

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at
Knowle, Sidmouth, on Wednesday, 29 July 2009

Present:

Councillors:

Graham Liverton (Chairman)
Tony Reed (Vice Chairman)

Vivienne Ash
David Atkins
Ray Bloxham
Peter Bowden
Graham Brown
Derek Button
Bob Buxton
Geoff Chamberlain
Iain Chubb
David Cox
Andrew Dinnis
Paul Diviani
Christine Drew
Vivien Duval-Steer
Jill Elson
Chris Gibbings
Roger Giles
Graham Godbeer
Pat Graham
Steve Hall
Peter Halse
May Hardy
Stuart Hughes
Douglas Hull

John Humphreys
Ben Ingham
Stephanie Jones
David Key
Jim Knight
Ann Liverton
Stuart Luxton
Andrew Moulding
Frances Newth
Barry Nicholson
Marion Olive
Helen Parr
Bob Peachey
Ken Potter
Sara Randall Johnson
Margaret Rogers
Philip Skinner
Pauline Stott
Brenda Taylor
Graham Troman
Mark Williamson
Tim Wood
Eileen Wragg
Steve Wragg

Also Present

Honorary Aldermen

Ron Mudge
Tony Wilkinson

Officers:

Karime Hassan, Corporate Director
Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director
Rachel Pocock, Head of Legal, Licensing and Democratic Services
Diana Vernon, Democratic Services Manager

Apologies

Councillors:

Roger Boote
Trevor Cope
Malcolm Florey
Ray Franklin

Ken George
Mike Green
John Jeffery

Officers:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Denise Lyon, Deputy Chief
Executive
Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm.

***17 Public question time**

The Chairman welcomed members of the public and Honorary Aldermen and asked them if they had any questions.

In reply to a request for clarification from Adrian Foster, a member of Ottery Dogs, the Leader confirmed that the Executive minute in respect of Dog Orders (Executive Board Minute 11) would be considered later in the agenda.

***18 Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2009 were confirmed and signed as a true record. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2009 had been confirmed and signed at the Annual Meeting and were included in the Minute Book for ease of reference only.

***19 Honorary Alderman Bernard Hughes - OBE**

The Chairman announced that Honorary Alderman Bernard Hughes has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Honours list. It was awarded in recognition of his work with the South West Fire and Rescue Board (Chairman) and for services to local government. The Chairman advised that he had already sent a letter of congratulation to Honorary Alderman Hughes. He said that this honour was one worthy of Bernard Hughes.

***20 Green Flag Awards**

The Leader announced that Sidmouth Connaught Gardens and Exmouth Manor Gardens had been awarded the Green Flag for the fifth and fourth consecutive years respectively. She extended thanks for this achievement to Darren Cross (Sidmouth) and Shane Luscome (Exmouth) and their teams within Streetscene.

***21 Honiton Nightstop**

The Chairman introduced Bob and José Shepherd, representatives from Honiton Nightstop. The organisation provided emergency accommodation to young adults aged between 16 and 25 and had recently received the Devon Community Foundation Award. A DVD on the work of the Honiton Nightstop had been shown to Members prior to the meeting and leaflets were available. The Chairman said that Mr and Mrs Shepherd had been volunteers for 8 years and provided a hot meal and bed for young people who had nowhere else to go. He said that not many people would do this, taking people into their own homes. On behalf of the Council and the community, he saluted what they were doing and thanked them for their valued efforts. He presented an EDDC framed certificate in recognition and appreciation of their contribution to the community and young people. The Council gave the couple a standing ovation as they came up to collect their certificate.

In acknowledgement, José Shepherd said that both she and her husband enjoyed having young people in their home. She said that the organisation had 30 volunteer hosts. The Devon Community Foundation Award and being invited to speak to the Council was welcomed because it helped to raise the profile of Nightstop. She said that she was indebted to the staff involved with scheme and advised that Nightstop was part of a wider umbrella of schemes to help young people acquire life skills and adult independence. Both she and her husband said it was a privilege to be part of this process and thanked the Council for its funding support which was vital to the service.

***22 Post Office Service**

The Member Champion – Post Offices had been invited by the Chairman to give a short statement on the future of the Post Office Service in recognition of the key role the network played in the community. Members were advised of the changes which had affected the viability of the Post Office network since the mid 1980s. Councillor Potter stated that if no action was taken to put new business into the network and if the annual subsidy was withdrawn in 2011, another 8000 Post Offices could be lost.

***22 Post Office Service (cont)..**

He said that the way to secure the future of the network was to make the business profitable. He outlined the National Federation of Subpostmasters' (NFSP) promotion of a '6 steps to a sustainable Post Office Network' plan. He reminded Councillors about the public outcry as a result of closures last year and called on the Council to support the future of the Post Office Service. He said that it was time for politicians 'to step up to the mark' and give the network the support it needed to survive as a viable concern. The recommendation included in the paper circulated prior to the meeting was seconded by Councillor Peachey and widely supported by Members.

The Chairman thanked the Post Office Member Champion for his efforts on behalf of the network and community.

RESOLVED that the Council urges the Local Government Association to take the lead in lobbying the Government with the aim of returning the Post Office network to a profitable future.

***23 Youth Parliament**

The Chairman introduced local members of the Mid and East Devon Youth Parliament, Adam Ward (also Member of the National Youth Parliament), Julian Ashwin and Alex Hall (both being Deputy Members of the National Youth Parliament) and invited them to address the Council.

Members were advised that the Youth Parliament was the UK non-political affiliated voice for 11-18 year olds, dealing with national and local issues. Locally, the Youth Parliament had liaised with Leisure East Devon to achieve an incentive scheme for use of facilities by young people. They would also be working with EDDC to help create relevant pages for young people on its website and were exploring ways of working together in the future. Throughout Devon, the website www.geturvoiceheard.co.uk, was used by young people to share information about key issues. 'Facebook' and other social networks are also used by the Mid and East Devon Youth Parliament as ways of informing and engaging with other young people. Adam and all the other UK Youth Parliament Members were to take part in a debate in the House of Commons at the end of October.

Adam had recently returned from the 9th Annual National Youth Parliament Conference and had been elected to represent the South West on transport issues. The transport group had launched a 'Get on Board' campaign, with the aim of achieving half price (maximum) bus fares for all young people under 18. This would benefit youth, businesses, the bus companies, the transport system and the environment. He asked the Council to 'Get on Board' and support the initiative.

Members recognised the problems of rural transport, with young people being stranded by the lack of public transport. Adam advised that the Youth Council was not only lobbying the Government for half price fares for young people, but was also discussing frequency of services with bus companies. In reply to a suggestion that the Youth Parliament should try to secure free bus travel similar to that enjoyed by over-60s, Members were advised that the campaign was being realistic in a time of recession, but if it was successful in achieving half price travel, it would then try to secure free youth bus travel. It was also suggested that the problems of poverty of access being experienced by young people were similar in a number of ways to those experienced by the elderly and that there could be benefits in a inter-generational meeting which could add weight to the campaign.

In thanking Adam, Julian and Alex for their inspiring presentation, the Chairman advised that he hoped that they would work closely with the Council's Member Champion for Young People and that an invitation would be sent to the local Youth Parliament to attend a meeting of youth in East Devon, which was to be arranged.

***24 Questions**

Printed questions and answers from the relevant Portfolio Holders/Chairmen had been circulated to Members at the meeting pursuant to Procedure Rule 9.2. No supplementary questions were asked in respect of question 1 in respect of uPVC windows and doors in the Seaton Conservation Area.

Pursuant to Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5, (Question 2), the Development Management Chairman stated that applications for affordable housing would be determined in line with policy and national guidance.

Pursuant to Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5, (Question 3) the Portfolio Holder – Resources confirmed that the Council would defend facilities for local people. He had not heard officially about Seaton Town Council's intended move from the Town Hall but had read about it in the local press. He confirmed that the Council would work closely with the Town Council and local community groups for the benefit of the area.

In respect of question 4 about the Governance of Seaton Regeneration Board and pursuant to Procedure Rules 9.2 and 9.5, Councillor Margaret Rogers said that she would submit her supplementary question in writing for a written response.

(Councillor Jim Knight declared a personal interest in respect of Question 3 as a member of Seaton Town Council).

***25 Minutes of Executive Board and Committees**

RESOLVED (1) that the under-mentioned minutes be received and the recommendations approved

Executive Board	Minutes	230-253, 1-44
Development Control	Minutes	71-83
Development Management	Minutes	1-17
Planning Inspections	Minutes	25-28, 1-4
Audit and Governance	Minutes	43-51, 1-7
Licensing and Enforcement	Minutes	1-5
Licensing and Enforcement Sub	Minutes	34-40, 1-6

(2) that the under-mentioned minutes be received.

The Executive Board (minutes 235, 7 and 24) had noted or accepted the Overview Committees' recommendations with or without amendment.

Scrutiny	Minutes	67-81
Corporate Overview	Minutes	40-51
O/S Co-ordinating Committee	Minutes	1-8
O/S Economy Committee	Minutes	1-3
O/S Service Delivery/ Performance	Minutes	1-8
O/S Communities	Minutes	1-6
Housing Review Board	Minutes	83-97, 1-17

Arising from consideration of the above minutes:-

a) Dog Control Orders (Executive Board Minute 11(3) refers)

The Leader advised that as resolved at recommendation 3 of this minute, consultation had taken place in respect of Winter's Lane Field, Ottery St Mary. The Board, at its meeting on 10 June, had proposed that a small specified area of land at Winter's Lane field be fenced off as an area for dog owners, with a Dogs Exclusion Order applying to the remainder of the playing field. Members were advised that as a result of the consultation the viability of the suggested arrangements had been questioned and that it was appropriate to refer the issue back to the Executive Board for further consideration.

RESOLVED that Dogs Exclusion Order for Winter's Lane be not approved, instead the results of the consultation in respect of the Dog Control Order and dedicated dog exercise area be referred back to the Executive Board for further consideration.

b) Home Safeguard Community alarm service review (Executive Board Minute 28 refers)

Concern was raised about the decision of the Board to charge Home Safeguard customers who were over 80 and in receipt of benefits the same as other clients. The budget shortfall and the need to make the service self financing was recognised but concern was expressed about the way that this was going to be achieved. Charging for the service was likely to exclude some vulnerable elderly people.

The Portfolio Holder – Communities agreed that the decision had been a difficult one but that the Council needed to invest in the service to comply with new legislation and to undertake the necessary up-grade of the current systems. She reminded the Council that the service provided was not statutory and that it was provided cheaper than other authorities and organisations. The Executive Board had given delegated authority to the Housing Business Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Communities to grant exemptions from Home Safeguard charges in cases of genuine hardship. Before the pricing structure for existing customers was introduced in April 2010, a member of the mobile support team would visit each person within the scheme to make sure they were receiving all the benefits to which they were entitled.

The Leader confirmed that if the service could not be made self-financing and, if due to lack of funds, it could not be up-graded, it was likely to fail. She said that the Portfolio Holder – Communities would keep a tight rein on expenditure and would make sure steps were in place to protect those in genuine need.

(Councillors Douglas Hull, Margaret Rogers and Andrew Moulding declared a personal interest in this item as subscribers to the scheme).

c) Selection process for new equipment for the Document Centre (Executive Board Minute 43 refers)

The report had set out the need to invest in new equipment following the decision to bring the service back in-house. To facilitate this, the Leader proposed an additional resolution.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme be amended to include the cost of necessary Xerox equipment for the document centre.

Arising from consideration of the above minutes (cont):-

- d) Development Control Committee meeting – 19 May 2009
Councillor Steve Wragg to be included on the list of those present.
- e) Development Control Committee meeting – 2 June 2009
This meeting was held at Exmouth Town Hall and not the Knowle Offices.

***26 Changes to Committee Membership**

- RESOLVED**
- (1) that Councillor David Atkins replace Councillor Roger Boote on the Licensing and Enforcement Committee
 - (2) that Councillor Ray Franklin replace Councillor Paul Diviani on the Local Development Framework Panel

***27 Membership on Outside Bodies**

- RESOLVED** that Councillor Iain Chubb be appointed to the East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee to replace Councillor Paul Diviani who now represents the County Council on that Committee.

Chairman

Date