

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL**Minutes of the Adjourned Annual Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour, College House on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at 7.15pm**

Present: The Town Mayor, Councillor R Whittle OBE in the Chair,
Councillors Mrs C Baines MBE, Mrs S Barlow,
Dr J Buckley, D Cooper, G Davies, R Fox, J Gittins,
Mrs H Howell, Mrs K Hurst-Knight, E Marshall,
Mrs J Onions, Mrs S Stevens, Mrs C Walden
and Mrs C Whittle

In Attendance: Town Clerk,
2 members of the Press
25 members of public

Minutes Secretary and transcribed by Mrs A Kendrick

The Mayor extended a warm welcome to the new Councillors and made a short statement about the year ahead. Councillors then introduced themselves to members of the public.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the five previous Councillors expressing the Town Council's thanks for their work during their terms in office.

The evening commenced with the presentation by the Mayor of the cheques for Grants awarded at the April Town Council meeting. Certain representatives were invited to say a few words about their organisations.

Following the presentation of grant cheques, Marcus Halliwell and Sue Briggs of the National Trust made a presentation to Members regarding the proposals for the Dudmaston Comer Wood project.

0009/1718 FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT

The meeting commenced with a fire safety announcement by the Mayor.

0010/1718 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: to accept the following apologies for absence.

Councillor A Hinton Unwell

0011/1718 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The following questions were received by [REDACTED]

1. "A letter to the Town Clerk dated 29th July 2016 was hand delivered to the Town Council offices by the Bridgnorth Chamber of Commerce withdrawing its request for the Shopwatch money and clearly stating that it believed the correct procedure would be to return it to the BRCI. Given this information, the fact that members of the Chamber then had a meeting with the Treasurer of the BRCI where they advised them that he needed to write to the Town Council requesting the return of the BRCI money, is entirely reasonable. Why has this letter of the 29th July 2016 setting out the Chamber's position not been given to the Councillors by the Town Clerk and included in the Scrutiny report? Perhaps you could ask the Town Clerk now; here is the letter."

[REDACTED] was reminded that questions should relate to matters on the agenda and not be an opportunity to criticise the Town Clerk.

The Mayor advised that the letter had been seen by Council and therefore this question was not appropriate.

The Town Clerk reiterated that she had nothing to do with the Facewatch Scrutiny Panel or the production of the report.

[REDACTED] continued.

"Instead, the report illegally named Councillors and members of the public who are also members of the Chamber and incorrectly implied that an attempt had been made to obtain money by deception.

As the Responsible Officer to the Town Council, the Town Clerk has not only withheld information from the Council, but also contravened the 1972 Local Government Act by allowing this report to be published. This Scrutiny report also contravened the Local Government Act 1972/70 Part VA and Schedule 12A and the Local Government Act Eliz 2/8-9/67/Section 1 by allowing this wholly inaccurate report to be published.

Will this Council now withdraw this report, apologise to the totally innocent parties who have been victimised and wrongly named and take action against the Town Clerk for bringing the Town Council into disrepute and placing the Council and its Members in a very vulnerable legal position?"

The Mayor advised that [REDACTED] was raising technical issues and therefore it was impossible to respond at the meeting. A written response would be sent after the meeting.

2. In response to my Public Questions put to the Council on 21st March 2017, the Town Clerk stated, and I quote "The work of the Town Council Scrutiny Committee was carried out in accordance with their mandate, they interviewed people involved and reported back through the outcome report. Could I therefore ask, were all people named in the Scrutiny report interviewed, as stated by the Town Clerk? Perhaps again Mr Mayor, you could ask her now.

The Mayor felt that the Town Clerk was not in a position to answer as she had already confirmed that she was not responsible for the Scrutiny Report and therefore the Mayor may need to consult with the Scrutiny Panel. The Mayor confirmed that he had been named in the report and had not been interviewed.

Could I further ask that you and this Council carry out a thorough investigation into the entire matter and make the findings public?

The Mayor stated that this matter had been discussed fully and although not all Councillors had been happy with the outcome of the report, the Council could not keep revisiting this. It was no appropriate to go back over old ground.

██████ was asked to confirm if he was representing the Chamber of Commerce and he confirmed that he was the Membership Secretary.

0013/1718 **REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL**

The Mayor advised that there was no report from Shropshire Council due to the elections.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.

0014/1718 **MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2017 were submitted as circulated.

Certain Members were concerned that their integrity had been questioned as the minutes contained the full Scrutiny Panel report in which they had been named.

The Mayor advised that he and one other Councillor had sought legal advice on this report but due to costs, they had felt that this was not appropriate to pursue.

The Mayor clarified that by adopting the minutes, Members were accepting them as a record of what happened at the meeting. He felt that there would be no benefit of having a detailed discussion on what had already been discussed previously regarding the Scrutiny Report.

The Town Clerk returned to the meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the minutes are a reflection of what took place at the meeting and stated that if the report were to be removed, the minutes would not make sense as this formed part of the agenda.

After a discussion, a recorded vote was requested.

The adoption of the minutes was proposed and seconded and a vote taken.

For: Councillors Mrs C Baines MBE, Dr J Buckley,
D Cooper, R Fox, J Gittins, E Marshall,
Mrs C Whittle, R Whittle OBE

Against: Councillors Ms S Barlow, G Davies, Mrs C Walden

Abstentions: Councillors Mrs H Howell, Mrs K Hurst-Knight,
Mrs J Onions, Mrs S Stevens

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0015/1718 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

0016/1718 **TOWN MAYOR'S AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S DIARY**

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

Mayoral Engagements

24th March – Athletics Club Presentation

29th March – University of the Third Age AGM

1st April – Mayor of Shrewsbury's Charity Dinner

2nd April – Vintage Tractor Rally

6th April - Plaque unveiling for Norman Cottrell at the Cliff Railway

7th April – Chair of Bromsgrove's Charity Dinner Dance

16th April – Easter Egg Hunt

19th April – Annual Town Meeting

21st April – Civic Dinner, Oswestry

23rd April – St. George's Day Celebrations

24th April – League of Friends of Bridgnorth Hospital AGM

3rd May – Friends of St. Leonard's AGM

8th May – Low Town Community Hall 25th Anniversary

8th May – Mayor's Farewell Curry Night

Deputy Mayor's Engagements

6th April - Plaque unveiling for Norman Cottrell at the Cliff Railway.

19th April - Annual Town Meeting

23rd April - St George's Day Event at Castle Grounds

8th May - Low Town Community Hall Anniversary Celebrations (as Mayor-Elect)

12th May - Bewdley Mayor Making (as Mayor-Elect)

0017/1718 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

There were no Members Questions.

0018/1718 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the CCTV Committee meeting held on Monday 6th March 2017 were submitted as circulated.

The Chairman advised that she was not prepared to present these minutes to Council as they were not an accurate reflection of what took place at the meeting and stated that discussions had been omitted.

Members' attention was drawn to minute number 0867/1617 in which it had been recommended that the minutes of the CCTV Committee meeting held on 9th January not be accepted in their present format. The Town Clerk advised Members that the CCTV minutes since September 2016 had been contradicted and not approved.

It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the CCTV Committee meeting held on Monday 6th March 2017 be received and adopted with the exception of the recommendation contained in minute number 0867/1617 not to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 9th January in their present form.

The Mayor felt that it would be best to start with a clean slate and therefore proposed that the recommendation contained in minute number 0867/1617 not to accept the minutes of the CCTV Committee meeting held on 9th January is not adopted and therefore the minutes be received and adopted.

RESOLVED: that the recommendation contained in minute number 0867/1617 not to accept the minutes of the CCTV Committee meeting held on 9th January is not adopted and therefore the minutes be received and adopted.

- ii) The Planning Committee meetings were then taken en bloc.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 20th May 2017, Monday 27th May 2017, Monday 10th April 2017 and Tuesday 2nd May 2017 be received and adopted.

0019/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

There were no other matters arising from the committee minutes.

0020/1718 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

RESOLVED: that the Common Seal be affixed to the following documents:

Section E 578
Oak Grove Crem 44
Oak Grove 182C, 182D, 182F, 182G and 217
Unconsecrated 1023

0021/1718 **FINANCE**

Members noted that the accounts for the previous financial year were closed on 28th April 2017. As a result the accounts for April 2017 have only recently been prepared. Year End adjustments have resulted in the reversal of Year End accruals in month 1 but were not yet available for Members.

The Town Clerk also advised Members that the Town Council had a surplus of £51,689 at the end of the financial year and were therefore not in deficit.

- i) Accounts for Payment

Members were asked to authorise the signing of invoices for payment and those invoices paid in between meetings.

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £151,967.01 be approved for payment.

- ii) Income and Expenditure Report

- i) Income and Expenditure Report

Members noted the income and expenditure report.

- ii) Account Code Report

Members noted the account code report.

iii) Report from Mrs R Williams

Members noted the report from Mrs R Williams.

iv) Level of Reserves

Members noted the level of the Town Council's reserves of £1,110,547.

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statement

Members noted the Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statement.

vi) Schedules for Signing Payroll and Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED: that Members agreed the schedules for signing payroll and payment of accounts.

Members acknowledged that should they not be able to fulfil their duty on their allocated date, it is their responsibility to arrange cover.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that it formed part of their duty as Councillors to sign payroll and payment of accounts.

vii) Internet Banking

RESOLVED: that the following be removed as cheque signatories and access to internet banking:

R Gill
Mrs V Gill
G Mountcastle
D Seipel
Ms V Voysey

And the following Councillors be added as cheque signatories and access to internet banking:

Mrs Kirstie Hurst-Knight
Dr Julia Buckley
Richard Fox
Mrs Helen Howell
Mrs Sarah Stevens

Members were asked to come into the office at the earliest convenience to sign forms.

viii) General Power of Competence

The Town Clerk advised that the General Power of Confidence allows the Town Council to work for the good of the community.

The Community Engagement Strategy had also been updated. The Town Mayor requested an amendment to the Strategy to state that Member's Surgeries were not compulsory, but could be held if they wished to do so.

RESOLVED: that the General Power of Competence is adopted.

FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Community Engagement Strategy is adopted with the amendment regarding Members' Surgeries.

ix) Internal Audit Report

Members received the Interim Internal Audit Report and felt that the staff should be congratulated for their work.

RESOLVED: that the Internal Audit Report be accepted.

0022/1718 **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Members were reminded that this year a proposal from Councillor Ron Whittle had been submitted as well as a proposal to amend a Committee representation from Councillor James Gittins.

Therefore Members were asked to consider the following:

i) a) i) Proposal from Councillor Ron Whittle

Councillor R Whittle OBE proposed the following:

Council is asked to consider and, if appropriate, approve the following:-

1. That Council meets twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month with the exception of August, when no meetings are held and December when only one meeting will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Without being prescriptive, the first meeting each month will normally, in addition to other matters, consider matters currently dealt with by the Property & Grounds Committee, while the second meeting will prioritise financial matters.
2. As a result of 1 above, the Property & Grounds Committee, and Administration and General Purposes Committee, the Christmas Committee and the CCTV Committee will be disbanded.
3. In view of the new, longer, consultation period the Planning Committee will meet once each month immediately prior to the second Council meeting.

4. Any other sub-committees, working parties etc. that currently exist are to be subject to early review to consider whether they remain relevant or if their work cannot be considered direct by Council.
5. Minutes should be considerably shortened, reflecting principally resolutions passed by Council and not normally including individual interventions.

Councillor E Marshall seconded this proposal.

Members had also been provided with an advisory note from the Town Clerk regarding this proposal, which Members acknowledged.

Councillor D Cooper reminded Members that proposals to change the committee structures had been discussed twice previously; in March 2015 and again in November 2016. He had thought about bringing the proposals back to Council but had decided that with the new Council, they would not have had chance to see how to work together and any specific interests or expertise they may have.

Councillor D Cooper then proposed an amendment to the proposal to allow a plan to be put together.

PROPOSED: that the Council continues with the current structure and review matters in six months' time.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Mrs H Howell.

Certain Members felt that the Council must move forward and by having all Councillors involved in two full Council meetings a month, this would provide a less disjointed approach to meetings and decision making.

Members had varying views as to whether the Council needed to time to settle in or whether the start of a new Council was the best time for change.

Concern was raised regarding the staff. The Town Clerk advised that she would need to look at how to manage staff who are attending meetings. A conversation had taken place with the staff to look at the practicality of the proposals and it had been agreed that it would not save staff time.

The Town Clerk made a further suggestion that all Councillors are appointed to all committees as a short term measure. This

would give committees delegated authority and would therefore speed up the decision making process.

It was stated that the proposal would save a lot of Councillors time as some Councillors want to attend both committee meetings, as well as attending full Council.

Certain Members felt that staff should be considered and that increased contact with staff should be encouraged.

Concern was raised about the timings of meetings should they continue to start at 7.15pm. This may lead to the adjournment of meetings and it was questioned as to when the adjourned meeting would take place as this would result in more than two meetings per month.

Further concern was raised regarding the proposal for the Planning Committee to meet once a month as this would not allow for recommendations to be submitted to Shropshire Council by the deadline. Although the consultations for Planning Applications have been extended, consultations for tree applications have not been altered and therefore the lead time is still 14 days. Councillor R Whittle OBE responded and advised that he had no strong feelings on this matter as last minute Planning Applications are accounted for on each Planning Committee agenda. He felt that Planning Committee meeting dates could be more flexible.

It was stated that decision making should not just be a quick process, but a good one. Concern was expressed that without having committees with certain Members for their certain expertise would result in every Member having to do everything and therefore meetings could only take longer. This was echoed by thoughts that Members would spend more time reading more minutes, when usually they would choose to abstain as they trust those on the committee to vote for their minutes and recommendations.

Councillor R Whittle OBE referred back to the question regarding the adjournment of meetings. He stated that experience would prove the proposal right or wrong but he felt that Members would be able to get through the agendas quite comfortably.

The Town Clerk made a further suggestion following a successful trial in another Council. The Town Clerk would meet with Ward Members should a matter arise in between meetings and this would then be reported back to full Council. Members felt that the Town Council was not big enough for this proposal. The Town Clerk advised that the staff would work with the democratic decision of Council.

Members were reminded by Cllr. R. Whittle OBE that Alison Lawrence of Shropshire HR had previously stated that this proposal would have no implications on the staff's roles or workload.

The Mayor clarified that the proposal would result in the first Town Council Meeting of the month focussing on Property and Grounds matters and the second meeting of the month focussing on Finances and General matters. He suggested that any guest speakers would be invited to attend from 7pm instead of 7.15pm.

Members moved to the vote and the amendment was considered first. A recorded vote was requested.

PROPOSED: that the Council continues with the current structure and review matters in six months' time.

For: Councillors Mrs C Baines MBE, Dr J Buckley, D Cooper, R Fox, J Gittins, Mrs H Howell

Against: G Davies, Mrs K Hurst-Knight, E Marshall, J Onions, Mrs S Stevens, Mrs C Walden, Mrs C Whittle, R Whittle OBE

Abstentions: Councillor Ms S Barlow

Therefore the motion was lost.

RESOLVED: that the following proposal be adopted:

1. That Council meets twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month with the exception of August, when no meetings are held and December when only one meeting will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Without being prescriptive, the first meeting each month will normally, in addition to other matters, consider matters currently dealt with by the Property & Grounds Committee, while the second meeting will prioritise financial matters.

2. As a result of 1 above, the Property & Grounds Committee, and Administration and General Purposes Committee, the Christmas Committee and the CCTV Committee will be disbanded.
3. In view of the new, longer, consultation period the Planning Committee will meet once each month immediately prior to the second Council meeting.
4. Any other sub-committees, working parties etc. that currently exist are to be subject to early review to consider whether they remain relevant or if their work cannot be considered direct by Council.
5. Minutes should be considerably shortened, reflecting principally resolutions passed by Council and not normally including individual interventions.

The Town Clerk advised that she would need to look into the logistics of the meeting structure in the office.

Members were advised that the first Town Council meeting scheduled for 6th June would be moved as the Town Clerk had already been booked on to a conference. An alternative meeting date for the second Town Council meeting in October would also have to be arranged. A new list of meeting dates would be circulated to the next meeting.

b) i) Appointment of Members to Council Committees

RESOLVED: that the following committee membership be adopted.

Committee	Membership	Councillors	Employee
Planning Committee (Monday fortnightly)	6 members	David Cooper James Gittins Adrian Hinton Jean Onions Sarah Stevens Carol Whittle	L Gardner

WORKING PARTIES			
Events Committee-Working Party	5 members Other members	David Cooper Richard Fox James Gittins Sarah Stevens Ron Whittle OBE K Adams Ms T Johnson Rev Preb S Cawdell C Lea (Chair) Chamber of Commerce D Mansfield L Hopkins G Aulton B Davies M Mackenzie	A Wilson A Kendrick
TASK & FINISH GROUPS			
Market Traders	3 members	David Cooper Jean Onions Carol Whittle	A Wilson B Ince

The previous Severn Park Management Working Party would be brought back to a future meeting, as would the Castle Hall and Town Hall Task and Finish Group, and the Boundaries Working Party would be set up at the next Town Council Meeting.

Councillor D Cooper advised Members that a Local Plan Review was taking place regarding the Green Belt and what should be built where. A Working Group had previously met and carried out work for this Review and it was hoped that this could continue. Past Councillor Mr R Gill had offered to sit on the Group, as had Mr C Dyson as he had previous experience with these matters. It was agreed that this Working Party would be set up shortly.

- ii) Councillor Gittins has proposed that in relation to 19i) b) i) above that the CCTV Committee be incorporated into the Property and Grounds Committee.

This proposal was not considered due to Councillor R Whittle's proposal being adopted.

- ii) Members as representatives to Outside Bodies

RESOLVED: that the Members be appointed as Town Council representatives to the following Outside Bodies:

Outside Bodies	Term of Office	Membership 2017/2018
Arthur Weaver and Bluecote School Foundation	5 years from 16.5.17 3 years from 6.10.15	Town Clerk Currently Cllr C Lea
Bridgnorth Arts Society	One year from May	Cllr Mrs H Howell
Bridgnorth Historical Society	One year from May	Cllr E Marshall Cllr Mrs K Hurst-Knight
Bridgnorth & District Twinning Association	One year from May	Cllr Dr J Buckley Cllr D Cooper Cllr Mrs H Howell
Bridgnorth & Shifnal Area Committee of Local Councils	One year from May (2 members)	Cllr D Cooper
Bus User Contact and Community Transport	One year from May	Cllr R Whittle OBE
Bridgnorth & District Tourist Association	One year from May	Cllr Mrs C Baines MBE Cllr Mrs H Howell Cllr J Gittins
Emergency Adviser		B Ince
Fairtrade Group	One year from May	Cllr Mrs S Stevens Cllr Mrs C Whittle
Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley Local Joint Committee	One year from May	Cllr Ms S Barlow
Low Town Action Group	One year from May (2 members)	Cllr E Marshall Cllr Mrs J Onions
Shropshire Assn of Local Councils (Voting Rep) including Larger Local Councils Forum	One year from May (2 members)	Cllr D Cooper Cllr E Marshall
Shropshire Playing Fields Association	One year from May	Cllr J Gittins
Sir Robert Lee's Charity	One year from May	Cllr R Fox Cllr J Gittins Cllr Mrs J Onions Cllr E Marshall

Theatre on the Steps	One year from May	Cllr Ms S Barlow Cllr R Fox
Tree Warden	One year from May	Cllr J Gittins
Bridgnorth Leisure Centre Advisory Group	One year from May	Cllr Mrs K Hurst-Knight Cllr Mrs C Whittle
Sustainable Bridgnorth	One year from May	Cllr Mrs H Howell
Bridgnorth Parish Charity	3 years from October 2015	Cllr Mrs C Baines
Lower Severn Corridor Flood Forum	One year from May	Cllr Mrs H Howell
Bridgnorth Youth Commissioning Group	One year from May (4 members)	Cllr Ms S Barlow Cllr Mrs H Howell Cllr Mrs K Hurst-Knight Cllr Mrs C Whittle
Bridgnorth Area Youth Partnership	One year from May (4 members)	Cllr Ms S Barlow Cllr Mrs H Howell Cllr Mrs K Hurst-Knight Cllr Mrs C Whittle
Our Hub	One year from May	Cllr Dr J Buckley Cllr D Cooper Cllr R Whittle OBE

Members noted that the Mayor becomes the President of the following organisations by default:

- Friends of Bridgnorth Hospital
- Bridgnorth Sinfonia
- Friends of St. Leonard's Church

The Town Clerk advised Members that the Bridgnorth Leisure Centre Advisory Group now exists in a different form.

0023/1718 **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda following the adoption of Councillor R Whittle's proposal contained in minute number 0022/1718.

Members noted that the next Planning Committee meeting is to take place on Monday 22nd May 2017.

0024/1718 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

i) Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Allowances

RESOLVED: that the Town Mayor shall receive £2000 for 2017-2018 and the Deputy Mayor shall receive £300 for 2017- 2018 to carry out their duties.

ii) Members

RESOLVED: that Members wish to continue with the previous system of non-payment of allowances.

iii) Subsistence Allowances

RESOLVED: that the following subsistence allowances are adopted:

Shropshire Council Subsistence Allowances for staff and Members for 2017/2018	
Breakfast	£ 4.95
Lunch	£ 6.77
Tea	£ 2.67
Evening Meal	£ 8.38

iv) Mileage Allowance

RESOLVED: that the mileage allowance, in line with national guidelines @ 0.45p per mile, is the rate used by Bridgnorth Town Council.

0025/1718 **ANNUAL REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF:**

- i) Standing Orders
- ii) Financial Regulations

The Mayor felt that it was unfair to consider and approve amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the first meeting of Council and suggested that Members consider the individual proposals submitted by Councillors D Cooper and Mrs C Whittle, whilst adopting the Standing Orders on a temporary basis. It was agreed that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would need to be looked at in light of experience.

The Mayor also felt that it was difficult for Councillors to absorb all the information contained within Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and work within them if they are too complex.

After a short discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be considered at a future date, acknowledging that amendments will need to be made following decisions made at that meeting.

Concern was expressed that the specific proposals had not been discussed as it was felt that some of these were important. The Mayor advised that he felt it was unfair to consider these at such short notice and that these matters would be discussed at an early meeting.

iii) Transparency Code

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Transparency Code was set in statute and that no amendments had been made since it was previously adopted.

RESOLVED: that the Transparency Code be adopted.

iv) Risk Management Strategy

RESOLVED: that the Risk Management Strategy be adopted.

0026/1718 **ANNUAL REVIEWS**

i) Town Council Insurance

Members noted that the Town Council insurance is due for renewal in July 2017. The basic coverage will not be changed but the whole coverage is currently being reviewed and will be added to throughout the following year if required e.g. following the purchase of new equipment.

Zurich, WPS, AON and Came and Company have been approached – all specialist local council insurers.

Responsibility for the Town Council to be adequately covered lies with the Town Clerk.

ii) Review of Inventory of land and assets

Members noted that the asset register is up to date with valuations on the buildings and items owned by the Town Council creating an inventory for the Council.

The register will be amended once the new hand tools and equipment for the grounds maintenance team is replaced. The Town Clerk advised that she was looking at alternative security measures following the recent spate of thefts.

iii) Review of the Council's and/or employees memberships of other bodies

Members noted that:

- a) The Town Clerk pays her own professional memberships
- b) A review of the subscriptions paid is regularly undertaken and those we no longer require removed.

Recently West Midlands Employers has been removed

We currently pay subscriptions to:

Shropshire Association of Local Councils
Shropshire Rural Community Charity
Zurich Insurance - Health and Safety Advisory Service
National Association of British Market Authorities
Bridgnorth Tourism Association
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

iv) Reviewing the Town Council Complaints Procedure

Members noted that a copy of the Complaints Procedure is on the Town Council website.

v) Reviewing the Councils procedures for handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

There are statutory requirements as to how quickly the Council has to respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

In future all requests made under either act will be reported back to Town Council.

vi) Reviewing the Council's Policy for dealing with the press/media

The review will take place under Agenda item 23 i) Standing Orders

Councillor Mrs C Walden left the meeting.

Councillors were reminded that at the Town Council meeting held on Monday 14th November, Members **RESOLVED** "that the Town Council establish a Task and Finish Group of 5 Members to:

1. Assess the value of Town Council supported events to the Community of Bridgnorth, and the costs
2. Consult residents and businesses about their perception of Town Council supported events
3. Consider options for future community involvement in Events and recommend an appropriate way forward"

Councillor R Whittle OBE had raised this item and his proposals had led to this resolution; however advised that he had now had chance to think about this in further detail and felt that it would be better to put this matter into the hands of the Events Committee. They would then be responsible for seeing who does what and why, and how they can make the running of the Town Events more of a 'three legged stool'

Councillor R Whittle OBE clarified that he was not against the running of the events but that he was against the costs of these falling largely under the Town Council remit. Confirmation was then requested that funding would not be withdrawn. Councillor R Whittle OBE advised that the budget had already been set for this financial year and therefore no funding could be withdrawn.

Councillor Mrs J Onions stated that after looking at the finances, the events lost money and could be seen as being a drain on resources. Costings were then requested and the Town Clerk advised that Members received these each month in the income and expenditure reports. The Mayor advised that some costs were clearly identifiable, but a breakdown of total costs would be going to a future Events meeting.

Certain Members felt that the events are an investment as they bring people to the town and the value of this could not be quantified.

It was felt that some people do not realise that not all businesses necessarily benefit from the events; however it was then stated that a lot of shops were closed when the majority of events took place. Members were also advised that one Councillor had received similar comments when the Saturday Market is on.

RESOLVED: that this matter be put into the hands of the Events Committee.

At this point in the meeting, it was **RESOLVED:** that Standing Order 1r be suspended to allow the meeting to continue.

0028/1718 **LOW TOWN COMMUNITY HALL**

i) Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED: the accounts amounting to £6,994.42 be retrospectively approved for payment.

ii) Members are asked to consider and note the minutes from the meeting of the Low Town Community Hall held on 3rd April 2017

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the Low Town Community Hall be received and adopted.

iii) The Town Clerk felt that the 25th Anniversary Celebrations at the Low Town Community Hall had been successful. It had been good to see current users and previous Trustees at the event.

0029/1718 **CCTV GRANT APPLICATION**

Members were asked to note the following statement from Andrew Gough, Safer Communities, Community Safety and Health Protection at Shropshire Council:

“Following the submission of the bid for funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for CCTV in Shropshire at the end of February, I have been waiting to hear if the bid was successful. I attended a Shropshire Community Safety Partnership Board meeting this morning, which was also attended by the Deputy PCC who informed the Board that there wouldn't be a decision on the funding for CCTV until September 2017 at the earliest. She explained that they were looking at CCTV systems across the four local authority areas across West Mercia and considering bids for a range of equipment and services.

I realise that this isn't the response you, or I, were hoping for but we will have to wait a bit longer for a final decision.”

It was proposed that a letter be sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner in the strongest possible terms to see how he proposes that the Town Council fund the CCTV system themselves.

0030/1718 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL**

A request had been received from Cllr Whittle in respect of correspondence of the Council and his view that Council should consider all items.

The Town Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor had been amazed to see how much information the Town Council already shared. This included newsletters and correspondence from outside organisations, as well as translating information received from organisations or individuals into agenda items for discussion.

Members were made aware of the of the diversity and volume of post the Town Council receives each day which includes invoices, application forms for events/halls/rent of council land etc, publicity leaflets, post for Shropshire Council, licence renewals, visitor information requests, contracts etc. This type of post does not need to be brought to the attention of members. To do so would result in huge cost for staff resource and photocopying.

Councillor G Davies raised a matter which the Town Clerk stated could not be discussed in open session.

The Town Mayor moved on to the next item on the agenda.

0031/1718 NABMA – LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM

Members noted that the NABMA Local Council Forum was being held in Bridgnorth on Friday 30th June 2017 in the Town Hall. Members were asked to advise the Town Clerk if they would like to attend.

0032/1718 CORRESPONDENCE FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

i) National Grid Gas Works

Members noted the list of locations and dates of works planned by National Grid Gas, letter drops and communications will take place with residents in advance of the works.

National Grid Gas - Mains renewal programme

Grove Crescent : 22.05.2017 – 23.06.2017
The Mall : 12.06.2017 – 30.06.2017
Bernards Hill : 19.06.2017 – 07.07.2017
Horsegrove Hill : 19.06.2017 – 07.07.2017
St Nicholas Road (Phase 1) : 26.06.2017 – 07.07.2017
St Nicholas Crescent : 10.07.2017 – 28.07.2017
Lodge Lane (Phase 1) : 17.07.2017 – 11.08.2017
Stourbridge Road : 17.07.2017 – 11.08.2017
Morfe Road : 31.07.2017 – 01.09.2017
St Nicholas Road (Phase 2) : 07.08.2017 – 08.09.2017
Priory Road : 07.08.2017 – 08.09.2017
Lodge Lane (Phase 2) : 28.08.2017 – 15.09.2017

Works are to mainly take place under minor traffic management, however there will be some planned road closures. Discussions are also ongoing over some dates to make sure that St Marys School is not affected.

0033/1718 **CONFERENCE/MEETING UPDATES**

No reports or minutes have been received.

0034/1718 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS 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.

0035/1718 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2017 were submitted as circulated

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0036/1718 **MATTERS ARISING**

- i) Updates from the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2017 not included elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no matters arising.

0037/1718 **CONFIDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Members are asked to approve confidential minutes and confirm the recommendations contained therein.

- i) The minutes of the Adjourned Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 27th March 2017 were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Adjourned Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 27th March 2017 be received and adopted.

0038/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM CONFIDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

The meeting closed at 9.55p.m.