

## Taunton Charter Trustees - 21 June 2022

Present: Councillor Sue Lees (Chair)

Councillors Brenda Weston, Lee Baker, Simon Coles, Tom Deakin,  
Caroline Ellis, Marcia Hill, Richard Lees, Libby Lisgo and Francesca Smith

Officers: Jo Comer, Marcus Prouse and Richard Venn

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

### 1. Election of Mayor Of Taunton

The Mayor opened the meeting, and invited her chaplain, Reverend James Clapham, to open the meeting with a short prayer.

Councillor Francesca Smith proposed and Councillor Richard Lees seconded the following motion, which was carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

"That Councillor Susan Lees be elected Mayor of Taunton for the ensuing year".

Councillor Susan Lees then repeated and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### 2. Deputy Mayor of Taunton

Councillor Francesca Smith proposed and Councillor Lee Baker seconded the following motion, which was carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

"That Councillor Brenda Weston be elected Deputy Mayor of Taunton for the ensuing year".

Councillor Brenda Weston then repeated and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### 3. Appointment of Civic Marshal

Councillor Smith proposed that Councillor Marcia Hill be appointed Civic Marshal for the ensuing municipal year. Councillor Simon Coles seconded the proposal.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Marcia Hill be appointed the Civic Marshal for the Taunton Charter Trustees for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

### 4. The Mayor will present to Councillor Smith her Past Mayor Badge

The Mayor requested that Councillor Francesca Smith came forward to be presented with her Past Mayor Badge as was customary, following the motion that was carried unanimously last year that the best thanks of the Charter Trustees be accorded to Councillor Francesca Smith for the manner in which she has discharged the duties of the office of Mayor of the Town during her two terms of office. The Mayor also requested that Mr Peter Smith came forward to be presented with his Past Consort's Badge.

5. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Booth, Smith-Roberts and Prior-Sankey.

6. **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 & SCC	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	SCC & 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 F Smith	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted

7. **Minutes of the previous meetings of the Taunton Charter Trustees**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 circulated with the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Taunton Charter Trustees held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

8. **To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standing Committee 2021/22**

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees received and considered reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standing Committee meetings held in 2021/22.

9. **Petitions**

The Clerk advised that no petitions had been received.

10. **Public Participation**

The Clerk advised that no members of the public had requested to speak.

11. **Communications**

The Mayor gave a brief resume of the past few months activities;

- Visited Quantock House (twice!)
- Opening of Kingfisher Court
- Many concerts and one of her passions
- Special events at Wells Cathedral e.g. Somerset Day Service.
- Celebrated the Queens Platinum Jubilee event in Vivary Park (despite the unkind weather).
- Opening of The Lighting Company shop.
- Celebrated the Corgi Trail – even the Mayoral Corgi painted by Sarah.
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for her support when the Mayor developed Covid.

12. **Appointment of Members of the Standing Committee 2022/23**

**RESOLVED** to defer consideration of this item to allow the membership of the Committee to be discussed at Group meetings.

13. **Final External Auditor Report for 2020-21**

The Clerk gave a brief introduction to this item. The draft report had been presented to an earlier meeting of the Charter Trustees and members had been advised that a couple of queries were still being worked through, which is why the final report had come through so late. The Clerk stated it was important for the Charter Trustees to consider the report and any action required. He had taken on board a number of their recommendations around how to correctly complete the Annual Governance Return.

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

- Councillors requested further information on the recommendations that had been made.

- *The Clerk clarified that in the first year of operation the Charter Trustees had been given a budget by the Council and there were ways that the information had to be presented that had to be clarified.*
- *The recommendations made by the External Auditor on how to complete the Annual Governance Return had been taken on board and actioned such as Staff costs.*

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees considered the Final External Auditor Report for 2020-21 and considered that no further actions were required.

14. **Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 - TO FOLLOW**

The Clerk advised that he had chased the Internal Auditor for an update on the report and the expectation that it would be available for this meeting, as it would have to be submitted along with the Annual Governance Return to the External Auditor by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022. The hope was that this would come through prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> July and the Clerk would keep the Charter Trustees updated.

- Cllr Lisgo asked for it to be minuted her disquiet over this missing report.
- A question was raised as to why South West Audit Partnership do not carry out Internal Audit function for the Charter Trustees?
- *It was confirmed that they had not responded to Officer queries but this could conceivably be looked at again when a potential Town Council was created.*

**RESOLVED** that the Charter Trustees deferred this item to their next meeting due to the unavailability of the report.

15. **Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**

The Clerk introduced this item which was to approve the Annual Governance Statement for submission to the Charter Trustee's external Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP. The Clerk advised that he had had to place a negative in Box 5 which was about an undertaking of an assessment of risks, and an explanation had been provided for the External Auditors and how this would be addressed. This explainer document had also been attached to the Agenda.

**RESOLVED** to approve:

- a) the Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022 for submission to the Taunton Charter Trustees External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP.
- b) That a Draft Action Plan and Draft Risk Register is circulated to the Charter Trustees and then taken to a Special Meeting of the Charter Trustees in July 2022 to ensure compliance for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

16. **Accounting Statements 2021/22**

The Clerk introduced the item which was to approve the Draft Accounting Statements 2021/2022 for submission to the Charter Trustee's external Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Draft Accounting Statements 2021/2022 for submission to the Charter Trustee's external Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP.

17. **Questions under Standing Order 8**

There were no questions made under Standing Order 8.

18. **Dates of future meetings**

The Clerk advised that he had not prepared a full list of meetings for the year ahead, beyond a meeting in July which would need to be held to consider the Community Governance Review Consultation Stage 2. The Clerk advised that further dates would be circulated.

19. **Any items which the Mayor considers to be urgent business**

The Mayor advised of the appointment of a new Sergeant at Mace, Mr Richard Venn. She formally welcomed Richard to the role and presented him with his badge from the Guild of Mace Bearers.

(The Meeting ended at 6.30 pm)