

## Taunton Charter Trustees

Thursday, 23rd January, 2020,  
6.00 pm

The John Meikle Room - The Deane House



**Members:** Francesca Smith (Chair), Sue Lees (Vice-Chair), Lee Baker, Chris Booth, Simon Coles, Caroline Ellis, Marcia Hill, Richard Lees, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Federica Smith-Roberts, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp and Brenda Weston

### Agenda

**1. Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee.

(Pages 7 - 16)

**3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

**4. Public Participation**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

**5. Petitions**

To receive any petitions from residents of Taunton containing over 200 signatures in accordance with Standing Order 30.

**6. Deputations**

To receive any deputations from residents of Taunton in accordance with Standing Order 30.

**7. Motions to the Charter Trustees**

**8. Communications**

To receive such communications as the Mayor may desire to lay before the Charter Trustees.

**9. To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standing Committee.**

(Pages 17 - 26)

To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standing Committee (if any).

**10. To answer questions under Standing Order 8**

A Charter Trustee may ask the Mayor any question upon an item which is under consideration by the Charter Trustees.

Every question shall be put and answered without discussion. The person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer but shall give an explanation for declining to do so.

An answer may take the form of:-

1. A direct oral answer; or
2. Where the desired information is contained in a publication of the Charter Trustees, a reference to that publication; or
3. Where reply to the question cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated to Charter Trustees.

**11. Taunton Charter Trustees Budget 2020/2021**

(Pages 27 - 34)

To approve a Budget for the Taunton Charter Trustees for the 2020/21 financial year.

## 12. Mayor Making for 2020/21

(Pages 35 - 40)

Following the meeting of the Charter Trustees on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019, where the presumption was supported that the person taking up the Mayor of Taunton role was presumed to serve in the role for two consecutive years, an overview of the selection process over the next few months leading up to the Annual General Meeting will be given.

## 13. Appointment of External Auditors

(Pages 41 - 44)

The Charter Trustees are advised that all smaller authorities, those with an income/expenditure under £6.5 million, require an external auditor to be appointed to undertake a 'limited assurance review' at the conclusion of the financial year and in case an objection is received from a local elector. Smaller authorities mainly comprise of Town and Parish Councils although Charter Trustees are also included within the definition of a smaller authority.

The Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) was formally appointed in January 2016 by the Minister for Local Government as "a person specified to appoint local auditors". It is proposed that the Charter Trustees use this central procurement and appointment regime. If newly created authorities opted out of this regime they would be required to procure and appoint their own external auditors.

We received statutory correspondence on 21st November 2019 providing details of the formation of SAAA and specification by MHCLG, the procurement of auditors and the central appointments regime for smaller authorities (with an option for the authority to opt-out, procure and appoint its own external auditor).

All Charter Trustees were forwarded the email correspondence for comment and no objections were raised.

We thus received confirmation by email a formal 'notification of auditor appointment' letter setting out our inclusion in the central appointments regime on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The fee will likely be £200 based on indicated expenditures.



**JAMES HASSETT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

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**Taunton Charter Trustees - 2 October 2019**

Present: Councillor Francesca Smith (Mayor)

Councillors Sue Lees (Deputy Mayor), Lee Baker, Chris Booth, Simon Coles, Caroline Ellis, Libby Lisgo, Martin Peters, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Federica Smith-Roberts, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp and Brenda Weston

Officers: Jo Comer, Kate Murdoch, Matthew Parr, Clare Rendell and Amy Tregellas

Also Present: Councillor Dave Durdan

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

31. **Apologies**

No apologies had been received and all Charter Trustees were in attendance.

32. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019 were circulated with the agenda)

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

33. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Sankey				
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Councillor Smith-Roberts declared a personal interest in respect of Item 10 – Twinning Arrangements for 2020, as she was a Friend of Konigslutter.

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in respect of Item 10 – Twinning Arrangements for 2020, as she was a Friend of Konigslutter.

Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in respect of Item 10 – Twinning Arrangements for 2020, as she had taken part in the Civic Visit.

34. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak at the meeting.

35. **Petitions**

No petitions from residents of Taunton had been received.

36. **Deputations**

No deputations from residents of Taunton had been received.

37. **Communications**

The Mayor confirmed that there were no communications to report.

38. **Motions to the Charter Trustees**

No motions to the Charter Trustees had been received.

39. **Presentation of gift from Friends of Konigslutter (FOK)**

The Mayor advised that a gift from the people of the twinned town of Konigslutter, Germany had been given to the Mayor when representatives from their town visited the town earlier this year. The Mayor informed Councillors that the town of Konigslutter had named a road after the Town – ‘Tauntonring’ and the possibility of this being reciprocated was mooted.



A letter had also been presented and this was translated and read out by Councillor Caroline Ellis, in which they apologised for the inability of the Mayor to attend the latest Civic Visit and stated that despite the recent political changes with the Council the friendship bonds with the town would remain.

The Mayor wished for this gift to be held in trust by the Charter Trustees of Taunton for the town, and this was officially presented by the Mayor to the Charter Trustees with a short recess for photographs to be taken.

#### 40. **Twinning Arrangements for 2020**

Charter Trustees considered the circulated proposal to continue provision of a degree of financial support for the group's supporting Taunton's Twinning arrangements for 2020.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- The concept of twinning was fully supported. It was felt to not just be about the cultural links, but also economic and other learning benefits which would benefit the wider community.
- It was stated that as Charter Trustees for the town that the twinning groups should be supported, and the amount per household contribution to this was considered small.
- Twinning was felt to be more important than ever considering the wider position of the country, to building bridges and keeping good relationships with EU countries. It was queried as to the tangible outcomes from the funding that could be demonstrated to the people of Taunton to ensure Twinning stayed relevant.
- It was suggested that those that go on the foreign visits be invited to come back and share their insights upon their return.
- The Mayor clarified that she had gained an insight into the German Electric Car Industry upon her most recent visit to a Volkswagen factory near Konigslutter. She wished to see commerce and culture promoted far more.
- Concern was raised about the assertion in the report on the perceived unfairness of Somerset West and Taunton Council continuing to fund Taunton's Twinning support and not any other localities. Residents from the parished parts of Taunton went on these trips. It was stated that there seemed to be some inconsistency about which costs the Charter Trustees were expected to pick up.
- *This report had originally come before the Charter Trustees in June. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the Charter Trustees would be managing their own budget.*
- It was considered that the Charter Trustees did not have to provide a fixed sum and could request the twinning organisations to bid for an amount each year through the Standing Committee Grants process.

- Other Councillors felt that it was important to maintain the links and it was not unreasonable for the Charter Trustees to be approached for funding prior to the completion of a Community Governance Review.
- It was felt important to continue the widening of participation of the visits to Germany and France and including young people in Higher Education.
- It was clarified that the Lisieux link with Richard Huish was particularly strong and eight or nine students went across most years, with prizes given for their work.
- Concern was felt over the prospect of bidding in in terms of affecting the budget setting and not knowing the requirements of the organisation in advance, with a precepted budget for them to draw into.
- People that went on the trips paid for their own travel costs, with gifts and prizes funded.
- *Councillor Dave Durdan, Chair of Friends of Konigslutter (FOK), clarified that FOK raised a lot of their own funds throughout the year with meals, raffles, cream teas and other events, with the aim to raise £4000 over a two year period. This allowed the guests to be taken to various places when they visited Taunton for example, Sheppy's Cider. The number of Councillors they send over is not matched by Taunton.*
- *Magnus Stewart, Acting Chair of Lisieux Civic Twinning Link, stated that it was time for a renaissance for the twinning link, which would be 65 years next year from when the Charter was signed in 1955. The link had been started by Monsieur Parmin and Mr Trevett, two schoolmasters from Lisieux and Taunton respectively. An important part of the visits were the trip to the War Memorial in Lisieux. When the French visit all expenses were paid for by the Twinning Link apart from the Civic Dinner. There was no fundraising facility and the costs were met by the 25-35 participants. A new generation of people were needed to be involved. Plans were in motion for a celebration of the signing of the Charter, with the hope to give them an original copy and to plant a tree in memory in Vivary Park.*
- The Mayor stated that whilst the two groups were run and funded differently, the Charter Trustees should look to treat both equally as a principle.
- It was suggested that the twinning groups prepare a report to get the message across about who has benefitted from this, with possible involvement of young people and their gains from the trips.
- *Magnus Stewart clarified that the age of the pupils restricted their participation to those pupils that went to either Richard Huish College or Bridgwater and Taunton College. The link with the latter had fallen away but the former had been interrupted but was hoped to be restated. He had met with the SWT Portfolio Holder for Communications and Culture Councillor Allen which had been positive and believed that there was a much better understanding moving forward.*

**RESOLVED** that both Twinning Organisations were written to requesting more information on their costs and how they generate any funding for themselves, and the level of funding they required from Taunton Charter Trustees, which would form part of the Budget Discussions for 2020/21.

#### 41. **Budget Options for 2020/21**

Charter Trustees were invited to discuss the initial budget options for 2020/21 financial year.

The SWT Monitoring Officer clarified that Finance were not able to attend the meeting. The s151 Officer had suggested that the Charter Trustees form a smaller sub-committee to meet with a couple of Finance Officers to discuss budgets, with the final report to come back to the main Charter Trustees to discuss. The powers and duties that fall on Charter Trustees was still being investigated as to whether an amount could be raised for Community Projects under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972. Legal advice was being sought on whether this applied to Charter Trustees as it did to Town and Parish Councils and this would be reported back.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- Concern was raised that the restriction under s137 Act of £8.61 would necessitate a larger leap once a successor body was formed.
- It was felt that the whole body of the Charter Trustees needed to be taken along together on the financials and not a smaller sub-set.
- It was raised that Councillors needed to be clear about their priorities and what we would want to spend that money for, with some serious consultation with residents of Taunton.
- *It was clarified that the priorities of the District were separate to the Charter Trustees as the entities were separate.*
- It was requested that a dedicated budget meeting was held before the end of October.
- *It was clarified that the Charter Trustee budget setting was standalone to the District, but would have to filter into the Billing process for Council Tax, as other Town's and Parishes were. The setting of a budget for a Town and Parish was very different to a District. The Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) was suggested as a possible invitee into the process.*
- It was requested that guidance needed to be provided on what the Charter Trustees could do, with a breakdown of what the Unparished Area Fund was spent on in the last few years so that could be extrapolated going forward, for example, the cost of using the DLO for projects and whether we could go outside of the DLO.

**RESOLVED** that a meeting of the Charter Trustees was held to discuss budget setting before the end of October with Finance Officers from SWT and representatives from SALC invited.

#### 42. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Priorities**

Charter Trustees were given a verbal update on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Unparished Area of Taunton.

Kate Murdoch, SWT Strategy provided an update on what was currently in the CIL pot and what that could be spent on. CIL was a levy that was charged on development in the former Taunton Deane area since April 2014 and is calculated on the square meterage on new development. The Unparished Area was allocated CIL funding of 15% as a proportion of the levy is allocated to the Parish Council or other body in which that element has been collected. It was 25% if the locality had a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The CIL pot was just over £100,000 and should be allocated to specific infrastructure projects in the area. The CIL the District Council has to be spent on specific items on an Infrastructure List. The Trustees would need to look to mitigate development impact but would not be tied to this restricted list.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- Concern was raised over the time limit that applied, with potentially £45,000 of the pot needing to be spent by October 2020 or the charging authority requesting it back and the risk it could go into a wider strategic pot and not benefit the Unparished Area. Clarity was sought on whether the Trustees were acting in an advisory capacity in deciding how this was spent?
- The Strategy Officer's view was that the Trustees were still advisory until this body was a Town/Parish Council but this would need clarification.
- Clarity was sought on how elastic the term 'infrastructure' could be defined? Would material, and social considerations be able to be taken into account?
- *The definition was considered quite loose, as anything else addressing the demand development places on an area. The Trustees had more flexibility than SWT.*
- Concerns were raised that the Trustees did not have a plan in place as to how and where the £100,000 was to be spent and this would need to be codified.
- It was stated that this had been discussed at various meetings prior to the May Elections at the previous incarnation of this body and Cycling Infrastructure had been supported, and it also benefitted the Green Agenda.
- A suggestion was made that Climate Change was made a priority, with the emissions caused by Housing mitigated.
- *Infrastructure addressing Climate Change would probably qualify under the criteria e.g. solar panels for energy generation. The definition of infrastructure was fairly broad and if thought you could justify.*
- A query was raised as to whether CIL was subdivided by ward and whether there was an unfairness if it was not tied to where the development was in the Unparished Ward?
- It was felt that as the Charter Trustees had not declared a Climate Emergency then this body would need to pro-actively make that a priority with CIL monies. Councillors needed to take off their District Hat and look at what is the priority for the Unparished Area of Taunton as the guardians of the levy and what it is residents needed.

- A query was raised as to who policed what the Charter Trustee's decided to do with this money and whether there were any penalties for exceeding the boundaries. One of the priorities must be cleaning up the air in Taunton and providing a decent public transport system.
- It was stated that the support did not have to be tied to any specific development.

#### 43. **CIL Funding Proposal - Cycling Infrastructure**

Charter Trustees were given information on the Taunton Town's Cycling Infrastructure Projects.

Matt Parr, Project Manager (Somerset West and Taunton Council) was in attendance along with Kate Murdoch. Kate Murdoch clarified that the purpose of this item was to seek a contribution from the CIL pot to the cycling infrastructure for the Coal Orchard development. However, Councillors may wish to make a wider contribution to address the concerns already raised. Councillors may have been made aware that SWT's bid to the Future High Street Fund was initially successful. As part of the Community Engagement Workshops that were undertaken one of the major issues raised was the need to improve cycling and walking pedestrian infrastructure in the Town Centre as well as cycle parking. A detailed draft business case was to be submitted to Government by the end of January, with the final one by April 2020. Officers were seeking an in principle decision to make a contribution from the CIL allocated to the Unparished Area pot to provide match funding SWT has already identified for cycling and walking infrastructure improvements. The Council would attract investment from Government if match funding was secured from the Charter Trustees. Officers would come back with further detail on what those projects were. Somerset County Council were currently working on the Local Cycling Infrastructure Plan, supported by the Taunton Area Cycling Campaign. Out of that work a list of projects would be prioritised and more detail would be provided.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- Councillors were keen to be provided with more detail and when this could be brought back for final decision?
- *Somerset County Council would submit to the Department for Transport at the beginning of November. The priority actions for the Town Centre from that plan will go into the Future High St Fund Bid. Officers could then come back to this body and ask for explicit support.*
- Councillors were supportive in principle but it was queried as to how much was required, was it the whole pot and how much were SWT providing? More detail was required for Councillors to have a view.
- It was felt that the Charter Trustees needed to create a set of priorities for the CIL pot before it was allocated to this project.
- Councillors felt that the Town Centre should not just be the sole focus of this pot of money as the Unparished Area encompassed a wider area than that.

- *Officers clarified that in terms of mitigating the impact of development cycling pedestrian developments were already on the Councils list and can be justified. Officers would be happy to come back when these projects were costed. SWT had £1.5 million for the Strategic CIL pot which could support the cycling pedestrian improvements in the bid. Officers were at this stage seeking a steer for an in principle commitment of some of that money or none at all?*
- It was considered that £100,000 would not pay for very much when it came to infrastructure.
- Some Councillors expressed support for putting the total amount of CIL money towards the High Street Fund Bid for improvements to the cycling pedestrian offer.
- Some Councillors were not in favour and felt this could be used towards a project of a cycle track from the Park and Ride into Taunton.
- Councillors queried when was the last opportunity to participate and decide whether in favour of committing funds to the Bid?
- The Draft bid would be submitted in January and so it was considered there was time to come back and for the Charter Trustees to identify their priorities in the interim.

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees hold a meeting as soon as possible to discuss and agree the priority areas in recommending the allocated CIL funds in advance of a decision to provide financial support to the cycling pedestrian improvements in the Future High Street Fund Bid to Central Government.

#### 44. **Community Governance Review Update**

Charter Trustees considered the briefing note on the Community Governance Review.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the proposed outline of a timetable for the Community Governance Review. It was important to note that any change would not come into effect until May 2023. It was considered prudent to leave a year of run-in time to complete the process by May 2022 to allow all policies and procedures to be taken into account. A wider governance review may be needed as other Towns and Parishes in the locality had requested this also. Terms of Reference would need to be drafted which would go out for consultation, with a final version reviewed and published in due course and once that was done the twelve month countdown for completion would start. Officers were currently scoping out what a review would look like and what dedicated resource would be needed to do this piece of work.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- *It would be researched into what other Councils have done and other models of good practice in Terms of Reference would be looked at.*
- *It was suggested that the Charter Trustees contact the Association to see if any other areas had gone through a similar process.*

- Councillors queried whether the District Council could undertake a review so soon after re-organisation and the Boundary Review undertaken for the formation of a new Council?
- *It was clarified that a Boundary Commission review was different to a Council Led Review which this would be.*
- Councillors were keen to know when the earliest start date might be and that a lot of big decisions were needed to be gotten right in the next 3-4 months.
- A query was raised on a scenario where the area might or might not be a Town Council and bigger or smaller than the current Unparished Area. Would the Boundary Commission be involved at all?
- *If required the Boundary Commission would need to be involved at the earliest possible date. Once the final terms of reference were agreed the consultation would involve the Boundary Commission.*
- Clarity was sought as to whether the Charter Trustees would contribute to the Review?
- *As the Review would be district wide the costs would be borne by the District. The Finance team could be requested to clarify.*
- *A report would be brought back providing further detail in early 2020.*

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees of Taunton were supportive of the proposed Community Governance Review Timetable and in officers to move the review forward.

#### 45. **Consultation Response - Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

Charter Trustees considered their consultation response to the Electric Vehicle Charging Points.

The Monitoring Officer stated that the SWT Portfolio Holder for Climate Change had written to all Town and Parish Councils about a pot of money that could be bid for to support the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in the District. The timescales were too short but Councillors were recommended to suggest land for use even if the Council was not the owner.

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees of Taunton were supportive of the District Council installing Electric Vehicle Charging Points where they thought appropriate in the Unparished Area of Taunton but were not able to submit a bid as they were not the owners nor had any responsibility for any land in the Unparished Area.

#### 46. **Consultation Response - Phone Boxes**

Charter Trustees considered their consultation response to BT Phone Box consultation. All Town and Parish Councillors had been made aware of the potential closure of 39 phone boxes across the district earmarked by BT.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and asked questions which included:-

- It was felt that a response was needed to be provided, especially in areas of deprivation or vulnerability.
- This was not public money involved but a request of BT to keep these open.
- Concerns were raised around the risks, especially in areas of high domestic violence, where this could be the only route for some women to make a call.
- Had notices been put on each of the phone boxes advising of the closure?
- *None had been provided by BT.*
- As there was no cost to the Charter Trustees or to SWT, it was suggested that there was no incentive to consent to close any of the phone boxes and there would be no public goodwill to do so.
- It was requested as to whether the calls could be broken down into those that were for Emergency Services.
- The need to keep them open also was balanced with whether to do so would fuel anti-social behaviour such as drug dealing. It was suggested the local beat team were invited to comment as to whether they had concerns.
- It was requested to find out how many of these were of the classic red box design as these were hoped to be kept or turned into something else.

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees be provided with the information on phone boxes in their ward area to feedback with a response as to whether to close via email to Officers go into the final consultation response.

(The Meeting ended at 8.37 pm)



## Record of Decision taken by Mayor of Taunton

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 05/09/2019

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Clare Rendell  
[c.rendell@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:c.rendell@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

Date of Decision: 09/09/2019

### Details of decision:

- 1. Trident Youth Centre - The Standing Committee recommended to offer a £2000 contribution to the cost of electrical rectification works at the Youth Centre from a total bid of £3360.**
- 2. Taunton Town Football Club - The Standing Committee recommended a refusal of the bid but were supportive of the Club and its aims. It was suggested that the Club explore other potential opportunities and approach SWT in the first instance to explore the possibility of a soft loan.**
- 3. North Taunton Partnership - The Standing Committee recommended a contribution of £2500 to the costs of the summer activities of the North Taunton Partnership for Summer 2020.**
- 4. Taunton/Wellington Transition Town - The Standing Committee recommended to refuse the bid. The map was felt to be of a wider application than Taunton and was also felt to be potentially outdated quickly due to timetabling updates. It was also felt that the digitalisation of the map could be explored.**
- 5. Taunton Area Cycling Campaign - The Standing Committee recommended to provide £500 as offered at the previous meeting, and hold that in trust until TACC were ready to reprint in 2020. The TACC were recommended to talk to the Head of Comms at SWT to assist with the production and marketing (including digital) of the map as it fitted in with the Garden Town work of the District and explore the possibility of the District match funding. If this was unsuccessful the Charter Trustees would look to fund the remaining £635 but the applicants must be made clear this would be a one-off.**
- 6. YMCA Taunton - The Standing Committee recommended to fund the total amount asked for of £2150.**
- 7. Catherine Herbert - The Standing Committee recommended to refuse the bid as no further information had been provided on who would run the scheme and where the pickers would be stored. It was recommended the applicant contact Idverde who were known to be able to supply litter pickers to interested communities.**
- 8. PCSO Jade Tingley - The Standing Committee recommended to fully support the bid for the £900 amount asked for.**

**9. Halcon Youth Club/ Fuse Performance - The Standing Committee recommended to provide a contribution of £3000, with a suggestion that the Minerva School was engaged with and a recommendation that Christine Gale SWT was engaged with to explore other funding opportunities and potential match funding for the full amount.**

**10. Take Art - The Standing Committee recommended to provide a contribution of £2000. An update on the projects progress was requested in due course.**

**11. Unique Events SW CIC - The Standing Committee recommended to agree the £3500 amount as requested.**

**12. Councillor Hazel Prior - Sankey - The Standing Committee recommended to agree the £2400 amount as requested.**

**13. Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey - The Standing Committee recommended to agree the amount of £1046.24 as requested.**

**14. Catherine Herbert - The Standing Committee recommended refusal of this bid. It had been verified that the Mount Walk Pathway was being maintained.**

**15. Catherine Herbert - The Standing Committee recommended refusal of this bid. The Committee had been made aware that SCC had plans to tarmac the verges on Mountfield Road in this financial year so this was considered unnecessary.**

**16. Catherine Herbert - The Standing Committee recommended refusal of this bid. The applicant was encouraged to contact their ward councillor to explore whether Deane House could be used to hold community meetings if required.**

<b>The below has been completed:</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	N/a	
<b>The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.</b>		
Finance implications	N/A	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact	N/A	
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

**Any conflicts of interest declared by Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to**

Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.

N/a

**Decision Maker**

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

**Name: Councillor Francesca Smith**

**Date: 09/09/2019**

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by The Mayor of Taunton following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

**Note:** A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –  
[governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)  
[civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)



## Record of Decision taken by Mayor of Taunton

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 19/11/2019

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Marcus Prouse  
[m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

Date of Decision: 20/11/19

### Details of decision:

1. **Go Create CIC - The Standing Committee recommended a contribution of £5000.00 towards the costs of supporting Taunton Fringe, an umbrella festival showcasing events in Taunton throughout July and August 2020.**
2. **Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey – The Standing Committee recommended to allocate £1046.24 to enable a new dog bin to be installed at the back of Larch Close next to an existing Litter Bin. The bid covers the costs of the bin plus installation (approximately £420) and emptying it over the following two year period.**
3. **Councillors Libby Lisgo & Brenda Weston – The Standing Committee recommended to allocate £2092.48 to enable two new dog bins to be installed on and around the Dorchester Road area. The bid covers the costs of the bin plus installation (approximately £420) and emptying it over the following two year period.**

**Bids amount total: £9184.96**

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	N/a	
<b>The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.</b>		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £31,108.49.	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact	N/A	

Safeguarding Implications		
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

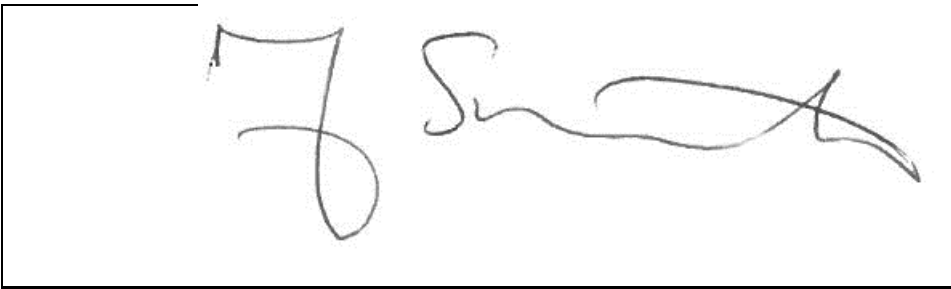
**Any conflicts of interest declared by Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.**

**N/a**

**Decision Maker**

**I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.**

**Signed:**



**Name: Councillor Francesca Smith**

**Date: 20/11/2019**

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by The Mayor of Taunton following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

**Note:** A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office – [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)  
[civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

## Record of Decision taken by Mayor of Taunton

Decision title: Award of Grant Funding from the Unparished Area Special Expenses Precept

Recommended by Standing Committee: 07/01/2020

Clerk to Charter Trustees Contact Details: Marcus Prouse  
[m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

Date of Decision: 08/01/20

### Details of decision:

**Taunton Area Parenting Support (6.30pm – 6.45pm) – A bid for up to £2400.00 towards the costs of delivering parenting courses in the central Taunton Area.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Standing Committee recommended to allocate the full amount of £2400.00, with a request for a condition that one of the two courses planned to be run this year targeted areas of need/deprivation in the Unparished Area of Taunton, in consultation if with the One Teams currently operating in those localities if possible. The Councillors representing these wards also offered their support in working with the applicants. This would be a one-off amount of funding and the applicants would not be expected to return again next year.

**Armed Forces Day Group (6.45pm – 7.00pm) – A bid for £10,000.00 towards the costs of supporting the running of Somerset Armed Forces Day in Vivary Park on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Standing Committee recommended to contribute £2000.00 towards the costs of supporting the running of Somerset Armed Forces Day in Vivary Park on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The funding would be released once proof of the amount having been match-funded by the relevant organisations the Group is approaching was produced.

**Taunton Homeless Choir Community Group (7pm – 7.15pm) - A bid for £500.00 towards the costs of supporting the setup of a volunteer- led Community Choir at Canon St. Church, Taunton for the homeless.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Standing Committee recommended to allocate the full amount of £500.00 towards the costs of supporting the setup of a volunteer-led Community Choir for the homeless. This would be a one-off amount of funding and the applicants would not be expected to return again next year.

**Friends of Konigslutter Twinning Group (7.15pm – 7.30pm) – A bid for £4500.00 towards the costs of supporting the activities of the Civic Twinning Link for a three year cycle for 2020, 2021 and 2022.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Standing Committee recommended to allocate the full amount of £4500.00 towards the costs of supporting the activities of the Friends of Konigslutter (FOK) for a three year cycle for 2020,2021,2022. The applicants should not approach the Charter Trustees for further funding during this period.

**Taunton-Lisieux Civic Twinning Link (7.30pm – 7.45pm) – A bid for £3500.00 towards the costs of supporting the activities of the Civic Twinning Link for a two year cycle of 2020 and 2021.**

**RECOMMENDATION: The Standing Committee recommended to allocate the full amount of £3500.00 towards the costs of supporting the activities of the Taunton-Lisieux Civic Twinning Link for a two year cycle for 2020 and 2021. The applicants should not approach the Charter Trustees for further funding during this period.**

**Councillor Chris Booth (7.45pm – 8pm) – A bid for £523.20 (£436.00 plus VAT) for the costs of cutting down tree branches and clearing debris at Avill Crescent/Severn Drive in Taunton.**

**RECOMMENDATION: The Standing Committee recommended to allocate the full amount of £523.20 to the costs of cutting down tree branches and clearing debris at Avill Crescent/Severn Drive in Taunton. The Committee requested advice was sought as to whether The Charter Trustees could invoice the cost of the work to Persimmon Homes as the private entity responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the trees.**

**Bids granted total: £13.423.20**

<b>The below has been completed:</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	N/a	
<b>The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.</b>		
Finance implications	The remaining funds for this year stand at £22,231.13	
Legal implications	N/A	
Links to corporate aims	N/A	
Community Safety implications	N/A	
Environmental implications	N/A	
Equalities Impact		
Safeguarding Implications	N/A	
Risk management	N/A	
Partnership implications	N/A	

**Any conflicts of interest declared by Mayor or Standing Committee Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Clerk to Charter Trustees to grant dispensation for the Mayor/Standing Committee Member's views to be considered.**

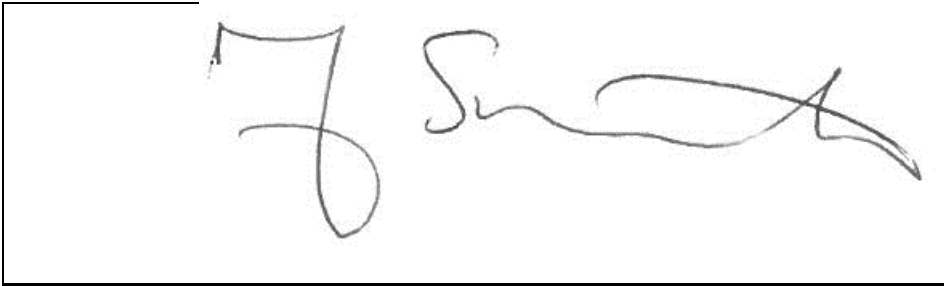


N/a

**Decision Maker**

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Francesca Smith'.

**Name: Councillor Francesca Smith**

**Date: 08/01/2020**

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by The Mayor of Taunton following a recommendation by the Standing Committee of the Charter Trustees of Taunton. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication.

**Note:** A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team and Civic Office –  
[governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)  
[civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:civicooffice@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)



## **Taunton Charter Trustees Budget 2020/21**

### **Introduction**

This report provides an overview to the Taunton Charter Trustees on the costs that will need to be precepted for on Council Tax Ratepayers in the Unparished Area of Taunton for the 2020/21 Financial Year. This will be finalised at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020.

The following totals are based on officer investigation and the elected Members representing the Unparished Area of Taunton are able to suggest further areas to precept or different options, but this will have to be justified to local ratepayers and managed responsibly, the need for a direct link to the civic role of the Mayoralty in Taunton and the limitations to scope under the relevant legislation.

This is the first year that the Charter Trustees are setting a precept. The legal basis for the Chartered Trustees is covered in the Local Government (Structure and Boundary Changes) (Supplementary Provision and Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2019. The borough of Taunton Deane was abolished as part of the Local Government changes in 2019 in this area which led to the establishment of Somerset West and Taunton Council. The Taunton Charter Trustees were set up to maintain the continuity of the Town Charter and was drawn specifically within the Unparished Area of Taunton.

The Special Expenses Rate (SER) which was levied on ratepayers in the Unparished Area of Taunton by SWT in 2019/20 and which was used to part-fund the Mayoralty (not taking into account staffing costs) was set at £46,399 or £3.02 on a Band D Property. As requested by the Charter Trustees, SWT agreed to transfer these funds to be managed by the Charter Trustees during the year. Somerset West and Taunton Council provided accommodation and staffing support for the Charter Trustees for their first year (19/20) and this year was taken to quantify how much of the Governance team's time is taken to support the function.

The Standing Committee of the Taunton Charter Trustees considered the budget requirement for the Taunton Charter Trustees for the 2020/21 financial year at their meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The Charter Trustees body will need to set its own budget and precept for 2020/21 and in future years as long as it is in existence.

### **Breakdown of Cost Areas**

#### **Mayoral Activities and Events**

Analysis of the Budget spend for 18/19 and previous years had shown spend of around £8,000-12,000 over the course of the financial year, not including staffing. This would cover activities and events associated with;

- Civic Service.
- Civic Events e.g. Flag raising, Remembrance and carol services.
- Special Anniversaries
- Visit to Twin Towns (France, Germany) & Travel Insurance and Gifts

- Mileage allowance and travel costs for the Mayor and Deputy.
- Printing and Design costs.
- Dry-cleaning and robe adjustments including new robes.
- Tickets and travel.
- Gifts and refreshments.
- Publicity and Promotion e.g. Sign Writing
- Photography (Mayoral Portrait)
- Subscriptions (e.g. Modern.gov)
- Other Events Contingency e.g. Freedom Parade.

For 19/20 £15,000 was prudently ring-fenced for this particular area of spend but in all likelihood there will be an under spend on this by 31 March 2020 as the budget was set later in the financial year. A further report on the final spends for 19/20 will be brought back to a future meeting of the Charter Trustees once the financial year has ended.

Therefore, depending on the type of events planned for 2020/21 by the Mayor, it is proposed to set this at **£10,000**.

### **Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for Mayor and Deputy**

The SRA Allowance for the Mayor and Deputy - the Charter Trustees predecessor committee the Unparished Area Committee formally requested that the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel look at the allowances for the Mayor and Deputy on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019, whose independent recommendations were then supported at the meeting of the SWT Shadow Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The recommendation was also passed that this would be looked after a year by the JIRP to test whether the SRA sat at the right level. This was endorsed by the Charter Trustees on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

I have enquired with Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer - Somerset County Council, as to whether the JIRP would be able to review this in advance of the precept being set on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019. Unfortunately they are in the middle of a review for Mendip Council and so this will not be possible in the timescales, so I would recommend that it is kept as is for the time being but that it is index-linked by the CPIH as originally recommended. The JIRP would be willing to review this in 2020 in time for the 2021/22 financial year if this was supported. However, the Charter Trustees are able to choose to divert from the JIRP's recommendations. It is not essential to refer the matter back to the Panel for review before amending the financial values but that is an option particularly if there is substantive new information on the role that wasn't available to the Panel at the time of its consideration. Any formal decision to amend a Panel's recommendations has to be accompanied by clear reasons for departing from the recommendations and these need to be publicised.

CPIH inflation rate for September 2019 (usually used for budget/funding purposes) was 1.7%.

The current and proposed allowances are:

	2019/20	2020/21	Increase
Mayor	2,930	2,980	1.7%
Deputy Mayor	1,570	1,600	1.7%
Totals	4,500	4,580	

Total recommended budget for 2020/21 is therefore: **£4,580**

### **Insurance for Insignia and Civic Silver**

The Civic Silver and Insignia that was associated with the Taunton Mayoralty transferred over to the Charter Trustees on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and thus the Charter Trustees are responsible for insuring such property. The premium SWT paid for Civic Insignia and Silver was £505.83 for the 18/19 Financial Year. However since then SWT have re-tendered for a new contract which was apparently considerably lower in cost. The Charter Trustee's set aside £500 in this year's budget and I have enquired with Finance as to the estimated cost for the 20/21 Financial Year.

Cost: **£500**

### **Supporting Twinning Links**

Each of the Twinned Towns has a support group; the Taunton-Lisieux Civic Link and the Friends of Konigslutter and both operate on the basis of bi-annual visits to France or Germany taking place, with return visits occurring the year after. Without a degree of funding there is little doubt the twinning groups would be seriously compromised with little prospect of them being able to continue after a relatively short time. The funding comprised a grant of £1,000 per annum to the Taunton-Lisieux Civic Link which was used to provide trips for the French visitors to local and regional landmarks during their stay in Taunton. In addition, the Council had borne the cost of the attendance of the French visitors at the Civic Dinner which was attended by TDBC's Mayor. A grant was not made to the Friends of Konigslutter as they undertook much of their own fund-raising. However, in recent years such fund-raising has become more and more difficult. It should be noted that TDBC did meet some of the costs associated with the Civic Dinner held in honour of the German visitors. With the formation of the new Council and a number of other well-established twinning arrangements across the enlarged area, the support given to Taunton's twin towns in the past cannot be continued.

This matter was discussed at the final meeting of the Taunton Unparished Area Committee held on 30 January 2019. The Councillors present at this meeting accepted that a degree of financial support ought to be provided to the twinning groups in future especially if Charter Trustees for Taunton were put in place. There was a view however that both groups should be treated in exactly the same way in future. It has recently been discussed that the FOK link should be investigated as to how it could be formalised as a Civic Link in the same way as Lisieux.

In the circumstances, the Charter Trustees were requested to consider making financial contributions to the Taunton-Lisieux Civic Link and the Friends of Konigslutter on the following basis:-

- (a) The sum of £1,000 per annum be awarded to each of the twinning groups to support the activities and events put on for foreign visitors when they are in country.
- (b) The further sum of up to £1,500 be made available to meet the cost of hosting the French or German visitors attending the Civic Dinners held in their honour. Should this amount be exceeded, the twinning group concerned will be expected to meet the balance of the overall cost.

Note: In any financial year there is only one visit from either France or Germany. Therefore in Year 1 if Taunton receives visitors from Lisieux (usually towards the end of May), a party from Taunton will travel to Germany to visit Konigslutter in August. In Year 2, the visits are reversed.

This means that in any one year, the amount of funding needed to support the twinning groups will be no more than £3,500.

The Standing Committee of the Taunton Charter Trustees considered two bids by the two groups on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and awarded £4500 to the Friends of Konigslutter for 2020, 2021 and 2022 and £3500 to the Taunton-Lisieux Civic Link for 2020 and 2021 from the existing Unparished Area Grants budget from this year, it is therefore not proposed to precept on ratepayers for the cost of this in the following year (or two in the case of FOK).

Twinning costs: **£0**

### **Staffing/Administration Costs**

For 19/20 the staffing costs of servicing the Charter Trustees has been absorbed by SWT Council to allow for a true approximation of the needs of the body to be established in its first year.

The Mayor of Taunton attends on average some 300+ events in the municipal year and dedicated diary management is an important aspect of ensuring this runs smoothly. The role of Civic and Engagement Specialist also includes a range of other activities which support the Mayor of Taunton such as organising events and the Civic Service.

The Specialist in Democracy and Governance role would be there to support the smooth running of the expected 12 meetings per annum. (4 CT's and 8 Standing Committee's) and the setting of a Budget and Audit of Accounts acting in a role much like a Town Clerk.

- The estimated cost of Marcus Prouse (Specialist – Governance and Democracy) will be £276 per day next year.
- The estimated cost of Jo Comer (Specialist – Civic and Engagement) per day will be £209 next year.

Please note the costs are based on assumptions related to 2020/21 pay award, national insurance and pension rates, and are therefore subject to change. SWT will

aim to confirm the actual rates by March 2020, which will be based on full cost recovery.

In terms of days to be bought it is initially suggested by SWT that the Charter Trustees plan for 0.1 FTE (0.5 days per week) of Specialist-Governance support and 0.5 FTE (2.5 days per week) of Specialist-Civic and Engagement support.

The Mayor's Sergeant at Mace was a role historically undertaken with the TDBC Mayor. It is the duty of the Sergeant-at-Mace to carry the Mace before the Mayor in civic ceremonial processions. The Sergeant-at-Mace is also responsible for ensuring that on civic ceremonial occasions the Mayor is appropriately robed and that on such occasion all necessary ceremonial robes etc. are available. The Sergeant-at-Mace usually also ensures that the Mace and all other civic silver is kept clean.

It is considered prudent to build in a budget for this, as the extra pressure on the Mayor to drive themselves to events and then robe themselves may be considered an undue pressure in what is a highly visible role and a busy year for the person occupying it. The current hourly rate for the role is set at £9.16 on a casual or 'zero hours' contract, due to the uncertain demand for work, depending upon the bookings for the Mayor. Holiday pay is also accrued at 12.1% of salary, taking the hourly rate to an estimated £10.27 plus on costs.

It is estimated the SAM would be required to work approximately 10 hours per month averaged over the year, which is 120 hours per year. It would be prudent to budget for 150 hours per year, so the annual costs are estimated as: £10.27 x 150 hours = £1,540.50. Additional costs for National Insurance and Pension are in the process of being clarified, so at this stage it is proposed to include c£700 for on costs, giving a total budget of £2250 (rounded).

The costs are therefore estimated as:

	Full Pay and On Costs	FTE	Approx. Days Per Year*	2020/21 Cost Estimates
Specialist-Governance	54,900	0.1	22	5,490
Specialist-Civic and Engagement	41,470	0.5	110	20,735
Sergeant at Mace	2250	Flex	12	2250
Sub-total				28,475
Contribution to overheads @ 10%				2,620
Total				31,095

\*assumes 220 chargeable days

As a comparison, Bath employ two full time staff and incur costs of £114,060 per annum on accommodation and staffing costs. If the Charter Trustee's did wish to explore the employment of a full-time Town Clerk they would be looking at a salary bracket of £32,000 – 36,000 per year, which does not include staff on-costs.

Estimated Staffing Cost: **£31,100**

### **Accommodation/Room Hire Costs**

I have enquired with the Assets team at SWT for the commercial rate for hire of the JMR in the evening on an expected basis of 12 evening meetings and including the use of coffee and tea facilities.

A disadvantage of hiring the JMR in The Deane House is that for public meetings a Security Guard is required to be hired (for which SWT are charged £15 an hour), so 15 x 3 hours 5.30-8.30pm = £45 x 12 Meetings a year = £540. This cost would also apply to other meetings where the building is required to be available later than standard closing time of 7pm.

Hire charges are to be officially confirmed, but it is feasible this could be in the range of £175 for a 4 hour booking. If there are an estimated 12 meetings a year this works out at 175 x 12 = £2100.

I have not explored the use other facilities but other venues could be contacted to quote if so wished. If no agreement can be made with SWT it would be prudent to include an indicative estimate of £2,640 for venue costs.

Estimated Cost: **£2640\***

### **Mayoral Vehicle Lease**

I have enquired with the Procurement team at SWT for quotes on the lease of a Mayoral Vehicle for the Sergeant at Mace/ or Mayor to use throughout their Mayoral Year. The option of using the existing pool car fleet at Deane House and re-charging the costs back (which could conceivably be cheaper) has been explored and is not possible.

In the previous three years the previous car (a Hybrid Ford Mondeo Saloon Car) did around 18,000 miles (6000 miles per year) and charged around £300 per month and £3600 for the year. I have suggested that as the Mayor is not the Mayor of the Borough of Taunton Deane but the Unparished Area that they quote for a low mileage rate of 3000 miles for 20/21 financial year ( by previous cost this should thus be an approx. cost of £1800). It is prudent at this stage to include an indicative estimate of £2000 for a Vehicle Lease.

The Mayor of Taunton does attend various events throughout the Mayoral year outside of the unparished area of Taunton (for example other Somerset Mayor's Civic Services) and it may be considered as to how the Mayor is supported to do this, either no financial support for outside of area travel spend, mileage claimable if using a personal car, or the use of the Lease Car outside of area.

Cost: **£2000**

### **Audit of Accounts**

The Charter Trustees are bound by the same requirements of town and parish councils in terms of financial accountability and the accounts will need to be audited each year.



The Charter Trustees have been opted-in to the central appointments regime Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) and the external auditor for our county area is PKF Littlejohn LLP. It is likely that the fees will be £200 per year based upon the amount of income and expenditure the Charter Trustees.

Estimated Cost: **£200**

### **Reserves**

It may be considered prudent for the Charter Trustees to build up a small reserve to deal with any out of the ordinary expenses which may come up in any given year (for example, a 40 Commando Freedom Parade) and to also balance the budget by the years end if there are any overspends. There will in all likelihood be a small amount of monies left over from the funds passed over to the Charter Trustees this financial year from Somerset West and Taunton Council from the Special Expenses levied on the Unparished Area and if this is allowed to be retained for future financial years I would suggest if there is any remainder left this is earmarked as a reserve rather than specifically precepted for or distributed via small grants. However, for initial budget planning, it would be prudent to include a contingency/reserves sum of £1,000.

Reserve: **£1,000**

## **Summary of Budget for 2020/21**

The indicative tax base for the unparished area is 15,308.18.

The following table provides an overview of the amount and areas to be precepted broken down on a Band D property in the Unparished Area of Taunton.

<b>Taunton Charter Trustees Budget 20/21</b>	<b>Charter Trustees £</b>
Mayoral Civic Activities and Events Spend	10,000
Special Responsibility Allowance for Mayor and Deputy	4,580
Insurance for Insignia/Regalia	500
Staffing/Administration Costs	31,100
Accommodation	2640
Mayoral Vehicle Lease	2000
Audit of Accounts	200
<b>Total Estimated Costs:</b>	<b>51,020</b>
Contingency/Reserves:	1,000
<b>Total Budget / Precept:</b>	<b>52,020</b>

Yellow = Mayor of Taunton Costs

Orange = Taunton Charter Trustees Costs

So when looking at the budget for next year, you need to divide it by this tax base figure to get the Band D basic rate;

**£52,020 / 15,308.18 = £3.40 per Band D property.**

Marcus Prouse

[m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:m.prouse@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

Specialist – Governance and Democracy

15 January 2020

## **The Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton**

### **Powers and Duties of the Standing Committee**

A Standing Committee of seven Members representing Wards in the Unparished Area of Taunton will be appointed by the Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton. Membership of the Standing Committee will reflect the political balance in the Unparished Area.

The Standing Committee will act on behalf of the Charter Trustees to:-

- 1 Select annually, for election by the Charter Trustees, the Mayor and a Deputy Mayor of Taunton and ensure a smooth transition of responsibility in the event of the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor being unable, for any reason, to complete his or her term of office, according to the following criteria:-

Candidates for the roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be drawn from the 16 Charter Trustees. Nominations must be supported by the signatures of at least two fellow Charter Trustees on a form to be provided by the Clerk to the Charter Trustees. There will be no canvassing after nominations have closed.

The Standing Committee will expect to receive at least one valid nomination for each office during the month of February. If one or more nominations are received for the same office the final decision will rest with the full body of the Charter Trustees. Each Charter Trustee will have one vote. The Standing Committee will have the responsibility for resolving all issues relating to the selection of a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor.

The Charter Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that all potential candidates are given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to maintain the high standard of the Office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Candidates must represent a Ward in the Unparished Area of Taunton. They must have served at least three years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Mayor and two years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Deputy Mayor.

In February the Clerk will write to all those who meet the criteria asking if they wish to be considered. The announcements will normally be made in March, except during an election year, when the selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be delayed until after the local elections.

If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is unable to complete his/her term of office and stands down, the procedure detailed above will be followed but the timescale will be adjusted to permit the Clerk to write immediately to all those who meet the criteria asking if they wish to be considered and the announcement will be made as soon as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor (as the case may be) has been elected.

If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is unable to fulfil his/her role but does not wish to stand down, after six weeks of incapacity the Standing Committee will be asked to consider whether or not the Mayor or (as may be the case) Deputy Mayor should remain in office and after twelve weeks of incapacity the term of office of the Mayor or (as the case may be) Deputy Mayor shall automatically terminate, unless the Standing Committee considers that there are extenuating circumstances.

- 2 Prepare and recommend to the Charter Trustees, the civic estimates and further required funding for the following Year.
- 3 Deal, in principle, with requests for civic hospitality.
- 4 Give advice or guidance to, and ensure the provision of proper support for, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor whenever appropriate.
- 5 Prepare and recommend to the Charter Trustees policies with regard to:-
  - A Civic winning;
  - B Civic representation at community events; and
  - C The holding, safety, curation and care of all items of civic property which has been given to the Charter Trustees by Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 6 (i) Consider applications from Charter Trustees or Community Groups in the Unparished Area of Taunton for grant funding towards projects or schemes which will be of benefit to residents of the Unparished Area. The funding is currently derived from the Special Expenses Precept levied on Council Tax payers in the Unparished Area. The Charter Trustee who has made an application will be expected to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee to present his/her application and be 'on hand' to respond to questions or queries Members of the Standing Committee might have. A representative(s) of a Community Group will similarly be expected to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee to present their application.  
  
(ii) Recommend to the Mayor of Taunton whether funding should be awarded for the projects or schemes which have been considered. Circulate the Mayor's decisions to all Members of the Charter Trustees.
- 7 Delegate to the Clerk to the Charter Trustees such tasks and responsibilities as are necessary for him/her to provide the required support to the Charter Trustees.
- 8 Deal with all other matters falling within the powers and duties of the Charter Trustees, except for those matters reserved for decision by the full body of the Charter Trustees as specified in 'The Charter Trustees of the Town of Taunton - Functions and Responsibilities'.

# The Functions of the Mayor of Taunton

Throughout the year the Mayor is required to perform two basic functions:-

## **(1) Chair of Meetings of the Charter Trustees**

The Mayor is the Chair of meetings of the Charter Trustees which comprises all 16 Councillors who have been elected to represent Wards in the Unparished Area of Taunton. This is primarily a function of control and chairmanship at these meetings.

## **(2) Taunton Ambassador**

This is a non-political role. The various engagements and events range from civic receptions to carol services. The Mayor is likely to undertake between 200 - 300 engagements each year, including:-

- **Charity and Voluntary Events**

The Mayor supports local charitable and voluntary organisations within the Unparished Area and is frequently asked to open an event or attend an anniversary. As the President or Patron of a number of societies and other voluntary bodies, the Mayor is invited to attend several Annual General Meetings or the annual concert arranged by the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir which is in aid of the Mayor's Charities.

- **Civic Receptions**

On occasion, hospitality is likely to be given by the Council and the Mayor hosts these events. The Mayor would normally make a speech of welcome on behalf of the Council and the Citizens of Taunton. This is followed by a response by the leading guest.

- **Flag Raising Ceremonies and Tributes**

The Mayor attends the various flag raising ceremonies throughout the year. These include Armed Forces Day, Emergency Services (999) Day, Merchant Navy Day and Commonwealth Day. Tributes in the form of two minute silences have been held in the past as a mark of respect for those who have lost their lives following an act of terrorism or a natural disaster.

- **Civic Visits to and from Taunton's Twin Towns**

All the arrangements are made by the Mayor's Officer. This involves a complete programme for the visitors which is compiled in conjunction with

the twinning associations and includes a welcoming reception and visits to centres of interest in the locality.

- **Church Services and Carols**

The Mayor invites the Members of the Council, Freeman, Past Mayors and Taunton's Member of Parliament, to join in religious services on different occasions throughout the year. The largest and most important of these are annual services held in St Mary Magdalene Church, namely the Civic Service and the Remembrance Service in November. Just before Christmas, the Mayor hosts a Carol Concert at the church and is usually asked to read one of the lessons. The Mayor also attends a large number of Carol Services held at various locations within the Unparished Area.

- **Festival Launches**

The Mayor is often invited to attend large events staged in Taunton such as 'Taunton Live' and 'EAT Taunton'.

- **Sporting Events**

The Mayor is invited annually to launch sporting events such as the Taunton Marathon, the Soroptimist's Swimathon and the Rotary Club's 50/50 Cycle Ride or to present the prizes. The Mayor is occasionally invited to attend matches in support of local Football, Rugby and Cricket Clubs.

- **Schools**

The Mayor is often invited to visit schools and sometimes wears the full Mayoral robes and Chain of Office, so that the children can learn something of Taunton's Mayoralty. The Mayor also formally welcomes exchange students from Taunton, Massachusetts and Kitwe, Zambia who have strong affiliations with local schools.

## **Important Notes**

- (i) Any Charter Trustee who wishes to be nominated as the Mayor must have served at least three years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Mayor and two years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Deputy Mayor.
- (ii) An allowance of £2,930 for the Mayor and £1,570 for the Deputy Mayor has been agreed for 2019/2020. The level of the allowances will be

subject to review by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel following the first year of operating this new arrangement;

- (iii) The Mayor will be expected to drive himself/herself (or arrange alternative modes of transport) to engagements within the Taunton Unparished Area. A mileage allowance of 45p per mile (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs non-taxable allowance) will be paid on submission by the Mayor of a monthly claim for re-imbusement.
- (iv) It is traditional for the Mayor to nominate at least one Charity for their one year Term of Office. Any donations or proceeds from events such as the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir or the Civic Carol Concert will be held for distribution to the Charity or Charities nominated by the Mayor at the end of the Mayoral Year.
- (v) At the meeting of the Charter Trustees on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019 a Civic Protocol was ratified, and Councillors also supported the presumption that the person taking up the Mayor of Taunton role was presumed to serve in the role for two consecutive years, if so wished by that person, though still being selected on an Annual basis. They also supported the tradition as undertaken under the former Taunton Deane Borough Council Mayoralty that there was an expectation of the Deputy Mayor taking on the role of Mayor of Taunton upon completion of their term of service as Deputy, if so wished by that person.





**Prouse, Marcus**

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**From:** admin@saaa.co.uk  
**Sent:** 18 December 2019 16:23  
**To:** Prouse, Marcus  
**Subject:** Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2019/20 financial year - PKFL

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

## **Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2019/20 financial year** **Taunton Charter Trustees**

SAAA has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as "a person specified to appoint local auditors" under powers in Regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. Under the Regulations, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities (smaller authorities are defined as those whose gross annual income or expenditure is less than £6.5 million), for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms.

Your appointed external auditor is **PKF Littlejohn LLP**

*Contact details:* SBA Team, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD

[sba@pkf-littlejohn.com](mailto:sba@pkf-littlejohn.com)

0207 516 2200

The fee scales are set out in the appendix below, and can also be found on the SAAA website [www.localaudits.co.uk/appts](http://www.localaudits.co.uk/appts)

The appointed audit firms all have previous experience of conducting limited assurance reviews for smaller bodies and have dedicated personnel to support communications. SAAA will monitor the performance of the appointed firms in providing limited assurance audit services in terms of quality and compliance with their statutory terms of appointment.

**If your authority has any potential conflict of interest relating to the auditor appointment, for instance if a Councillor, or close relation is employed by the appointed auditor, you should advise SAAA immediately.**

### **The Annual Return**

The "Annual Governance and Accountability Return" and will need to be completed in accordance "Proper Practices" as set out in '*Governance and Accountability for Smaller*

*Authorities in England - a Practitioners' Guide'*, which is available on the SAAA website [www.localaudits.co.uk/guidance](http://www.localaudits.co.uk/guidance)

Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) forms will be sent out by your appointed auditor electronically at the end of the financial year. It is assumed that your authority is willing and able to accept documents electronically by e-mail unless you specifically advise SAAA or the auditor to the contrary. The return can either be completed electronically or printed off and completed manually.

Yours faithfully

## **Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd**

### **Appendix**

#### **Scales of Fees**

The following fees have been determined by SAAA following consultation for the Audit Years 2017-18 to 2021-22.

Scales of fees for smaller authorities, are based on bands of annual income or expenditure, whichever is the higher. This means that the fees are broadly proportionate to the public funds involved and the ability of each authority to pay.

Table 1 sets out the scales of audit fees for smaller authorities that complete their Annual Return fully and accurately within the required timescales, and provide the necessary supporting information and any explanations sought.

Authorities with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £200,000 will be subject to basic limited assurance audit review.

Authorities with either income or expenditure exceeding £200,000 will be subject to intermediate limited assurance audit review.

#### **Table1 - Scale of fees for authorities subject to limited assurance review**

<b>INCOME/EXPENDITURE BAND (£)</b>	<b>FEE FOR LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW (£)</b>
0 - 25,000	200 (see note)
25,001 - 50,000	200
50,001 - 100,000	300
100,001 - 200,000	400
200,001 - 300,000	600

300,001 - 400,000	800
400,001 - 500,000	1,000
500,001 - 750,000	1,300
750,001 - 1,000,000	1,600
1,000,001 - 2,000,000	2,000
2,000,001 - 3,000,000	2,400
3,000,001 - 4,000,000	2,800
4,000,001 - 5,000,000	3,200
5,000,001 - 6,500,000	3,600

**Note:** An authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000 that is **not** able to certify that it is an exempt authority as it does not meet the qualifying criteria, or if the authority wishes to have a limited assurance review by the external auditor, then the fee payable will be £200.

**There is no fee payable if the authority certifies itself as exempt.**

## Reminder letters

Where a supplier is required to send a reminder to any authority, the supplier will charge the authority £40 for each reminder.

## Additional work and variations to the scale fees

If an active authority fails either to submit its Annual Return to the supplier for review by 30 September or (if it is an exempt authority) to provide a certificate of exemption, the supplier will consider issuing a public interest report, the cost of which will be payable by the authority pertaining to the fee income band of that authority as in Table 1 (above).

Extra fees may also be charged, subject to SAAA's approval, in other circumstances, for example where auditors have to:

- consider objections to the accounts from local electors, from the point at which the auditor accepts the objection as valid;
- exercise special powers in relation to the review, such as issuing a report in the public interest; or
- undertake any special investigations, such as those arising from disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Extra fees will be calculated and charged according to the work required, subject to the maximum hourly rates set out in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Maximum hourly rates for additional work at smaller authorities**

STAFF GRADE	MAXIMUM £ PER HOUR
Engagement lead	355

Senior manager/manager	215
Senior auditor	140
Other staff	105

## Value Added Tax

The fee scales exclude Value Added Tax, which will be charged at the prevailing rate on all work undertaken.

**SAAA** - Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited

77 Mansell Street, London E1 8AN [www.saaa.co.uk](http://www.saaa.co.uk)

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