

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Annexe, College House on Tuesday 15th February 2022 at 7.15pm

Present:

Councillors:

Aked
Baines MBE
Buckley
Buffey
Chetter
Connolly
D Cooper
N Cooper
Ireland
Marshall
Neal
Rochelle
Sawbridge BEM (Chair)
Seabright
Wellings

In Attendance:

L Jakeman, Town Clerk
R Williams, Deputy Town Clerk

0310/2122 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies from:

Councillor S Barlow – unwell/shielding

0311/2122 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0312/2122 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

1. Question(s) received from Mr R Richards of St Leonard's Close

- a) Does the Council still have a Procurement Committee?
- b) Does it plan to re-establish such a committee?

Deputy Town Mayor's Response

- a) No, not at present.
- b) The situation with regards to committees is being discussed later in the meeting under agenda item number 15.

2. Question(s) received from Mr R Richards of St Leonard's Close

- a) With regard to Appendix H of the Agenda, is there any explanation of how and why a contract for street lighting was awarded without authorisation by the Council?
- b) Have any other contracts requiring authorisation of the Council been awarded without it?

Town Clerk's Response

- a) The Street lighting contract was not awarded without authorisation however, it was rolled over subconsciously on the same terms and conditions previously approved by the Town Council. In reviewing contracts generally the fact became known (clearly it would have been better to have identified the matter before the fact). Once it became known then a tender for the contract was issued. Furthermore, the fact that the internal auditor identified the error should provide the Council with some assurance that such unfortunate matters will be identified relatively promptly.
- b) None that we are aware of.

0313/2122 **MINUTES**

- i) **RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on 1st February 2022. (subject to the correction of the spelling of 2 names of members of the public – minute 0295/2122 refers)**

0314/2122 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- i) Mayor's Diary for January 2022 - Nil
- ii) Announcements:
 - a. Councillor Wellings advised members that the residents flood forum would be holding a meeting in the evening on Wednesday 16th February at the Bridgnorth Community Hall.

0315/2122 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0316/2122 **POLICING CHARTER**

Members received an update on some local policing issues from a member of the Bridgnorth Safer Neighbourhood Team (PCSO Steve Dunne-Browne in the absence of PC Lightfoot) including: anti-social behaviour; community speed watch and anti-social driving (and the issuing of Section 59 notices). Members took the opportunity to ask some general questions around policing and incidents that had allegedly taken place in the town.

(Note: Section 59 (1) of the Police Reform Act 2002 establishes that where a police constable in uniform has reasonable grounds for believing that a motor vehicle is being used on any occasion in a manner which contravenes section 3 or section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (careless and inconsiderate driving and prohibition of off-road driving) and is causing, or is likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public, a constable in uniform has the power to order the person driving to stop the vehicle, to seize and remove the vehicle, to enter any premises (other than a dwelling) on/in which the officer has reasonable grounds for believing the motor vehicle to be and to use reasonable force where necessary, in order to do so. A Police Community Support Officer has the same powers as a constable, EXCEPT that they can only enter premises when in the company, and under the supervision of, a constable)

Members reviewed the Council's priorities which were previously:

- 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.*

RESOLVED that:

The 3 policing priorities should now be:

- 1- Elimination/ reduction of illegal drug activity.**
- 2- Reduce speeding cars in and around the town and town centre and antisocial driving.**
- 3- Tackle vehicle related crime** (thefts for vehicles, vandalism and vehicle theft).

0317/2122 **FINANCE**

- i) Accounts Paid – January 2022

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

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £46,374.47 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 January 2022 (£728,765) comprising:

General Fund	£419,886
Ear Marked Reserves	£136,246
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 January 2022. (Reconciled sum of all bank accounts £543,719.24.

vi) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

- i) **RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £21,512.07 be approved for payment.**

And

- ii) **RESOLVED: to authorise councillors Aked and Connolly to sign the cheques** (on Friday 18th February 2022).

vii) Accounting and Audit

Members noted that councillors A Chetter and K Sawbridge, on Friday 21st January 2022, verified/signed the bank statements for December 2021 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 18th January 2022. Councillors Chetter and Sawbridge authorised payroll for January 2022.

0318/2122 **QUATERLEY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted a quarterly budget monitoring report for the period October – December 2021.

0319/2122 **INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/2022**

Members received the first interim internal audit report for 2021/2022 and noted the RFO's comments, although they requested sight of full report covering prior periods for completeness and to ensure the due action had been taken.

0320/2122 **YEAR END CLOSEDOWN FOR FY 2021/2022**

Members noted that the Year End closedown for 2021/2022 has been arranged for Thursday 21st April 2022. The closedown will be carried out remotely by Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd (RBS) using Microsoft Teams.

0321/2122 **TOWN COUNCIL FEES FOR FY 2022/2023**

Members considered a report which recommended levels of standard fees charged by the Town Council.

Members were in agreement with the standard fees from 1 April 2022 as proposed in the report other than:

- the allotment fees which should remain frozen at current levels.
- and
- the car parking charges for Severn Park should being further increased to £2, £3 and £5, (*but noting that the date of implementation would be subject to due process of public notices and time frames for producing and installing revised signage and equipment updates*)

The RFO will make the necessary modifications and present a final draft set of fees for approval at the March meeting of the Town Council.

0322/2122 **TO RECEIVE NOMINATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING**

- i) Town Mayor (Elect) 2022/2023

RESOLVED: that Councillor Karen Sawbridge (BEM) be appointed the Mayor Elect for 2022/23.

- ii) Deputy Town Mayor (Elect) 2022/2023

RESOLVED: that Councillor Rachel Connolly be appointed the Deputy Mayor Elect for 2022/23.

(Clerk's Note, the voting on these appointments are purely indicative as the appointments are to made formally at the Annual Council meeting – 17th May 2022.)

0323/2122 **FOOTPATHS AND ROADS REPORT**

Members considered a report for upgrades to roads, paths and car parks owned by Bridgnorth Town Council.

RESOLVED: to transfer £9,000 from EMR 325 to the appropriate Grounds and Severn Park budgets to undertake surfacing repairs to Severn Park car park, Doctors Lane, Cemetery internal roads, Castle Grounds and Crown Meadow access road.

0324/2122 **COMMITTEES**

Members considered a report and written comments from councillors regarding structure of council meetings and dates and time for the civic year 2022/23.

A number of differing views were expressed with regard to frequency of Council and committee meetings. There was general agreement that some form of Finance Committee should be created, there were however some differing views on what specific roles and responsibilities should be included in the terms of reference.

Members were asked to provide comment to the Town Clerk before the end of February so that the Town Clerk might construct a draft set of terms of reference for consideration at the 15th March 2022 Town Council meeting.

In looking at the schedule of meetings for the current year members

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council meeting scheduled for 19th April 2022 be moved to Tuesday 26th April 2022.

0325/2122 **TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS**

Members considered a proposal from Councillor Wellings with regards to possible alterations and improvements to the Town Hall.

RESOLVED:

i) To form a Town Hall working group

And

ii) that the councillors: Aked, Buffey, Ireland, Seabright and Wellings be appointed to the working group

And

iii) that the appointed members prepare draft terms of reference for the working group for approval by the Town Council before undertaking any activity.

0326/2122 **CROWN MEADOW TREE PLANTING**

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk and correspondence from 'Tree Town' with regards painting a series of birds, and other natural things, along most or all of the concrete fence panels adjoining the Tennis Court on Crown Meadow mural will be painted by an artist using funding that has been secured by 'Tree Town'.

RESOLVED:

To be supportive of painting a series of birds, and other natural things, along most or all of the concrete fence panels adjoining the Tennis Court on Crown Meadow (*subject to obtaining permission from the landowner, believed to be the Tennis Club*).

0327/2122 **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)

0328/2122 **STAFFING MATTERS**

Members received a report on staffing matters

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations in the report.

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