

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour,
College House on Tuesday 6th February 2018 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,
Mrs H Howell, Mrs K Hurst-Knight, Mrs J Onions,
E Marshall, Mrs C Walden and Mrs C Whittle

In Attendance: Acting Town Clerk, Mr B Ince
Minutes Secretaries and transcribed by Mrs P Russell and
Mrs L Gardner (public session only)

Members of the Public 10 (public session only)

Prior to the meeting, a presentation was made by Bridgnorth & District Twinning Association regarding their 40th anniversary celebrations in 2018. Bridgnorth & District Twinning Association are hosting this special anniversary and invited the Councillors to take part in the celebrations starting with the arrival of guests on the 21st September 2018 at 4.00pm. It was suggested that the Mayor and Councillors could hold a welcome reception. A meal has been arranged for Saturday 22nd September 2018 at the Castle Hall and there will be a Church service with choral singers on Sunday 23rd September 2018. A classic cars procession has also been arranged.

0641/1718 **FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

0642/1718 **RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

The Chairman informed the meeting that recording, including filming, audio recording, taking photographs, blogging, tweeting and using other social media websites is permitted at Council meetings which are open to the public - however, anyone wishing to do is requested to speak to the Town Council staff prior to the meeting as there are rules which must be followed.

0643/1718 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(i) **RESOLVED:** to receive the apologies as listed below:

Councillor A Hinton	Unwell
Councillor Mrs S Stevens	Unwell

- (ii) No formal approval of the reasons for absence for the purposes of S85 Local Government Act 1972 was required.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman asked Members for agenda item 18 regarding the use of the Town Hall Fairtrade fortnight to be brought forward to this point in the meeting and also that agenda item 18 (ii) regarding use of Town Hall for Council meetings be deferred to a later meeting pending investigations relating to Wi-Fi availability.

The Chairman also requested that agenda item 20 regarding St Mary's Churchyard be deferred to a later meeting as this item had been raised by Councillor A Hinton who could not attend.

0644/1718 **TOWN HALL**

- i) Fairtrade Fortnight Coffee Morning – Use of the Town Hall

The theme for Fairtrade Fortnight is “Open Doors to Fairtrade” and the Fairtrade Foundation asks Fairtrade Groups around the country to find an “iconic door” in the community through which people can be invited. The Town Hall door is the only door on a main thoroughfare which could be considered iconic – therefore we ask to be able to use it. Permission is therefore requested for use of the Town Hall for a Fairtrade coffee morning on Friday March 2nd between 10am to 12noon. During which Fairtrade drinks, cake and biscuits, will be given away.

Members were asked to consider fore-going the sale of Fairtrade Products for this one session and join forces with the Steering Group to welcome people and give away Fairtrade products that the Steering Group will provide. This could promote the Town Hall and the Fair Trade products it sells throughout the remainder of the year.

After a short update it was **RESOLVED**: that there will be no charge for the use of the Town Hall on Friday 2nd March 2018 between 10.00am till 12 noon for Fairtrade Coffee morning

- ii) Use of the Town Hall for Council Meetings

This item has been deferred to a future meeting.

0645/1718 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Personal Interest

Councillor Mrs H Howell	Item 20	St Mary's Churchyard
Councillor Mrs C Baines	Item 26 (iii)	Personnel Matters
Councillor D Cooper	Item 26 (iii)	Personnel Matters
Councillor G Davies	Item 6 (i)	Planning Minutes

Questions from Resident 1

1. Why are various individual residents allowed to use the Town Hall for non-council meetings free of charge? Should not this use be invoiced to the various individuals requesting use of the Town Hall under scheme charges agreed already by the Council? The last such meeting was on 11th January at 6pm. If no invoices are being raised, why not?

The Chairman replied that this meeting was for residents of Church Street and St Mary’s Street and had invited Councillors along. Each case is dealt with individually at the time.

2. The Council has been paying large amounts of money out in respect of Pension Scheme surcharges, and this appears to be also a forward commitment, a total payment of around £125,000 appears to be being made. What Act, Statutory Instrument, or other legislation forces the Council to pay these additional Pension Deficit charges for staff pensions when they are already contributing by normal deductions?

The resident wished it to be clarified that after surcharge (second line) it should say ‘to cover a deficit’ and the amount shown as £125,00 should be written as £125,000.

The Chairman read out a statement from Shropshire Council Pensions in answer to the above Question.

“As you know Bridgnorth Town Council is a participating employer of the Local Government Pension Scheme. A Town Council is a Part 2 of Schedule 2 employer under the Local Government Regulations 2013 (Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 2356, last amended SI 2017 864) and designate the employees who can join the scheme.

As a scheme employer the contribution rates payable are determined by a 3 year Actuarial Valuation that the Administering Authority must obtain under Regulation 62. The Fund must also publish a Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) under regulation 58. The last valuation took place in 2016 for new rates to be applied from 1 April 2017. A copy of the latest report is on our website and can be found by following this link:

<https://shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SCPF-2016-valuation-report.pdf>

You will see from this report that although the Funding level is assessed as a whole for the Fund, each individual employer rate is calculated based on their own assets and liabilities. I would draw your attention to page 4 and page 6 which states how an employer will pay contributions as stated in the FSS. It is split into a primary contribution rate, this is the % deduction from pay and is required to meet the cost of the future accrual of benefits and the secondary

rate (lump sum payment) which is an adjustment to the primary rate to reflect any past service deficit or surplus. Appendix H (from page 26) shows the individual rates and adjustments for each employer, Bridgnorth TC is on page 27.”

Supplementary Questions

1. As Agenda item 16 will probably result in the Council adopting the seven principles (Nolan principles) of behaviour in Public Office, the fifth of which is that such holders of Public Office should be as open as possible and give reasons for their decisions, will Agenda item 24 to exclude the Press and Public now be deleted tonight, or at least shifted to after item 25 so as to only have personnel matters discussed in private?

The Chairman replied that it should be in the order of the agenda but on this occasion it will stand. In future there will not be separate confidential minutes.

2. Under Agenda item 15, “Events Calendar” why has the Council ignored a request from the Chamber and High Street traders not to hold the carnival on a Saturday?

The Chairman replied that this was discussed at the Events meeting where it was agreed that the carnival would start later giving High Street traders and Market traders more trading time.

0647/1718 **MINUTES**

i) The minutes of the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 16th January 2018 were submitted as circulated.

A recorded vote was requested.

For: Councillors Mrs C Baines, Mrs S Barlow, Dr J Buckley, G Davies, R Fox, Mrs H Howell Mrs K Hurst-Knight, E Marshall, Mrs J Onions, Mrs C Walden, Mrs C Whittle and R Whittle OBE

Against: D Cooper

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Bridgnorth Town Council Committee – minutes of the meeting held on on Tuesday 16th January 2018 be received and adopted.

0648/1718 **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor D Cooper expressed his concerns that the Council had not been provided with an estimate of the effect the agreed fee increases would have on the Council’s income and that a detailed schedule of fees and charges from April 2018 had not been presented.

The Mayor reminded Councillor D Cooper that it was inappropriate to put forward a motion under "Matters Arising" but could do so on a future agenda. Certain Members raised concern that this would result in a matter being discussed twice within six months and therefore would require the signatures of eight Members to bring this item back to the table.

0649/1718 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

No written questions had been received prior to the meeting, but the following was raised by Councillor Dr J Buckley.

'Does anyone think anything should be done about the homeless in Bridgnorth?'

Members were of the opinion that this was Shropshire Council's responsibility.

Shropshire Councillor E Lynch was in attendance and undertook to establish whether Shropshire Council had an obligation to carry out an annual street survey of the homeless.

Councillor Dr Buckley stated that she would like to work with the church on the matter and would bring a proposal back to the next Town Council meeting.

0650/1718 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2018 were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2018 be received and adopted.

Members were asked to approve the minutes and confirm the recommendations contained therein:

- i) The minutes of the Christmas Committee held on Monday 29th January 2018 at 7.15pm were submitted as circulated.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Christmas Committee held on Monday 29th January 2018 be received and adopted.

0651/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0652/1718 **NOTES OF OTHER MEETINGS**

- i) Notes of the Arts Trail Working Party meeting held on 8th January 2018

Members were informed that the next scheduled meeting of the Arts Trail Working Group had been changed from 20th February 2018 to 19th February 2018 and would be held in the Annexe at College House. A prototype of the finished statue was passed amongst Members and it was suggested that a letter be sent to Grainger Worrall to thank them for their work.

- ii) Notes of the Events Working Party meeting held on 23rd January 2018

Members noted the notes.

0653/1718 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

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

Chestnut Grove Crem 31

0654/1718 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Following discussions held at the Town Council meeting on 9th January 2018, Members were asked to agree ways to encourage residents to attend the Annual Town Meeting which is to take place on Wednesday 25th April 2018 at 7pm in the Low Town Community Hall.

Various ideas such as erecting promotional banners in the High Street and inclusion in the Mayor's new diary column in the Bridgnorth Journal were suggested to advertise the meeting and it was requested that Members submit any additional ideas regarding the meeting to the Town Clerk.

0655/1718 **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR R WHITTLE OBE**

Members were asked to consider a proposal from Councillor R Whittle OBE that the Town Council suggest to the Events Committee that in order to provide proper governance of taxpayer's money it should become a committee of Council, with co-opted members, a Town Councillor in the chair to be combined with the Christmas Committee

After a lengthy discussion the above proposal was made.

An amended proposal was then was put forward to set up a working party with a Governance Structure and a recorded vote was requested.

Amended proposal:

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

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

The amended proposal was therefore lost.

Members voted on the original proposal as follows:

For: Councillors G Davies, Mrs K Hurst-Knight, E Marshall, Mrs J Onions, Mrs C Walden, Mrs C Whittle and R Whittle OBE
Against: Councillors Mrs C Baines, Mrs S Barlow, Dr J Buckley, D Cooper, R Fox and Mrs H Howell.

The proposal was carried and became the substantive motion.

RESOLVED: that it be suggested to the Events Committee that they become a Council Committee with co-opted members and that it is also combined with the Christmas Committee which could continue to accept funding.

0656/1718 **EVENTS CALENDAR**

Members were asked to consider and confirm/note the following events being organised by the Town Events Working Party/Committee and the Town Council.

Continental Market and Annual Vintage Tractor Rally*	Sunday 18th March
Easter Bunny Hunt	Sunday 1st April
Mayor Making	Thursday 10th May
Civic Sunday*	Sunday 13th May
Bridgnorth Town Carnival*	Saturday 23rd June
Teddy Bear's Picnic	Wednesday 25th July
Italian Auto Moto Festival & Continental Market*	Sunday 2nd Sept
Remembrance Sunday*	Sunday 11th November
Christmas Lighting Up Event*	Friday 23rd November
Mayor's Charity Christmas Concert	Saturday 8th December

Members were asked to note that the St. George's Day event and Proms in the Pews would not be taking place in 2018.

RESOLVED: that the Events Calendar be agreed and it was confirmed that Town Council Staff could continue to assist with these events.

0657/1718 **GUIDANCE & PROTOCOL**

Following the Town Council meeting on 16th January 2018, Members were asked to consider and adopt the Member Employee Protocol (previously circulated). Members were reminded that previously it was requested that they contact the Locum Town Clerk with any comments they may have.

The matter was discussed at length and it was stated that there was no provision in the Protocol for the system of the Mayor meeting with the Town Clerk on a day to day basis and making a record of the meeting for both parties that would be used to assist the appraisal system.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED:** that this be deferred for one month while the Town Council seeks advice from NALC, SALC and Shropshire HR.

0658/1718 **CEMETERY**

i) Surrendered Grave Deeds

a) Request to 'buy back' Grave Deeds

A request had been received from a member of the public for the Council to 'buy back' Grave Deeds 1471 and 1472 to two unused grave plots in the cemetery which are no longer required. The plots were originally purchased in 2003 for £224.00 each. Members were asked to consider this request taking into account the information provided.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council pay the original purchase price of £224.00 to buy back Grave Deeds 1471 and 1472 with no administration fees.

b) Gifting back a Cremation Plot Grave Deed

Members were informed that a member of the public has offered to gift back, at no cost to the Council, Deed of Grant number 1575 that he and his wife purchased in 2005 for a cremation plot in Bridgnorth Cemetery that they no longer require. Members are asked to formally accept this kind offer subject to completion of the appropriate paperwork.

RESOLVED: that the offer from a member of the public to gift back Grave Deed 1575 be accepted and also to send a letter of thanks to the family.

ii) Claiming Back Grave Plots

Members were asked to consider the information from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management regarding claiming back grave and cremation plots and the information was noted.

0659/1718 **OUTDOORS AND PROPERTIES MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members received and noted the following report:

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Work has now begun on the repair of the Mary Jones tomb and should be completed this week weather permitting. Temporary barriers have also been placed out in the disused graveyard adjacent to the Castle Grounds in order to restrict parking to the area agreed by the Church authority.

SNOW DAMAGE TO CEMETERY TREES

The last of three quotes will be in by Friday 2nd February for the remainder of the tree repairs to be carried out and will be presented at the next Town Council meeting for consideration.

RIVERSIDE CLEARING

The riverside clearance is on-going.

TREE COPPICING AND PRUNING ON WELL MEADOW

Consultation between Shropshire Council tree officers and the Town Council has now been agreed and work will continue throughout February and early March. At this time of year, we get a number of calls about hedge cutting and tree pruning in the nesting season. It's amazing how many people think you cannot touch hedges and trees while birds are nesting, but you can. People are very passionate about protecting our bird life, quite rightly, but I thought I would do a bit of myth busting.

1. All birds in the UK are fully protected by law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - WCA) from intentional harm. Under the same act, any active nest, including nest building or a nest with eggs or chicks in, is also protected from intentional destruction or removal and you cannot block access to any active nest. So, if you see a bird carrying nesting material or food into an area, this indicates that there is an active nest there.
2. There is no law in the UK preventing any one from felling trees or pruning hedges at any time of year. However, we advise that you try to do any tree work over the winter months, when you can see into the tree and the tree itself is dormant. This also avoids the peak season for nesting birds, which is from the beginning of March to the end of August.
3. However, some birds can nest at any time of year and recent winters have shown us that milder weather can tempt many birds into nesting early. Last year there were reports of Blackbirds with chicks in January, Robins with chicks in February and Ducks with ducklings in March.

It does not matter when or where the bird's nest is, it is still protected by the WCA all year round.

Bridgnorth Town Council conducts a common sense approach to this issue and would only carry out hedge cutting and tree pruning if absolutely necessary and with strict regard to the guidance given above.

PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING (PAT)

PAT testing continues.

GAS FIRE MAYOR'S PARLOUR

The chimney is being inspected by a specialist contractor and a report will follow for the consideration of Members.

STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT RENEWAL

The closing date for the return of tenders is Friday 16th February 2018.

0660/1718 **ST. MARY'S CHURCHYARD**

It was announced earlier in the meeting that this item was to be deferred to a future meeting. Minute number 0643/1718 refers.

0661/1718 **JENNINGS EASTER FUN FAIR**

Members were asked to consider permitting Jennings Fun Fair to hold their annual event on Severn Park.

RESOLVED: that Jennings Fun Fair be given permission to hold their annual event on Severn Park from Tuesday 27th March 2018 (pull on), open Thursday 29th March 2018 until Monday 2nd April 2018, departing on Tuesday 3rd April 2018 with the following conditions:

- *All music to be turned off by 9.00pm*
- *That the generators be placed at the furthest side of the field away from Riverside for this event.*

0662/1718 **PAYROLL SERVICES**

Members were asked to consider a report with regard to outsourcing payroll services.

RESOLVED: that Bridgnorth Town Council accept Shropshire Council's quotation in the sum of £1,000.00 excluding VAT and move the payroll software function to Shropshire Council.

0663/1718 **BRIDGNORTH HIGH STREET BUILDINGS**

Members were asked to give consideration to the condition of two High Street buildings; No. 3 High Street and Newmarket Buildings, Postern Gate and agree a way forward.

RESOLVED: that Bridgnorth Town Council write to Shropshire Council regarding the condition of two High Street buildings; No. 3 High Street and Newmarket Buildings, Postern Gate to express our concern over their condition.

0664/1718 **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.

0665/1718 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

- i) Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16th January 2017

RESOLVED: that the confidential minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 16th January 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

- ii) Matters arising from Confidential Minutes

a) It was proposed and seconded that in future only the resolutions from Confidential sessions are recorded as part of the minutes of the full meeting.

RESOLVED: that Confidential sessions of the Council meetings or Committees of Council are minuted to only show the resolutions made as required by law and are shown as part of the minutes of the full meeting.

0666/1718 **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

RESOLVED:

- i) That Members accept the proposal at Appendix F relating to the Pay Reviews of two members of the Direct Labour Force.
- ii) That Members approve the appointment of Barry Ince as Acting Town Clerk and that Roslyn Williams is promoted in to the post of Responsible Finance Officer.

At this point in the meeting, it was **RESOLVED:** that Standing Orders be suspended for 30 minutes to allow the meeting to continue over the 2.5 hour limit.

Councillor Mrs C Walden left the meeting 9:50pm

- iii) Members were asked to consider the report with regard to the revised Town Clerks salary scale, job description and reconfirm that we can proceed to advertising the position.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk post is advertised using the Job Description and pay scale previously circulated with Members' agendas at Appendix G. National Joint Council scale points 48-51 (£42,899.00 - £46,036.00), the starting point to be dependent on experience.

The meeting closed at 10pm.