

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 30 March 2023** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(7.30 pm - 8.45 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Paul Maxwell (Chairman)
Councillor Wes Read (Vice-Chairman)

Jason Baker	Charlie Hull	David Recardo
Robin Bastable	Kaysar Hussain	Dean Ruddle
Mike Best	Val Keitch	Gina Seaton
Ray Buckler	Andy Kendall	Peter Seib
Dave Bulmer	Tim Kerley	Garry Shortland
Tony Capozzoli	Mike Lock	Jeny Snell
John Clark	Pauline Lock	Andy Soughton
Nicola Clark	Tony Lock	Mike Stanton
Louise Clarke	Kevin Messenger	Rob Stickland
Adam Dance	Graham Oakes	Lucy Trimnell
Sarah Dyke	Sue Osborne	Gerard Tucker
Karl Gill	Tiffany Osborne	Martin Wale
David Gubbins	Oliver Patrick	William Wallace
Peter Gubbins	Clare Paul	
Mike Hewitson	Crispin Raikes	

Officers:

Jane Portman	Chief Executive
Jan Gamon	Director (Place, Recovery, Arts & Entertainment)
Nicola Hix	Director (Strategy, Support & Environmental Services)
Kirsty Larkins	Director (Service Delivery)
Jill Byron	District Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Robert Orrett	Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager
Angela Cox	Specialist (Democratic Services)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Ella Bending	Case Officer - Communications

117. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Appleby, Neil Bloomfield, Hayward Burt, Martin Carnell, Nick Colbert, Henry Hobhouse, Ben Hodgson, Jenny Kenton, Mike Lewis, Tricia O'Brien, Paul Rowsell and Colin Winder.

118. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 19 January 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

119. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

120. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

A resident of Yeovil advised she had started attending Council meetings a number of years ago for specific issues and had seen that Councillors could not please all residents but had to work within certain regulations. She felt that there was now a good mix of age and gender represented by Councillors and she wished them luck in the new Somerset Council.

A resident of Yeovil said he had been attending Council meetings since 2007 when campaigning to retain the Mudford recreation ground which had remained intact and he had become interested in Council meetings. He recalled past visitors to Council meetings and said some good decisions had been made for the benefit of Yeovil.

121. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman invited Members of Council to join him in a minute of silence to remember Councillor Malcolm Cavill who had recently passed away.

All Members stood for a minute of silence.

The Chairman then paid tribute to Jane Portman, Chief Executive, who would be leaving the Council and he presented her with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of Council members.

The Chief Executive thanked Members and said that it had been a pleasure to serve as Chief Executive for the final 18 months of SSDC. She paid tribute to the Council staff and wished all success moving forward.

The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group paid tribute to the Leader of Council for her leadership during the last 5 years of SSDC and he presented her with a box of flowers on behalf of Council members.

The Leader of Council thanked all Members for the gift and said it was a sad day for SSDC but her leadership was as good as the people surrounding her.

The Chairman wished all Members and officers success in the future.

122. Chairman's Engagements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman said he had attended a very moving service at Wells Cathedral on 12 March to celebrate the five Councils of Somerset and he said that the South Somerset Chairman's Chain of Office would be displayed in Taunton Museum along with the other Somerset Chains of Office.

The list of Chairman's engagements were NOTED.

123. Confirmation of Minutes of Committee meetings held during March 2023 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman asked if Members were content to confirm the final minutes of the Committees of the Council. It was proposed and seconded to accept them as a true record of the meetings and they were signed by the relevant Committee Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Full Council agreed to confirm and authorise the relevant Committee Chair to sign as a correct record the minutes of:-

Area East Committee - 8 March 2023

Area North Committee – 22 Nov 2022

Area South Committee – 8 March 2023

Area West Committee – 15 Feb 2023

Audit Committee – 24 March 2023

District Executive – 2 March 2023

Licensing Committee – 13 Dec 2022

Licensing Sub Committee – 16 Jan 2023

Regulation Committee – 21 March 2023

Scrutiny Committee – 28 Feb 2023

Standards Committee – 6 Sept 2022

Reason: To confirm the final minutes of South Somerset District Council Committees.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

124. Reflections of South Somerset District Council (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman of Council recalled being elected to South Somerset District Council in 2011 and he said it had been a privilege to serve as Chairman for the last 4 years.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Leader of Council, the Deputy Leader, the Leader of the Conservative Group, the Leader of the Independent Group and several Councillors and Aldermen spoke of their pride in representing South Somerset District Council.

125. Sale of commercial development land at Lufton, Yeovil (Lufton 2000 joint venture) (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised that Abbey Manor Developments Ltd had made an offer to buy the Council's interest in the Lufton 2000 Joint Venture in March 2022 and due to movements in the property market the original price had been renegotiated which the Commercial Property, Land and Development Manager had advised was still a good offer. He concluded that the sale would simplify the Council's property portfolio.

There were no questions from Members and the recommendations to sell the Council's share in the Joint Venture in the asset named Lufton 2000 on the terms outlined in the confidential appendix to the report and other recommendations were proposed and seconded and unanimously agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: That Full Council agreed to:-

- a. note the contents of the report.
- b. approve the proposal to sell the Council's share in the Joint Venture in the asset named Lufton 2000 on the terms outlined in the confidential appendix to the report.
- c. authorise the Chief Financial Officer to seek the approval of the Somerset County Council to the sale under the S24 direction.
- d. if the proposal is approved, to delegate the power to the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer approval of detail of the sale.

Reason: To accept the reduced price for the sale of the Council's 50% share in the Lufton 2000 Joint Venture to its joint venture partner Abbey Manor Developments Limited from that agreed in September 2022.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

126. 2021/22 Auditor's Annual Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services asked Members to note the recommendations of the report to improve the future for the Somerset Council.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee advised that officers had worked hard to improve the governance to hand over to the new Somerset Council and he particularly thanked the Monitoring Officer for her work to improve the internal governance of the Council.

There was no debate and Members were content to note the 2021/22 Auditor's Annual Report

RESOLVED: That Full Council agreed to:-

- a. note the Auditor's Annual Report and recommendations.
- b. note and endorse management's proposed responses and actions to the improvement recommendations.

Reason: Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountancy Act requires Full Council to discuss and respond publicly on the Auditor's Annual Report and the Council's management response.

127. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 11)

The Leader of Council introduced the report and invited questions.

There were no questions and the report of executive decisions was NOTED.

128. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 12)

The Chairman of the Audit Committee noted that the committee had met for the final time the previous week. He regretted that that the finalised Auditor's Annual Report had not been ready to present to Council because of the nature of the Council's assets but he confirmed that it would be presented to the Somerset Council Audit Committee. He thanked the Audit Committee members, the officers who had supported them and the External Auditors, Grant Thornton.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services thanked the Audit Committee members for their critical friend role.

The report of the Audit Committee was NOTED.

129. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 13)

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said they had worked well together over the last 4 years and had achieved good outcomes for the council. He also thanked the officers who assisted them.

He concluded by thanking the Chairman of Council for his chairing of Council meetings, particularly during the Covid pandemic when meetings had been held on-line.

130. Motions (Agenda Item 14)

There were no Motions submitted by Members.

131. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 15)

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

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Chairman

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Date