

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour,
College House on Tuesday 22nd October 2019 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors:

R Whittle OBE (in the Chair)
C Baines MBE
S Barlow
D Cooper
R Fox
H Howell
K Hurst-Knight
E Lynch
E Marshall
K Sawbridge
S Stevens
C Walden
C Whittle

In Attendance:

L Jakeman, Town Clerk
Mrs R Williams, RFO

0259/1920 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members noted the apologies as listed below:

Councillor J Buckley – work commitment
Councillor G Davies – personal commitment
Councillor C Dyson – personal commitment

0260/1920 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0261/1920 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Questions from Mr R Richards, St. Leonard's Close

1. Has the Council's land at Bandon Lane been advertised for sale?
2. If so, how, when and where?
3. Can we see a copy of the advertisements if such exist?

Town Council response:

Bridgnorth Town Council has not specifically advertised the land at Bandon Lane (that it owns) being for sale. However, the fact that there is a potential for a sale (following an approach from the Bridgnorth Rugby Club) has been made public knowledge. Indeed the Town Council spoke with the local press on the matter in September 2018 with the topic making the front page of the Bridgnorth Journal.

If you consider the press coverage to be a form of advertisement then we have provided you with a copy of the front page of the Bridgnorth Journal from Thursday 10th September 2018. Otherwise, the answers to your 2nd and 3^d questions is in both cases, not applicable.

0262/1920 **MINUTES**

- i) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 8th October 2019.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 8th October 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0263/1920 **MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR'S DIARY**

Members noted that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had attended the following events since the last Town Council meeting:

Mayor

- 20/9. Telford Mayor's Charity Launch
22/9. Bridgnorth Carnival
6/10. Alveley Heritage Sculpture unveiling
17/10. Visit by Duke of Gloucester

Deputy Mayor

- 17/10. Visit by Duke of Gloucester

0264/1920 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0265/1920 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) Planning Committee – minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2019

RESOLVED: to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th October 2019 and noted the resolutions contained therein.

0266/1920 **FINANCE**

- i) Accounts Paid – September 2019

Members received notification of items which had been paid in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5.

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £54,591.63 be retrospectively approved for payment.

- ii) Budget Report

Members noted the Budget Summary report, including Earmarked Reserves.

- iii) Balance Sheet

Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th September 2019 (£871,987)

- iv) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members noted the bank reconciliation statements as at 30th September 2019.

- v) Receipts and Payments Summary

Members noted the in-year receipts and payments summary as at 30th September 2019.

- vi) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £21,451.22 be approved for payment.

0267/1920 **INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members noted the income and expenditure report.

Members considered a budget report from the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and a 2nd draft budget. Members noted that the draft budget was predicting a 5.9% increase in the precept; an increase of £7.93 per band D household with a predicted level of the general reserve at the end of FY 20/21 being £160,000.

It was noted that the draft budget did not currently include any increases to Town Council fees and it was suggested that the RFO consider some significant fee increases to certain services (room/ hall hire predominantly) but with a discounted rate for regular users and Bridgnorth registered charities.

It was acknowledged that in the current year there has been some unbudgeted expenditure including: 2 elections costing £6k, waiving of service charges to Bridgnorth Community Hall £10k and LED upgrade to Street Lighting £39K (albeit the LED upgrade is anticipated to achieve a £5k per year saving in electricity costs).

Some discussion took place about the provision of public toilets; making them free of charge, closure where use was low and an acknowledgment that the new session of parliament had not confirmed that the previous administrations proposal to remove business rates from public toilets (a current cost of some £7k to Bridgnorth Town Council).

CCTV provision was considered and some members were mindful of a number points made by the Police & Crime Commissioner in his recent visit.

Members were of the opinion that the personnel committee should meet in the very near future to discuss personnel issues that might have a budgetary impact, Recommendations from the meeting to be notified to the Full Town Council.

(Clerk's note: a Personnel Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday 31 October 2019).

The volatility of some income streams was noted e.g. parking fees from Severn Park and the Cemetery.

Members were asked to write to the RFO before the 1st November regarding any specific budget suggestions (cost savings/ service reductions or increase spend/ additional services).

0269/1920 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members noted the draft proposal prepared by Shropshire Council and its recommendation not to support a change of boundary. Members were, in general, of the opinion that the draft proposals failed to represent or reasonably document Bridgnorth Town Council's lengthy submission and that the recommendation was not borne out of an objective assessment of the differing consultation submissions.

RESOLVED to delegate to the CGR Working Group to provide a response on behalf of the Town Council.

0270/1920 **BRIDGNORTH (LOW TOWN) COMMUNITY HALL**

i) Accounts for Payment

Members noted a list of accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £1,453.62 be approved for payment.

0271/1920 **SHROPSHIRE YOUTH CONSULTATION**

Members noted the ongoing consultation being conducted by Shropshire Council.

RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk to respond to the current Shropshire Youth Consultation on behalf of the Town Council.

(Along the lines that the Town Council was not minded to make any budgetary provision for supporting services that had beneficiaries beyond the Town boundary and where the funding for them (through taxation) is considered to be more appropriate through a wider tax collecting body e.g. Shropshire Council. Furthermore, without some specific suggestions as to how Town Councils might be involved in delivering services then it would not support services alluded to in the consultation being taken on or funded by Bridgnorth Town Council.)

0272/1920 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

RESOLVED in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

0273/1920 **TOWN COUNCIL DEBTORS**

Members considered a report from the Responsible Finance Officer.

RESOLVED:

To note a debtors report and approve the actions being undertaken to address unpaid invoices due to the Town Council.