

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL****Minutes of the Bridgnorth Town Council Meeting held in the Annexe, College House on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 6:45pm.**

**Present:** R Connolly (Mayor)  
I Wellings (Deputy Mayor)  
C Aked  
C Baines MBE  
J Buckley  
A Chetter  
D Cooper  
N Cooper  
R Ireland  
E Marshall  
K Sawbridge BEM  
L Rochelle

**In Attendance:** Mrs C Turner - Town Clerk, Mrs R Williams - Deputy Town Clerk and Trevor Parfitt – DLF Supervisor

There were 9 members of the public present at the meeting.

**0091/2324 WELCOME**

The Mayor issued a welcome to the meeting and updated on the additional agenda items which had been both emailed and posted to Councillors.

It was proposed by Councillor R Connolly, seconded by Councillor C Baines  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree to move agenda item number 16 – A&E Services within Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin forward in the meeting to be discussed after agenda item number 6 – Future Bridgnorth – Project Update.

Councillor E Marshall raised the point that he did not feel item number 27. – Mobile Phone Contract should be within the private and confidential part of the meeting and did not meet the criteria under the provision of Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this was a contract, and this agenda item would be discussing a contract for the Town Council and included the quotations from a number of different suppliers, therefore this procurement / quotation information would be confidential.

Councillor E Marshall did not agree with the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor E Marshall for agenda item number 27. – Mobile Phone Contract to be discussed in the main body of the agenda and meeting. There was no seconder for this proposal therefore the motion did not carry.

**0092/2324 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was proposed by Councillor C Aked, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors



**RESOLVED:** that the Committee accept the apologies and reasons for absence for the following Councillors:

Councillor S Barlow - unwell  
Councillor L Neal – work commitment  
Councillor R Seabright – work commitment

0093/2324 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J Buckley declared an interest in agenda item 20. Update – Boundary Review and Community Governance Review due to her position as a Shropshire Councillor

Councillor R Connolly declared an interest in agenda item 20. Update – Boundary Review and Community Governance Review due to her position as a Shropshire Councillor.

0094/2324 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Town Clerk informed that a question was raised at the last Town Council meeting by a member of the public and a response had been provided:

Question - *How much has the Castle Hill retaining wall project cost so far for the Town Council?*

Response – In financial year 2022/23 Bridgnorth Town Council have spent a total of £56,648 on the retaining wall project. To date in financial year 2023/24 (up to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023) Bridgnorth Town Council have spend a total of £158,110.12 on the retaining wall project.

Question - *Have these costs depleted the Town Councils reserves?*

Response – Bridgnorth Town Council have allocated spend for the retaining wall project from the Town Council's reserves. The Town Council reserves are not fully depleted.

Question - *How much monies have been allocated from the town's regeneration scheme from Shropshire Council to the retaining wall project?*

Response - There is currently no allocation from the Shropshire Council Future Bridgnorth Project funding for the Bridgnorth Town Council retaining wall project.

A member of the public raised the following questions:

- a. Is the Town Council willing to support a Covid Memorial Tree and for this to be located in Castle Grounds.

It was acknowledged by the Mayor that this was an extremely good idea to recognise those from the town who had been affected by Covid and the lock-down. This would be an item for further discussion at a future Town Council meeting once all the information had been gathered.

- b. Would the Town Council consider the purchase of a number of disused red telephone boxes in the Town and surrounding area to use for tool storage for the Bridgnorth Gardening Community group and other groups?

It was acknowledged by the Mayor that further work would have to be undertaken to understand who could use these red telephone boxes and the cost implications.



- c. Is the Town Council willing to support flying the Pride Flag on the Northgate Museum next Saturday – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as a show of support for the Shrewsbury Pride event taking place on this day.

The Mayor confirmed with the Town Clerk that the Town Council Staff would work with the member of the public to try and achieve the Pride Flag to fly on the Northgate Museum on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as a show of support for the Shrewsbury Pride event taking place on this day.

The retaining wall on the entrance to the Church Yard was raised and it was confirmed that this was being looked into by Shropshire Council and the landowner.

The Mayor read out the questions raised by the Head Teacher from Oldbury Wells School:

- d. Are the Town Council Councillors aware of the consultation regarding Bridgnorth 6<sup>th</sup> Form, its long-term provision and the potential decision to close Bridgnorth 6<sup>th</sup> Form from September 2025?

It was confirmed that all Councillors had been provided with the information regarding the consultation regarding the Bridgnorth 6<sup>th</sup> Form and its long-term provision.

- e. Would the Town Council wish to take up the offer from the Head Teacher – Lee Tristham to host a meeting to discuss the consultation, the specific information relating to the potential closure, the impact and the potential alternatives for this provision in the community of Bridgnorth.

The Mayor asked the Town Clerk to obtain some suitable dates from the Head Teacher and offer this meeting to all Councillors who wished to attend. It was also confirmed that there was to be a public consultation evening on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September for those who wished to attend.

0095/2324

#### **SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM**

It was proposed by Councillor R Connolly, seconded by Councillor R Ireland  
Abstained by Councillor E Marshall

**RESOLVED:** to agree to suspend standing orders to allow for those representatives to provide an update to the Town Council and for members of the public to ask questions.

The Mayor welcomed the three members of the Bridgnorth Safer Neighbourhood Team and thanked them for their time.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team for Bridgnorth provided an update on policing issues in and around Bridgnorth and confirmed they would not be able to answer questions relating to on-going investigations. The update included the three policing priorities:

- Drug problems in and around the town
- Speeding
- ASB

It was confirmed that members of the public need to make calls into 101 and 999 in an emergency.

The Councillors and members of the public were given an opportunity to ask the Safer Neighbourhood Team questions, this included:



- A member of the public asked if the police were going to object to the 3am opening time at The Crown. The Officer informed that all licensing related enquiries were forwarded to the Policing Licensing Department, and this was not something the local teams got involved with.
- Apathy in the town is that residents don't report because nothing happens. The Officer informed that lots of residents' report on social media platforms particularly Facebook, but officers are unable to respond to this as factual unless it has been reported via 101.
- Thefts from shops are on the rise within the town. The Officer confirmed that certain larger retailers were being targeted and would encourage the manager / staff from shops to report incidents and share CCTV / statements with the Police.
- What was the process for providing information and getting hold of the Local Policing Team. The Officer informed that SNT dealt with lower level incidents, offender management and victim support, etc, with the high level incidents including violence being responded to via a Sergeant allocating the call to an officer to investigate.

#### 0096/2324 **FUTURE BRIDGNORTH – PROJECT UPDATE**

The Mayor informed the Council that apologies had been received from the officers of Shropshire Council's Future Bridgnorth project. They were unable to attend the meeting this evening but had provided a written update which had been circulated prior to the meeting to all Councillors.

The Town Clerk was asked to invite the Future Bridgnorth Project Team to a future meeting of the Town Council.

#### 0097/2324 **A&E SERVICES WITHIN SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD & WREKIN**

The Mayor informed this item had been moved to the beginning part of the agenda and a local resident was going to provide an update regarding this matter and the report provided.

The resident provided the Council with a verbal update regarding the A&E Services and details surrounding the survey carried out in Bridgnorth on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions.

It was proposed by Councillor R Connolly, seconded by Councillor N Cooper  
Abstained by Councillor E Marshall

**RESOLVED:** to reinstate standing orders.

Councillors debated at length and were informed that a business case regarding the implementation stage would be available later in the year and it was their duty to speak up on behalf of all residents.

The Town Clerk was asked for a recorded vote.

It was proposed by Councillor R Connolly, seconded by Councillor J Buckley  
For: Councillors Chetter, Aked, Welling, Connolly and Buckley  
Against: Councillors D Cooper, N Cooper, Sawbridge and Baines  
Abstained: Councillors Marshall, Rochelle and Ireland

The Town Clerk informed a vote of For 5 Councillors, Against 4 Councillors, Abstained 3 Councillors



**RESOLVED:** to approve for the Town Council to send a letter formally requesting that NHS Shropshire Telford and Wrekin, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit, and NHS England and NHS Improvement to re-considering the Future Fit/Hospitals Transformation Programme (to have a single Emergency Department).

0098/2324

**MINUTES**

Councillor D Cooper provided an update relating to the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 that he would like the minutes of this meeting to record that he had advised the Council that LGBCE's proposals would result in a 2 member Bridgnorth Town Council Morfe Ward with just 800 voters and that this would represent a gross electoral inequality compared with the rest of the Town. Also, he advised the Council that he did not think that this could be amended at a subsequent Community Governance Review. He confirmed he had since consulted the Community Governance review Guidance and confirmed that a Principal Council would require LGBCE's consent to alter the electoral arrangements of a parish where those arrangements have been put in place by LGBCE within the past 5 years.

The Town Clerk was asked to review and amend the minutes for 0084/2324 to include that Councillor L Rochelle abstained during the vote.

It was proposed by Councillor I Wellings, seconded by Councillor R Ireland  
Abstained by Councillor L Rochelle

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the Bridgnorth Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023, to include wording for resolution number 0084/2324 to say that Councillor R Ireland asked for the pricing and option for the bottom fixed bollards to be removed and re-installed at the top entrance (north) of the market area.

It was proposed by Councillor C Baines, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Against by Councillor D Cooper  
Abstained by Councillors N Cooper and R Ireland

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the Bridgnorth Extra-Ordinary Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Councillors noted the minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Councillors noted the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Finance Committee held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023

0099/2324

**MAYOR'S DIARY JULY AND AUGUST 2023**

Members noted the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Diary for July and August 2023.

0100/2324

**MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

Councillor E Marshall asked the following questions:

- a. For a long time, it has been the policy of this Council to publicly record Bridgnorth Town Council Meetings. For example, see minute 0044/2223 relating to BTC meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022, where the Council agreed to videoing and streaming of meetings. Members agreed Councillor Neal and the Town Clerk should explore a simple method to, in the first place, live stream future council meetings.

What if any action has been taken to implement recording of BTC Meetings, where are we now and when will we have a fully functioning recording and streaming system of BTC Meetings?



The Town Clerk confirmed that she was not in post at that time but had been completing some work on this. She confirmed she had spoken to two other Town Councils: Shifnal Town Council had purchased a system to do this but had cost in the thousands to procure, purchase and set-up and Wellington Town Council who used an iPhone on a simple stand to live stream during the meetings. The Town Clerk confirmed that as soon as she had all the information and prices, etc, she would include this as an agenda item on a future Town Council meeting.

- b. On a regular basis, Councillor E Marshall looks at the Town Council's website for information. Information about some of the Working Groups is out-of-date, e.g. one Working Group still shows an ex-member who resigned as a councillor a year ago and another Working Group only shows members who all resigned some time ago. When will the information about Working Group be updated?

The Town Clerk confirmed that the temporary Business Administrator had been looking into this but had been experiencing some difficulty with the Website, the site was at full capacity, and this needed to be addressed prior to any further changes. Releasing up space by removing some of the older data no longer required on the website is also being looked into.

#### 0101/2324 **SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

Shropshire Councillor C Lea provided a verbal update and informed this would be emailed to the Town Clerk to disseminate to all Councillors. Councillors were given the opportunity to ask the Shropshire Councillor questions.

#### 0102/2324 **FINANCE**

##### 1. Accounts Paid – July 2023

It was proposed by Councillor K Sawbridge, seconded by Councillor J Buckley  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the accounts amounting to £104,572.47 be retrospectively approved for payment for July 2023 as shown in the list of payments reports attached for Cashbooks 1, 2 & 3.

##### Account Paid – August 2023

It was proposed by Councillor C Baines, seconded by Councillor R Connolly  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council received and retrospectively approve the payments amounting to £126,474.38 be retrospectively approved for payment for August 2023 as shown in the list of payments reports attached for Cashbooks 1, 2 & 3.

2. Members noted that Councillor N Cooper, K Sawbridge and D Cooper authorised bank payments, as per resolution from the Town Council meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 (0080/23224), verified bank statements for July 2023 and authorised payroll for August 2023.

##### 3. Payment Schedules

- 3.1. It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor C Aled



Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council received and retrospectively approve the payments amounting to £126,474.38 for August 2023.

- 3.2. It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor D Cooper  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the council agreed for the following members would authorise the Bank payments, verify the Bank statement and authorising September 2023 payroll. Councillor R Connolly on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and Councillor A Chetter on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.

#### 4. Accounting Reports

4.1 Budget Report including Earmarked Reserves was noted by Members.

4.2 Balance Sheet was noted by Members as of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (£964,769) comprising:

General Fund:	£561,858
Earmarked Reserves:	£230,279
Unusable Capital Receipts:	£172,633

#### 4.3 Town Bank Reconciliation Statements

Members noted the bank reconciliation statements as of the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.  
(Reconciled sum of all bank accounts (£128,092.91))

#### 0103/2324 **DIRECT DEBITS**

It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** to give retrospective approval for direct debit payments to SSE for the Christmas lights electricity unmetered supply and Quadient for lease of the franking machine.

#### 0104/2324 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN - YEAR END 31 MARCH 2023**

1. Members noted the satisfactory review by the external auditor (PKF Littlejohn LLP) of Bridgnorth Town Council's Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), without additional comment.
2. Members noted a copy of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.
3. Members noted the publishing of the Notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR occurred on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 on both the town notices boards and the Town Council's website.
4. It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper to publish the notice for 14 days and then this was withdrawn.



It was proposed by Councillor E Marhsall, seconded by Councillor D Cooper  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree to publish the notice for 28 days.

0105/2324

**BANKING**

1. Members debated amending the Town Council's Unity Trust bank mandate with regard to internal transfers only and to permit officers to move money between accounts.

It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor R Ireland to permit officers to move money between the current account and the deposit account without Councillors authorisation. This posed minimal risk to the Town Council due to being an internal transfer between two bank accounts of the Town Council and there being other mechanisms in place to serve as checks for these transactions.

A second motion was made by Councillor Juila Buckley, seconded by Councillor R Connolly to permit officers to move money between the current account and the deposit account but to have a printed page detailing the transaction which could be checked by Councillors when signing the bank reconciliation and be monitored.

The vote was recorded as For 3 votes, Against 8 votes, Abstained 1 vote therefore the motion was not carried.

Voting for the original motion took place and was recorded as: For 9 votes, Against 1 vote, abstained 2 votes.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree to permit officers to move money between the current account and the deposit account without Councillors authorisation. This posed minimal risk to the Town Council due to being an internal transfer between two bank accounts of the Town Council and there being other mechanisms in place to serve as checks for these transactions.

2. Members debated re-establishing internet banking with HSBC that has been suspended due to lack of usage and further delegate to the RFO the task of setting this up.

It was proposed by Councill R Ireland, seconded by Councillor N Cooper  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree for the RFO to have delegated powers to investigate the re-establishing of the internet banking with HSBC.

0106/2324

**COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

Members noted the date of the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 for the election for the vacancy of Councillor in Morfe Ward.

0107/2324

**A&E SERVICES WITHIN SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD & WREKIN**

This item was moved within the agenda and debated after agenda item Future Bridgnorth – Project Update.

**0108/2324 COMMUNITY MEETING FOR RESIDENTS ON RETAINING WALL**

It was proposed by Councillor L Rochelle, seconded by Councillor D Cooper  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree hold a community meeting for residents to provide up to date information and inform on the next stages of the project and costs, but the date for this meeting to be deferred for a future agenda item.

**0109/2324 UPDATE – BRIDGNORTH & SHIFNAL AREA COMMITTEE**

Members noted the report and verbal update from Councillor D Cooper regarding the Bridgnorth & Shifnal Area Committee.

**0110/2324 UPDATE – PLACE PLAN**

Members received a verbal update and report from Councillor D Cooper regarding the Place Plan and the way forward for the Town Council's projects to be considered and investigated.

It was proposed by Councillor D Cooper, seconded by Councillor A Chetter  
Abstained by Councillor E Marshall

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree for the three projects to be included on the Place Plan: The retaining wall, 20MPH area in Bridgnorth, Town Hall Project, for the other projects within the report to be agreed in principle, to also include the accident black spot for speeding mitigation measures, for a Councillor to champion a project that has been agreed in principle and bring back to the Full Council for further debate and agreement, and for the Town Clerk to have delegated authority for the completion of the required application forms with Shropshire Council.

**0111/2324 UPDATE – BOUNDARY REVIEW AND COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members received a verbal update and report from Councillor D Cooper regarding the Boundaries and Community Governance and the Shropshire Council's review of the polling stations.

Members had until the end of the month to contact the Town Clerk if they wanted to be part of the working group to consider future electoral arrangements, this commitment would be until late 2004.

**0112/2324 DLF ENVIRONMENTAL**

It was proposed by Councillor D Cooper, seconded by Councillor R Connolly  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** that the Council agree to suspend standing order to complete the remaining items on the agenda and conclude the business within it.

Members received a verbal update and note the report from the DLF Supervisor regarding the DLF and Environmental. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and debate any points.



The DLF Supervisor was thanked for attending the meeting and the report update.

#### 0113/2324 **PROPERTY AND ASSETS**

Members received a verbal update from the Town Clerk and noted the report from the Property Manager regarding the Town Council's property and asset portfolio. Councillors were given an opportunity to ask questions and debate any points.

It was proposed by Councillor R Connolly, seconded by Councillor A Chetter  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree for the toilets at Listley Street to be open to the public until 7.00pm each evening during the summertime and then changed to 5.00pm when the clocks change in the Autumn. This to be reviewed and any vandalism recorded as part of the review.

#### 0114/2324 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor D Cooper, seconded by I Wellings  
Abstained by Councillor E Marshall and Councillor A Chetter

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree for Brian Jones to be co-opted on to the Planning Committee for year 2023/2024 with no voting rights.

It was proposed by Councillor D Cooper, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree to renew the Delegated Authority for the Planning Committee and to include an amendment to not include Shropshire Councillors as ward members in planning applications in their areas.

#### 0115/2324 **CARTWAY REFUSE**

Members were provided with an update from Shropshire Councillor – Councillor Hurst-Knight regarding the refuse issues and it was confirmed that there had not been any issues raised for several months with officers from Shropshire Council.

Members were updated that bins were still overflowing in the area and pulled over in the middle of the night. Efes had contacted a Councillor and offered to put out additional bins but did not want to be fined for this. The Town Clerk was asked to email the Shropshire Council team and make enquires on Efes behalf.

#### 0116/2324 **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

Members discussed the following items for inclusion on the future agenda:

- Copy of the list of the items on the list for including on a future agenda
- Possible pyrolysis plant in Bridgnorth (environmental charcoal)
- Post 16 education
- Election – system and better information of what's included in being a Councillor.
- Place Plan

**0117/2324 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor C Baines  
Abstained by Councillors E Marshall and J Buckley

**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.

The Mayor agreed for a 5 minute recess to allow Councillors and Town Council staff a refreshment break.

**0118/2324 MOBILE PHONE CONTRACT**

Members were provided with a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the report provided on the mobile phone contract. Members debated the report and were given an opportunity to ask questions.

It was proposed by Councillor N Cooper, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Abstained by Councillor A Chetter

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree for the Deputy Town Clerk to investigate a quotation with the local supplier Get Connected for the supply and service for the mobile phone provision for the Town Council and for the Deputy Town Clerk to have delegated powers to award the contract to the supplier who provides best overall value to the Town Council for the new mobile phone contract.

**0119/2324 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

Members were provided with a verbal update from the Town Clerk regarding the Health and Safety Report and were given the opportunity to debate the report and ask questions.

It was proposed by Councillor D Cooper, seconded by Councillor I Wellings  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOVLED:** that the Council noted the content and update from the report, agreed for the Town Clerk to have delegated powers for up to £5,000.00 spend for Health & Safety issues as detailed within the report and for the Town Clerk to update the Council at a future Town Council meeting.

**0120/2324 RETAINING WALL**

Members were provided with a verbal update from the Town Clerk and a verbal update from the Chair of Finance Committee regarding the Castle Walk Retaining Wall Project and the financial implications to the Town Council.

It was proposed by Councillor E Marshall, seconded by Councillor R Ireland  
Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOVLED:** that the Council agree to a further update to be provided at a future Town Council meeting and for a meeting to provisionally be put in place for early November 2023 (week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023) providing a two week notice period to the community.

Meeting Closed at 10:47pm.