

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary consultative virtual meeting of Council held Online via the Zoom App on 7 September 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.23 pm

29 **Declarations of interest**

The Chair welcomed members of the public and Councillors to the Extraordinary meeting of Council and explained that all participants were taking part remotely and the meeting was also being viewed online and recorded.

He outlined that based on the decision of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 26th July, the Council had delegated much of its decision taking power to its Senior Officers. This is for a short period of time only and due to concerns relating to COVID risk. Consequently, the meeting is held on a consultative basis only, and the procedural rules detailed in the Council's Constitution, will continue to be adhered to.

However, where the meeting would have normally decided a matter, it will now make recommendation to a Senior Officer. The Officer will then take that recommendation into account, when making their decision.

The Chair then started the meeting by doing a roll call of those present, and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

There were no declarations of interest.

30 **Honorary Alderman Award**

The Chair introduced the item by reminding those present of the recent trial and conviction of a former East Devon District Councillor. He went on to outline that John Humphreys had been found guilty of ten charges, relating to the sexual assault of two young boys between 1990 and 2001. His 21-year jail sentence and addition to the sex offenders' list for life, reflected the gravity of his crimes.

Most importantly, the Chair wanted to extend his sympathy and that of the Council, to the two victims and their families, and hoped that the conviction and sentence handed down would offer some level of closure.

In 2019, an Extraordinary meeting of East Devon District Council awarded the position of Honorary Alderman to Mr Humphreys. This position was established under the Local Government Act 1972 and is awarded in recognition of valued service to the community represented and the Council. As Chair of the Council, Cllr Thomas considered that Mr Humphreys' offences, conviction, and sentence, did not make Mr Humphreys a fit person to hold this honour. He had, therefore, called this Extraordinary meeting of Council, to put the sole recommendation, that the award of Honorary Alderman be withdrawn from John Humphreys forthwith. If this was supported, this recommendation would be the first time the award of Honorary Alderman had been withdrawn, further confirming the Council's recognition of the gravity of the crimes involved.

The Chair then invited colleagues to speak on the specific recommendation.

During a brief debate on the issue, the following comments were made;

- The Council, being the body which bestowed the Honour, could remove the Honour if necessary.
- The Council's Constitution does not currently have much information on the issues relating to the role of Honorary Aldermen and possibly needs amending.
- To avoid this situation arising again it may be necessary to review other relevant Council practices.

In response the Chair confirmed that these and related topics would all be picked up in the work programmes already planned by relevant Council Committees throughout the year.

Cllr Johns requested and Cllr Millar seconded a Recorded vote. After a vote of those present, it was accepted that a Recorded vote would take place.

The Chair moved the following recommendation and invited members to vote;

RECOMMENDATION: that the award of Honorary Alderman to Mr John Humphreys be withdrawn with immediate effect.

Recorded vote:

Councillors Megan Armstrong, Paul Arnott, Jess Bailey, Dean Barrow, Denise Bickley, Jake Bonetta, Colin Brown, Alasdair Bruce, Fred Caygill, Maddy Chapman, Iain Chubb, Andrew Colman, Olly Davey, Bruce De Saram, Alan Dent, Peter Faithfull, Cathy Gardner, Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, Nick Hookway, Mike Howe, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Sarah Jackson, Paul Jarvis, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, David Key, Richard Lawrence, Dan Ledger, John Loudoun, Dawn Manley, Tony McCollum, Paul Millar, Helen Parr, Geoff Pook, Geoff Pratt, Val Ranger, Marianne Rixson, Jack Rowland, Brenda Taylor, Ian Thomas, Phil Twiss, Joe Whibley, Tony Woodward, Eileen Wragg, Chris Wright - voted in favour – 48.

There was unanimous support for the following recommendation to be passed for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: that the award of Honorary Alderman to Mr John Humphreys be withdrawn with immediate effect.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending or watching the meeting online and closed the meeting at 6.23pm.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

V Ranger (Vice-Chair)	D Ledger	M Hartnell
M Armstrong	J Rowland	M Howe
P Jarvis	J Loudoun	B Ingham
S Jackson	D Bickley	G Jung
P Arnott	J Bailey	H Parr
F Caygill	P Hayward	G Pook
A Colman	S Hawkins	G Pratt
P Millar	D Key	M Rixson
R Lawrence	C Gardner	B De Saram

T Woodward
N Hookway
C Wright
O Davey
J Whibley
T McCollum
V Johns

D Manley
C Brown
M Chapman
I Chubb
A Dent
D Barrow
P Faithfull

B Taylor
I Thomas (Chair)
P Twiss
E Wragg
S Hughes
A Bruce

Officers in attendance:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Andrew Hopkins, Communications and Events Consultant

Councillor apologies:

S Chamberlain
K Blakey
K Bloxham
A Moulding
M Allen
I Hall
P Skinner
T Wright

Chairman

Date: