

**WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 16 May 2012 at 2.30 pm**  
**In the Council Chamber, Williton**

**Present:**

Councillor A F Knight ..... Chairman

Councillor A M Chick	Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor H J W Davies	Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor G S Dowding	Councillor P N Grierson
Councillor A P Hadley	Councillor B Heywood
Councillor K V Kravis	Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor E May	Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor S J Pugsley	Councillor D D Ross
Councillor K M Mills	Councillor K J Ross
Councillor D J Sanders	Councillor M A Smith
Councillor T Taylor	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor D J Westcott

**Officers in Attendance:**

Chief Executive (A Dyer)  
Corporate Director & Monitoring Officer (B Lang)  
Section 151 Officer (G Carne)  
Group Manager – Housing & Community (I Timms)  
Administrative Support (E Day)  
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

The Meeting was opened with prayers led by the Reverend Bethan Guttridge.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman made the following announcements:

25 March 2012	Attended the legal service and presentation of the new High Sheriff of Somerset at Well Cathedral.
31 March 2012	Attended a celebration of the 150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Railway reaching Watchet.
5 April 2012	Attended the opening exhibition of Gallery 41 in Swain Street, Watchet
14 April 2012	Attended a Mayoral Charity Pub Crawl around the boozers of Frome.
21 April 2012	Quiz at Washford Village Hall in aid of raising funds for Keith Hunts St Margarets Hospice Appeal. Thanks to those who attended.

22 April 2012	Attended St. George's Day Parade and Service at Dunster held and organized by the Scouting movement and supported by the Guiding movement. Accompanied by Cllr K Mills. Cllr A Chick was also a guest.
30 April 2012	Attended the Pupil Parliament held in the Council Chamber. Cllr E May also attended.
10 May 2012	Attended concert at St. Decuman's Church with the Choral Society. Supported by Cllrs May, Turner and Westcott.
11 May 2012	Civic Dinner for the new Mayor of Taunton Deane at Somerset County Cricket Club.

At this point the Chairman presented to Philip West, Accounting Technician, his certificate for successfully completing and becoming a Qualified Accountant Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. There was a short break in the proceedings as they left the Chamber briefly for photographs.

#### **C1 Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor D D Ross be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor D Ross thanked Councillors for electing him as Chairman particularly considering the Council's political affiliation and praised the Chairmen that had gone before him. He believed that in the face of the Council's huge challenges the spirit of the Council's togetherness would sustain them when putting forward robust views all the while showing respect to colleagues and maintaining tolerance and friendship, which makes West Somerset unique.

Councillor Taylor thanked Councillor Knight for all his hard work and enhancing the Council's reputation. Councillor Melhuish praised Councillor Knight for his equanimity under difficult circumstances and the Chief Executive thanked Councillor Knight on behalf of all the staff for his excellent chairing skills and presented him with a post Chairman's badge. In response, Councillor Knight thanked Councillors and staff for their support during his year as Chairman; he had felt it an honour to represent the Council. He recognised that Councillors Pugsley and K Ross had been elected members for the authority for 25 years on this very day.

#### **C2 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor G S Dowding be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

At this point there was a short adjournment in the proceedings to allow for photographs of the incoming and outgoing Chairmen.

During the adjournment the fire alarm sounded for the building to be evacuated as part of a fire drill. On returning to the building the meeting proceeded according to the agenda.

**C3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Freeman, S Y Goss, K M Mills and L W Smith.

**C4 Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr P N Grierson	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew	All Items	Somerset County Council	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All Items	Brompton Ralph	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted

**C5 Minutes**

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21 March 2012 and Special Council held on 16 April 2012, circulated with the Agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 21 March 2012 and Special Council held on 16 April 2012, be confirmed as a correct record.

**C6 Public Participation**

No member of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

**C7 Appointment of Leader**

The Chairman advised that although Councillor Taylor had been appointed last year as Leader of the Council for four years, Councillor Taylor wished to provide Council with the opportunity to reconsider each year.

**RESOLVED** that the appointment of Councillor T Taylor be confirmed for the ensuing municipal year.

**C8 Appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor C Morgan be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

**C9 Cabinet**

The Leader announced the following appointments and portfolios:

<b>CABINET</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Group</b>	<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Shadow Portfolios</b>
Councillor D J Sanders	Conservative	Regeneration and Economic Growth	Councillor K J Ross
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative	Housing, Environmental Health and Licensing	Councillor A Hadley
Councillor S J Pugsley	Conservative	Executive Support and Democracy	Councillor P Murphy
Councillor D Westcott	Conservative	Community and Customer	Councillor E May
Councillor T Taylor	Conservative	<b>Leader</b> and Performance and Corporate Support	Councillor I Melhuish
Councillor C Morgan	Conservative	Environment	Councillor J Freeman
Councillor K V Kravis	Conservative	Resources and Central Support	Councillor D Ross

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor I Melhuish, announced the shadow portfolio holders as detailed in the table above.

**C10 Allocation of Seats to Committees**

**RESOLVED** that the nominations for Committee seats made by the political groups be ratified and that the composition of the Committees be as detailed below.

<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>9 seats in total</b>	
<b>Conservative 6</b>	
<b>Independent 3</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
Councillor G S Dowding	Conservative
Councillor R Lillis	Conservative
Councillor B Heywood	Conservative
Councillor P Grierson	Conservative
Councillor M Chilcott	Conservative
Councillor M Dewdney	Conservative
Councillor J Freeman	Independent
Councillor D Ross	Independent
Councillor K J Ross	Independent

<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>15 seats in total</b>	
<b>Conservative 10</b>	
<b>Independent 5</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
Councillor A F Knight	Conservative
Councillor S J Pugsley	Conservative
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative
Councillor A Chick	Conservative
Councillor G S Dowding	Conservative
Councillor C Morgan	Conservative
Councillor B Heywood	Conservative
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	Conservative
Councillor L Smith	Conservative
Councillor K Mills	Conservative
Councillor A Hadley	Independent
Councillor E May	Independent
Councillor D Ross	Independent
Councillor I Melhuish	Independent
Councillor M Smith	Independent

<b>LICENSING COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>11 seats in total</b>	
<b>Conservative 8</b>	
<b>Independent 3</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Group</b>
Councillor D J Westcott	Conservative
Councillor D Sanders	Conservative

Councillor P Grierson	Conservative
Councillor M Dewdney	Conservative
Councillor L Smith	Conservative
Councillor A Chick	Conservative
Councillor R Lillis	Conservative
Councillor S Goss	Conservative
Councillor A Hadley	Independent
Councillor H J W Davies	Independent
Councillor E May	Independent

<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>7 seats in total</b>	
<b>Conservative 5</b>	
<b>Independent 2</b>	
Name	Political Group
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	Conservative
Councillor S Goss	Conservative
Councillor M Chilcott	Conservative
Councillor R Lillis	Conservative
Councillor K Mills	Conservative
Councillor E May	Independent
Councillor P Murphy	Independent
Reverend V Woods	Co-opted Member

<b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL</b>	
<b>8 seats in total</b>	
<b>Conservative 5</b>	
<b>Independent 3</b>	
Name	Political Group
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative
Councillor A F Knight	Conservative
Councillor B Heywood	Conservative
Councillor S Goss	Conservative
Councillor C Morgan	Conservative
Councillor K J Ross	Independent
Councillor I Melhuish	Independent
Councillor M Smith	Independent

<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
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<b>9 Seats in total</b>
<b>3 West Somerset District Councillors</b>
<b>3 Independent Members</b>
<b>3 Parish/Town Councillors</b>
Councillor H J W Davies
Councillor P Grierson
Councillor D J Westcott

**C11 Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees**

The following appointments were made –

**Scrutiny Committee**

Chairman Councillor K J Ross  
 Vice Chairman Councillor G S Dowding

**Planning Committee**

Chairman Councillor A F Knight  
 Vice Chairman Councillor I R Melhuish

**Licensing Committee**

Chairman Councillor H J W Davies  
 Vice Chairman Councillor D J Westcott

**Audit Committee**

Chairman Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew  
 Vice Chairman Councillor E May

**Local Development Panel**

Chairman Councillor K H Turner  
 Vice Chairman Councillor C Morgan

**C12 Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Councillor K Turner proposed that Members representing outside bodies provide a report for information at an appropriate time during the year, this was seconded by Councillor M O A Dewdney.

During the discussion the Group Manager – Housing and Community suggested that he report to Council through the Corporate PAG on the process.

**RESOLVED (1)** that Members appointed to serve on Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2012-13 be requested to provide an information report part way through the year.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the Members appointed to serve on Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2012-2013 be as follows –

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>REPS 2012/2013</b>
Management Committee of Broadlands	Councillor M Chilcott Councillor P Grierson

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MATA Regal Theatre Co Ltd	Councillor I R Melhuish
Watchet Youth Centre	Councillor D J Westcott
Somerset Rural Youth Project	Councillor E May
Early Childhood & Child Care Network Meetings	Councillor E May Deputy: Councillor D J Westcott
Strategic Partnership Group West Somerset Sports and Leisure Centre	Councillor I Melhuish Councillor L Smith
Somerset County Playing Fields Association	Councillor H J W Davies
Somerset Public Transport Forum	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew Sub: Councillor K Mills
Exmoor National Park (politically balanced)	Councillor S J Pugsley Councillor J Freeman Councillor C Morgan Councillor T Taylor
Somerset Building Preservation Trust	Councillor H J W Davies Deputy: Councillor G Dowding
The Parrett Drainage Board	Councillor R Lillis (Dunster Area) Councillor C Morgan (Stockland Area)
Wessex Water Customer Liaison Panels	Councillor A Chick
Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee (politically balanced)	Councillor C Morgan Councillor H J W Davies Councillor G S Dowding
West Somerset Advice Bureau	Councillor P Grierson
ENGAGE - West Somerset Voluntary Sector Development agency	Councillor R Lillis
Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group (politically balanced)	Councillor C Morgan Councillor S Goss Councillor M Smith
Taunton & Somerset NHS Trust – Foundation Trust Council of Governors	Councillor D Ross
Minehead EYE Management Committee	Councillor D J Westcott Deputy: Councillor E May
Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership	Councillor G S Dowding
Somerset Local Access Forum	Councillor C Morgan
Minehead Visioning Group	Councillor A Hadley Councillor R Lillis
Rural Commission	Councillor S J Pugsley Councillor B Heywood
Police and Crime Panel	Leader: Councillor T Taylor Deputy: Councillor C Morgan
Health and Wellbeing Board	Leader: Councillor T Taylor Deputy: Councillor K Turner



**C13 The Localism Act 2011 – Preparing for the Implementation of the new Ethical Standards Regime**

(Report No. WSC 73/12, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to update Council on the work undertaken to date in regard to the preparation for the implementation of the new Ethical Standards Regime following the Localism Act 2011 and recommending the next steps in regard to the way forward.

The Lead Member for Democratic Services presented the report, which set out the proposed changes to the Council's standards regime, the implementation of which could be delayed beyond the anticipated commencement date of 1 July 2012. In the interim, it was proposed that the current Standards Committee would continue in its current form. The proposal was that

existing members continue to serve and recruitment of town/parish councillors and independent members of the proposed West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee be conducted in due course. It was expected that a further report would be taken to Council in June to consider recommendations as to the appointment of an independent person. The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report and they were duly seconded by Councillor M O A Dewdney.

During the course of the debate Councillor P Murphy asked what progress was being made throughout the County. It was important all parish and town councils signed up to the code of conduct and had the same standards and that the public had a right to expect members to abide by them.

In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that whilst under the new regime councillors would no longer have to give an undertaking in a declaration of acceptance of office to comply with a statutory code of conduct, the Council would be required to adopt a new code of conduct governing elected and co-opted members when acting in that capacity. The Somerset Monitoring Officers Group were in the process of trying to draft a code that all authorities would consider using in Somerset, including town and parish councils.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the work undertaken to date in relation to preparing the implementation of the new Ethical Standards Regime, be noted.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the current Standards Committee continue in its present form to operate until the implementation of the new regime on 1 July 2012 or any later date as determined by the Secretary of State.

**RESOLVED (3)** that the Council agree to the principle of establishing, with effect from 1 July 2012 or any later date as determined by the Secretary of State, a West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee based on the composition of three district councillors (to be politically balanced), three town/parish councillors and three independent members so that all members have equal voting rights to maintain the independence and objectivity of the Committee.

**RESOLVED (4)** that the terms of reference of the West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee be as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**RESOLVED (5)** that in order to assist with the smooth transition to the new Ethical Standards Regime, for at least the first twelve months, to retain the current three district councillors, subject to the political proportionality requirements being met, and the two serving town/parish councillors and the two serving independent members of the existing Standards Committee on the new West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee.

**RESOLVED (6)** that, subject to the adoption of the above recommendations, arrangements be put in place to recruit to fill the remaining vacancies in respect of town/parish councillors and independent members of the proposed West Somerset Standards Advisory Committee.

**RESOLVED (7)** that arrangements be put in place to advertise a vacancy for the appointment of one independent person as defined in the Localism Act 2011 on the basis of working with the other local authorities in Somerset to utilize appointed independent persons from across the County to act as a reserve in West Somerset cases should that prove necessary.

**RESOLVED (8)** that a further report be submitted to the June meeting of the Council to:

- a) adopt a new Code of Conduct based on the principles set out in the Localism Act 2011;
- b) endorse that all town and parish councillors in West Somerset be encouraged to adopt the same form of Code of Conduct as that referred to in (a) above;
- c) adopt arrangements for dealing with complaints in regard to district, town and parish councillors under the new regime;
- d) consider any recommendation for the appointment of an Independent Person; and
- e) consider any miscellaneous issues relating to the requirements set out in the Localism act 2011 in respect of the new Ethical Standards Regime.

**C14 Authorisation of Officers – Port Medical Officer Functions**

(Report No. WSC 75/12, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to request Council to update the Scheme of Delegation to authorise named individuals to act on its behalf enabling the discharge of functions relating to port medical officers.

The Lead Member for Housing, Environmental Health & Licensing proposed the recommendation of the report and it was seconded by Councillor D Westcott.

**RESOLVED** that the Council authorises the named individuals, in Appendix A to the report, to act as Port Medical Officers under the requirements of the Public Health Acts.

**C15 Consultation on Changes to National Park Governance**

(Report No. WSC 71/12, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek Council's approval of a submission to the department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) relating to proposed changes of governance arrangements of National Parks.

The Lead Member for Democratic Services presented the report, he advised that the consultation did raise issues, such as, the implementation of direct elections, which could lead to fewer members, and split parishes (part in Exmoor National Park and part in West Somerset) creating voting problems: who would retain the register and who would bear the cost of elections, etc. Further, that a limit to the maximum term of appointment for members had proved controversial and it appeared National Parks, as a whole, would not wish for this clause to be introduced. He proposed the recommendation of the report, which was duly seconded by Councillor T Taylor.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Exmoor National Park were currently in the process of responding to the consultation and that the Council's draft response was similar to that of Exmoor National Park.

**RESOLVED** that the response to DEFRA in regard to the consultation on changes to the National Park governance, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved and submitted without amendments.

The meeting closed at 3.52 pm.