

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held remotely via Zoom
Video-Conferencing on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 7.15pm**

(Draft until signed at a subsequent meeting)

Present:

Councillors:

K Hurst-Knight (Chair)
C Baines
S Barlow
J Buckley
D Cooper
G Davies
C Dyson
H Howell
E Marshall
K Sawbridge
C Whittle
R Whittle

In Attendance:

L Jakeman, Town Clerk
R Williams, RFO & Deputy Town Clerk
A Kendrick, PA to the Town Clerk

(Note: 3 members of the public attended)

0162/2021 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors: R Fox, S Stevens and C Walden

0163/2021 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Town Clerk and the Town Mayor declared an interest in the agenda item relating to the Bridgnorth Community Hall.

Councillor Sawbridge declared an interest in agenda item 14 relating to Severn Park fees

Requests for Dispensation

The Town Clerk had received prior to the meeting a written request from Cllr Marshall to have dispensation granted to take part in agenda item 8 Community Hall despite being Chairman of the Management Committee. The Town Clerk granted the dispensation.

At the meeting Councillors Baines and R Whittle requested a similar dispensation and these were granted by the Town Clerk.

0164/2021 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Written Questions submitted prior to publication of the agenda

Question from Ms R Connolly

Does the Town Council consider the Castle Hall to be a community facility or a commercial asset?

Town Mayor's Response:

I am not sure that the Town Council has in recent years or ever made a decision on whether the Castle Hall is a community facility or a commercial asset. It is likely that many councillors will think it is both; others might think it is one or the other; and others might think that it might more than the 2 options that you have suggested the Council considers.

A supplementary question was asked, if any of the councillors would like to respond individually.

Members were encouraged to respond individually by e-mail.

0165/2021 **MINUTES**

- i) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

RESOLVED: Subject to the removal of the wording in parenthesis in the resolution regarding Listley Street Public Toilets, minute1049/2021, to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

- ii) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Wednesday 25th November 2020.

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Wednesday 25th November 2020.

i) Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Diary

Members noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's diaries since the last meeting:

Mayor's Diary

- 16/11 Bridgnorth & Much Wenlock Covid Reassurance Team meeting
- 18/11 Dismantled poppies for Remembrance Sunday in the town park / Meeting with BN poppy makers
- 19/11 Christmas light switch on live event
- 20/11 Shropshire Council Highways/ Bridgnorth High Street Review meeting
- 24/11 @myshropshire mobile unit visit to Bridgnorth with Cllr Lea
- 30/11 Bridgnorth Churches advent reading
- 1/13 Low Town Community Hall AGM/ meeting
- 2/12 Search and Rescue charity launch
- 3/12 @sportingbridgnorth committee meeting
- 4/12 Visit to Tuition, Medical and Behavioural Support Service, Bridgnorth
- 7/12 Child Exploitation Training with West Mercia Police
- 9/12 Full @sportingbridgnorth virtual meeting
- 10/12 Come2lowtown review meeting
Visit to The Bridge Bar, Bridgnorth
- 11/12 Future Bridgnorth review meeting

Deputy Mayor's Diary

No engagements to report

ii) Mayor's Civic Award 2020

Members noted that Councillor R Whittle will be presenting the Civic Award to Ms Carol Billingsley, owner of Aristocats Ladies Fashion, in recognition of her charitable contributions over many years.

0167/2021 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Question from Councillor C Dyson

Does the Town Council agree that it should prepare a response to the Regulation 19 draft of the Local Plan, using the same approach used to prepare a response to the Regulation 18 draft? If a different approach is to be used, how can that be agreed and progressed before the next Town Council meeting?

Town Clerk's Response

There are 2 questions here.

The first question is likely best considered to be more of a proposal than a question; the matter has not been put before the Town Council previously and what the Council might think would be purely speculation.

The second question relies on some form of answer (yes or no) for it to be answered and would require discussion (something that is not permitted under members questions).

Councillors always have an option to have matters discussed or proposals considered and a corporate view or decision expressed by submitting agenda items to the Town Clerk in advance of the agenda being circulated. Members' questions are not designed to allow non agenda items to be discussed and voted upon.

The terms of reference of the Town Council's Planning Committee includes the following delegated powers.

"The Committee shall undertake the following roles and functions: -

1. To make policy recommendations to Town Council in relation to the Local Plan and SAMDev and in relation to the proposed provisions to existing approved strategy and local plans as and when the Council's observations are sought concerning these plans".

The Planning Committee might choose to meet to discuss how it might want to respond and then prepare a submission that they might want to submit to the Town Council for consideration at its next meeting?

Furthermore, there is a Local Plan Working Group in existence with approved terms of reference which includes:

"The working group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -

1. To make recommendations to Town Council in relation to submissions to the Local Plan Partial Review 2016 -2036; having due regard for recent decisions and activity of the Council and its Planning Committee.
2. To undertake reasonable activity that can capture the opinion of the electorate (e.g. arrange discussion/ research groups).
3. To liaise directly with local Unitary Authority representatives, to be suitably informed and obtain clarity."
4. To inform the Town Council of consultation deadlines and provide draft responses."

Either of the above offers a means to address the questions posed.

i) Accounts Paid – November 2020

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

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £58,766.87 be retrospectively approved for payment.

ii) Cashbooks 1, 2 & 3

Members noted receipt of Cashbooks 1, 2 & 3.

iii) Budget Report

Members noted the Budget Summary report, including Earmarked Reserves.

iv) Balance Sheet

Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th November 2020 (£759,785) comprising:

General Fund	£432,168
Ear Marked Reserves	£142,627
Useable Capital Receipts	£184,991

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members noted the bank reconciliation statements as at 30th November 2020.

vi) Receipts and Payments Summary

Members noted the in-year receipts and payments summary as at 30th November 2020.

vii) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £17,570.93 be approved for payment.

(Clerk's Note: Cllrs R Whittle and Hurst-Knight to sign cheques on behalf of Town Council)

viii) Accounting and Audit

Members noted that Councillors R Fox and H Howell, on Friday 20 November 2020, verified/signed the bank statements for October 2020, authorised payroll for November 2020 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 17 November 2020.

0169/2021 **COMMUNITY HALL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/ MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Members received the minutes of the AGM and the subsequent business meeting of the Bridgnorth Community Hall held on 1st December 2020 and **RESOLVED: that:**

- **It would defer any decision to a later date on whether the Town Council waives some of its management fee for the current financial year.**
- **AND**
- **The management fee for the next financial year (21/22) remain at its current level £20,400).**

(Clerk's Notes:

The Town Clerk and the Town Mayor left the meeting during this agenda item. Cllr Barlow as Deputy Mayor chaired the meeting and the Deputy Clerk stood in for the Town Clerk.

A recorded vote was requested. For: Barlow, Buckley, Cooper, Davies, Dyson, Howell, Sawbridge, C Whittle and R Whittle; Against: Nil. Abstentions: Baines and Marshall)

0170/2021 **BRIDGNORTH ARTS TRAIL**

Members noted the minutes of the Arts Trail meeting held on 9th November 2020.

0171/2021 **REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE – AFC BRIDGNORTH**

RESOLVED: to contribute 50% of the costs of improved gates for the Football Club up to a maximum of £350.

(Clerk's Note: the gates are intended to reduce occurrences of antisocial behaviour)

0172/2021 **BUDGET PREPARATION 2021/2022**

RESOLVED: to accept the draft budget (noting that any agreement would need formal ratification at the January Town Council meeting when the precept is due to be set).

A recorded vote was requested:

For: Cllrs; Baines, Barlow, Davies, Dyson, Hurst-Knight, Marshall, Sawbridge, C Whittle and R Whittle.

Against: Cllrs; Buckley and Cooper

Abstention: Cllr Howell

Two separate amendments were proposed both of which failed to be carried:

- a. To increase cost centre 120 'Grants' budget from £11,175 to £15,000.

For: Cllrs Baines, Barlow, Cooper, Buckley, Dyson and Howell.

Against: Davies, Hurst-Knight, Marshall, Sawbridge, C Whittle and R Whittle.

Abstention - Nil

- b. To accept the budget but note that that the increase in the precept would be expected to lie within the range 1.9% to 2.5%

For: Cllrs; Barlow, Buckley, Dyson and Sawbridge.

Against Cllrs Baines, Cooper, Davies, Hurst-Knight, Marshall, C Whittle, R Whittle.

Abstention: Cllr Howell

(Clerk's notes:

- 1. The acceptance of the draft budget does not and was not intended to mean that alterations cannot be made to it, or the proposed level of the precept, at the January meeting of the Full Town Council.*
- 2. After the event it has come to light that the vote on the first amendment 'To Increase the grants budget to £15,000' was in fact tied and not defeated.*

0173/2021 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

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

0174/2021 **TOWN COUNCIL DEBTORS**

Members considered a report from the Responsible Financial Officer.

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

0175/2021 SEVERN PARK FEES

RESOLVED: to be consistent with other requests from tenants, to not uphold the request from Bridgnorth Rugby Club to credit part or all on the two invoices in question.

0176/2021 COMPLAINT

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillors Marshall and C Whittle to investigate a complaint (received by the Town Mayor) and report their findings to the Town Council.

0177/2021 IT CONTRACT

RESOLVED: to

a. Confirm that the Town Clerk (subject to unanimous approval of the Working Group) be delegated the authority to negotiate the detail of a 2 year agreement with the 2 preferred contractors (with an option to extend to a total of 5 years subject to a suitable standard of service being delivered) and award the support and maintenance contract in line with the budgets proposed.

AND

b. Confirm that up to £12k be made available from useable capital receipts to purchase the hardware for the proposed IT upgrade.

0178/2021 YOUTH CLUB COMMISSIONING

RESOLVED: To approve the draft tender document for the provision of Youth Services at Innage Lane subject to 2 agreed changes which removed references specifically to levels of funding.

0179/2021 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: To suspend standing orders in order that the meeting could continue beyond 2 ½ hours

0180/2021 **LODGE LANE IMPROVEMENTS – TENDER**

RESOLVED: that

- a. The Town Council confirms Company F on the summary of tenders report as the preferred contractor. Before awarding the contract, the ERDF grant funding terms are to be confirmed to ensure the net value of funding available.**

AND

- b. Should the anticipated amount of funding be reduced then the Outdoor and Property Manager has delegated authority to approve modifications to the proposal of Company F to ensure that they are within any revised budget.**

0181/2021 **FLORAL PROVISION CONTRACT**

RESOLVED:

- a. To award the Town Council Floral Contract to Littlefords Nursery for 3 years (subject to an annual review) at a fixed price (£12,011.50 in year one, reducing to £11,981.50 in years 2 and 3)**

AND

- b. That in light of the lack of suitable quotes and responses to previous tender processes, the option to extend the contract beyond 12 months (that will consider reasonable inflationary increases) up to a maximum of 5 years, be approved (subject to an annual review of satisfactory service delivery).**