

**Minutes of the Annual Town meeting
held on Tuesday 10th May 2022 at 6.30pm**

Present: Councillor Sarah Barlow (Town Mayor)

8 members of the public

In Attendance:

13 x Town Councillors (C Baines, D Cooper, I Wellings, R Connolly, L Rochelle, A Buffey, E Marshall, K Sawbridge, C Aked, N Cooper, J Buckley, R Ireland, L Neal)
4 x Town Council Staff (L Jakeman, R Williams E Overton and A Plimmer).

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor, Councillor Sarah Barlow

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting was the Annual Town Meeting for the residents of the Parish of Bridgnorth.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 21st April 2021 were accepted as previously circulated.

3. Town Council Reports

a) Councillor Sarah Barlow – Town Mayor

- Detailed changes to the Council in the past year.
- Work undertaken in the Lodge Lane park amounting to £60,000.
- Repairs made to the retaining wall on Stoneway Steps costing £10,000.
- Bridgnorth community Hall is ran by a management committee but require extra volunteers.
- Routine services and maintenance provided including public toilets, cemetery, Severn Park, Crown Meadow, Castle grounds and streetlights.
- Major inspections of all buildings have revealed significant work to be undertaken in the next few years.
- The Castle Hall would benefit from more regular use as it is being run at a loss at the moment.

b) Councillor David Cooper – Planning Committee

- Explained the aim of the planning committee.
- Described the steps and process of the planning committee deciding and submitting comments to the planning officers at Shropshire Council.
- It was explained that some planning applications take a long time to reach a decision. For example, the building development proposed for Westagte which is still in discussion.
- The Shropshire local plan is in the process of being reviewed.

c) Councillor Rachel Connolly – Events & Christmas committee

- Explained the aim of the events & Christmas committee.
- Described how Bridgnorth Town Council are trying to liase with Shropshire Council to be involved in the road closure process.
- Volunteers are always needed for events and so anybody interested should contact Bridgnorth Town Council.

4. **Guest Speaker: Bridgnorth Safer Neighbourhood Team**

- Explained what the Bridgnorth Safer Neighbourhood team are involved in including local crime, visiting domestic abuse victims, and giving talks in schools.
- Over the past year, there has been a decrease in reports of crime.
- The main incidents that take place in Bridgnorth are issues with the safety of those with mental health problems, suspicious activity, and road traffic accidents.
- There has been a recent spike in Landrover Thefts.
- The team are working with schools to educate children about diversity.
- The priorities at the moment are combatting drug use, theft and speeding. This is evidenced by county lines drug training, patrols, and visits to targeted areas for theft and increased speed checks on major roads.
- There will be another river safety day following recent incidents in Shrewsbury.
- There will also be knife crime awareness workshops in parks and green spaces.

5. **Public Discussion**

Mr Edward Marshall - £4.5 million development

- Does not believe there has been any public consultation regarding the £4.5million to be spent in Bridgnorth on roads, parking, and infrastructure.

Mr Edward Marshall - Riverside Development

- Believes Bridgnorth has been forgotten about in the upcoming local plan.
- Concerned about plans for the derelict building on Riverside.

Mr Ron Whittle - £4.5 million development

- Attended the public consultation for the development.
- One of the proposals is alternative access to Oldbury Wells school via a bridge. He believes this is a waste of the money as it would provide no better access.
- Thinks the £4.5million is unnecessary spending.

Town Mayor Councillor Sarah Barlow - Riverside Development

- Agrees that the derelict building needs attention.

Mr David Cooper - £4.5 million development

- There was a public consultation last August showcasing potential projects. All are just ideas, and none are confirmed at the moment.
- The consultation was to gauge which projects the residents wanted and which were worth it.

Mrs Julia Buckley - £4.5 million development

- Some projects do not need to be delivered using this funding as some qualify for national funding, and some will generate their own income.
- Shropshire council would like suggestions as to where residents would like the money spent.

Mr Ron Whittle - £4.5 million development

- Has submitted his comments on the Oldbury Wells access idea.

Mrs Julia Buckley - £4.5 million development

- Results from the public consultation based on the amount of residents who support the idea are as follows: Improved bus service – 85%, reopening the

railway station – 83%, reinstating the park and ride service – 83%, improving local travel – 81%, pedestrianise the High Street – 65%, improve the A45 junction – 62%, Multistorey car park – 54%.

- School buses cause some of the highest pollution rates in Shropshire and so the Oldbury Wells access idea could qualify for national funding.
- We do not have to pick just one project, Shropshire Council would like to do as many as they can within the budget and encourage involvement.

Mrs Jennifer Durham - £4.5 million development

- Concerned about congestion at the Hawthorns and worried about HGV's causing damage.
- Believes the proposed plan for Oldbury Wells School will make the issue worse.

Mrs Julia Buckley - £4.5 million development

- Suggests Mrs Durham should submit her views to Shropshire Council.

Town Mayor Councillor Sarah Barlow - £4.5 million development

- Reminded electors that nothing is decided, and all comments can be submitted to Shropshire Council.

Mr Ross Ireland - £4.5 million development

- Alternative idea to bridge into Oldbury Wells school, reduce the A458 to two lanes and create a large layby for coaches.

Mr Ron Whittle - £4.5 million development

- Layby would need to be very large to accommodate all the school coaches, he does not think this is practical.
- Some coaches would still go through low town and so there is still the issue of pollution.
- A different idea would be a slip road off the Cleobury road.

Town Mayor Councillor Sarah Barlow

- Suggests we move on from the discussion of the £4.5million development.

Ms Connie Baines – Sainsburys Bus stop

- The bus stop by Sainsburys is causing traffic and safety issues as busses are often double parked.

Mr Edward Marshall – Sainsburys Bus stop

- Agrees this causing safety issues as he witnesses a near accident on the zebra crossing.

Mrs Jennifer Durham – Review of the Town Boundaries

- Is concerned that money to be spent on residents of Bridgnorth is being spent on residents of other parishes. In particular, the Youth Club as children from other areas attend.
- Bridgnorth should not subsidise other authorities and maybe there should be a change in boundaries.
- Alternatively, other parishes could contribute to services in our area that their residents are using.

Mr Edward Marshall – Review of the Town Boundaries

- An 800-person petition was sent to Shropshire Council a few years ago.

- Is disappointed at the lack of Shropshire Councillors in attendance at this meeting.

Mr Edward Marshall – Better use of the Town Hall including Accessibility

- Access needs to be improved into the Town Hall and believes we should not hold meetings here until this happens.

Mr Edward Marshall – Planning applications published on Town Council website

- Would like all Bridgnorth planning applications published and split into wards on the Town Council website, so residents do not have to search on Shropshire Councils website.

Mr Edward Marshall – Doctors' Appointments

- System to obtain a doctors appointment is inefficient.

Mr Edward Marshall – Parish Charities

- Would like the accounts of the Parish Charities published.
- The Robert Lee trust are currently changing their procedure for this.

Mr Edward Marshall – Tourist Office

- Would like the tourist office in the library to re-open.

Mr Edward Marshall – Tasley Park and Ride

- Would like the Tasley park and ride to operate again.

Mr Edward Marshall – Purpose of Meeting

- What is the purpose of the Annual Town Meeting as he feels no action is taken to based on the issues raised.

Town Clerk Lee Jakeman – Purpose of Meeting

- Legislation requires the meeting takes place to talk about wider, non-council, issues.
- The minutes of the meeting provide opportunity for the issues to be raised elsewhere to the appropriate people.

Mr Michael Grocock – Police Presence

- Asks the Police Sergeant present why there is no police presence on the streets, particularly when there was an electricity explosion on the High Street a few months ago.

Sgt Kate Oen – Police presence

- Explains that cover depends on availability, events in the local area and emergency incidents elsewhere.
- Is Mr Grocock would like to see data on the amount of police officers and where they are based, he should file a data protection request.

Mr Michael Grocock – Pale & Well Meadow

- Would like more frequent mowing of the grass and trees to replace those that have been removed.

Town Clerk Lee Jakeman – Pale & Well Meadow

- Both areas are maintained under a management plan.

- Has already spoken to Mr Grocock multiple times about this matter, however he is welcome to book another appointment to discuss it further.
- Shropshire Council have been informed of the issues.

Mr Luke Neal - Pale & Well Meadow

- Has set up a green spaces working group.
- Riverside is also a key area to focus on however there is issues over ownership.
- They are also working in crown meadow as well as pale and well meadows.

6. Conclusion by the Town Mayor, Councillor Sarah Barlow

The Town Mayor thanked electors for attending and reminded them that any further questions can be submitted to the Town Council and they are welcome to submit questions and attend Town Council meetings.

L S Jakeman
Town Clerk
Bridgnorth Town Council