

Modbury Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting
Tuesday 27th July 2021
7pm Pavilion, QEII Recreation Field
MINUTES

Present Cllrs Watts (PW), (Chair), Whybrow (CW), Vice-Chair, Harvey (JH), Price (BP), Rosevear (GR), West (RW), Woodcock (JW)

Cllr T Coates attended via Zoom from 7pm – 7.30pm

Members of the public and press were excluded from this meeting due to the consideration of sensitive personnel issues and personal circumstances of individual councillors.

2021 98 Apologies were received from Cllrs Keel, Keohane and Walker

PW welcomed BP to her first meeting.

2021 99 There were no declarations of interests

2021 100 Update on current Council membership

Councillors were informed that CW had resigned from post. PW expressed his concern that this was the 3rd Councillor to stand down in a very short period and explained that the meeting had been called in order for all Councillors to have an opportunity to share their own individual pressures and challenges in order for Council to agree a supportive and sustainable way forward to ensure the Parish Council continues to represent Modbury at a local level.

PW invited CW to express the reasons for his resignation in order to open the debate:

- The workload necessary to achieve results has become unsustainable
- Despite substantial and sustained efforts – still not delivering on important projects. This is very demotivating
- Increasing disillusionment with the whole process and function of local government at Parish, District and County level.
- What Parish Councils (Councillors) are required to do without the resources, budgets (and in some cases the authority) is also unsustainable
- The inadequacies of SHDC – in particular in fulfilling their obligations with regard to the Bloor development – issues are still on-going after 2.5 years. It is not right that a volunteer has to do the work of paid SHDC officers.

Council then identified further challenges:

- Challenging, confrontational and occasionally aggressive behaviour from some members of the public
- Time-spent responding to vexatious correspondence that could be spent more productively for the benefit of the community as a whole.
- Lack of awareness from the public about what a parish council actually has powers to do leading to unrealistic requests for actions
- Not just lack of support from District and County Councils but, on occasions, barriers preventing action

It was agreed unanimously that Council, despite the obstacles, achieves a great deal for the people of Modbury on a daily basis and that it should do more to promote the work done for the parish. It was noted that, if SHDC were forced to step in should the Council become inquorate, it would be a major backward step for Modbury.

BP and TC left the meeting

2021 101 Roles and responsibilities and representation on other bodies:

It was noted that, due to the vacancies on the Council, there are numerous vacancies on Committees, Working Groups and outside bodies. **It was agreed that the clerk will email all Councillors for expressions of interest and new representation would be agreed at the September meeting.**

Vice-Chair

Proposed by GR, seconded by JH and all in favour that RW take on the role of Vice-Chair with immediate effect

RW stated he was happy to take the Vice-Chair role but would need to relinquish role of Chair to Finance and HR Committee.

GR expressed an interest in taking on the role

Proposed by PW, seconded by RW and all in favour that GR take role of Chair to FHR Committee.

2021 102 Action plan for the way forward

Agreed that strategies would be developed to raise the profile of the Council and to recruit new Councillors and that Council would be mindful of priorities and workload when considering any new activities.

PW thanked everyone for attending and being open and honest regarding their experiences in the debate. Especial thanks to CW for his input and work done for Modbury during his time with the Council.

CW offered, if Council agreed, to continue to pursue the 3 outstanding issues on the Palm Cross Estate, to support the NP sub-committee in an advisory capacity, to share work done to date on the Devon Carbon Plan and Traffic Task Group, to continue to assist with practical maintenance work and to be available for hand-over queries.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm.