

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
18th May 2021**

LJ/2021

10th May 2021

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 12 – WORKING GROUPS

AIM

1. To consider the requirement for any working groups formed under the previous administration to continue.

BACKGROUND

2. The Town Council will from time-to-time form Working Groups to:
 - a. Deal with narrow issues that need some detailed consideration by members in order that a view can be formed about how the Council might proceed with a particular matter.
 - b. To prompt a forum for discussion regarding a new or novel matter raised by an individual member or small group of members.
3. Working Groups make recommendations to the Full Council or the Committee that it is formed by and each has formal terms of reference.
4. The previous administration formed a number of Working/ Advisory /Steering Groups:
 - a. Community Governance Review – Working Group
 - b. Tree Planting Scheme - Working Group
 - c. Events Working Group – Working Group
 - d. Local Plan Review – Working Group
 - e. Bridgnorth Plan - Steering Group
 - f. Climate Change - Advisory Group
 - g. Arts Trail (Post Delivery) – Working Group

GENERAL OPERATION

5. Working Groups (including advisory groups and steering groups) are formed by a formal resolution of the Full Council or a Committee and should have formal terms of reference in order that those members on the working group are clear as to what the purpose is. Furthermore, the terms of reference provide some expectation to the Full Council as to what activity will take place and have an idea about what the outcomes might be.
6. The terms of reference should indicate membership and whether non-councillors might be appointed to the working group or consulted.
7. Working Groups are often useful if members wish to undertake new or novel activity or a desired course of action needs some research before committing the Council to a decision and an understanding of how and if the activity might be achieved and the consideration of any unintended consequences.
8. Working Groups are not decision makers as such they can meet without notice or having to be open to the public and members can correspond via email, telephone or virtually via video conferencing. Any recommendations to Full Council (or a committee) should be documented in order that an overview of the process undertaken and any recommendations presented in a meaningful format to the Full Council (or committee). A template for a report exists to aid members. The outcome of the work of a Working Group should normally be a recommendation to the Town Council that results in a vote on course of action (or not).
9. Working Groups require members to actively lead the debate, undertake research, develop some clear vision and document initial actions/ recommendations and drive the topic. Officers of the Council should not sit on or be appointed to Working Groups. However, officer support can be requested and that will be provided subject to having the resources available.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

10. It is probably not good practice to roll over automatically the working groups set up by the previous administration and in particular when there has been a large change in members. The new administration might have other priorities.
11. Enclosed are the terms of reference for the previously formed Working Groups (WG).

12. A brief overview of each WG follows:

- a. Community Governance Review (CGR) WG - Working Group was formed largely to consider the submission of request to Shropshire Council to conduct a CGR. A decision was made by Shropshire Council to not change the boundary of the parish of Bridgnorth or the make-up of the Town Council. However, recently Shropshire Council have asked all parish and town councils in Shropshire for their views on a County wide CGR. At the last meeting of the previous administration the matter was discussed, and a recommendation:

Based on current and proposed future developments on the boundaries of the town, and a petition of residents that raised over 800 signatures in support, BTC informs Shropshire Council that it wants a Community Governance Review of the town's boundaries, and undertakes preparatory work for this review. As this Review will or might affect the neighbouring parishes of Tasley, Astley Abbots, Worfield & Rudge and Eardington, BTC would like to discuss our proposals with their Parish Councils.

But feels that any formal decision should be made by the new Town Council and that it [the current Town Council] recommends that it proceeds with the motion presented.

- b. Tree Planting WG - Working Group formed in Feb 2020 as a result of a motion from Cllr Fox, some activity and discussion has taken place but no recommendations as yet brought to Full Council.
- c. Events & Christmas WG - Formerly a Committee and rebranded a Working Group – no formal activity carried out in the past 12 months, in light of the covid-19 pandemic. As we appear to be coming out of a series of lockdowns the group needs to reconvene.
- d. Local Plan Review (LPR) WG – Formed in April 2019 to prepare Town Council submission to the Local Plan Review. Town Council submission made in June and September 2020. Subject considered closed.
- e. Bridgnorth (Town) Plan Steering Group - Formed in July 2019 latest update provided to Town Council at the last meeting of the previous administration. Latest update provided at the April 2021 Council meeting which included a recommendation that:

As soon as possible after the local elections, Bridgnorth Town Council and supporting local parish councils review their position on the Bridgnorth Plan and, if supportive, appoint representatives to the Steering Group.

- f. Climate Change (Advisory Group) – Formed in June 2019, some initial research and recommendations made to Council. No formal activity recently.
- g. Arts Trail (post-delivery) WG – Formed in September 2018, to oversee the project management until its life end (circa end of 2022). Regular updates provided to Council (minutes of WG minutes tabled at Council meetings).

13. The new Town Council will need to consider the need for all, some or any of the current Working Groups (including advisory and steering groups).

- a. The CGR WG - May be appropriate to continue if members are keen to consider the topic (which has been requested by Shropshire Council) beyond that of its original intention, however the terms of reference would need updating somewhat, to remain relevant.
- b. Tree Planting WG – With the lack of tangible progress other than with the standard council activity the WG it might be best to capture ‘tree planting’ within the ‘Climate Change’ activity and provided a more joined up approach – the two items are related.
- c. The Events and Christmas WG - Has a tasks to undertake, including consideration of a tender for the Christmas Lights and arrangements for the Christmas light switch on event later in the year. It is therefore considered beneficial to retain the WG, albeit the terms of reference will need some updating.
- d. The LPR WG can probably be dispensed with any further discussion or decisions can be brought to Full Town Council or considered by the Planning Committee within its current terms of reference.
- e. Bridgnorth (Town) Plan Steering Group – Much work appears to have been undertaken that has contributed to activities of the Council, largely in relation the LPR however, we have not yet had sight of an all-encompassing draft document that the Council might use to inform its decision making in a number of areas over the years ahead. Some understanding of the ambitions and intended outcomes by new members of the Council would be helpful.
- f. Climate Change Advisory Group – Some very informative, constructive and well documented work undertaken initially. The Group needs a councillor or 2 on it that can turn discussion into actions that can be brought before the Council.
- g. Arts Trail WG – Has tasks to undertake and will need to continue through to closure of the project (end of 2022).

14. For each WG (councillor) membership needs to be confirmed at the least. Furthermore, any WGs that are continued could be asked to meet promptly and review their terms of reference and membership to ensure that they remain relevant and purposeful.

SUMMARY

15. The Events & Christmas and the Arts Trail Working Groups contribute directly to Town Council services and are seen as essential to continue. Each will benefit from at least 3 Councillors being appointed to it and for those councillors appointed to approve wider membership in line with the terms of reference.

16. The LPR WG can be disbanded.

17. The topic of the CGR WG is likely to linger to some extent however the current WG was set up for a particular purpose (to submit an application) which has been concluded, and as such it can probably be disbanded.

18. Other than the WGs above, all others would likely benefit from a re-evaluation and clarification of purpose. With so few of the previous councillors continuing in office there has been an outflow of 'corporate' understanding of some topics (e.g. why are we doing what we are doing, what are we looking to achieve, who are the non-councillors on these working groups).

19. Working Groups can always be created at short notice to deal with issues.

OPTIONS

20. Options might include the following (or a mix of some):

- a. Agree to approve all Working Groups (and steering and advisory groups), listed above and their current terms of reference.
- b. Agree to defer any decision to a later date.
- c. Agree to disband the LPR and CGR working Groups.
- d. Agree to continue with the Working Groups, subject to them reviewing their terms of reference and making any recommendations to Full Town Council promptly.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

21. It is recommended that the Town Council RESOLVES:

- a. To approve the Terms of Reference for the following 2 working groups
 - i. Arts Trail (*and appoint 3 Town Council representatives*)
 - ii. Events & Christmas (*and appoint 3 Town Council representatives*)

subject to them reviewing their own terms of reference and making recommendations regarding the (TORs and membership) to Full Town Council promptly.

- b. To disband the following 2 working groups:
 - i. Community Governance
 - ii. Local Plan Review

- c. To appoint at least one lead councillor (preferably 2) for each of the following working groups who should liaise with the current membership (of those working groups) to re-evaluate the terms of reference and membership and in turn make recommendations to the Full Town Council before any further action is undertaken.
 - i. Tree Planting
 - ii. Climate Change
 - iii. Bridgnorth (Town) Plan Steering Group

Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk

Enclosures:

7 x Terms of Reference

1. Community Governance Review – Working Group
2. Tree Planting Scheme - Working Group
3. Events Working Group – Working Group
4. Local Plan Review – Working Group
5. Bridgnorth Plan - Steering Group
6. Climate Change - Advisory Group
7. Arts Trail (Post Delivery) – Working Group

Community Governance Review Working Group – Terms of Reference

- The Working Group will comprise up to 3 Members.
- The working group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -
 1. To be familiar with the appropriate legislation (*Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007- chapter 3*)
 2. To make meaningful recommendations to Town Council in relation to submissions to any consultation process required as a result of the Town Council's 2019 petition for a Community Governance Review; having due regard for recent decisions and activity of the Council.
 3. To undertake reasonable activity that can capture the opinion of the electorate (e.g. arrange discussion/ research groups).
 4. To liaise directly with local Unitary Authority representatives in order to be suitably informed and obtain clarity.
 5. To inform the Town Council of consultation deadlines and provide draft responses.

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 16th April 2019 Minute 0613iii)/1819 refers)

Tree Planting Scheme Working Group – Terms of Reference

The Working Group will comprise up to 5 Members.

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

1. To make recommendations to Town Council in relation to where and how trees should be planted in Bridgnorth and the surrounding area, given the available root stock and funding.
2. To undertake reasonable activity that can capture the opinion of the electorate, if considered necessary.
3. To liaise directly with Shropshire Council and other bodies, including funding bodies.
4. To agree implementation of any activity, once approved by Town Council.

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 3rd March 2020 Minute 0442/1920 refers)

0442/1920 **TREE PLANTING SCHEME WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for a Tree Planting Scheme Working Group be approved.



Events & Christmas Working Group – Terms of Reference

Events & Christmas Working Group

- The Working Group will comprise up to six Members, with members of the public permitted to be co-opted to the Committee and have voting rights on Events matters only, in line with NALC's LTN 7 and s144 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- The quorum of the Working Group shall be three Members.
- The Working Group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -

Events

1. To provide an annual diarised scheme of community events, eg. Town Carnival, Teddy Bears' Picnic, Specialist Markets, Christmas Lighting Up Night etc.
2. To produce an annual schedule of events in liaison with other parish-based community groups and promote those events.
3. To act within the annually agreed budget and the Parish Council's expenditure guidelines to produce the planned events
4. To seek volunteers to assist at planned events
5. To provide best value to the rate payer including gaining sponsorship for events
6. Review feedback from events

Christmas

1. To consider quotations relating to Christmas Lighting, repairs, contractual matters etc
2. To seek best value for the ratepayers in the provision of Christmas schemes, storage, erection of lighting etc
3. To seek sponsorship
4. To maintain records of all sponsors and manage accounts of the same
5. To invite sponsors to events when necessary
6. To liaise with contractor for the erection of Christmas lights and other matters relating to the same
7. To ensure tender documentation is updated and relevant, meeting current legislation

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 21 May 2019, Minute 0014/1920 refers)

Local Plan Review Working Group – Terms of Reference

- The Working Group will comprise up to 5 Members.
- 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.

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 16th April 2019 Minute 0613iii)/1819 refers)

Town Plan Steering Group – Terms of Reference

The Steering Group will comprise 8 to 10 members, who should be reasonably representative of residents and interests across the wider Bridgnorth settlement (Bridgnorth Town and adjacent parishes).

The Steering Group shall undertake the following:

- Manage the development of a revised Town Plan, which should provide a vision for the future of the town, including options for growth, aiming for the following tentative schedule:
September 2019: Draft of an initial, short consultation document, covering major issues.

November 2019: First consultation complete.

December 2019: Revision to the consultation to document (not a finalised Town Plan).

This date chosen to be ready for the stage 4 consultation on the Local Plan Review, which may be delayed.

During 2020: Production of a final draft of the Town Plan, for approval by participating bodies and, if agreed, subsequent submission for acceptance as supplementary planning guidance.

- Involve and consult with residents, businesses (including retail), service providers (including

education, medical, transport, highways, etc), and customers (including tourists).

- Take into account the relationship between the Town Plan and Shropshire Council's Local Plan.

- Consider potential sources of funding for major infrastructure and improvements, supporting

Shropshire Council's lead role.

- Report on progress to parish councils and participating organisations, which may wish to ratify the final Town Plan

Climate Change Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION:

At its meeting on 18th June 2019 (minute number 0076/1819) the Town Council agreed:

“That an advisory group be created (*in line with an offer made by Sustainable Bridgnorth to provide advice, support and recommendations*) that can report formally to the Town Council on how the Town Council might best proceed to reduce and measure any reduction in its (*net*) carbon footprint (*Town Clerk to arrange for some appropriate terms of reference to be drawn up*). Once a process had been identified a regular report (*most likely annually*) should be provided to the Town Council”.

-
- The Advisory Group will comprise up to 6 Members.

Members should have some suitable knowledge and skill set that can deliver the aims of the working group internally

Initial membership is to be confirmed by the Town Council.

- The Advisory Group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -
 1. To identify a chair/ leader of the Advisory Group (and a deputy).
 2. To contribute significantly to the Town Council resolution (above).
 3. Produce summary documents of meetings and discussions of the Advisory Group to the Town Council that can be published or discussed in the public domain.
 4. To produce a draft document(s) that identifies sources of advice and best practice.
 5. To produce a draft document(s) that seeks to identify and measure carbon emissions and offsets of the Town Council (and associated costs).
 6. To produce a draft document that can form the basis of an annual report that can be used by the Council in future years.
 7. To provide written recommendations to the Town Council on a process that can be reasonably adopted and implemented by the Town Council.
- The Town Council will look to make available, if required, a reasonable amount of meeting space for use by the Advisory Group if it is not being used by paying clients and where it does not incur additional staffing costs.
- The Town Council will provide reasonable use of printing equipment.

(Approved at Town Council meeting dated 9 July 2019, Minute 0120/1920 refers).

Arts Trail (Post Delivery) Working Group – Terms of Reference

1. The working group is a “task and finish” group established in July 2017 by Bridgnorth Town Council for the sole purpose of managing and reporting on the Bridgnorth Art Trail “Catch-me-who-can” for the set period of its duration: 2017-2022.
 - The Working Group will comprise at least 3 Members (approved by the Town Council annually) and no more than 15 members.
 - The chair of the working group should be an elected member of Bridgnorth Town Council and will act as the working party’s representative to the Council and main point of contact.
 - Once approved by the Town Council the working Group can co-opt on an annual basis non-councillors as it sees fit.
 - The quorum of the Committee shall be three Members.
 - Any balance in the Nominal Ledger at the end of the financial year will be carried forward to the following financial year (up to the end of FY 2022).

2. The Committee shall undertake the following roles and functions: -
 - Meet as required but at least once in any 4 month period.
 - Produces notes of its meetings that will be presented to the Town Council as soon as practically possible after the meeting (normally within one month of the meeting taking place).
 - Ensure that the aims of the project are maintained throughout the life of the project.
 - Provide at least 6 monthly reports on budget/ expenditure.
 - Facilitating sponsorship to fund the trail.
 - Supporting local artists to show case their work in the trail
 - Practical logistics in installing and maintaining the trail
 - Promoting the trail to boost Bridgnorth as a visitor destination.
 - Have delegated power to recommend expenditure up to 50% of the starting budget value in any one financial year, subject to confirmation by the Town Clerk or RFO (novel or significant spend should be referred to the Town Council) that the general financial regulations of the Council regarding obtaining best value are adhered to.
 - Make recommendations for Town Council approval for novel or as yet unplanned categories of expenditure.