

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Castle Hall on
Tuesday 15th June 2021 at 7.15pm**

(Draft until signed at a subsequent meeting)

Present:

Councillors:

Barlow (in the Chair)
Baines MBE
Buckley
Buffey
Chetter
Connolly
D Cooper
N Cooper
Neal
Rochelle
Round
Sawbridge
Wellings

In Attendance:

R Williams, RFO & Deputy Town Clerk

8 members of the public

0060/2122 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Nil

0061/2122 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

Councillor A Buffey joined the meeting at this point

0062/2122 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Question from Mr M Proudman

I strongly object to agenda item 11, requesting £1,200 for the Parish Rooms in the name of Twinning.

The Twinning Committee had no prior knowledge, and did not agree to any funds being used to publicise the School's Thiers Banner project at the Parish Rooms.

Money has already been well spent on the Banner project using the reduced grant of £250 for the 2020/21 year. There has been massive publicity via our website and Facebook page, plus a centre page spread of photographs in the Bridgnorth Journal.

Councillor Sawbridge has acted independently, without consultation with the Twinning Committee, and has no authority to seek Council funds in the name of Twinning for the Parish Rooms.

I therefore ask the question, could you remove the name of Twinning, and the use of twinning posters from the request by Councillor Sawbridge for the Parish Room funds?

Response

Mr Proudman was informed that the matter was due to be discussed later in the meeting.

Supplementary question from Mr M Proudman

Bridgnorth Town Council had agreed on the budget for the financial year 2020/21, to pay a grant of £750 to the Twinning Association.

Why was only £250 paid in March this year?

Response

The Town Council will respond in writing to Mr Proudman.

Question from Mr D Seipel

Has the Council now changed its policy with regard to the powers awarded to a Councillor who has been appointed to the position of observer on an external committee?

Formerly, and when I was a Councillor, such an appointment was to hold a watching brief and report the said committee's activities (usually the minutes of meetings) for the Town Council to see, and which were duly 'noted'. This procedure was steeped in history.

A recent set of circumstances seems to have changed all this.

If an appointed Councillor, at their first meeting, and with no experience of the committee's work AND who does not even have a vote on the subcommittee, appears to be awarding themselves additional powers by making unfounded criticism of the Chair and of the committee volunteers as a whole, is this your policy? This seeking to change established procedures, and proposing sweeping changes including yet another re-write of the constitution only done a short time ago, is causing unrest and offence with the well experienced volunteers on which the committee depends, AND which has hitherto functioned well.

My question is therefore – has the Town Council changed its policy on sending representatives to other committees and is it policy to encourage them to attend their first meeting and create such ill-informed havoc?

If it is a new approach, when was it agreed by the Town Council and why is it not minuted?

Response

The Town Council will respond in writing to Mr Seipel.

Question from Mr E Marshall

Agenda item 11 - Twinning and Townscape

I noticed this item on tonight's agenda. As a long term resident of Low Town, I am always interested in the appearance of this part of the town, and how it could be improved.

I strongly disagree with the suggestion that putting posters on the Parish Rooms building will improve the appearance of the property which is currently empty. Rather the opposite, I think it will make the building less attractive, and even tacky. Furthermore, posters on this building could attract others to fly post or even graffiti. It may also distract drivers of passing vehicles.

If flying posting or graffiti did occur, would Bridgnorth Town Council be responsible?

Although the main purposes are clear, there is little precise detail of what is involved. Examples include:

1. The posters – How many, size, colour, proposed location and fixing arrangements?

2. Regarding time – How long is temporary?
3. Possible future maintenance?
4. Staff involvement and time?

I also note the suggestion to put aside £1,200 for this project, a relatively significant sum of money for a project of little or no value to the local community.

I have mentioned this to a couple of Bridgnorth residents and they have similar thoughts to mine.

It would be more useful for the Town Council to show interest in and perhaps be involved in finding a beneficial use of this relatively new building. It appears to be soundly built with good sound proofing.

Finally, this should not be considered as 'having a go' at Councillor Sawbridge. I like and would encourage anyone to come forward with ideas for the benefit of the local community.

Response

The Town Council will respond in writing to Mr Marshall.

Question for Mr P Randell

1. It is a well established principle of Civil Law that every resident has a right to 'quiet enjoyment of their home'. Noise from the funfair has been intolerable for residents. I live in upper Friars St, but the loud music has permeated secondary glazing. Needless to say it was very audible in the garden. Worse was the constant shouting from an MC or DJ over a loudspeaker. In addition the 'hum' and smell from generators were obvious if walking on Riverside.

Noise commenced at about 2 pm and went onto 10 or 10.30 pm every day over a period of about 10 days. As I recall the fair occurred 3 times a year in the recent past.

The situation was so bad in 2017 that residents requested a meeting with the Town Clerk. Conditions were imposed on the owner but were ignored as I personally witnessed.

2. Acts of Parliament like the Pollution Act 1990 and the Licensing Act 2003 are able to protect the individual from excess noise, smell etc. If Shropshire Council were to proceed against the owner, on representation by one or more residents, it is possible that the Town Council may be drawn into legal argument or action if it condoned the visits of the fair. Of course that might be embarrassing for the TC and may also have financial implications.

3. The ancient charter often quoted as a right for the fair to attend is irrelevant because the current funfair has no direct 'business benefit' to the Town.

4. I suggest the funfair has no benefit to residents as I honestly believe from many conversations over 35 years that very few, if any, locals attend it. Day visitors might attend but it is arguable that their monies would not be spent in the High Street and if so only on refreshments.

5. A TC instigated residents survey in 2011 showed that the majority of responders did not want loud events on Severn Park.

In summary, I suggest that noise pollution is one of the more serious aspects of 'anti social behaviour' of recent times. If loud enterprises such a funfairs, music festivals etc in the wrong location are allowed then residents' right to 'quiet enjoyment of their homes' is denied.

Response

Mr Randell was informed that the matter was due to be discussed later in the meeting.

0063/2122 **MINUTES**

- i) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 1st June 2021.

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on 1st June 2021.

- ii) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 7th June 2021.

RESOLVED: to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th June 2021.

- iii) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on Thursday 10th June 2021.

RESOLVED: to receive the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 10th June 2021.

0064/2122 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor's Diary

1/6 - Met with Simon Macvicker, MD of Bridgnorth Aluminium

- 2/6 - Met with Philp Dunne MP
- 3/6 - Mayoral training
- 8/6 - Visit to cemetery (following complaints from residents)
- 11/6 - Agenda prep with town clerk & RFO
- 13/6 - Visit to Pam's Pool's open day. Made pledge to #preventpointlessplastic & support Sustainable Bridgnorth

The Town Mayor elaborated on the meetings with both S Macvicker and P Dunne MP.

She informed the meeting that the shareholders of Bridgnorth Aluminium are keen to commemorate the Duke of Edinburgh in some way in Town.

The Town Mayor had met with Philip Dunne MP to discuss the issues surrounding flooding in Bridgnorth and along the River Severn to highlight the problems that the town encounter.

0065/2122 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0066/2122 **FINANCE**

i) Accounts Paid – May 2021

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

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £51,277.83 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 31st May 2021 (£1,124,186) comprising:

General Fund	£781,660
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Ear Marked Reserves £169,894
Useable Capital Receipts £172,633

(Clerk's Note: the 3 elements do not necessarily equal the summary figure due to rounding.)

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members noted the bank reconciliation statements as at 31st May 2021.

vi) Receipts and Payments Summary

Members noted the in-year receipts and payments summary as at 31st May 2021.

vii) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

i) **RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £34,482.95 be approved for payment.**

ii) **RESOLVED: to authorise Councillors C Baines and J Buckley to sign the cheques** (on Friday 18 June 2021)

viii) Accounting and Audit

Members noted that Councillors S Barlow and D Cooper, on Friday 21 May 2021, verified/signed the bank statements for April 2021 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 18 May 2021. Councillors S Barlow and D Cooper authorised payroll for May 2021.

0067/2122 **SEVERN PARK FUNFAIR**

Members were asked to consider how it might wish to respond to requests for the hire of Severn Park for funfairs and other large scale commercial activities.

It was proposed to delegate to the Events Working Group the task of looking at this in greater detail with regard to producing a set of 'rules' and different locations.

An amendment was proposed to delegate the task to the Events Working Group along with delegated authority to the Town Clerk in the interim period. An addition to the amendment was made for the Town Clerk to take into consideration the following elements before agreeing to any hires: noise levels

and the time of operation, anticipated occupancy and the effect on current concessions.

A vote was taken and the amendment became the substantive motion and it was

RESOLVED: to delegate the task to the Events Working Group of looking in greater detail into the hiring of Severn Park for funfairs and other large scale commercial activities with regard to producing a set of 'rules' and different locations, along with granting delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in the interim period, to consider applications.

0068/2122 **SEVERN PARK PUBLIC TOILETS**

RESOLVED: to delegate to the Town Clerk to commission as many (up to 3 per week) cleans as is necessary to maintain suitable provision on Severn Park over the course of the next few months, provided the budget is not exceeded by more than £1k.

0069/2122 **COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS**

- i) **RESOLVED: that Councillor Buffey be appointed to the Town Council's Climate Change Working Group**
- ii) Members noted that Councillor Rochelle had not intended to become a member of the Town Plan Steering Group at the Annual Meeting.

0070/2122 **TWINNING AND TOWNSCAPE**

RESOLVED: that the Town Council approaches the owners of the Parish Rooms building on St. John's Street, which is currently unused, to obtain permission to temporarily improve the appearance of the building in some way as it is one of the gateways into the town.

(Clerk's note: It is likely that any expenditure, should the project go ahead, can be funded from the Marches LEP Grant funding)

0071/2122 **REQUEST TO USE CASTLE GROUNDS**

RESOLVED: to gift the hire fee for Castle Grounds for a charity event in aid of the "Gunner Appeal" in the bandstand on 24th July 2021.

Councillor A Chetter wished for it to be minuted that he will be looking to bring a proposal to a future meeting with regard to reviewing the hire fees charged to registered charities and their events.

0072/2122 **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.

(Clerk's note: While the discussions are confidential the decisions made are documented for the public record)

0073/2122 **TOWN COUNCIL DEBTORS**

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

0074/2122 **LEASE – THE HIVE WORKS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE**

RESOLVED: to note the confidential report and that no further action is required by the Town Council.

0075/2122 **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

- i) **to approve recommendation A contained within the Personnel Committee confidential report**

(To delegate to the Town Clerk the responsibility of commissioning temporary cleaning cover to support the current caretaker)

AND

- ii) **to approve recommendation B contained within the Personnel Committee confidential report.**

(To pay membership fees to the Society of Local Council Clerks for the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Democratic Services Officer)

AND

- iii) **To approve recommendation C contained within the Personnel Committee confidential report**

(To approve a backdated pay increase to 1 July 2020)

AND

- iv) To approve recommendation D contained within the Personnel Committee confidential report**

(To approve a reimbursement of £65.98 for university study books)

DRAFT