

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL****Minutes of the Extraordinary Bridgnorth Town Council Meeting held in the Annexe, College House  
on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 6.45pm.****Present:**

R Connolly (Mayor)  
Ian Wellings (Deputy Mayor)  
C Aked  
C Baines MBE  
J Buckley  
A Chetter  
D Cooper  
N Cooper  
T Green  
R Ireland  
L Rochelle  
R Seabright

**In Attendance:** Mrs C Turner, Town Clerk

0147/2324

**Welcome**

The Mayor issued a welcome to the meeting

0148/2324

**Apologies for Absence**

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

**RESOLVED:** to receive the apologies and reasons for absence for the following Councillors:

S Barlow – another meeting  
E Marshall – personal commitment  
K Sawbridge BEM – another meeting

0149/2324

**Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared.

0150/2324

**Public Question Time**

There were no member of the public present.

0151/2324

**Members Question Time**

Councillor Ireland raised a question.

We were recently informed stage 2b was completed in four weeks rather than six by the labour force being increased from two men to three.

The contractor helpfully carried out this work more quickly than originally anticipated as there had been a two/three month delay to the contract for legal reasons during which they were stood down.



Can we please see a full and detailed breakdown, dates involved and final sum invoiced for the stand down charges made by the contractor?

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ireland for this question and informed a response in writing would be provided by the Town Clerk / RFO.

0152/2324

### **The Retaining Wall Project – Decision to Borrow**

Members received a report and verbal update from the Town Clerk and Project Group setting out brief details of the retaining wall project and options for financing the delivery of the project.

Councillor D Cooper proposed the draft resolution to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £500,000 over the term of 25 years for the Retaining Wall Project. For the Clerk and RFO to have delegated authority to complete the details regarding the annual loan repayments costs and insert the details of the % and additional £ monies for the repayment once consultation had been completed and the specific day loan rates.

It was confirmed that as of today the percentage increase would be 5.62%, with an annual repayment of £37,200 each year for 25 years. The figures quoted were as a guide only as interest rates calculated automatically daily.

Councillor Seabright entered the meeting.

The members debated the proposal. It was discussed that the Shropshire Council element on the council tax for 2024/25 was likely to increase by £5.99 for a band d property.

Councillor Buckley asked if Bridgnorth was the highest precept cost in the County and was informed it was not, examples of other Town Council precepts were provided.

It was debated that the Town Council would explore every opportunity and avenue including CIL funding with Shropshire Council to enable the borrowing by Bridgnorth Town Council to be kept to a minimum. Members were informed that the Town Council would only 'draw down' the monies when required from the funding allocation. It was confirmed that if all the loan was not required this would not be 'drawn down' and used for other projects.

It was Proposed by Councillor Buckley, Seconded by Councillor Chetter for a total sum of £465,000 over 25 years be agreed as the borrowing amount, to also set up a crowd fund towards the cost of the retaining wall project and the base budget for the Town Council to only increase by up to 2%.

Members were informed the 1<sup>st</sup> draft budget for 2024/25 had been completed with a cost implication of £20.25 per household, a further updated version had been completed by the Finance Committee. The 2<sup>nd</sup> draft budget included an increase to income with car park fees in line with inflation, increase market fees, reduction in grants from 2% to 1% and review of the staffing structure and what any changes and reduced in services delivered to the community.



Councillor Buckley proposed an amendment, Seconded by Councillor Chetter for a total sum of £465,000 over 25 years be agreed as the borrowing amount and any increase on the base budget for the Town Council to be kept as low as possible.

The vote was For 1. Against 11. Abstained 0. The motion was not carried.

Proposed by Councillor D Cooper, Seconded by Councillor Ireland

The vote was For 11. Against 1. Abstained 0.

**RESOLVED:** to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of 500,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for the Retaining Wall Project. The annual loan repayments will come to around £38,052. It also intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 5.2% which is the equivalent of an additional £8.12 a year. This will be subject to a precept increase consultation.

Members discussed the launch of the borrowing consultation.

Proposed by Councillor D Cooper, Seconded by Councillor Chetter

Unanimously agreed by all Councillors

**RESOLVED:** to agree delegated authority to the Town Clerk and the Working Group for the retaining wall project to proceed with the borrowing consultation, to produce the consultation documentation, agree costs associated with the borrowing consultation and complete the documentation for approval by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of 500,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for the Retaining Wall Project

Close: 8.05pm