

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held in the Town Hall on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 7.15pm. The meeting was adjourned after Agenda item 2 and resumed in the Annexe, College House on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 7.15pm.

Present:

Councillors:

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

In Attendance:

Mrs R Williams, Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs R Follette, Finance Administrator
Miss E Overton, Property and Grounds Administrator
Miss A Plimmer, Business Administrator

0001/2223 **ELECTION OF MAYOR**

RESOLVED: that Karen Sawbridge, a Councillor of this Town, be and is hereby elected as Mayor of this Town for the coming year.

The elected Mayor then signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office after being invested with Robe and Chain of Office and her consort with his new Chain of Office.

0002/2223 **MAYOR'S ADDRESS**

The Mayor addressed the assembly.

0003/2223 **VOTE OF THANKS TO OUTGOING MAYOR**

RESOLVED: that a vote of thanks be given to the outgoing-Mayor, Councillor S Barlow for the most able manner in which she has discharged the duties of the office.

0004/2223 **PRESENTATION OF GIFTS AND AWARDS**

- i. The newly elected Mayor offered her own message of thanks to the outgoing-Mayor and presented her with a gift as a measure of appreciation.
- ii. The outgoing-Mayor responded to the vote of thanks and presented the following awards:
 - a. The Civic Award to Alice Pritchard.
 - b. The Davies Shield to Becky Peters.

0005/2223 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

RESOLVED: that Rachel Connolly, a Councillor of this Town, be and is hereby elected Deputy Mayor of this Town for the coming year.

The Deputy Mayor then signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office,

0006/2223 **ADJOURNMENT**

RESOLVED: that the remaining business of the Annual Meeting be deferred for consideration at the Adjourned Annual Meeting to be held at College House on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 7.15pm.

THE MEETING RESUMED IN THE ANNEXE, COLLEGE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 19TH MAY 2022 AT 7.15PM.

Present:

Councillors:

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

In Attendance:

Mrs R Williams, Deputy Town Clerk
Miss A Plimmer, Business Administrator

The Chairman sought permission from the Members to audio record the meeting which was unanimously supported.

0007/2223 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor A Buffey – Unwell
Councillor A Chetter – Personal Commitment
Councillor E Marshall – Isolating

0008/2223 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Nil

0009/2223 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Nil

0010/2223 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on 26th April 2022.

Members noted the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022.

Members noted the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022.

0011/2223 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members noted the Mayor's diary including the remaining engagements of the municipal year 2021/2022:

- 27/04/2022 – Dracups Cottage art exhibition opening.
- 28/04/2022 – 70th Anniversary celebration of the Camera Club.
- 29/04/2022 – Bridgnorth Lions Charter evening with the Deputy Mayor.
- 02/05/2022 – The Mayor started the Bridgnorth Lion's Walk.
- 10/05/2022 – Visit to Faraday Business Park

0012/2223 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Question from Councillor E Marshall

Prior to the Council Meeting in April and following correct procedures, I submitted a request for an agenda item about the audio-recording and broadcasting of Council Meetings. There were no problems.

A few days later I met the Town Clerk, and at this meeting he mentioned that the Council was already undertaking work to video- record and broadcast Council Meetings held in the Annexe which would be better than just audio-recording, and that this system should be operational by mid-summer or a little later in the year. There was no suggestion that I should withdraw my proposed agenda item.

However, I later decided on my own initiative to withdraw my request for my agenda item.

Since the April Council Meeting it has now come to my attention that the Council may be considering some changes. So, I would like to take this opportunity to seek clarification on the current situation regarding video-recording and broadcasting Council Meetings. My questions are:

1. What progress has been made to-date to install a video-recording and broadcasting system in the Annexe?
2. What remains to be done?
3. When is it anticipated that the system will be completely installed and fully operational?

Answer

1. The Town Clerk has met with our IT provider who has recently provided an indicative quote to install a 'conferencing facility in the Annexe'.

2. The Mayor and the Town Clerk will discuss the quote and an initial specification before bringing a proposal to the Town Council for consideration (most likely June).
3. There is no anticipated timescale for installation as there will need to be some detailed consideration of costs and agreement on the level of specification.

Members asked if the audio recording of this meeting would be made available on the Town Council website or available to Members. They were informed that the recording would be available, for office use, until the minutes were ratified at the next Town Council meeting and then deleted.

0013/2223 **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: To approve the following schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2022/23 subject to a review at the Town Council meeting on the 20th September 2022:

Full Town Council	Planning Committee	Personnel Committee	Events Committee	Finance Committee
17 May 2022				
7 June	13 June	14 June	6 June	
21 June				
5 July				
19 July				12 July
16 August				
6 September				
20 September	12 September	9 September	5 September	
18 October				11 October
1 November				
15 November				
20 December	12 December	13 December		
17 January 2023			9 January	10 January
7 February				
21 February				
21 March	13 March	14 March	6 March	
18 April				11 April
16 May 2023				

ANNUAL REVIEWS

0014/2223 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Following a discussion, it was

RESOLVED: to increase the membership of all Committees to 7 members and change the name of the Personnel Committee to the Workforce Committee

- i) **RESOLVED:** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee.
- ii) **RESOLVED:** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Workforce Committee. *(Retitled from Personnel Committee)*
- iii) **RESOLVED:** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee.
- iv) **RESOLVED:** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Events Committee. *(Retitled from Events & Christmas Committee)*

0015/2223 **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES**

Members **RESOLVED:** to increase Committee membership for the Workforce Committee to 8.

RESOLVED: to appoint the following Councillors to the Committees listed below:

Committee	Membership	Councillors
Planning	7 members	C Aked, J Buckley, D Cooper, L Neal and I Wellings
Events	7 members	C Aked, C Baines, S Barlow, R Connolly, N Cooper and I Wellings
Workforce	8 members	C Aked, S Barlow, A Buffey, R Connolly, N Cooper, E Marshall, R Seabright and I Wellings
Finance	7 members	J Buckley, D Cooper, N Cooper, K Sawbridge and R Seabright

0016/2223 **EXTERNAL BODIES**

- a) **RESOLVED:** to appoint the following Councillors to the External Bodies as listed below:

External Body	Term of Office	Membership 2022/2023
St Leonard's Weaver and Bluecoat Trust	2 posts – 3-year term	Councillors S Barlow and N Cooper
Bridgnorth & Shifnal Area Committee of Local Councils	2 posts – 1-year term	Councillors R Connolly and D Cooper
Sir Robert Lee's Charity	3 posts – 4-year term	Councillors N Cooper, E Marshall and

		L Rochelle
Bridgnorth Parish Charity	1 post – 3-year term	Councillor C Baines
Bridgnorth & District Twinning Association	1 post – 3-year term	Councillor K Sawbridge

Members noted that representatives will be required to provide a report to Council at least once in the year, a matter which had been overlooked during the pandemic.

(Clerk's Note: Officers to remind the representatives quarterly that a report is required)

0017/2223 **REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF LAND AND ASSETS**

Members noted that a review of the asset register had been undertaken as part of the end of year accounting process (as at 31st March 2022, value £2,379,304.03).

0018/2223 **INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Members noted that the Town Council has a 3-year contract with WPS Insurance which expires in July 2023 and

RESOLVED: To further delegate the task of maintaining appropriate insurance cover to the Town Clerk.

0019/2223 **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

i) Members noted that the Council is currently a member (by subscription) of the following organisations and **RESOLVED:** to continue membership:

- Shropshire Association of Local Councils
- National Association of British Market Authorities
- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

ii) **RESOLVED:** To delegate the decision of continued membership (of the above) for next financial year as part of the standard budgeting process.

0020/2223 **POLICIES**

Members noted that the task of adopting the Staff Handbook is delegated to the Workforce Committee under item 5 on their Terms of Reference.

a) **RESOLVED:** To adopt the following policies without amendment:

- i. Standing Orders
- ii. Financial Regulations
- iii. Town Council Complaints Procedure
- iv. Freedom of Information Procedure

- v. Data Protection Policy
- vi. Policy for dealing with the press/media
- vii. Financial Reserves Policy

b) Members considered a report from the RFO on the Risk Management Schedule and it was **RESOLVED**: to bring the Schedule back to the August meeting for adoption once a further review had been carried out.

0021/2223 **FINANCE**

i) Accounts Paid – April 2022

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

A query was raised with regards to the payment of £1,000 to Orbital Funfairs. Members were informed that the cheque was awaiting signatures and the payment would be referred to the Events Committee. *(Clerk's note: This cheque was in fact cancelled and a subsequent cheque for £1,000 to refund the deposit was due to be raised.)*

It was therefore

RESOLVED: that the accounts amounting to £63,474.02 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 of 30th April 2022 (£1,251,481) comprising:

General Fund	£925,504
Ear Marked Reserves	£132,598
Useable Capital Receipts	£172,633

v) Town Council Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members noted the bank reconciliation statements as at 30th April 2022.

vi) Accounts for Payment

Members noted receipt of a list of payments for approval.

- i. **RESOLVED:** that the accounts amounting to £24,709.93 be approved for payment.

And

- ii. **RESOLVED:** to authorise Councillors N Cooper and L Rochelle to sign the cheques (on Friday 20th May 2022).

vii) Accounting and Audit

Members noted that Councillors S Barlow and C Aked on Friday 29 April 2022, verified/signed the bank statements for March 2022 and signed those cheques approved by Council at the meeting held on 26 April 2022. Councillors S Barlow and C Aked authorised payroll for April 2022.

viii) Internal Audit Report

- i. Members received and accepted the final Internal Audit Report for 2021/2022 and noted the comments from the Town Clerk and RFO.

Progress reports are to be presented to Council via the Finance Committee.

- ii. **RESOLVED:** To retrospectively approve the following movements to Earmarked Reserves:

EMR 346 - Committed Funds 2022/2023:
Past Mayoral badges £1,300

EMR 345 – Mayoral Allowance Unspent:
Mayoral Allowance £100

xi) Earmarked Reserves

Members considered a report and the following recommendations on movements to Earmarked Reserves from the Town Clerk:

- a) To approve the movement of £50,867 from the General Reserve to earmarked reserves as follows:

EMR 325 - Equipment/Repairs/Maintenance	£43,464
EMR 327 – Cemetery Land	£5,403
EMR 331 – Elections	£2,000

b) To delegate to the RFO the authority to transfer all future Exclusive Right of Burial income to an appropriate earmarked reserve without prior Council approval.

RESOLVED: to only approve recommendation a).

xii) Regular Payments and Standing Orders

RESOLVED: to approve a list of regular payments, direct debits and standing orders.

0022/2223 **GRANT APPLICATION**

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk on a grant application that had been received from Bridgnorth Twinning Association.

Following a lengthy discussion and a resolution to suspend and re-instate Standing Orders in order that the Chairman of the Bridgnorth Twinning Association could provide Members with some content it was

RESOLVED: to grant £1,500 to the Association specifically for transport to/from Birmingham airport (numerous journeys), Civic gifts to Mayors of Thiers and Schrobenhausen and Civic dinner for 25 people. Also, to encourage the Bridgnorth Twinning Association to return with a further grant application and plans for future development of the Association, which have a wider community benefit.

0023/2223 **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: Whilst the discussions are confidential the decisions made are documented for the public record)

0024/2223 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Deputy Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED: that Councillor David Cooper take the notes of the meeting.

Members received a confidential report from the Work Force Committee and noted the contents.

RESOLVED: to accept the recommendation contained in item 5 of the confidential report, with the arrangements outlined therein to be effective from 22nd July 2022.