

EDC Council Meeting 26th November 2020.
Report from Dr Michael Hanley (EDC Councillor).

Chairman's Announcements.

Chairman Andy Connell talked about the recent death of Councillor Rob Orchard (Conservative,Hartside). He had taken over from his wife, after her death a few years ago. He was a thoughtful and decent colleague. A minutes silence was observed.

He announced the resignation of Councillor Kevin Beaty (C). He described Kevin as a hard working and diligent Councillor and will be missed.

Since March Eden businesses have received £40 million in Covid assistance.

A new Covid testing centre has opened at Sandgate in Penrith.

The Eden Environmental Health Team has been working hard to track and trace all contacts of people infected by the novel coronavirus.

Eden Community Wardens have been awarded the highest award by the RSPCA for their excellent work. This is the tenth year that they have received this award.

Appointment of Acting Chief Executive.

This post has been vacant for the last few months since the resignation of former chief executive, Rose Rouse. The Human Resources Committee has worked hard over the last few months to consider this appointment. Two reports were commissioned. The committee opted for the appointment of Jason Gooding. He is currently the chief executive of Carlisle Council and will spend two days per week at Penrith, so he will work on a part time basis. This is the cheapest option. Les Clark has been covering this post since the departure of Rose Rouse and it is proposed that he will become deputy chief executive. His salary will be £33,500 per annum. This motion was passed.

Appointment of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Returning Officer has overall responsibility for elections in Eden. The Electoral Registration Officer has responsibility for the maintenance of the electoral roll. Paul Sutton was recommended for Returning Officer and Lisa Tremble for Registration Officer. This motion was passed.

Treasury Management Strategy and Plan 2020-21.

The council is briefed twice yearly on this. There have been no material changes. All investment activity has been in line and there has been no extra borrowing. A member queried a consultancy fee of £150,000. Les Clark said he would respond in writing to the query.

Review of Licensing Policy.

Eden's policy was amended by the Licensing Committee. This will be in place until 2026. Only small changes were made: the right of immigrants to work in the UK and new powers that licensing committees have to suspend or revoke licenses (to sell alcohol).

Councillor Phil Dew asked why there had been such a brief reply to the submission of Punch Pubs as they were the only organisation to have replied and deserved more than a single sentence. Councillor Deb Holden, chair of the Licensing Committee said that the points in the Punch Pubs document would not have changed policy and their document was a generic one sent to all authorities.

Councillor Mike Eyles said that the minutes from the meeting are very inadequate compared to the recording as to what was said. He has found that a fuller account is often found in the archives of the Cumberland Herald.

This item was passed.

Allocation of Seats on Committees.

There are currently 36 members, 2 short of the full council of 38 members. When there are any changes allocation has to be reconsidered. No significant change was made. This was approved.

Information Technology Security Measures.

This concerned the adoption of IT security measures. This is important because of increasing cyber attacks. Much of the council's information is stored digitally. The current policy was adopted in 2018 and there have been updates since then. The new inclusions concern virtual online meetings and home-working. The council's IT department may examine member's emails and online activity to monitor that they are following the rules. Zoom has been used by many parish councils. EDC used to block Zoom because of poor security but has recently allowed its use as long as the participants are using a paid-for version. Free Zoom accounts should not be used. Members can now use Zoom on their council computers. It is the responsibility of any members taking part to make sure that the vehicle is not a free copy.

The next council meeting will be on the 28th of January 2021.