

## BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour,  
College House on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 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 (arrived during the meeting), D Cooper,  
G Davies, R Fox, A Hinton,  
Mrs K Hurst-Knight (arrived during the meeting),  
E Marshall, Mrs J Onions, Mrs S Stevens, Mrs C Walden  
and Mrs C Whittle

In Attendance: Acting Town Clerk, Mr B Ince  
Minutes Secretaries and transcribed by Mrs A Kendrick  
Mrs P Russell

Francis Darling, Shropshire Council  
Jessica Moores, Shropshire Council

5 members of the public

0732/1718 **FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

0733/1718 **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.

0734/1718 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

Councillor Mrs H Howell	Unwell
Councillor Mrs K Hurst- Knight	Arriving late due to alternative meeting

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

0735/1718 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Personal Interest

Councillor Mrs C Baines                      Item 20                      Request to use Bridgnorth's Coat of Arms

0736/1718 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Questions from Resident 1

Is there any legal entity other than the Council that will be legally responsible for the costs incurred by the Arts Trail? Or if the Arts trail have any assets or sufficient income to cover their costs?

The Mayor advised that Bridgnorth Town Council supports the Arts Trail. The project was approved on the basis that it was of no cost to the Council and therefore the group are responsible for raising funds to cover costs. It was noted that this would be discussed later in the meeting.

The resident asked a supplementary question; is there anything legally binding on the project to pay anything, as costs may continue year on year?

It was the Mayor's understanding that the Working Party are making provision for funds to be available to cover ongoing maintenance costs. The group may seek further sponsorship if necessary. The Mayor stated that legally, as a Working Group of the Council, the responsibility lies with the Town Council.

0737/1718 **STREET TRADING**

Ms F Darling and Ms J Moores of Shropshire Council introduced themselves and provided Members with a background of the consultation process which had taken place regarding their new policy for Street Trading. Members were advised that although opportunities to join the consultation were given, no response was received from Bridgnorth Town Council.

The new Street Trading Policy would come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. This would result in traders on all A and B Roads, including adjacent laybys, in Shropshire requiring a licence, unless Town and Parish Councils had requested that they receive delegated powers to take on the responsibility of Street Trading in their areas where different policies may be in place. Traders would be required to pay £75.00 for a licence to trade for seven trading days. This would include traders at events where road closures are in place.

Councillor Dr J Buckley arrived at this point in the meeting.

After further discussion, Members queried whether Whitburn Street, the High Street and St. Mary's Street were B Roads as if not, they would be exempt from the Policy and these are where the main events take place in the town. Shropshire Council agreed to investigate and would confirm after the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that Standing Orders be suspended for 5 minutes to allow a member of the public to speak.

The resident raised concerns that this Street Trading Policy could be the end of events as it was near impossible to ask a trader to pay £75 over and above the cost of attending an event. The resident urged the Town Council to seriously consider applying to Shropshire Council to take on Street Trading if it applied to the town centre.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was agreed that there was nothing the Council could do until a definitive answer was received regarding the status of town centre roads and that this item would be brought back to Council if necessary. Members noted that if the roads are included in the Street Licencing arrangements, this would commence as of 1<sup>st</sup> April and the first opportunity for Shropshire to consider a request for delegation to be passed to the Town Council would be in June; resulting in two months when events are taking place and traders would need to be licenced.

At this point in the meeting, it was **RESOLVED:** that agenda item 20 – Request to Use Bridgnorth’s Coat of Arms be brought forward to this point in the meeting.

0738/1718 **REQUEST TO USE BRIDGNORTH’S COAT OF ARMS**

- i) Members were asked to consider a request from the Bridgnorth Ladies Luncheon Club to use the Bridgnorth Coat of Arms on the top of a cake, in icing, to celebrate 40 years of the Club.

**RESOLVED:** that permission be granted to the Bridgnorth Ladies Luncheon Club to use the Bridgnorth Coat of Arms on the top of a cake, in icing, to celebrate 40 years of the Club.

- ii) Members were asked to consider a request from John Cannaby Associates Ltd for the Bridgnorth Coat of Arms to be used as part of a display to promote Bridgnorth in their meet and greet office.

**RESOLVED:** that as long as the Coat of Arms was not being used for commercial purposes, permission be granted to John Cannaby Associates Ltd for use of the Coat of Arms in their premises.

0739/1718 **MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were submitted as circulated.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Bridgnorth Town Council Committee – minutes of the meeting held on on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be received and adopted.

0740/1718 **MATTERS ARISING**

Regarding minute number 0680/1718 Public Question Time, a request was received for the recording of the telephone call to be played to Members in confidential session. The Mayor could see no problem with this request and therefore this would take place in confidential session.

0741/1718 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

1. Could the Mayor please report back on the meeting he held in January with Chair's and Clerks of neighbouring parish councils. Was this a scheduled meeting? What was on the agenda? Could a written report, including the agenda and points discussed please be included in the minutes

Councillor R Fox withdrew this question as the minutes featured later in the agenda.

0742/1718 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were submitted as circulated.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be received and adopted.

0743/1718 **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0744/1718 **NOTES OF OTHER MEETINGS**

- i) Notes of the Place Plan meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The Mayor advised Members that this was an informal meeting where he was trying to start discussions to reach an agreement rather than to have a Community Governance Review; however he felt that it was unlikely that a meaningful agreement could be reached. It was agreed that a future meeting would be held after the Local Plan Review had been published.

Councillor D Cooper requested an amendment to the notes, as they stated "Bridgnorth Town Council's point of view" regarding reaching an agreement instead of a Community Governance Review which was not a Town Council policy. This amendment was accepted.

**RESOLVED:** that the notes of the Place Plan meeting with amendment be noted.

0745/1718 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

0746/1718 **MARKET COLLECTIONS**

Members were asked to consider changing to monthly invoicing for the collection of market rent on a Friday and Saturday under the Town Hall. Members were made aware of safety, storage and cost concerns regarding the current arrangements and that invoicing would fall in line with the collection of rent from the Town Council stalls in the High Street. It was felt that the current procedure was outdated.

Certain Members raised concerns regarding the lack of consultation with the traders, however the Mayor advised that he had planned to speak with the traders over the weekend but due to inclement weather, very few traders were present. He would endeavour to go down to the market to explain the reasons behind this change in procedure.

**RESOLVED:** that as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, traders under the Town Hall will be invoiced monthly in advance.

0747/1718 **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Members are reminded that this item had been deferred from the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February due to the amount of information presented on the evening for consideration.

Councillor R Fox had previously submitted an amendment and made the following proposal:

**PROPOSED:** to recommend to council that the section DAY To DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE TOWN CLERK, be removed as being unnecessary in one part and in contradiction to section 101 of the local government act, and contrary of the proposed terms of reference in the other.

Councillor Mrs K Hurst-Knight arrived at this point in the meeting.

An amendment to the proposal was received as follows:

**PROPOSED:** that under "Day to Day Management of the Clerk", add the following sentence, as the penultimate sentence of the first paragraph. The Mayor and Chair of the Personnel Committee shall jointly undertake the Clerk's annual appraisal. Also, item 13 under "Terms of Reference" be removed as it duplicates item 12 and the Personnel Committee is only given delegated powers to deal with item 9 and the first stages of items 8 and 12.

This amendment was accepted by the Mayor.

**RESOLVED:** to accept the proposal from Councillor R Whittle with the following amendments:

- under “Day to Day Management of the Clerk”, add the following sentence, as the penultimate sentence of the first paragraph. The Mayor and Chair of the Personnel Committee shall jointly undertake the Clerk’s annual appraisal.
- Item 13 under “Terms of Reference” be removed as it duplicates item 12 and the Personnel Committee is only given delegated powers to deal with item 9 and the first stages of items 8 and 12.

0748/1718 **GUIDANCE & PROTOCOL**

Following the Town Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 6<sup>th</sup> February, further advice has now been sought from NALC, SALC and Shropshire HR and therefore, Members were asked to consider and adopt the Member Employee Protocol.

Concern was raised that Shropshire Council HR have been asked to prepare new policy documents, some of which may conflict or amend the Member Employee Protocol. It was therefore **PROPOSED** that Members do not proceed with the adoption of the Protocol at this meeting, and that at the next meeting, Members could consider adopting SALC’s draft Protocol.

Councillor D Cooper advised Members that the problem with the SALC Protocol is that it focusses on smaller Councils where the only employee is the Clerk; therefore he wished to continue with adopting the Protocol with the following amendments:

- Insert in 2.3b “It would be good practice to explain what the motion is intended to achieve, who it will affect, any financial implications, any regulatory or employee relations implications, any risks involved, and the anticipated timescale to implement the decision.”
- Amend 2.4a to read “Day-to-day decision making remains the responsibility of the Town Clerk as Proper Officer and in any event, Council has authorised some delegation to Officers up to specified spending limits as set out in Financial Regulations.

Although certain Members agreed with these amendments, it was reiterated that adopting this document could conflict with the new policies from Shropshire Council.

It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the Town Council does not adopt the Member Employee Protocol Policy until all new policy documents have been received and brought to Council.

A recorded vote was requested.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council does not adopt the Member Employee Protocol Policy until all new policy documents have been received and brought to Council.

In favour: Councillors S Barlow, G Davies, A Hinton,  
Mrs K Hurst-Knight, E Marshall, J Onions, Mrs C Walden,  
Mrs C Whittle, R Whittle OBE  
Against: Councillors Mrs C Baines MBE, D Cooper  
Abstentions: Councillors Dr J Buckley, R Fox

0749/1718 **SHOPWATCH/RADIOWATCH**

It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the Town Council writes to each business asking them what they want to do with the remaining ShopWatch/RadioWatch money.

The following amendment was made. It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the cheques be returned on a pro-rata basis accompanied with a letter stating that this was the remaining money and give the option to donate it to charity. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that the cheques be returned on a pro-rata basis accompanied with a letter stating that this was the remaining money and give the option to donate it to charity.

This became the substantive motion and a further vote was taken.

**RESOLVED:** that the cheques be returned on a pro-rata basis accompanied with a letter stating that this was the remaining money and give the option to donate it to charity.

0750/1718 **DEPUTY MAYORS ALLOWANCE**

**RESOLVED:** that a virement of £300 from cost code 4501 Deputy Mayor's Allowance to cost code 4800 Grants – Other be approved, with the money being donated to West Mercia Search and Rescue.

0751/1718 **BRIDGNORTH ARTS TRAIL**

- i) Notes of the Arts Trail Working Party meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Members noted the notes.

- ii) Update from the Arts Trail

The Working Group were congratulated on their hard work and for making this project such a community effort.

Members queried the budget as it showed a deficit of £5,500. It was confirmed that this would be neutralised by sponsorship coming in.

- i) Members were asked to approve payment of £100 to each artist towards their materials' costs out of the Arts Trail budget.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council authorise payment of £100 to each artist towards their material costs out of the Arts Trail budget.

- ii) Members of the Arts Trail were also seeking approval for the Council to enter into a contract to secure the website domain name and annual renew contract (price £12.95 per annum). This cost has been met from the budget but the Council is required to sign a 5 year contract taking ownership of the website domain and agree to pay the annual fee on behalf of the project from our budget.

**RESOLVED:** that Council enter into a contract to secure the website domain name and annual renew contract (price £12.95 per annum) out of the Arts Trail budget.

0752/1718 **CEMETERY**

- i) Request to 'buy back' Grave Deed

Following a recent request from a member of the public, Members agreed to 'buy back' two Grave Deeds to unused grave plots in the cemetery at the same fee as originally paid. A further request has now been received for Members to 'buy back' Grave Deed 1552 which was originally purchased in March 2005 for a total of £500.00 (which comprised of £250.00 Exclusive Right of Burial and £250.00 Maintenance Fee). The grave plot that this Deed relates to is in a suitable location for re-sale and Members are asked to consider this request.

**RESOLVED:** that the recent request be approved and that blanket approval be granted for any future requests to "buy back" Grave Deeds.

0753/1718 **OUTDOORS AND PROPERTIES MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members noted the following report.

**ST MARY'S CHURCH**

Work on Mary Jones tomb is now complete.

**SNOW DAMAGE TO CEMETERY TREES**

The majority of the damaged trees have now been tidied up and work should be completed very soon, weather permitting.



## **RIVERSIDE CLEARING**

The riverside clearance is on-going.

## **TREE COPPICING AND PRUNING ON WELL MEADOW**

The tree coppicing on Well Meadow is progressing well and had made a significant improvement to the area.

## **GAS FIRE MAYOR'S PARLOUR**

The engineers report has found that the chimney is in good condition but the pot on that particular chimney was not fitted with a gas compliant pot when the other chimneys were modified and it is this that was causing the back-draft. It was also noted that the gas fire is an old and inefficient model that he recommended we replace with a more efficient model. The chimney pot will be looked at when we get favorable weather conditions.

## 0754/1718 **GAP YEAR BRITAIN IN BLOOM 2018 AND COMMUNITY PRIDE AWARDS**

**RESOLVED:** that Bridgnorth Town Council take a year out of entering Britain in Bloom and review the situation again next year.

It was acknowledged that not entering the competition will not detract from the magnificent floral displays of past years, as floral provision for the town is the same whether we enter or not. It will however, have much less of an impact on the DLF, as well as the staff involved with the administration, planning, preparation and execution of the inspection and judging days.

**RESOLVED:** that Bridgnorth Town Council continue with the Community Pride Awards, which proved very popular with residents last year.

## 0755/1718 **STREET LIGHTING**

i) Street Lighting Maintenance Contract

**RESOLVED:** that the quotation from Highline Electrical Ltd for a three year maintenance contract, for the sum of £10,348 per annum be accepted.

ii) Urgent Repairs

**RESOLVED:** that Members approve the urgent repairs identified on completion of a conditioning survey of the Town Council's 281 street lights and columns for the sum of £1,736.40 plus VAT.

**RESOLVED:** that Members authorise Highline Electrical Ltd to replace existing SON or SOX lighting units with energy efficient LED units as and when they fail and not wait until new legislation comes into effect in 2020, by which time we are likely to be confronted with a significantly higher cost through inflation.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council replaces no less than three of its oldest concrete columns a year now that money has been earmarked for this purpose and prices continue to rise at an alarming rate. The cost of replacing one column is likely to be in the region of £1,500.00.

**RESOLVED:** that Members would consider switching our street lights off in line with Shropshire Council between 23.59pm and 6pm on all new lights fitted at a later date. This would be brought back to a future meeting.

0756/1718 **TRANSFER OF OPEN SPACES**

It was noted that no funds would be forthcoming when taking on these areas.

**RESOLVED:** that Bridgnorth Town Council takes over Lodge Lane Park, Pale Meadow and Cantern Brook Hollow but not Ropewalk Dingle and Harley Way from Shropshire Council.

0757/1718 **TIPPER TRUCK LEASE**

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council leases 2 tipper trucks via Shropshire Council Transport Operations at a monthly rental of £408 per vehicle for a 36 month lease, and agrees that the use of Shropshire Council's competitive procurement process, rather than carrying out a tender exercise itself for the acquisition of the vehicles, is appropriate.

0758/1718 **LAVINGTON GARDENS – MONITORING**

Members noted the monitoring report from Sladen Associates for Lavington Gardens.

0759/1718 **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.

At this point in the meeting Members listened to a taped recording, as was agreed in Agenda Item 0740 above.

0760/1718 **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council agreed that a member of staff is reinstated to full-time employment and also stated that they were pleased that personal circumstances were now such as to have allowed this to happen. It was also agreed by Members that a part-time member of staff be extended in post for a further six months.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** that the matter regarding compliance with financial regulations is brought back to the next meeting.

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

0761/1718 **BRIDGNORTH CLUB FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

0762/1718 **ADDITIONAL ITEM SOLICITORS LETTER**

Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman made an informal request to Members that a small panel be appointed to oversee the selection and interviewing of candidates for the new Town Clerk post and that the Town Council seek the services of a consultant to deliver expert guidance on selecting the right candidate for the post. It was also suggested that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor R Fox become the members of the panel. It was agreed by all Members and that this item be formally proposed at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.