



**Notes - Fire Safety Task & Finish (Working) Group**  
**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021**  
**At 4:00pm on Zoom**

Councillors Present:	J. Buczkowski, R. Dietriche & M. Rowe
Also present:	M. Weston – Deputy Town Clerk

**1. Election of Chair**

Cllr. R. Dietriche was elected as Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Andrews & M. Dale

**3. Fire Safety Provision**

Consideration was given to the Town Council's Fire Safety Provision and a review of the Fire Safety Report/documentation as received from the appointed external contractor (W. T. Consultancy) was undertaken (Supporting Paper A to the agenda) -

**3a. General Comments**

- It was agreed that the Fire Safety Report as \*received was overall: comprehensive, much improved and a good starting point for the Town Council's Fire Safety provision. It was noted that there were a number of action points and an action plan would be required to address these.
- It was noted that the Fire Safety Report was now two months in and there was uncertainty about whether any resulting action had been taken. It was noted that if the (requested) draft Fire Safety Report had been circulated as had been requested, this would have saved time.
- No. 1 action point: Fixed Wiring - This Public WC (opposite Codners Corner) is rented from Mid-Devon District Council (MDDC) and it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that the wiring is safe. An e-mail should be sent to MDDC advising that it is leasing a building with no fire safety certificate. Rodent infestation: Why has a pest removal company not been engaged?
- No. 2 action point: Fixed Wiring – This was due for re-testing in August 2021.
- No. 14 action point: PAT testing of Christmas trees; perhaps this is being carried out by the contractor when installing?
- Town Hall fire escape matter is being addressed by the Town Clerk.
- The Fire Safety Management and Fire Emergency Plan is a policy document and the policy would need to be formally adopted by the Town Council. This should be dealt with by the Governance Committee or perhaps approved by the Cemetery & Town Hall Committee but this would need to be directed by the Town Clerk.

**3b. Fire Extinguishers**

- Concern with the section relating to fire extinguishers; a cause of contention as the danger with powder extinguishers had been raised. It would appear that the 'dangers' of powder extinguishers had just been 'copied and pasted' with no real guidance. It had been

explicitly asked in the commissioning that a Risk Assessment/Report be provided to determine their suitability and necessity. *'To ensure that as part of the Fire Risk Assessment work that the suitability of powder fire extinguishers is addressed and if current provision is deemed suitable, that the necessary risk assessment for their provision and use is also completed and presented for approval.'* The first part of this has not been addressed i.e. does not address the risk of powder extinguisher use and why there is a need for these extinguishers. There are powder extinguishers in the cemetery and (Town Hall) kitchen. There has been no explanation as to why the Council has powder extinguishers. Secondly, if the recommendation is that powder extinguishers are required, there is a need for a risk assessment for their siting and use; this is completely missing from the report. This isn't what was asked for and we haven't done what we should be doing which is making sure their use is essential. We haven't explained why we have these and certainly have no risk assessment in place.

- There was uncertainty as to what risk would be addressed in the kitchen as a foam or water combined with a CO2 extinguisher should be acceptable inside and in the cemetery, there is no electrical risk so presumably extinguisher use would be for fuel and a foam extinguisher would be a better option. NB: 01/07/2021 *'Risk assessments are required particularly on the powder fire extinguishers located in the Town Hall (kitchen) and Cemetery (staff welfare unit, listed buildings and containers)'*
- Powder extinguisher usage may be correct as previously stated by the Fire Service, however, this contradicts the British standards on fire extinguishers. The Fire Safety Consultant had been asked to make a recommendation on which extinguishers should be sited. If the recommendation is that powder extinguishers should be in place, there needs to be a risk assessment (in line with the British standards on fire extinguishers for where these are located and how they are used) and justification as to their provision is sought.
- The question was asked as to whether the Town Council should look to remove powder extinguishers. It was advised that a member of staff had installed these in the mortuary and container (December 2020) on advice from the operative undertaking fire safety checks (on extinguishers). Further, that it had been mentioned at this time (by a member) that ideally alternative extinguishers should be used; clarification on the use of these powder extinguishers has been sought since this time and definitive guidance is required on which extinguishers should be used. If it is deemed appropriate that powder is used, then recommendations should be followed on justifying their provision and a risk assessment for their use should be in place.

#### **3c. Emergency Escape Lighting**

- The report states there are no records of testing of the emergency lighting; This is confusing as a few months ago; members were presented with records. Additionally, there is a question surrounding the dates; were these checks actually being done or was this just a 'paper exercise'? - For the purposes of the report, this is a very valid action point.

#### **3d. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**

- There is a concern with the Town Council's COSHH arrangements; the report is fine but this does raise 'alarm bells' around the Council's COSHH procedures.

#### **3e. Electrical Safety**

- Electrical safety questions have been raised.

#### **3f. Action Plan**

An Action Plan from the responsible person (Town Clerk) is required. There had been a question (draft report) of who the responsible person is; this should be the senior civil servant i.e. Town Clerk. Perhaps an output from this meeting should be a recommendation to that effect. It is certainly not the Outdoor Team Supervisor who doesn't have the authority to be a 'responsible person'. The report mentions a member of staff being a retained Fire Fighter, however, this does not necessarily mean they should be classed as a 'competent individual' and the need to differentiate between the two is required.

### **Training**

- 3g.** The Action Plan does address training so there is a need to identify who is going to be the competent person and ensure they have training along with training for the responsible person. These are two very different roles that should work symbiotically.
- 4. Output /Action Required:**
1. Implementation of the Fire Safety report which should be cascaded to all staff. Log books and associated checks should be used and used correctly. A dated Action Plan should be completed; Action points as specified (pages 43-46 of report) have to be a high priority. \_Who/what & when? - needs to be directed by the Town Clerk/Officers.
  2. Clarification needed on the use of the powder fire extinguishers as per the Council's original commission.
  3. Arrange any training as required.
- 5. RECOMMENDATION from the Fire Safety (Task & Finish) Working Group:**
1. That the Fire Safety and Fire Emergency Plan is adopted by the Town Council;
  2. the statement of intent is signed by the Town Clerk and actioned accordingly;
  3. The Town Clerk to be instructed to proceed with the Action Plan and to arrange any training requirements as recommended.
- 6. Budget & Fire Safety Contractors Invoice**

Consideration was given to the payment to the contractor for the work undertaken to review the Town Council's Fire Safety Provision – with a view to making an associated recommendation to the Town Council.

NB: It was noted that a £5,000.00 budget had been allocated for the Town Council's Fire Safety Provision; the invoice supplied for the works undertaken totals £2,410.00 (+ VAT) leaving £2,590.00.

### **RECOMMENDATION from the Fire Safety (Task & Finish) Working Group:**

That the invoice as submitted from W. T Consultancy in the sum of £2,410.00 for works undertaken in relation to the Town Council's Fire Safety Provision \* is paid in full –

*\*Cemetery & Town Hall Committee's Resolution of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021:*

- i) Fire Safety Emergency Plan that is a policy document which clearly nominates the Town Clerk as the responsible person. Once this has been actioned –*
- ii) Fire Safety Risk Assessments should be completed for all areas under the control of Cullompton Town Council by a competent individual;*
- iii) Fire Safety Log Book for all sites under the Town Council's control which has clear instructions for completion by a suitably trained individual should also be put into place;*

- iv) *Implementation Plan for all the required improvements and required actions as identified in the process of creating the above documents, particularly around staff training and fire safety equipment.*

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