

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Mayor's Parlour,
College House on Tuesday 4th February 2020 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors:

C Baines
S Barlow
J Buckley
D Cooper
G Davies
C Dyson
R Fox
H Howell
K Hurst-Knight (in the Chair)
E Marshall
K Sawbridge
C Walden

In Attendance:

L Jakeman, Town Clerk
A Kendrick, PA to the Town Clerk

0398/1920 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members noted the apologies as listed below:

Councillor E Lynch - Personal commitment
Councillor S Stevens - Personal commitment
Councillor C Whittle - Personal commitment
Councillor R Whittle OBE - Personal commitment

0399/1920 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0400/1920 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Questions from Mr R Richards, St. Leonard's Close

1. Why has the Council's projected annual insurance premium increased by £3,000?

In budgeting, the Town Council were guided by the RFO and Town Clerk who have made some reasonable inflationary assumptions now that the Town Council is at the end of a 3-year deal. Furthermore, they have assumed that the number of successful claims made against policies held by the Town Council over the past 5 years is likely to have a detrimental impact on keeping costs down.

2. How many insurance claims have been made in the last three years, what for and for how much?

Breakdown of insurance claims over the last 3 years (2017 to 2019)

8 property claims	£30693.70	– Castle Hall burst pipes, Town Hall storm damage, theft of tools, pay & display machines Severn Park, bus shelter
5 motor claims	£26990.23	– Attempted thefts, vehicle collisions and vehicle theft
1 PL claim	£4125.39	– Severn Park play area, pothole

0401/1920 **MINUTES**

- i) Members noted receipt of the draft minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st January 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

0402/1920 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- i) Events & Christmas Committee

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Events & Christmas Committee meeting held on Tuesday 28th January 2020 be received and adopted.

0403/1920 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0404/1920 **OUTDOORS AND PROPERTIES MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members noted receipt of a report that provided a general overview of recent and planned activity regarding grounds and property maintenance, extract below:

- Freshwater First – ERDF – Lodge Lane Wooded Area Improvements Scheme. Shropshire Wildlife Trust has secured funding to help finance seven separate projects within the county of which BTC is one. Our project bid involves woodland improvements and recreational areas, the introduction of new meadowland, improvements to the hedges and the creation of a sustainable drainage system (Suds). £40,500 of earmarked ERDF money is to be match funded with £27,000 of Lodge Lane S106 money that has to be spent this year. Our project is 6th in line and should commence in December this year.
- Tree work continues at a pace and major improvements have been made at the far end of Severn Park, the entrance to Well Meadow, Brook Hollow, woods below Morfe Road Open Space, Foundry Park, and Lodge Lane if time permits before the bird nesting season begins in March. In addition, there are several trees that were highlighted for felling in the latest Tree Survey Report that are too big for our tree team and are being contracted out at a cost of £2,950.00. Much of this work could have been avoided had there have been a robust tree management system in place earlier.
- Quotes have been submitted to Shropshire Council to renovate and paint the whole stretch of railings on Castle Walk, from the entrance to Castle Grounds to the Cliff Railway and for the vegetation clearing and annual weed maintenance of all the major steps in town.
- The maintenance team have carried out a number of leak repairs highlighted by the recent wet spell. They have done an excellent job of decorating the Mayor's Parlour and carried a number of woodwork repairs on the ground floor. They continue to work through the endless list of outstanding jobs highlighted in the previous Quinquennial Report and fire-fire new priority tasks as and when they arise.
- Hanging Basket Contract

The Town Council awarded an annual contract for the provision of hanging baskets and some bedding plants to a company called Plantscape for last year's displays. The contract entered into included an option to extend for up to 3 years at a fixed price £9028.75 (subject to the Town Council being satisfied with the service).

Finding companies willing to quote has in recent times been difficult; indeed, the last round of tenders in 2018 saw no interested parties. We approached Plantscape as a result and they hastily put forward a price that was not unreasonable.

There were a few issues with the quality of the baskets last year and this was due to a number of reasons most of which lay at the door of the Council including. Late ordering, which allowed for limited stock to be procured and a delivery date of early May (all deliveries dates for late May early June had been taken by other customers) when we would prefer first week of June. Furthermore the weather conditions last year (wet) affected the quality of the displays. However, Plantscape responded positively to our difficulties and the service received was satisfactory.

We have met with Plantscape to discuss the contract for this year over the course of the autumn and winter to identify most appropriate plants, plant feed, watering schedule and delivery date, they are as seen as The Town Council to have a high standard of display as it is their reputation at stake and from which they get referrals. The cost of the contract for 2020 is the same as in the previous year £9,028.75 (no increase). We have agreed to extend the contract into a second year and minded to continue into a 3rd year (should we consider the service to be at least satisfactory).

RESOLVED: that the Town Council acknowledges that the current Hanging basket contract with Plantscape has been extended in to a 2nd year at the same price.

Note: Cllr Marshall asked that the ownership of the riverbank (East side) from the main bridge to the Bylet Island be confirmed at a future meeting of the Council.

0405/1920 **NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR (ELECT) AND DEPUTY MAYOR (ELECT) 2020/2021**

Members noted that any decisions made would be non-binding as the election of the Mayor and Deputy takes place at the Annual Meeting in May, however it is custom to appoint a Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect in advance.

- i) The Town Mayor (elect) for 2020/2021

It was proposed and seconded that this matter be deferred until the next meeting. The motion was lost.

It was proposed by Councillor K Hurst-Knight and seconded by Councillor S Barlow that Councillor K Hurst-Knight be appointed Mayor Elect for 2020/2021.

It was proposed by Councillor H Howell and seconded by Councillor C Baines that Councillor R Fox be appointed Mayor Elect for 2020/2021.

A proposal from Councillor J Buckley was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED: that verbal statements of intent are received from each nominee.**

Following the verbal statements, a vote was taken on the appointment of Mayor Elect.

After a tied vote, the Chairman used her right to a casting vote and it was

RESOLVED: that Councillor K Hurst-Knight be appointed Mayor Elect for 2020/2021

ii) The Deputy Mayor (elect) 2020/2021

It was proposed by Councillor K Hurst-Knight and seconded by Councillor G Davies that Councillor S Barlow be appointed Deputy Mayor Elect for 2020/2021.

It was proposed by Councillor H Howell and seconded by Councillor J Buckley that Councillor R Fox be appointed Deputy Mayor Elect for 2020/2021.

After a tied vote, the Chairman declined the right to use the casting vote and it was

RESOLVED: that the matter be deferred to the next Town Council meeting.

0406/1920 **TREE PLANTING SCHEME**

Members considered a proposal from Councillor Fox.

RESOLVED: that this Council agrees to move forward with a scheme to plant more trees in Bridgnorth and the surrounding area, and that a working group be convened to explore the feasibility of such a project at this stage.

That working group to comprise:

**Cllr R Fox
Cllr G Davies
Cllr J Buckley
Cllr H Howell
Cllr C Dyson**

0407/1920 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

A recorded vote was requested.

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.

In favour - K Hurst-Knight, S Barlow, C Baines, D Cooper, G Davies,
C Dyson, R Fox, H Howell, E Marshall, K Sawbridge, C Walden

Against - Nil

Abstentions - J Buckley

0408/1920 **STAFFING MATTERS**

- i) **RESOLVED: that the recommendations regarding CCTV be adopted as amended in the debate.**
- ii) **RESOLVED: to delegate to the Town Clerk to oversee the recruitment process for the vacant Direct Labour Force position.**
- iii) **RESOLVED: that the matter (College House staffing) be deferred to the next meeting.**