

APP/Q1153/W/24/3356886 Replacement of timber windows, North Tawton Pharmacy, The Square, North Tawton. EX20 2EW. Application reference **2452/24/FUL**

222/24 **Finance** – The Clerk reported to the Council and members of the public the difference between the Responsible Finance Officer and the Chair of Finance as there was some confusion and were reminded, all financial decisions were made by the Council as a whole.

- I. On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Whiteley, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve payment and receipts lists.
- II. On the proposition of Cllr Kennedy, seconded Cllr Lee, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the budget report and bank reconciliation dated 31st December 2024
- III. On the proposition of Cllr Lee, seconded Cllr McKnight, the Council agreed to **RESOLVE** to approve the salaries and previously circulated list of payments.
- IV. The Council noted the Clerk had submitted a VAT return for the period 1st July 2024 – 31st December 2024 for the value of £5786.85
- V. The Council agreed to defer the decision on moving funds from NatWest bank accounts to CCLA as more information was required before a decision could be made.
- VI. On the proposition of Cllr Lee, seconded Cllr Whiteley, the Council **RESOLVED** to vire Earmarked Reserve (General Reserve) £49,693.54 to a new Ear Marked Reserve code 'New Cemetery'.

223/24 **Standing Order** – On the proposition of Cllr Lee, seconded Cllr Kennedy, four in favour two against, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve to adopt the previously circulated amended Standing Order Version 5. The public participation time had

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Watson, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith*

been removed from the Standing Orders, for 6 months. The Chairman reminded members of public they can contact the Clerk by email or by visiting the Town Council Offices, regarding any Town Council matters and she would endeavor to reply and if necessary, add to an agenda to bring it to the attention of the Council.

A member of the public left the meeting.

224/24 **Financial Regulations** - On the proposition of Cllr Lee seconded Cllr Whiteley, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve to adopt the previously circulated amended Financial Regulations.

225/24 **Filming & Recording of Meetings Policy** - On the proposition of Cllr Lee, seconded Cllr Whiteley, one abstention, the Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the previously circulated amended Filming and Recording of Meetings Policy. Cllr Kennedy requested the Clerk investigate GDPR implications.

226/24 **Cheque Signatures** – Proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk to be a signature on the following bank accounts: Unity Trust, Nat West, Triod Bank and to approve a Lloyds Credit Card. Three signatures would be required for internet banking.

227/24 **Grant** – The Clerk contacted Citizens Advice and offered the use of the Town Council office to be able to bring their services direct to the local community. They were keen to extend their outreach facility but currently have limited capacity. This offer would be passed on to the new Operations Manager, who would be starting shortly. On the proposition of Cllr Lee, seconded Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the grant application from The Citizens Advice for a grant of £500

228/24 **Office Purchases** –

- i. On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a Depstech 4k webcam at a cost of £47.49
- ii. On the proposition of Cllr Whiteley, seconded Cllr McKnight, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve Cllr Smith to source a secondhand desk and drawers, at a cost of no more than £255 with the understanding if no suitable desk was available the Clerk would purchase the desk and drawers from Universal Direct at a cost of £255. It was agreed to purchase a chair from Viking Direct.
- iii. On the proposition of Cllr Hodge, seconded Cllr Lee, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of keyboard and monitor at an estimated cost of £130.00

229/24 **Public Right of Way – Batheway to Barton Street** - The Council were informed that Cllr Burrow contacted the relevant officers in early December and it was agreed that DCC would carry out the works on the unregistered land using their powers and would invoice Allison Homes. The work was planned for the beginning of February 2025 for a period of two weeks. The plan was to use two 5-day closure order, opening the path the weekend between each order.

230/24 **Bus stop at Batheway** – The Council noted the bus stop had been installed.

231/24 **Public Information Event regarding Digital Switchover** - On the proposition of

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Watson, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith*

Cllr Whiteley, seconded Cllr McKnight the Council agreed to arrange an information event to be hosted by BT, if there were no costs to NTTCC.

232/24 **Members Reports** – It was reported the key was missing from a noticeboard and asked if the Handyman could look at replacing it. Cllr Smith was still investigating LEVI and was waiting for information from the Clerk. Cllr McKnight had received training, from Cllr Whiteley regarding defibrillator inspections. Cllr Lee reported he had approached highways design companies regarding the 7.5 weight limit and the Traffic Regulation Order. He was waiting for two more replies. Cllr Lee had requested an accurate cost from DCC. Cllr Whitely reported he had not received an apology from a member of the public as requested at a previous meeting. He had also been informed a Cllr had submitted a complaint to the Monitoring Officer about him and he would report the findings at a later date.

233/24 **Co-Option** - No applications received.

234/24 **Councillor Reports and items for future agendas** -
Cllr Kennedy requested the office opening times be updated on the website and a new bench needed to be installed at Bouchers Hill. The Clerk would obtain a quotation. It was asked if the hot water bottles had been purchased. The Clerk had purchased and delivered the hot water bottles and had submitted an expenses claim for reimbursement. It was asked if the 'no dogs' sign been purchased. The Clerk had not purchased the sign, but she had contacted the Church for permission and was waiting for a reply. An update was requested regarding the VAS sign. The Clerk had found the original purchase order dated June 2024 and had contacted the contractor and asked if the quotation was still valid. The Clerk would update the Council at the next meeting. Cllr Hodge reported there were parking issues at Tarka Court. The Clerk confirmed a resident had spoken to her regarding the issues. The Clerk contacted DCC and WDBC, but as it is a private road they are not able to assist. The Clerk also contacted LiveWest and they confirmed it was not their properties. It was suggested the if the resident contacted the Clerk with details of the landlord she would contact them or they contacted their landlord direct. There had been issues with off-road vehicles driving along the river at Yeo Lane. The Clerk would investigate. Cllr Smith suggested a public consultation regarding vehicle electric charging points at the Annual Town Meeting. Cllr Lee suggested reactivating the Speed Watch Group. A new bench was required at Essington Road.

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS On the proposition of Cllr McKnight seconded Cllr Smith, it was **RESOLVED** that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items which are **CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council.

235/24 **Handyman & Lengthsman Contract** - On the proposition of Cllr Hodge, seconded Cllr Whiteley, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the increase in charges for both the Handyman and Lengthsman. It was noted the Lengthsman had not increased prices in 10 years.

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Watson, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith*

- 236/24** **Clerks Extra Hours** – On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to increase the Clerks hours to 24 hours per week from February 2025. On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Hodge, the Council **RESOLVED** to pay the additional hours worked.
- 237/24** **Clerks Report** – The Clerk reported the progress made by the Deputy Clerk and herself. Cllr Lee wanted to publicly thank the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk for their work, this was agreed unanimously.
- 238/24** **Planning Enforcement Issues** - The Council noted Planning Enforcement Issues as read by the Clerk.

On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Lee, it was **RESOLVED** to exit part 2 and ratify decisions made therein.

Meeting closed at 21.21

Councillor S McKnight
Chairman

DATED: