

**Minutes of the Annual Town meeting  
held in Bridgnorth Community Hall,  
Severn Street, Bridgnorth on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 7pm**

Present: Councillors R Whittle OBE (Town Mayor), Mrs S Barlow, Mrs J Onions.

43 members of the public (33 residents and 10 non-residents).

Apologies were submitted by Shropshire Councillors Les Winwood, William Parr, Graham Downes (Shropshire Council Highways).

In Attendance:

Town Councillors x 8 (C Whittle, E Marshall, C Baines, G Davies, S Stevens, D Cooper, C Dyson, J Buckley)

3 x Town Council Staff (L Jakeman, R Williams and A Kendrick).

**1. Welcome by the Town Mayor, Councillor R Whittle OBE**

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting was the Annual Town Meeting for the residents of the Parish of Bridgnorth.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 were accepted as previously circulated.

**3. Review of the work of the Town Council**

(a) The Mayor's Report from Councillor Ron Whittle OBE

*May I start by saying what an honour it has been to serve as Mayor of this lovely historic Town for the last two years. My wife and I have tried very hard to raise the profile of the town by attending a very large number of events around the county and beyond. I have also tried hard to leave the Council and Town in a better place but it will be for others, now and in the future, to judge if that has been successful.*

*Residents may recall that last year my report was somewhat downbeat due to the problems we were facing. Those problems extended in to the first few months of this year and I must pay tribute to the way in which our administrative staff rallied round to make sure operations continued as normally as possible. We now have a new Town Clerk, Lee Jakeman, who is making a big difference. As a consequence good progress is now being made on the Cemetery Extension, Castle Hall etc. and there are many other projects in the pipeline.*

*Our amended structure with fewer committees and more regular Council meetings has bedded in well and has led to a greater involvement by Councillors and a swifter decision making process – decision making in Councils generally is about as fast as a tortoise!! Financial information provided to Councillors is now both clearer and more concise leading to greater understanding by Councillors and therefore better budgeting and spending decisions.*

*Last year we ended up raising nearly £12,000 for charity and this was distributed to the Hospital League of Friends, the Bridgnorth Boy Scouts and the Bridgnorth Girl Guides. This year we are on course, thanks to the efforts of my wife and several generous donations, to raise around £8,000 and this will be distributed to several Bridgnorth junior sports clubs to encourage more children in to sport. A further donation is also being made to the Bridgnorth Boy Scouts.*

*I wish my successor a fair wind and an enjoyable term of office.*

(b) Councillor Mrs Jean Onions, Chairman of The Town Council Planning Committee provided a brief on the roles and activities of the Planning Committee.

(b) Councillor Ms S Barlow, Chairman of the Events & Christmas Committee provided a brief on the roles and activities of the Events & Christmas Committee.

#### 4. **Guest Speakers**

(a) Sustainable Bridgnorth. Representatives of the group provided an interesting and informative overview of the ambitions and work of Sustainable Bridgnorth in particular with regard to reducing the use of single use plastics and increasing the recycling of plastics. In addition they asked that the meeting consider a proposal regarding climate change.

(Note: The presenters were advised that motions for consideration by the meeting should take place in the public meeting element of the agenda following presentations).

(b) St Johns Ambulance. Representatives of the organisation provided an eloquent overview of the work of the organisation the opportunities it offers and its underlying message 'we believe that nobody should die through the lack of first aid and its desire to raise awareness of its services and volunteering opportunities. They further advised of the great facilities that they have in Bridgnorth, their willingness to support all events and the inevitable need for funding.

(c) Shropshire Councillor Christian Lea (Bridgnorth East and Astley Abbots). Provided a verbal report on some matters of interest.

#### 5. **Discussions relating to Parish matters**

(a) The meeting was advised that this element of the Annual Town meeting was for electors of the Town to raise and discuss issues that were of concern or worthy of note.

The following provides a summary of the points raised:

a. High Street Cleaning – can Shropshire Council increase its street cleaning presence in and around the High Street (Mary Gilbert).

b. Mill St Bus Shelter – What is happening with the bus shelter that has recently been removed? (Christian Lea).

- i. Town Clerk response: Currently away for repair, due back before the end of May.
- c. Drainage in Mill Street (Cemetery Lane) - Concerns of poor drainage / blocked drains (Sarah Stevens).
- d. Castel Walk / Street Cleaning – Concerns over lack of/ regularity of cleaning the Castel Walk area (Connie Baines).
- e. Street Cleaning – Road Sweepers have been observed in and around the High Street (Geoff Davis). Mr Crockson advises that he sees one every morning going about its business.
- f. Litter Bin St Marys Church Yard – Asked that a bin that had been removed (for whatever reason) be reinstated.
- g. Shropshire Council Bus Service Consultation – How can we reduce pollution of we are forced to use cars? Can the Shropshire Councillor present make a written submission on behalf of constituents?
- h. Climate Emergency – The meeting was asked to support a generic motion (addressed to all town and parish councils) requesting that Bridgnorth Town Council considers a draft motion (relating to climate change) at an appropriate meeting this calendar year (Luke Neal). A show of hands indicated that there was support for the motion.
- i. Climate Emergency – While we know there is one asked that people consider what can we do about it (Clive Dyson).
- j. Tourism – Tourism requires media to promote it. A number of guided walks and talks of Bridgnorth have been cancelled due to cancellation of coach visits. The tourist economy is not doing as well as people might think it is (Derek Crockson).
- k. CCTV – Concerns that there is no direct contact between the police and the CCTV (Pat Wood and Pam Becke).
  - i. Mayor’s Response – The decision lies with the police force and the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- l. Bridgnorth Boys Club / Club for Young People – Informed the meeting that the charity has significant sums of money yet the charity has been in effect inactive for a lengthy period; what are we going to do about it ?(Rev S Cadwell and Edward Marshall).
  - i. Town Clerk’s Response – It is likely that any individual having concerns about a charity can report those concerns to the Charities Commission directly.
- m. Stanley Lane (Shropshire Council owned) Land – Asked the Shropshire Councillor present what was happening with a parcel of land that had been up for sale for many years (Edward Marshall).

- n. Community Governance Review – Informed the meeting of the likely forthcoming consultation on the boundary review requested as a result of a petition of some 750 residents collected and submitted by Bridgnorth Town Council, and asked residents to support the request and respond to the consultation.
- o. Severn Park Play Area – Are there any plans to improve the tired play ground equipment in Severn Park (Christian Lea).
  - i. Town Clerk's Response – Work has been ordered (circa £70k) to upgrade and replace the playground equipment, resurface the entrance funnel and part of the internal roadway. Major works will begin on 20<sup>th</sup> May and it is anticipated that the project will be mostly completed by late June.
- p. Town Plan – Informed the meeting that a group of people are looking to proceed with a new/ updated Town Plan (Clive Dyson).

**6. Mayor's Closing remarks:**

- a. Informed the meeting of a number of examples of Town Council recent and planned activity.
- b. Asked the meeting to acknowledge the work of the Town Councillors (all of whom receive no financial remuneration).
- c. Thanked the audience for attending.

L S Jakeman  
Town Clerk  
Bridgnorth Town Council