

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Castle Hall on
Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 7.15pm**

(Draft until signed at a subsequent meeting)

Present:

Councillors:

Barlow (in the Chair)
Baines MBE (in part)
Buckley
Buffey
Chetter (in part)
Connolly
D Cooper
N Cooper
Neal
Rochelle
Sawbridge
Wellings
Aked (in part)
Seabright (in part)
Colley (in part)

In Attendance:

L Jakeman, Town Clerk
A Kendrick, Democratic Service Officer

0076/2122 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Round - personal commitment
Councillor Baines - personal commitment arriving late

0077/2122 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0078/2122 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

i) No public questions were received at the meeting.

- ii) Members noted the responses sent to the unanswered public question at the previous meeting. namely:

From Mr 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 had budgeted upto £750 for the Twinning Association grant for financial year 2020/2021. In February 2021, following discussions between yourself, as Chairman of the Association, and Councillor Sawbridge, around the climate of financial uncertainty due to Covid-19 and the lack of any formal twinning exchange occurring this and last year, a cheque for £250 was written and duly collected by you on 1 March 2021. The payment was authorised at the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 under minute number 0216/2021.

I am aware that in November 2020 a letter was forwarded by the Town Clerk, Lee Jakeman, in which he asked for the Twinning Association to apply to the Town Council for the grant funding whilst indicating for what purpose the funding was required along with some supporting financial documentation.

As far as I am aware, no further formal request for the remainder of the funding was received from yourselves before the end of the financial year of 2020/2021.

I hope this clarifies the situation for both yourself and the Twinning Association.

AND

From Mr 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 –

I will take each question individually –

1) Has the Town Council changed its policy on sending representatives to other committees?

No, the Town Council do not have an adopted policy for appointing Representatives to Outside Bodies. The appointments are made at the Annual meeting of Council in May each year.

2) And is it policy to encourage them to attend their first meeting and create such ill-informed havoc?

No

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

Not applicable

AND

From Mr 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:

Having considered your comments, I am of the opinion that the questions posed were largely rhetorical and they were designed to contribute to the later debate by Councillors on the topic and ensure that they were mindful of wider considerations before embarking on a course of action.

I think it is safe to say that the points you raise as questions are valid matters and points that will be taken into consideration when delivering the project, if it proves to be achievable, and that any delivery will consider them as routine. The decision of the Council was more about a desired direction of travel rather than the approval of an agreed project plan and risk assessment.

0079/2122 **MINUTES**

- i) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 15th June 2021.

(Clerk's Note: Councillor Baines arrives for the remainder of the meeting)

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on 15th June 2021.

0080/2122 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Nil

0081/2122 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0082/2122 **CO-OPTION**

A number of candidates for co-option took the opportunity to introduce themselves and expand on or summarise their written application form before members voted.

East Ward

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor N Cooper and **SECONDED** by Councillor Sawbridge that Mr C Aked be co-opted to East Ward.

RESOLVED: that Mr C Aked be co-opted to East Ward.

West Ward

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Connolly and **SECONDED** by Councillor Buckley that Ms R Seabright be co-opted to West Ward.

RESOLVED: that Ms R Seabright be co-opted to West Ward.

Castle Ward

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Chetter and **SECONDED** by Councillor Buffey that Mr G Colley be co-opted to Castle Ward.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Sawbridge and **SECONDED** by Councillor Rochelle that Ms S Huxley be co-opted to Castle Ward.

After receiving a clear majority of votes, it was

RESOLVED: that Mr G Colley be co-opted to Castle Ward.

Councillor Aked, Councillor Seabright and Councillor Colley signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the remainder of the meeting.

0083/2122 **COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS**

i) Membership

RESOLVED: that Councillor Wellings be appointed to the Events & Christmas Working Group.

ii) Recommendations from Working Groups.

i) Members noted the report from the Events and Christmas Working Group and

RESOLVED:

i) **That the Town Council converts the Working Group into a Standing Committee and that the following amendments are made to the Terms of Reference:**

- Removal of point 8 under Events
- Addition of "to liaise with outside organisations staging town events"
- Removal of "ratepayer" in point 4 and 7
- Removal of "and approve" from point 2 under Christmas Lighting Provision.

ii) **that Friday 19th November 2021 be the confirmed as the date for the Christmas Light switch on.**

iii) **that the grants budget be increased by £7,500 from the general reserve to allow seed funding for a community group to co-ordinate and run the Town Carnival.**

(Clerk's Note: Councillor Chetter left the meeting).

iv) to adopt initial recommendations contained within the report from the Events and Christmas Working Group regarding funfairs and large scale commercial activities, and delegate to the Events Committee to consider the following issues:

- Protecting Concessions
- Protecting the ground/turf
- Protecting the income from the car park
- Siting of generators

iii) Minutes

Members noted the minutes of the Art Trail Working Group meetings held on 19th April 2021 and 24th May 2021.

0084/2122 **UNITARY COUNCILLORS UPDATE**

Members noted the reports from Councillor Julia Buckley and Kirstie Hurst-Knight.

0085/2122 **GRANT AWARDING POLICY**

Members considered a draft policy and application form for grant funding.

RESOLVED:

- to form a working group of some councillors to consider the draft and at a later date submit a revised draft of the policy and application form to the Town Council for consideration and approval.**
- To appoint councillors Aked Neal and Seabright as members of the working group.**

(Clerk's Note: Councillors Aked, Neal and Seabright were appointed.)

0086/2122 **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members received the following:

- Minutes from the Bridgnorth Plan Steering Group meeting held on 22nd June 2021.
- Summary of Meeting and Constitution from the SALC Area meeting held on 14th June 2021.

0087/2122 **STONEWAY STEPS**

RESOLVED:

- a. **To approve the quote (£6096.24) provided by Shropshire Council to effect the repairs to the retaining wall on Stoneway Steps.**

AND

- b. **To increase the budget for Cost Centre 249 Nominal Ledger 4172 (Other Properties – miscellaneous repairs) from £3k to £10.5k.**

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