



14th July 2021

The **MEETING** of **BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL** will be held in the **CASTLE HALL, WEST CASTLE STREET, BRIDGNORTH** on **TUESDAY 20TH JULY 2021** at **7.15PM** when Members are summoned to attend.

Yours sincerely

Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk
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AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Members are reminded that should you declare a pecuniary interest at a meeting, it is your responsibility to inform the Monitoring Officer.

3. Public Question Time

Members of the public who are electors of the parish of Bridgnorth are advised that they are welcome to ask questions about items on the agenda. Where a question relates more generally to the business of the Council, advance notification is preferred so that a considered response can be provided. It is not always possible to give a verbal response at a meeting and questions may receive a written reply. In accordance with Standing Order 3y (viii), questions should be related to matters of Town Council policy or practice and not related to the individual affairs of either the questioner or any other named person.

(Clerk's Note: The Council will generally permit up to 15 minutes to take questions with each question being limited to 3 minutes).

Written question from Mr E Marshall

Dear Madam Mayor

A question about recording of Council Meetings.

As far as I am aware, Bridgnorth Town Council is still a Council that is proud to proclaim that it is an Open and Transparent Council.

Therefore, could Bridgnorth Town Council give serious consideration to the re-introduction of audio recording all Town Council meetings, including all Committee Meetings, and furthermore to broadcasting these meetings. Broadcasting meetings would permit organisations and individuals to make their own recordings without recourse to contacting the Town Council and the likelihood of incurring a fee. The actual financial cost to the Council would be the proverbial 'peanuts', and likewise the staff time involved would be negligible.

It only takes one councillor to request that this item is put on the agenda of a Council Meeting, but it would be much better if Bridgnorth electors and residents became aware that all 16 current councillors had requested and supported this action.

Background Information

For the last couple of years or so, the Minutes of Council meetings have taken the form of a formal brief business report, only giving details of the motions adopted, i.e., decisions taken. There is no information about the debate and whether any decision is contentious or just 'noddled through', and normally no record of how individual Councillors voted, unless a member requested a recorded vote.

These Minutes are permanent historical records that can be accessed and researched for years, decades and generations to come. In previous years, the Minutes were much more detailed and an almost verbatim record of what was said, and by whom. From 2009 to around 2015, the Town Council did audio record its meetings, but this was stopped for reasons which are no longer applicable. For a few months around 2017/2018 some of the full Council Meetings were videoed and broadcast live on Facebook by members of the Labour Party, and the Annual Meeting of the Council held in May 2021 was videoed and broadcast live by the Town Council itself. Personally, I would prefer all Council Meetings to be recorded by video.

Finally, most if not all current councillors would know that many of the Council Meetings held by Zoom earlier this year were well attended by members of the public, at least one by around 30 to 40 people. All those members of the public attending these Zoom Meetings did not have to pay to hear and view the proceedings.

4. Minutes

- i) To approve the minutes of the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 6th July 2021.
(BTC/04/2021 on the Town Council website)

5. Announcements

i) Mayor's Diary

13/6 - Visit to Pam's Pools. Signed pledge to #preventpointlessplastic

22/6 - Meeting at Morville to support Acton Arms action group

23/6 - Tasley Gateway update meeting

26/6 - Open new business 'Yours Truly Events'

Walk about town, speaking to traders, visitors and residents

27/6 - Open Morville/5 churches fete

28/6 - Agenda prep meeting with Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk

30/6 - Judging creative writing competition for Castlefields School

2/7 - Interview with BBC Radio Shropshire about floral provision in the town

2/7 - Visit The Bridge Youth Club

7/7 - Open new business 'Delightful Desserts' with Deputy Mayor

7/7 - Visit to Bridgnorth cubs. Took litter pickers, high viz jackets in conjunction with Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

8/7 - High Sheriff of Shropshire visit

11/7 - Judge Bridgnorth in Bloom

13/7 - Visit St Leonards primary school.

ii) Announcements

To receive any announcements.

6. Flooding

To welcome a representative from the Environmental Agency to brief members on the Initial Assessment document produced in response to recent flooding events if the River Severn at Bridgnorth.

7. Policing – Safer Neighbourhood Team

To receive a briefing from a member of the local policing team regarding a 'contract' with local councils.

8. Members Question Time

Members are asked to receive questions (if any) in accordance with Standing Order 27 and to take no more than 15 minutes in total.

9. Finance

i) Accounts Paid – June 2021

Members are asked to receive notification of items which have been paid in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5

(Appendix A on the Town Council website)

ii) Members are asked to note receipt of Cashbooks 1, 2 & 3

(Appendix B on the Town Council website)

iii) Budget Report

Members are asked to note the Budget Summary report, including Earmarked Reserves.

(Appendix C on the Town Council website)

iv) Balance Sheet

Members are asked to note the balance sheet as at 30 June 2021.

(Appendix D on the Town Council website)

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members are asked to note the bank reconciliation statements.

(Appendix E on the Town Council website)

vi) Receipts and Payments Summary

Members are asked to note the Receipts and Payments Summary as at 30 June 2021.

(Appendix F on the Town Council website)

Members are advised that a full Income & Expenditure report can be found on the Town Council website under Policies & Procedures; Financials.

vii) Accounts for Payment

Members are asked to:

i) Authorise the signing of invoices for payment.

ii) Confirm those Councillors who will be authorised to sign the cheques on Friday 23 July 2021.

(Appendix G on the Town Council website)

viii) Accounting and Audit

Members are asked to note that Councillors C Baines and J Buckley, on Friday 18 June 2021, verified/signed the bank statements for May 2021 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 15 June 2021. Councillors C Baines and J Buckley authorised payroll for June 2021.

10. Quarterly Budget Monitoring

Members are asked to note the quarterly budget monitoring report from the Finance Administrator.

(Appendix H on the Town Council website)

11. Utility Charges for Public Toilets

Members are asked to consider a report from the Accounts Administrator and the following recommendations:

- i) To delegate to the Financial Administrator the task of setting up direct debits with Everflow Water and British Gas for utility charges.
- ii) Vire an amount of £5,000 from cost code 4110/285 (buildings rates) with £3,000 to be apportioned to 4115/285 (water rates) and £2,000 to 4120/285 (heat & light).
(Appendix I on the Town Council website)

12. Schedule of Meetings

At the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th June, it was

RESOLVED: to continue with a “virtual committee” (Members uploading comments onto the Planning spreadsheet) **with responses to planning applications being submitted by Officers to Shropshire Council under delegated authority.**

Members are therefore asked to confirm the amended schedule of meetings.
(Appendix J on the Town Council website)

13. Committees/Working Groups

- i) Review of Committee Membership following Co-option of Members

Following on from the recent round of co-options to the Town Council which now sees all seats on the Town Council filled, members are asked to consider any requests to join/amend membership to Committees and/or Working Groups.
(Appendix K on the Town Council website)

- ii) Personnel Committee Terms of Reference

To consider a draft revised set of Terms of Reference for the personnel committee.

(Clerk’s Note: Members should note that the draft TORs are being considered by the personnel committee the day before the Town Council meeting and may be subject to some variation of the recommendation; the chair of the personnel committee will be able to advise any changes at the Town Council meeting).
(Appendix L on the Town Council website)

- iii) Tree Planting Scheme Working Group

- a. To receive the notes of discussions between members of the Working Group and consider the following recommendations:

1. **To receive a report from the Tree Planting Scheme Working Group and consider its 3 recommendations:**

- To support and approve the Tree Town Plan with some amendments:
- Reduction of number of trees in open space, namely 3 trees beside Skate park
- Removal of trees in hedge line beside Tennis club boundary in line with comments by tennis club and Grounds Maintenance lead.
- Exchange 'spiky' thorn varieties proposed with non-thorn varieties in hedge line beside tennis club boundary to prevent puncturing of footballs or other potential injury.

Tree Town Plan:

- 120m new hedge, tennis club boundary, hornbeam or similar native non-thorn variety.
- x6 standard Oak trees, 15m+ spacing along bank beside top pitch (not interfering with pitch at full maturity)
- x2 standard 'other' trees, Towards Victoria Rd entrance.
- x5 medium sized trees, whitebeam or similar, around children's play area.
- Community planting weekend to be organised by the charity 'Possible' during planting season (Nov-March) by arrangement.

2. To rename the Tree Planting Working Group the 'Bridgnorth Green Spaces Working Group'
3. To approve Terms of Reference for the Bridgnorth Green Spaces Working Group draft attached.
(*Appendix M on the Town Council website*)

14. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

RECOMMENDED 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, **RECOMMENDED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded

15. Town Council Debtors

This item is being discussed in confidential as it may relate to the early stages of dispute.

16. Staffing Matters

This item is being discussed in confidential as it relates to staffing matters.

Membership: Councillors Barlow (Town Mayor), Aked, Baines MBE, Buckley, Buffey, Chetter, Colley, Connolly, D Cooper, N Cooper, Neal, Rochelle, Round, Sawbridge, Seabright, Wellings