

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Annexe, College House, Bridgnorth on Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 7.15pm

(Draft until signed at a subsequent meeting)

Present:

Councillors:

- Aked
- Baines MBE
- Barlow (Chair)
- Buckley
- Buffey
- Chetter
- Connolly
- D Cooper
- N Cooper
- Neal
- Sawbridge
- Seabright
- Wellings

In Attendance:

- R Williams, Deputy Town Clerk
- R Follette, Finance Administrator

0230/2122 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Rochelle – personal commitment (noted).

0231/2122 CASUAL VACANCIES

- i) Members noted that Councillor Charlotte Round had written to the Town Mayor to inform her that she has resigned from the Town Council. A casual vacancy now exists on the Town Council in Morfe Ward. Shropshire Council had been informed and a formal notice was published on 5th November 2021.
- ii) Members were further advised that in relation to the other casual vacancy on the Town Council (Castle Ward) that an election had been called with an election date planned for 6th January, subject to there being more than one candidate.

Signed: Date:

0232/2122 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0233/2122 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Question received, Mr R Richards

1. Why is the Council proposing to increase the precept by 10.53 per cent, well above the rate of inflation?
2. What steps did the Council take to examine inessential expenditure with a view to reduction of expenditure rather than an increase in the precept?

Response

1. The draft summary budget, which forms part of the attachments for TC/26/2122 is a working document and is intended to give an example of a balanced budget only as commented upon in the report (TC/26/2122) item number 13. This is not a proposal. The decision for the level of precept to be levied will be taken at the Town Council meeting held in January 2022.
2. The budgets will continue to be monitored and Members will continue to assess the need and cost of services and expenditure.

Question received, Mr A Daniels

1. Can the Council give a firm undertaking that the Arts Trail Statues will be removed?
2. Can the Council give a firm date by which, if not earlier, the statues will be removed?
3. Does the Council have a recent estimate for the cost of removal of the statues and making good the ground on which they stand?

Response

The Town Council will respond in writing.

Question received, Mr E Marshall

This is a question about preparation of the Councils budget for next year. It is noted that the Town Council seems to be looking at:

1. Increasing Council Tax by 10.53%
2. Not increasing most or all the fees paid for council services

This means that residents of the town will be paying by their Council Tax all the increases in costs being imposed on the Council. Residents do not have a choice; they have to pay their Council Tax charges.

The current rate of consumer price inflation is around 3.1%.

The Town Council does not provide the important care services such as the collection of rubbish, highways, education and social services.

It is very easy and lazy to impose taxes on residents. But an organisation such as Bridgnorth Town Council should be looking at ways to improve efficiency, productivity, reduce costs, increase income from services other than residents and explore ways of working jointly with other organisations.

Response

The Town Council will respond in writing.

0234/2122 **MINUTES**

- i) **RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on 2nd November 2021.**
- ii) Members noted receipt of the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 3rd November 2021.

0235/2122 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- i) Planning Committee Meeting - The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor D Cooper, informed Members that an Extraordinary Planning Committee meeting would be held on Monday 29th November and the agenda would include the planning application recently submitted by the Bridgnorth Rugby Club.
- ii) Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan – Members were advised that the ongoing public engagement activity being co-ordinated by Shropshire Council on the topic ends on 25th November. A short open to the public session will be held in the Town Hall on Tuesday 23rd November from 5.30pm to 6.15pm followed by a short briefing to councillors from an appropriate Shropshire Council officer.

Members were also informed that Bridgnorth Library are hosting an additional event on Friday 26th November 2021.

- iii) Members were informed that the trees had been ordered for Crown Meadow with the planting being organised for the first week in March 2022.

0236/2122 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Members noted a question from Councillor Wellings:

“It would appear that the Gates to Severn Park were left open on Saturday Evening 6 November, to facilitate Vehicle Parking for Guests attending the Firework display at Bridgnorth Rugby Club. A very considerable number of vehicles used this facility as was brought to my attention by several local residents. Can the Clerk advise how much income was generated by Car Parking Charges between the hours of 16:00 hrs and 21:00 on Saturday November 6 2021 please?”

Response from the Town Clerk:

There was no income generated by car parking charges between the hours of 16:00 hrs and 21:00 hrs on Saturday 6th November 2021.

0237/2122 **POLICING CHARTER**

Members received a comprehensive update from a member of the Bridgnorth Safer Neighbourhood Team, PC J Lightfoot, regarding activity undertaken as a result of the Town Council previously advising the SNT of its priorities.

Members reviewed the Council’s priorities and **RESOLVED:**

That the 3 priorities previously identified remain current with the addition of targeting anti-social behaviour amongst younger teens:

- 1- **For an increased police presence to also help aide the reduction in anti-social behaviour amongst younger teens.**
- 2- **Elimination/ reduction of illegal drug activity.**
- 3- **Reduce speeding cars in and around the town and town centre.**

Councillor J Buckley informed Members of the Community Speed Watch.

0238/2122 **FINANCE**

- i) Accounts Paid – October 2021

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

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £57,459.53 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 October 2021 (£849,516) comprising:

General Fund	£534,758
Ear Marked Reserves	£142,125
Useable Capital Receipts	£172,633

(* Sub totals combined do not necessarily agree with overall total due to roundings)

- v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

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

- vi) Receipts and Payments Summary

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

RESOLVED: to remove the Receipts and Payments summary from future agendas.

- vii) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

- i) **RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £87,497.74 be approved for payment.**

- ii) **RESOLVED: to authorise Councillors N Cooper and R Connolly to sign the cheques** (on Thursday 18th November 2021/Friday 19th November 2021)

viii) Accounting and Audit

Members noted that Councillors A Chetter and K Sawbridge, on Friday 22nd October 2021, verified/signed the bank statements for September 2021 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 18th October. Councillors A Chetter and K Sawbridge authorised payroll for October 2021

0239/2122 **BUDGET 2022/2023**

i) Town Council Fees

Members considered a report and asked Officers to bring back costings, for inclusion in the 2022/2023 budget, for the increase of fees for Severn Park parking and Cemetery in line with general inflation.

All commercial costs to be reviewed early next financial year to include but not restricted to: use of the slipway in Severn Park, cleaning charges for hall hire, parking in Severn Park for events.

ii) Budget Setting

Discussions were held with regard to the budget for 2022/2023 and it was

RESOLVED: that cost centre 120 – Grants be increased to £25,000 in total with nominal code 4810 – Grants - Bridgnorth Twinning being incorporated into nominal code 4800 Grants – Other

Members gave an indication to Officers to aim for a possible increase in the Band D equivalent in the range of £8 to £12 per annum. Members also asked that consideration be given to the following and that the draft budget be revised accordingly:

- consider taking the purchase of new grounds equipment from General Reserve
- look to using either Useable Capital Receipts or existing Earmarked Reserves for expenditure where appropriate

0240/2122 **GREEN SPACES WORKING GROUP**

Members noted receipt of the notes of a meeting of the Green Spaces Working Group 0183/2122.

0241/2122 **BRIDGNORTH ARTS TRAIL WORKING GROUP**

- i) Members noted receipt of the minutes of the Bridgnorth Arts Trail Working Group meeting held on Monday 6 September 2021.
- ii) Members noted receipt of supplementary information from Cllr Buckley and
- iii) **RESOLVED: to extend the trail period from 2022 to 2023 subject to permission being granted by both Shropshire Council and Historic England.**

0242/2122 **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)

0243/2122 **TOWN COUNCIL DEBTORS**

RESOLVED: to note a debtors' report and approve the actions being taken.

RESOLVED: to receive the debtors' report on a quarterly basis going forward.

0244/2122 **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations from the Personnel Committee.

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