

Minutes of the meeting of Council Offices Working Group of Ilminster Town Council held on
Thursday 09 September 2021 at 19:30 hrs.

Chair: Fran White

Councillors: Cllr A Shearman, Cllr M James, Cllr F White, Cllr B Jenner-Hurford, Cllr N Tinson

Officers: Mr M Tredwin (Town Clerk)

In Attendance: No members of the public joined the meeting

1. Elect Chair

Both Cllrs' White and Shearman put their names forward for the role, members discussed and voted that Cllr White be elected chair of the working group.

2. Terms of Reference

Members discussed the suggested Terms of reference and agreed that they should be taken to full Council for their approval.

The Council Offices Working group unanimously voted to Recommend to Full Council that the proposed Terms of Reference be agreed.

3. North Street Office Discussion

Cllrs' agreed that information was needed on whether the District Council would sell us the North Street offices before any decisions was made on what should be done in the Old Magistrates building.

Cllr James raised the point that we do not have to own a building that houses the council chambers and that we could rent a room to use as a chamber for meetings that called for it.

Mr Tredwin informed the working group that SSDC has previously told the council that they are not averse to the idea of selling the North Street offices to the Town Council. They would sell it to the Town Council with a covenant on the use of the building likely restricting certain uses. Mr Tredwin mentioned that he thinks they may allow the 1st floor to be converted to an apartment on the condition it was let to a local family who are saving to buy a house for a max term with checks in place to ensure they were indeed saving.

SSDC currently pay for all maintenance to the North Street offices so that would need to be budgeted for should we purchase the building.

If we were to purchase North Street it would need to be done from reserves as it is not budget for, more information on current reserves is needed.

4. Plan of Action

A very simple plan of action was agreed:

- a. Answer the questions around the North Street offices.
- b. Establish what it is the council needs from its building(s).
- c. Decide on how we meet those needs.
- d. Should any space and/or resource be left over then decide how it can benefit the local community.

5. Suggesting Architects & Builders

Cllr White shared that she had a list of 3 architects that may be interested in working with the council for the Old Magistrates and invited members to email her any other local architects or builders to be added to a list of contacts for the future.

A discussion was also had about using the chosen architect to manage the whole project rather than burdening on of the council's officers.

6. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would provisionally held on Thursday 7th October at 19:30, this will be moved to an earlier date if the response from SSDC about the North Street offices is received quickly.

7. Meeting Closed at 20-50

Council Offices Working Group

Number of Members: 5

Members: Cllrs' Shearman, James, White, Jenner-Hurford and Tinson

Frequency of Meetings: - As required/requested

Open to the Public: Because contractual matters are likely to be a major part of this working groups business, members of the public and Press may be excluded.

Quorum: 3

Purpose: To prepare plans for Full Council on how to develop premises to house the council administration and meetings.

Outputs: To make Recommendations to the Town Council regarding

- Layout of offices and Council Chamber
- Identify additional uses of the Old Magistrates Court Building
- To identify what other buildings may be available to hold Council Meetings

Delegated Powers / Decision making: None

Specific Tasks and Responsibilities:

- To identify possible architects and builders to prepare designs and quotations for the use of the Old Magistrates Court Buildings
- To Plan layouts and identify infrastructure necessary to create a modern town council offices
- To liaise with South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council to establish possible buildings that will house Council Chambers.
- To liaise with community groups to see how best they might benefit from the acquisition of council premises