

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour,
College House on Monday 16th October 2017 at 7.15pm**

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

In Attendance: Clerk, Phil Griffiths
Shropshire Councillor, Les Winwood
One member of the press
Five members of the public
Minutes' Secretary and transcribed by Mrs P M Russell

Prior to the meeting, a presentation was made by Bridgnorth Hospital League of Friends at the invitation of the Town Mayor. Ray Gill, Chairman of Bridgnorth Hospital League of Friends, gave Councillors an overview.

The League is a voluntary organisation and will have been running for 60 years in October 2018. A newsletter is produced after each committee meeting, of which there are 16 members, and there are regular invitations to share ideas and be actively involved. The hospital Manager liaises with the Committee on a regular basis. The League fund raise to support hospital projects and raised £8,000 in 2015 for a birthing pool for MLU and are hoping to update the X-Ray equipment in the next financial year. Fund raising activities include:

Easter coffee morning
Fish & chip supper on SVR
Street collections
"Gala" and Grand Draw
Entertainment evenings
Christmas coffee morning
100+ Club
LARGE amounts of money are received as bequests from people's wills

They also run a coffee shop and a refreshment trolley on the wards.

The Mayor is ex officio President and attends AGM to see "fair play". This year Councillor R Whittle has kindly made the League of Friends one of his charities and it is the charity of the year for the Co-op.

Members thanked Ray on a very informative presentation.

A presentation was then made by the Town Mayor, for the Community Pride Awards 2017, to Paul Hopkins who received first prize in the Best Container Garden section.

0356/1718 **FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

0357/1718 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED: to receive the apology as listed below:

Councillor Mrs S Stevens (Unwell)

0358/1718 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Personal Interest

Councillor D Cooper	Item 30	Town Council Debtors
Councillor J Gittins	Item 30	Town Council Debtors
Councillor Mrs H Howell		Cemetery Trustee of Bridgnorth Housing Trust

0359/1718 **APPOINTMENT OF A CLERK FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED: that Mr P Griffiths be appointed as Clerk for the meeting.

0360/1718 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions had been received.

0361/1718 **REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL**

Councillor L Winwood provided the following report from Shropshire Council:

“Good evening Councillors, Ladies and Gentleman. I’ve been asked to present a Shropshire Council report to you tonight.

Tracy Johnson Community Enablement team on behalf of The Bridgnorth Area Youth Partnership is trying to organise a social evening where groups come and network, meeting and sharing ideas on the 23rd November 2017, venue to be advertised. Anyone wishing to help please contact Tracy Johnson @shropshire.gov.uk.

Place Plan Review 2017, all completed forms need to be returned by 22nd December 2017. They provide up to date evidence and identify local community investment.

On the 29th November 2017 at 7pm at Stanley Lane Council offices. There will be a meeting on Place Plans, CIL, Community Lead Plans and Neighbourhood

Plans, if a representative from Bridgnorth Town Council would like to attend.

Kier have been appointed Shropshire Councils Highways Contractor from 1st April 2018.

Pavement work on SCD and Victoria Road have now been completed it makes a huge difference.

Consultation on the Parking Strategy closes on 17th October 2017.

Shropshire Council in conjunction with Phil and Christine Webster who have been working with the resident to organise litter picks four dates have now been fixed to assist these residents who kindly give up their time and are asking for more volunteers to help keep our Town clean and tidy.

18th October 2017 at 1.15pm Innage Lane

1st November 2017 at 1.15pm Westgate

15th November 2017 at 1.15pm Sainsbury's

29th November 2017 at 1.15pm Severn Street

Myself and Elliott are due to meet staff with the Head of Oldbury Wells and Officers to look at Safety issues in November, date to be arranged.

The By-pass is on track for mid November 2017

That concludes my report but if anyone has a question to ask me then I will do my best to answer them".

Members asked if the pavement on the other side of Victoria Road would also be repaired. Les Winwood replied not to his knowledge. Members also asked if the Place Plan Review would be completed in full with Town and Parish councils. L Winwood replied yes this would be done.

Members thanked Councillor L Winwood for his report.

0362/1718 **MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 at 7.15pm were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0363/1718 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

0364/1718 **TOWN MAYOR'S AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S DIARY**

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

Mayor's Diary

There was no report from the Mayor.

Deputy Mayor's Diary

Friday 29th September - Telford & Wrekin Council Mayor's Charity Appeal
Wednesday 4th October - Bridgnorth Roman Catholic Church, Live simply Mass.

0365/1718 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Questions from Councillor D Cooper

- Q1 Is it lawful for a member of the Council, such as the Chairman, to take decisions or give instructions on behalf of the Council?
- Q2. What are the consequences of any action purportedly taken on behalf of the Council without proper authority?
- Q3. Can the Council retrospectively validate an unauthorised act?
- Q4. If a decision about a Council matter needs to be taken as a matter of urgency, and there is no provision in Standing Orders covering the situation, how should the matter be dealt with?
- Q5. In the absence of the appointed Proper Officer, or any designated deputy, what arrangements would it be advisable to make to exercise the Council's day to day functions?
- Q6. Who in law is the line manager of a Council's Proper Officer?
- Q7. Who has provided the answers to these questions, and what qualifications to they have?

This item was deferred to the Confidential part of the meeting.

0366/1718 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 2nd October 2017 were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 2nd October 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

- ii) The minutes of the Christmas Committee meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Christmas Committee meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Councillor J Gittins gave a verbal update to Members from the Christmas Committee meeting that had met prior to this Town Council meeting. He also informed Members of the cost of the additional Christmas lights, £4104, that they wished to purchase for areas in Low Town. Members were informed that with the monies that had already been allocated from Council, £1400 and the donations that had been received or pledged, £2475, this left a deficit of £229.

0367/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0368/1718 **NOTES OF OTHER MEETINGS**

- i) Notes of the Arts Trail meeting held on 2nd October 2017

Members noted the report.

0369/1718 **FINANCE**

- 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 £82,662.29 be approved for payment.

- ii) Income and Expenditure Reports

- i) Income and Expenditure Report

RESOLVED: that the income and expenditure report be noted.

Account Code Report

- i) Budget Report

RESOLVED: that the account code budget report be noted.

- ii) Earmarked Reserves Report

RESOLVED: that the account code earmarked reserves report be noted.

iii) Report from Mrs R Williams

RESOLVED: that the report from Mrs R Williams be noted.

iv) Level of Reserves

RESOLVED: that the level of the Town Council's reserves of £848,073 be noted.

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statement

RESOLVED: that the Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statement be noted.

vi) External Audit

Members were asked to note that the External Audit had been completed for the year ended 31 March 2017 and their comments were as follows:

'On the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the smaller authority:

The Council did not send any of the documents we requested in respect of the intermediate audit when they submitted the annual return. The documents were provided subsequently but in future the Council should ensure that all of the documents requested in the letter accompanying the blank annual return are submitted together with the completed annual return rather than later.'

Members noted the comments and the Chairman requested that the notice be put on the Town Council website and notice boards.

vii) VAT partial exemption 2016/17

Members noted that the calculations for the VAT Partial Exemption position for 2016/2017 have been completed by DCK Accounting Solutions. The VAT recovered on the exempt activities for the year was £5,710.20 which has not exceeded the de-minimis limit of £7,500.

0370/1718 **LOW TOWN COMMUNITY HALL**

i) Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £938.94 be approved for payment.

0371/1718 **COMMUNITY LITTERPICKS**

Members were given information on a community litter pick that had been organised for 18th October 2017 by Shropshire Council's Street Scene team.

After a discussion with regard to volunteers carrying out litter picks and gardening duties **IT WAS AGREED** that the Town Council would add a new section to the Community Pride Awards for 2018 entitled Volunteers.

0372/1718 **REQUEST TO COLLECT DONATIONS OF BISCUITS FOR CHRISTMAS**

Following a request from a resident, Members considered whether to allow the Town Council offices to be used as a drop off point for donations of boxes of biscuits that are handed out at the "Together at Christmas" event.

Members agreed to this request.

0373/1718 **GOOD NEIGHBOURS EVENT IN SHROPSHIRE**

Members were asked to note an invitation that had been sent by the Shropshire RCC Wise and Well team to attend a Good Neighbours Event being held on Thursday 9th November.

Members noted the invitation.

0374/1718 **REPAIR TO MARY JONES BOX TOMB**

Members requested that this item be deferred to a future meeting to allow more information and legal advice to be obtained.

0375/1718 **MINI 360 EXCAVATOR OPERATORS COURSE**

Members considered quotations with regard to training for the Direct Labour Force for Mini 360 Excavators.

RESOLVED: that the quote from Mechanised Industry Training be accepted at a cost of £1,133.00 plus VAT.

0376/1718 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS RECEIVED**

Members were asked to note that no Freedom of Information Requests had been received since the last meeting.

0377/1718 **BRIEFING ON KEY CHANGES UNDER GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS**

Members were asked to consider if they would like to attend a briefing session, being run by SALC on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which take effect from 25th May 2018.

Councillor Mrs C Whittle agreed to attend.

0378/1718 **SEVERN PARK TOILET CONTRACT**

Members were asked to consider quotations with regard to the toilet contract for Severn Park in 2018.

This item was deferred to the Confidential part of the meeting.

0379/1718 **20'S PLENTY CONFERENCE**

Councillor R Fox made a presentation to Members following his attendance at the 20's Plenty Conference.

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED**: that a letter be sent to Shropshire Council asking for their engagement with Town and Parish Councils with regard to the 20's Plenty campaign.

Members thanked Councillor R Fox for an excellent presentation. The Chairman reminded Members that reports should normally be put in writing and not in the form of a Presentation.

0380/1718 **CONFERENCE/MEETING UPDATES**

From external bodies

- i) Bridgnorth, Worfield, Claverley, Alveley & Brown Clee Local Joint Committee

Members noted the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th March 2017.

- ii) Low Town Action Group

Members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2017

- iii) Helicopter Liaison Group

Members were asked to note the attached minutes and consider whether they would like to bring future notes to meetings for Members information. Members were also asked to consider appointing a Town Council representative to this group.

Members noted the report but did not wish to appoint a representative.

iv) Bridgnorth and District Twinning Association

Members noted the minutes from the Bridgnorth and District Twinning Association meeting held on 12th September 2017.

0381/1718 **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

i) Shropshire Council Car Parking Consultation

Members were asked to confirm a response to the Shropshire Council Car Parking Consultation formulated by the Task and Finish Group appointed at the last meeting.

It was **RESOLVED:** that Bridgnorth Town Council also write formally regarding the level of charges, and that they reduce the charges or implement them over a two year period.

ii) Tasley Chicken Farm

Following a short discussion at the last Town Council meeting, it was brought to this meeting and the Tasley Chicken Farm Action Group made a presentation by David Baker. The group have contacted Richard Bucklin to fight the case and he has issued papers for a judicial review for failure to assess environmental manure spreading.

RESOLVED: that Bridgnorth Town Council would write to Shropshire Council regarding monitoring of the area around the site before and after construction.

iii) NHS Consultation of Minor Injuries Units

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust (SATH) have just announced their review into the Minor Injuries Units (MiUs). They propose reducing the 4 rural ones down to 2, which will have a dramatic impact on Bridgnorth (whether ours is closed or comes under greater pressure).

There is now a 4 week review period during which time SATH will receive comments.

Launch of "out of hospital" care review

Shropshire CCG are conducting a parallel, but separate, review of three services that make up health care that aims to reduce hospital admissions:

1. Minor Injury Units
2. Community Beds
3. DAART (Diagnostics, Assessment and Access to Rehabilitation Treatments)

At its board meeting on 11 October they announced a four week review of their “case for change”, accepting comments from the public, patient groups, representations and Councils until 10 November, at which time their case for change will become a formal proposal for consultation (a yes/no question via an online survey).

Next steps: A Task and Finish group was established with Cllr Julia Buckley and Cllr Celia Walden, to draft a response on behalf of the Council, for members to consider by email in time for the deadline. Cllr Buckley also indicated they would make contact with the League of Friends from Bridgnorth Hospital to invite their views and ensure co-ordination of our separate response.

There is a very real risk that the CCG may suggest reducing the current provision of five rural community hospitals down to two (one in the North and one in the South of the county). Whether Bridgnorth is selected to survive or not, there could be dramatic impacts on the health provision for Bridgnorth residents either way. It is important for Bridgnorth to speak out against these proposed service cuts and defend the vital role of our Minor Injury Unit, DAART and community bed service.

Update on Maternity (Midwife Led Units) Review

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are drawing their “engagement” exercise to a close, which sought views from the public as to how best re-design maternity services for Shropshire. Cllr Buckley attended several workshops and put forward the suggestion of separating out the contracts between low risk (MLU) from high risk (Consultant Led Unit or CLU) care. This would remove the financial incentive to push mothers into higher interventions against their best interests, but when budgets are squeezed, and instead create incentives to promote each care route appropriately for sustainability.

Next steps: The CCG should publish its draft proposals in November for a formal consultation period (a yes/no question via an online survey). Cllr Buckley will update members when this is available for their consideration.

There is a very real risk that the CCG may suggest re-opening the MLUs on 1 Jan as “rural hubs” purely for 9-5 ante natal and post-natal clinics, but not as birthing centres (With the focus remaining on Shrewsbury and Telford). It is important for Bridgnorth to continue to push for our own midwife led maternity unit to be available for births.

0382/1718 **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.

0383/1718 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

- i) The confidential minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 at 7.15pm were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the confidential minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 at 7.15pm be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0384/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from confidential committee minutes.

0385/1718 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

This item is being discussed in confidential as requested by the Member.

0386/1718 **TOWN COUNCIL DEBTORS**

The current situation was outlined at the meeting and Members received an update on the action that is being taken in some cases to follow up on debtors.

0387/1718 **BANDON LANE**

This item is being discussed in confidential as it relates to the preparation of cases in legal proceedings, including land transactions.

0388/1718 **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Members discussed items relating to, terms of employment, resignations and pay of employees.

This item was in confidential session as it related to individual Town Council employees and their terms of employment/service.

0389/1718 **UPDATE ON APPOINTMENT OF A LOCUM TOWN CLERK**

Members received a verbal update.

The meeting closed at 10.33pm