



Credition Town Council



Minutes of the Meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 6 November 2007

Present:	Councillors	Mr R Adams (Chairman) Mr W Brown (part meeting) Miss J Harris Mr F Letch (Vice Chairman) Mrs E Brookes-Hocking Mr P Finnegan Mr D Nation Mr D Sansom Mr R Wright Mr S Baker
Absent		
In Attendance:	Clerk Councillor Press Public	Mr M Maggs Mr N Way (part meeting) 2 14

Prior to the start of the meeting, the MDDC Director of Community Services and the MDDC Chairman of the Leisure Services Procurement Sub Committee made a short presentation and answered questions from councillors and members of the public. The Chairman expressed his thanks and invited members of the public to stay for the debate on the agenda item which, for convenience, would be brought forward. (MDDC briefing notes are appended)

GENERAL PURPOSES (*items for discussion and determination*)

44. Apologies

None received. Councillor Brown, who was unwell, tendered his apologies after the MDDC presentation and left the meeting.

45. Declarations of Interest

Personal	Councillor Harris	Minute 48b (07/02064/ARM)
Prejudicial	Councillor Letch	Minute 48b (07/02068/FULL)
Personal	Councillor Wright	Minute 48b (07/02032/FULL) (07/02068/FULL)
Prejudicial	Councillor Adams	Minute 51
Prejudicial	Councillor Brookes-Hocking	Minute 51
Personal	Councillor Harris	Minute 51
Personal	Councillor Nation	Minute 51
Personal	Councillor Wright	Minute 51

Prejudicial	Councillor Adams	Minute 53b
Personal	Councillor Wright	Minute 53a
Personal	Councillor Wright	Minute 57
Code of Conduct	Councillor Nation Councillor Way Councillor Wright	As members of more than one authority, declared that any views or opinions expressed at this meeting would be provisional and would not prejudice any views expressed at a meeting of another authority.

46. Public Question Time

Councillor Letch, having declared a prejudicial interest in planning application 07/02068/FULL, made representations and outlined his objections to the proposal. He then, immediately, left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Further representations were made by a member of the public in respect of this application.

47. Chairman's Announcements and Meeting Management

The Chairman of the Council asked for as many members as possible to attend the Remembrance Service on 11 November and to inform the Clerk of numbers. She also thanked members for attending the Twinning reception, the Garden of Remembrance service and the Council litter pick at Barnfield.

48. Planning

a) *Planning Decisions.*

Noted. Decisions notified by the planning authority are appended.

b) *Planning Applications.*

Comments made in respect of planning applications considered at this meeting are appended.

Councillor Letch declared a Prejudicial Interest in Application 07/02068/FULL and left the chamber for the duration of discussion on that item.

c) *Planning Applications and Items for Determination week ending Tuesday 6 November 2007.*

None.

49. General Purposes Committee Minutes

The Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting of 2 October 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

50. MDDC Leisure Services

Members expressed concern over the outsourcing of leisure centre management and the admitted loss of control which could put the provision of services at risk.

Following questions from committee members and public at the earlier presentation and lack of firm guarantees on the provision of certain leisure services, it was decided to object to the possible future loss of facilities and help co-ordinate opposition to MDDC's proposals by copying the Council's objections to other authorities and organisations (town and parish councils, leisure centre user groups etc). Councillor Brookes-Hocking agreed to help provide contact details.

GENERAL PURPOSES *(item for discussion and recommendation)*

51. Car Parking

The Chairman declared a prejudicial interest and left the meeting for the duration of the debate on this item. The Vice Chairman took the Chair.

Councillor Brookes-Hocking declared a prejudicial interest in matters relating to car parking on the Town Square and left the meeting for aspects of the debate on this issue only.

Representations were allowed from a member of the Crediton & District Access Group who asked the Council to take into account, as part of the current parking review, the need for properly marked disabled parking bays. More space, particularly at the rear of vehicles, is needed to accommodate the use of mobility scooters and wheelchairs. The Town Square cede surface was considered unsuitable for use by drivers with disabilities.

The committee supported these points and agreed to recommend that the Council pass the comments to MDDC for consideration as part of the review.

It was also reported by a member that the RDA had not placed a "no-parking" condition on the Town Square. However, the design and construction of the Square could not accommodate general parking; appropriate drainage systems and resurfacing with a more durable material would have to be considered and at considerable cost.

Councillor Brookes-Hocking returned to the meeting and presented her report which was received and endorsed by the committee with thanks for her efforts. It was agreed to recommend that a copy of the report be sent to MDDC, DCC and the Chamber of Commerce with a request for their comments.

Copy of report appended.

GENERAL PURPOSES (*items for discussion and determination*)

52. Allotments

Deferred to next meeting due to pressure of business. However, the Clerk provided a brief update and outlined the need for discussion.

53. Peoples Park

a) Tree Works

Three quotations were received to carry out the works detailed in the consultant arboriculturalist's report. Quotation 3 was approved. The Clerk to action.

b) Litter Bins

The Chairman declared a prejudicial interest and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion on this item. The Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

It was reported that offers to sponsor four bins had been received. The design was considered and approved. The Clerk and Councillor Wright to progress installation subject to the approval of the sponsors on signage and finish/decoration of the bins.

Councillor Wright was thanked for his efforts in obtaining sponsorship.

54. Parish Lengthsman

Following discussion at a previous meeting and the Council's concern over the programmed dates, the Clerk provided an update with a suggestion to request an increase in the frequency of visits. This was approved with the suggestion of up to four visits of 2 to 3 days each.

GENERAL PURPOSES (*item for discussion and recommendation*)

55. Town Guide

Deferred to next meeting due to pressure of business.

56. Bus Services

Deferred to next meeting due to pressure of business.

57. CCTV

Councillors Adams and Wright reported on their visit to Cullompton Town Council and the Tiverton Control Centre. The Clerk provided details on CCTV training and costs. The Council's suggested amendments to the license agreement for the installation of camera 3 had been sent to the Chairman of the CCTV Working Group. No further progress had been made following discussion at the previous Council meeting.

It was agreed to recommend that the current situation be noted.

Councillor Way left the meeting.

58. Town Council Representative

The committee recommended the nomination of Councillor Nation as the Council's representative on the newly formed Crediton Hospital Working Party.

59. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1. MDDC:- Meeting with Mid Devon Parish & Town Clerks; 13 Nov. 2007.
2. DCC:- Annual Parish Paths partnership; Christmas Workshops 2007. Clerk to arrange Sub Committee meeting to discuss 2008 programme.
3. Crediton Chamber of Commerce:- Notice of Meeting & Agenda.
4. MDDC:- Summons & Agenda; Council Meeting, 31 October 2007.
5. Meg Booth; DCC:- E-mail; St Lawrence Green Bus Stop; Road markings.
6. EDP Drug & Alcohol Services:- "Detox for Devon".
7. DCC – Newcombes Day Centre – Tim Johnson's last day as TC helper. Clerk to write letter of thanks.
8. NALC/SLCC National Salary Awards for Clerks 2007-8.
9. SLCC – details on Practitioner's Conference for Clerks.
10. Crediton Festival 2009 – minutes of meeting held on 22 October.
11. Access Group – invitation to attend launch of Access Guide – 28 November in Boniface Centre at 12 to 2pm. Members to RSVP.

BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD

60. Boniface Allotments Association

The next meeting of the Association would be 19 November in the Council Chamber.

Meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Signed:

(Chairman)

Date:

The Council is drawing up a shortlist of companies who have expressed interest in running leisure centres

Background on the process to date

During the fundamental leisure service review in 2003 it was decided that a key aim would be to investigate and implement the best method of operational management for Mid Devon leisure facilities'. In July 2004 funds were made available to employ specialist consultants to assist with this project, Strategic Leisure Ltd (SLL). The portfolio of facilities to be investigated being; Tiverton Swimming Pool (now Exe Valley Leisure Centre), Lords Meadow Leisure Centre and Culm Valley Sports Centre.

In May 2005 SLL produced an options appraisal that assessed the varying different methods of managing the leisure sites:

- Status Quo – service remains the same.
- Mixed economy – different service providers for different facilities
- Private sector partnership
- Private sector 'hybrid trust'
- Establishment of a new Not For Profit distributing Organisation (NPDO often in the form of a Trust)
- Partnership with an existing NPDO.

A Working group was established comprising of Councillors and officers and the lead advisor (SLL). The recommendation from the options appraisal was for the partnership with an existing NPDO. It was recommended that a soft market test exercise be implemented to test the market to see whether there was actual interest in the Mid Devon facilities. In May 2006 several leisure operators were contacted, both local and further a field, and this resulted in five operators expressing an interest in Mid Devon.

In March 2007 a formal Leisure Procurement Sub Committee was established to progress the project to the shortlist stage. The decision-making powers of this group were:

- Approval of the partnership strategy
- Approval of the tender shortlist
- Approval of the final invitation to tender and associated documents.

To date an advert has gone out in the leisure press seeking expressions of interest to which nine companies actually returned the pre tender questionnaire information. A shortlist has been considered and is likely to have a cross section of leisure operators in it i.e. private contractor, hybrid Trusts and 'Local Authority' Trusts.

Issues, considerations and decisions

Partnership documentation.

Several important documents are currently being finalised that will dictate how the new contractor will operate the sites and what outcomes the Council require from the partnership.

A key document is the *Minimum Requirements Document*, this document outlines the minimum standards that will be expected from a new contractor and includes such issues as

programming, pricing, health and safety and staffing issues. This is reaching its final stages and will be based on the recommendations from the external leisure advisor and members of the Leisure Procurement

Sub Committee (due to be disbanded in November 2007 due to the new council structure). Progress and decisions made at the Sub Committee can be found at [Leisure Procurement Sub-Committee](#) . A detailed *Performance Plan* has been developed which contains over 50 performance indicators ranging from expected attendance levels to staffing issues. It covers many other areas including customer satisfaction, health and safety, equality and financial performance.

The underpinning document to the whole process is the *Partnership Philosophy Document* which outlines the key principles and ethos behind the procurement project and the expectations of the Council of the new contractor. This document should provide a basis for aligning the synergy of both MDDC and the new contractor and ensure that both understand and agree the outcomes from the partnership.

Considerations.

Programming: A survey carried out at the leisure centres concerning the current programming of the sites gave the Sub Committee Members a clear indication of what the needs of the users were in terms of future programming. This survey demonstrated that most users were happy with the current balance of casual usage vs. programmed sessions, but there were a significant number who would prefer more casual time if it was possible. A number of programmed activities will be protected for the duration of the contract and these will be decided by the Sub Committee. It is envisaged that to ensure all clubs and organisations have an opportunity to negotiate future long-term bookings with the new contractor that a period of 18 months of their current bookings be protected.

Pricing: Certain core prices will be protected and thus determined by the Council annually, others will be left to the new contractor to create, which will be based on market forces. Pricing will be reviewed annually as is the current practice.

Evaluation: the criteria and weighting for the evaluation of the tenders has been decided and is contained in the Minutes of the Sub Committee (see [Minutes 18 July 2007](#)). The evaluation panel has yet to be formed but will include senior officers, the lead advisor, the legal advisor and councillors.

Decisions made to date.

Minutes of the Sub Committee since its commencement are available at [Leisure Procurement Sub-Committee](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Why is the Council seeking to have the leisure centres managed by an external organisation?

Answer: Under Best Value legislation the Council has a duty to deliver its services in the most economic, efficient and effective way. There are financial and operational benefits to having the facilities managed by an external organisation. This will help the Council reduce the revenue cost of the service and also enable the Council to attract essential investment in the facilities over the longer term?

Question: If there is a transfer, when will it happen?

Answer: Whilst there is a project plan detailing all the tasks to be completed in the project the completion date is reviewed regularly and subject to change. Original timetables had targeted April 2008 as a transfer date but this is now more likely to be June/July 2008.

Question: What will I be paying for my activities if there is a transfer?

Answer: The Sub Committee has deliberated for a long time over this issue. Several activity charges will be 'protected' which means that the Council will set these charges throughout the contract. The activities chosen for protection are: junior swim, junior swim lesson, adult swim, casual fitness session and a GP referral session. Contractors will be asked to provide their proposed set of charges during the evaluation

stage and the panel will assess this in terms of feasibility, accessibility and achieving corporate aims. Concessionary price discounts will also be controlled by the Council.

Question: What will happen to the staff?

Answer: The existing staff will transfer under the TUPE regulations. There are of course, options for the new contractor to re-organise the staff which could involve structural/role changes. Contractors will be asked for their staffing structures during the evaluation process so that the Council can assess the health and safety implications and any operational issues that may arise. The staff union Unison are involved in the process and advising members, they will have some input into the evaluation process. New staff to the contract will be protected under the Workforce Matters Code which is currently being reviewed by the Council.

Question: Are the Council selling off the buildings?

Answer: No, Ownership of the buildings remains with the Council. The contract is organised that reflects a tenant/landlord relationship and is likely to last for 10 years with an option to extend for an extra 5 years. Planned preventative maintenance work will be retained by the Council to safeguard against 'asset stripping' and to ensure that the buildings will be operational for many years to come.

Question: Why haven't the Council set up their own leisure Trust like East Devon and Taunton Deane have?

Answer: Leisure Trusts are becoming more and more popular and offer some very real savings and efficiencies. However, an options appraisal was carried out by Strategic Leisure Ltd in May 2005, which considered options available to the Council in the future management of the leisure centres. One option considered was setting up a Trust for Mid Devon, however this carried some risks one of which was the limited turnover and the size of the portfolio, which would make the option less attractive than other options available. The favoured option was partnering with an existing Trust; this was later altered to a full 'open' tender process (including private companies) to avoid challenge from some leisure operators for being anti-competitive.

Questions: How are local people going to be involved in how the centres run under a new contractor?

Answer: Within the Performance Plan new contractors will have to prove that they are liaising with customers in a proactive way and considering their views. Within the evaluation stage contractors will be asked about how they propose to operate the contract to include local representation. For some contractors this may involve the creation of a board of trustees that are made up from members of the Mid Devon community, other contractors may suggest other methods.

Question: Will any of the leisure centres close?

Answer: No the Council's intention is that this Contract will ensure the continued availability of the leisure centres to the community. Sports and leisure centres are deemed by the Government to be a discretionary service therefore the Council doesn't have to have any. MDDC has made a commitment to leisure in terms of investment over many years and wishes to see that continue. This transfer to an outside organisation is seen as the best way to keep facilities open, reduce the cost to the Council Tax payer and ensure the facilities are kept up to date with investment in the facilities.

PLANNING DECISIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING 6 NOVEMBER 2007

Planning Decisions – as notified by the Planning Authority:

DECISION	Type - Approved					
	Number 07/01519/FULL (18/10/07)	Applicant David Warden Crediton Car MOT Centre Fordton Crediton EX17 3DH	Agent Jerry Saunders Michael Thorne Construction Bishops Court Garden Clyst St Mary Exeter EX5 1DH	Location Miles of Cars Commonmarsh Lane Lords Meadow Industrial Estate Crediton Devon EX17 1HJ	Proposal Erection of a new industrial unit	Officer Mr Delwyn Matthews
DECISION	Type - Application					
	Number 07/01742/FULL (18/10/07)	Applicant Mr & Mrs C Riddaway C/O Keith Mortimer Upper Park 2 Searle Street Crediton EX17 2AT	Agent	Location 9 Tuckers Meadow Crediton Devon EX17 3NT	Proposal Erection of two storey extension	Officer Mr Charles Bladon
DECISION	Type - Application Withdrawn					
	Number 07/01743/FULL (24/10/07)	Applicant Mr J Peck 3 Creedy Vale Units Down End Lords Meadow Crediton EX17 1HN	Agent	Location Dyfed Steels Ltd Unit 2 Marsh Lane Lords Meadow Industrial Estate Crediton Devon EX17 1ES	Proposal Removal of condition (1) of planning consent 92/0285 to allow unrestricted class B2 use	Officer Mr Keith Garside

DECISION	Type - Approved	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	Number 07/01733/FULL (18/10/07)	Mr & Mrs Jones 8 Chapel Downs Road Crediton EX17 2EB	Coastal Windows and Conservatories Unit 8 Silverhills Road Decoy Industrial Estate Newton Abbot TQ12 5LZ	8 Chapel Downs Road Crediton Devon EX17 2EB	Erection of a conservatory	Mr Charles Bladon
DECISION	Type - Approved	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	Number 07/01780/FULL (18/10/07)	Mr & Mrs Rowe Orchard House Western Road Crediton EX17 3NF		Orchard House Western Road Crediton Devon EX17 3NF	Retention of raised patio	Miss Tina Maryan
DECISION	Type - Application Withdrawn	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	Number 07/01760/FULL (26/10/07)	Mr S Reed C/o Mr W Porritt Bargains Farm Spreyton Crediton EX17 5AL		The Bungalow Charlotte Street Crediton Devon EX17 3BE	Erection of 2 dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling	Mr Delwyn Matthews
DECISION	Type - Approved	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	Number 07/01824/FULL (26/10/07)	M. Squire, Esq 22 Victoria Crescent Crediton Devon EX17 1DZ	Mr L G Playle Forge Newton St Cyres Exeter EX5 5BY	22 Victoria Crescent Crediton Devon EX17 1DZ	Erection of plant room	Mr Charles Bladon

Planning Applications

The Committee considered the following applications:

APPLICATION	Type - Application Number 07/01967/LBC (17/10/2007)	Applicant Mr & Mrs D Jacques 4 St Lawrences Green Crediton Devon EX17 3LH	Agent Mr E Holden, Dip Arch, RIBA Architect Tanners Yard 100 High Street Crediton EX17 3LF	Location 4 St Lawrences Green Crediton Devon EX17 3LH	Proposal Listed Building Consent for improvement of existing stairs and internal works to provide additional bathroom facilities	Officer Miss Tina Maryan
	- APPROVED					
APPLICATION	Type - Application Number 07/01991/FULL (17/10/2007)	Applicant A J Hough 26 Cromwells Meadow Crediton Devon EX17 1JZ	Agent	Location 26 Cromwells Meadow Crediton Devon EX17 1JZ	Proposal Erection of a greenhouse	Officer Mr Charles Bladon
	- APPROVED					

APPLICATION	Type - Application					
	Number 07/02032/FULL (17/10/2007)	Applicant Mr S Elston 8 Chapel Downs Drive Crediton EX17 2ED	Agent Mrs Inka Lee-Wright Friends Gallery Coldharbour Mill Uffculme Cullompton Devon EX15 3EE	Location St Andrews Alexandra Road Crediton Devon EX17 2DX	Proposal Erection of 9 flats (Revised Scheme)	Officer Mr Keith Garside
- OBJECTION						
Councillors repeated their concerns recognising no significant improvement over the previous application still considering this to be an inappropriate development for the size and location of the site. Not in keeping with the existing street scene. Special concerns were raised over the additional traffic generated by 9 separate homes.						
APPLICATION	Type - Application					
	Number 07/02000/FULL (24/10/2007)	Applicant Mr G Lewis C/O Nigel Cant Planning Sutton Farm New Buildings Crediton EX17 4PS	Agent	Location Land at NGR 284066 100279 Hawkins Way Crediton Devon	Proposal Erection of 2 linked dwellings and formation of new vehicular access	Officer Mr Delwyn Matthews
- NO OBJECTIONS						

APPLICATION	Type - Application Number	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	07/02041/FULL (24/10/2007)	Mr G Lewis Mr Weeks 48 Beech Park Crediton EX17 1HW	The Conservatory Centre Bernaville Nurseries Three Horseshoes Cowley Exeter EX5 5EU	48 Beech Park Crediton EX17 1HW	Erection of replacement conservatory	Miss Tina Maryan
- APPROVED						
APPLICATION	Type - Application Number	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	07/02064/ARM (24/10/2007)	CIR Development Ltd 19 Highacres Loders Bridport DT6 3UJ	Randell Burton Architects The Studio 7 William Street Tiverton EX16 6BJ	Land and Buildings at NGR 283409 100132 Barnfield Crediton Devon	Reserved Matters for the erection of 2 dwellings following Outline planning permission 05/0939/OUT	Mr Keith Garside
- APPROVED						
APPLICATION	Type - Application Number	Applicant	Agent	Location	Proposal	Officer
	07/02068/FULL (31/10/2007)	Mr I Brown 3 Easter Court Roundswell Sticklepath Barnstaple EX31 3SJ	Dyer Feesey Wickham Architects 24 Castle Street Barnstaple EX31 1DR	38 Spruce Park Crediton Devon EX17 3HG	Erection of a dwelling	Mr Keith Garside
- DEFERRED for individual inspection and consultation						

Type - Application**Number**

[07/02106/FULL](#)
(31/10/2007)

Applicant

Mrs R Hills
C/o Keith Mortimer
Upper Park
2 Searle Street
Crediton
EX17 2AT

Agent**Location**

14 Meadow
Gardens
Crediton
Devon
EX17 1EJ

Proposal

Erection of conservatory

Officer

Miss Tina
Maryan

- APPROVED

Car parking issues in Crediton

The public view – ‘You can’t park in Crediton’

People believe that the sale of part of the Market Street car park for housing means that they now cannot park in Crediton.

It so firmly believed that drivers cannot park in the town that it was suggested that Tesco should allow shoppers to leave their cars in the planned Tesco car park and catch a bus into town so they can continue to support the town centre shops.

People have variously mentioned that St Saviour’s Way car park is taken up by Jackson’s employees and that there are no spaces for shoppers available there.

Conversely, it was mentioned during discussion that one Jackson employee had had to give up his parking permit for St Saviour’s Way car park because (presumably on more than one occasion) it was not possible to find a space in it.

St Saviour’s Way – usage

On numerous occasions during the last year I found, on average, 60 empty spaces at any one time in St Saviour’s Way car park. On the basis that decisions should be made in the light of facts I monitored St Saviour’s Way car park over the past 10 days at various times to see if the picture has changed significantly and found the following:

		No. of empty spaces
Thursday 18 th October	11.40	50
Friday 19 th October	14.20	61
Monday 22 nd October	11.50	60
Tuesday 23 rd October	10.10	71
Wednesday 24 th October	15.55	97
Friday 26 th October	11.50	62
Saturday 27 th October	10.30	131
Monday 29 th October	11.30	69
Monday 29 th October	14.50	78

It is possible that these days were atypical. Councillors may wish to look themselves.

St Saviour’s Way - distance

It was mentioned in discussion that St Saviour’s Way Car Park is too far away from the main shopping centre and that is the reason that people do not want to use it – it is a town edge car park. I thought it would be useful to find out distances of various existing and proposed shopper’s car parking locations. I measured this out in normal walking paces (mine, obviously) and found the following:

High Street/ Silbury Place to St Saviour’s Way car park	150
High Street/Market Street corner to Market Street car park	165
High Street/opposite North Street to Union Road parking	280
High Street/Searle Street to People’s Park Road	320

Councillors may wish to check these distances themselves.

Public perception

The belief in the difficulty of car parking in Crediton is partly a matter of perception:

St Saviour's Way seems further away from the centre, although in fact it isn't. People have been told it's always full, but in fact, it isn't. One final objection is that access is difficult as it is up a slope. This is clearly true and people who are infirm or who have mobility difficulties would undoubtedly find the slope too much. Such disability is, however, not the situation for the majority of people who visit shops.

As a council we need to support town centre commerce and dispel misconceptions. At present there is under-used capacity at St Saviour's Way car park. At the same time there is a need to look at additional parking at the east end of the town centre. I would ask councillors to

1. consider investigating the possibility of electronic signage on the road that monitors the number of spaces available at St Saviour's Way
2. delay any restriction of resident parking in residential streets while St Saviour's Way car park is under capacity.
3. consider actively pursuing the proposal that least part of the British Telecom site in Parliament Street currently identified for housing should instead be identified for car parking
4. actively pursue the feasibility of gaining funding for such a development through S106 contributions and any other possibilities.

Liz Brookes-Hocking
30th October 2007