

**Minutes of the Annual Town meeting
held on Wednesday 21st April 2021 at 6.30pm via Zoom**

Present: Councillors K Hurst-Knight (Town Mayor)

4 members of the public

In Attendance:

Town Councillors x 7 (C Whittle, E Marshall, C Baines, S Barlow, D Cooper, R Whittle, K Sawbridge)

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

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor, Councillor K Hurst-Knight

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 30th April 2019 were accepted as previously circulated.

3. Report from the Town Mayor

The past 13 months have been unprecedented for most of us with fundamental changes to the way in which we have had to live our lives. It has been a most difficult year.

Some have had their livelihoods significantly affected, many have had to deal with mental health issues that would likely not otherwise risen.

On top of the pandemic we have had to deal with flooding of the river Severn which has been traumatic to a number of residents and businesses; again the community has rallied together to support those most directly affected, but we should acknowledge that there needs to be more thought in reducing the likelihood of it occurring. We eagerly await a report from the Environmental Agency and Shropshire Council how that might be achieved.

However, throughout the adversity there have been many who have looked to alleviate pain and stress for their fellow citizens, and for those we should be truly grateful. We have seen the community come together for example to clap on their doorsteps for NHS and other key workers. A big thank you to Dr Swallow and his team for the vaccination rollout and our local hospital for going from a minor injuries, to an urgent care centre.

We have seen volunteer groups form to provide support for those in need, including delivering food parcels and collecting prescriptions for the most vulnerable and I would like to thank all for their differing contributions.

Local businesses have looked to work together to adapt and comply with changing government advice to provide essential services to us.

People's habits have changed and much of that has had a positive impact on the environment and, no doubt we can learn a little that might have some lasting effect.

As I have already said, there have been some very difficult times; some have coped well and others not so well. We have all had our own difficulties and at times we have all shown our frustrations.

I would ask that we continue to show tolerance with each other as we hope things will improve for us.

The Town Council will have a new Council on 10th May. We already know who the new councillors will be, I would like to congratulate those that have been elected and wish them well. Furthermore, for those current councillors who are standing down I would like to thank them for their service in recent years as individuals who volunteer without any remuneration, all have genuinely had the well-being of our community at heart.

May I suggest that I open the floor and ask if you would wish to agree to adjourn the meeting until a later date, hopefully mid to late summer. If people have suggestions for topics at a future meeting, then we can take note of them now so that they can prompt some debate.

If you do wish to speak, can I ask that you use the 'raise hand' icon on the controls switch on your video and I will call you forward to speak. Before, you speak please introduce yourself by name and confirm that you are an elector of Bridgnorth. Thank you.

Questions from Residents

1. Jennifer Durham - What is the council's long-term intentions for the youth centre? Are the Town Council going to continue to fund it? As it is used by residents from outside the Bridgnorth parish, it is being subsidised by this council and the cost to run it should be shared by the other parishes. This is just one of the many services that Bridgnorth Town Council subsidises which are used by those outside of Bridgnorth and seems unfair if this also applies to the youth centre.

The Town Clerk advised that the current council agreed to fund the youth club for 12 months only. However, a new Council would be in place from May who may have the same agenda or have different thoughts on the matter and it would be unfair to confirm their intentions at this stage.

4. **Adjournment**

It was agreed that the meeting be closed and that another meeting of residents be held later in the year when we can safely meet in large numbers (i.e. not before 21st June 2021).

L S Jakeman
Town Clerk
Bridgnorth Town Council