



**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 25 February 2025
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at
7.30pm.**

Members Present: Councillors M Cotton (Mayor), Z Gover (Deputy Mayor), D Budd, K Critchley, A Dallimore, B Dean, S Dean, V Green, M Hill, R Holloway, L Kirk, D Robinson, M Tighe and S Wheatley.

Officers present: N Gray, Town Clerk & RFO, S Dickins, Deputy Clerk

TC 169/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Cleaton and Cllr I Davey.

TC 170/25 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 171/25 Public participation time

There were two members of the public present. Dorset Councillor, Beryl Ezzard, spoke regarding a member of the public who was trying to get more defibrillators installed across the town, which required the support of the Town Council. It was recommended that the member of public concerned attend the next Amenities meeting to provide further information.

TC 172/25 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

Minute no. TC 155/25 should state 2024 not 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 28 January 2025 be **APPROVED** and would be signed by the Mayor following the meeting.

TC 173/25 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

TC 174/25 Reports by Dorset Councillors and representatives on outside bodies

Cllr Holloway noted the date in the devolution section should state 2026.

Cllr Critchley noted the support from Dorset Council in respect of its position on the railway crossing proposals should be formally noted and thanks passed to the leader.

The report from Cllr Holloway was NOTED.

TC 175/25 Payments for outstanding creditors

Members considered the list of payments for approval.

Cllr Budd asked why transaction number 818 was not showing VAT at the lower rate. The Clerk confirmed that the lower rate only applied to a capped amount of gas usage with all usage above that cap having the standard VAT rate applied, as was the case with this transaction.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments in the sum of **£49,668.55** be approved.

TC 176/25 To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to place before the Council

The Mayor noted the positive turn out and response to the rail crossing demonstration.

TC 177/25 Reports from committees and sub-groups

The minutes from the following meetings were NOTED:

- a) Amenities Committee – 08/10/2024
- b) Planning and Transport Committee – 14/01/2025 and 28/01/2025
- c) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 12/09/2024

Cllr Critchley noted a further Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting was due to be held and it was hoped this would take place on 13 March 2025.

TC 178/25 Howard's Lane Public Toilets Tender

The Deputy Clerk presented the report from the Amenities Committee which provided a recommendation as to the preferred Tender Submission following a rigorous scoring criterion.

It was requested that formal thanks be given to the Deputy Clerk for his hard work on the project so far.

It was **RESOLVED** to APPROVE the recommendation from the Amenities Committee to award the contract to Tender Submission 1 (Healthmatic Ltd) at a cost of £146,671.32 and that delegated authority be given to the Clerk to enter into a contract for the works to be carried out.

TC 179/25 Town Council Action List

Cllr Holloway queried the Youth Council progress, and the Deputy Clerk confirmed it had been slightly delayed due to workload but would be followed up as soon as possible.

Cllr Hill queried whether the information regarding the speeding issue raised by a member of the public had been fed back to them. The Deputy Clerk confirmed he had communicated with the member of public the previous week but would follow it up with a telephone call.

TC 180/25 Report from Museum Manager

The Museum Manager's report was noted, and members requested that formal thanks from the Council be given to recognise the excellent progress that had been made so far by the Museum Manager, and to note how much of a loss it would be when he leaves.

TC 181/25 Town Clerk's Update

The Clerk noted the following items for information:

- The clothing recycling bin in Howard's Lane was being replaced with a new one by the Air Ambulance Charity.
- The Clerk had attended the Practitioners Conference in January which had been very good and had received updates, training and information on a number of topics. In particular, Martyn's Law, which was relevant to any event being held on Council land or premises, the new Procurement Rules, Menopause policies for Councils which applies to Councillors as well as staff because of the

protected temporary disability status implications, and information on the redevelopment of highstreets with social values in mind.

- The Clerk had been undergoing training over three afternoons in property and land tax, with a focus on the legalities of VAT.
- There had been issues with the drainage at the Quay Toilets, however, Wessex Water and Dorset Council were resolving as the issue was within the Dorset Council land ownership.
- The Howard's Lane Car Park SLA was awaiting a signatory by Dorset Council; however, Civil Enforcement Officer's had been seen patrolling the area.
- The second of three Internal Audit visits would be taking place on 20 March.
- Prep work was underway for the year end finances.
- The Museum Manager had agreed to extend his notice period to the end of March to assist with the re-opening of the Museum and to complete projects that he had started. There had been 12 applicants for the Museum Co-ordinator role, with 10 being shortlisted. The applications had been extremely strong which was very positive.

TC 182/25 Any other items the Mayor deems urgent

There were no items deemed urgent.

TC 183/25 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held on 25 March 2025.

TC 184/25 To Resolve to exclude members of the press and public

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the nature of the business to be transacted

TC 185/25 Museum Development Update

The Clerk shared information in relation to the development of the Museum and options were discussed. It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting be called for Monday 3 March 2025 to enable the Clerk to compile estimated figures for members to consider before a decision be made.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor call an extraordinary meeting for Monday 3 March 2025 at 7pm.

Mayor..... Date.....