

# BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2011 AT 7.30PM IN THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER

**PRESENT:** Cllr WJ Monteith (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), Cllrs DL Baker, MD Cresswell, D Hall, DP Loveridge, JR Munn, PGH Parker, KF Richards, Mrs GJ Slocombe, P Smeed & J Turner (JP)

**Apologies:** Cllrs Busby, Downes, Granter, Preece and Ms J Raven

**71/10 WELCOME and SEASONS GREETING:**

The Mayor welcomed members of the public and wished them and all members a prosperous and happy new year.

**72/10 PUBLIC SPEAKING:**

Mr Bob Cudlipp addressed the meeting on a series of points arising from a report to the SDC Executive relating to the provision of a new swimming pool at Chilton planned as part of the BSF project, and the future management proposals and the offer from Tesco and plans for Northgate which included a reduction but enhancement of the POS provision on the Brewery field.

The Town Council's well documented position was repeated in response and the Mayor indicated his intention to speak as an individual at the Executive.

Mrs Sally Jones then spoke on behalf of traders, repeating many of the comments she had previously made to the Town Council and whilst welcoming the number of retail initiatives in hand, emphasised her view that bringing Tesco into the town on this site would be to the detriment of local traders and the town centre.

**73/10 POLICING IN BRIDGWATER:**

Inspector Carey accompanied by Sergeant Charmaine Dyne gave members an update on a number of issues which had been aired previously at the Town Council confirming action which had been initiated by the police. This had been successful at Canon Close and in respect of cycling on pavements in Bristol Road and other roads. Further follow-up was needed in Fore Street and where cyclists insisted on riding against the flow of traffic. An action plan to deal with traffic problems and congestion would continue into March and April this year. Members highlighted issues in Eastover and St John Street and New Road and examples of parking in bays for disabled use. Inspector Carey also mentioned a low level protest against Hinkley development in King Square, which had been largely based on findings of uranium spoil on site although this had been denied by the Nuclear Regulator.

The Mayor thanked the Officers for their report.

**74/10 TOWN HALL EXTERIOR WORKS AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT:**

Mr George Allen gave the Council a talk illustrated with over-heads explaining the works which had been carried out well within budget to make the building wind and water tight and refurbish the exterior. 36 roofs including the theatre glazing had been refurbished. Some internal works had also been carried out and some aspects of historic interest discovered including the cruck beam roof in the BTC meeting room which had been opened up as a feature. The whole project was now nearly finished save for snagging which had been delayed due to the Rok company situation. This was now in the hands of the liquidator.

**75/10 MINUTES of the PREVIOUS MEETING 9 December 2010:**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 December 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**76/10 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 9 December 2010:**

- i NATIONAL GRID – HINKLEY POINT C CONNECTION PROJECT –** (Mins 62/10 & 67/10 i) - The first notes of the HCCG of 15 December 2010 under the improved consultation arrangements for town and parish councils were noted.
- ii) REPORT OF THE MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE** (Min 64/10) – Arrangements were being made for the Accreditation certificate to be presented after the sub-committee meeting on 18 Jan – with invitations extended to all the volunteers and FOBM.
- iii) EDF STAGE 2 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION** (Min 67/10 iii) – The preliminary works planning application submitted to West Somerset District Council had been presented at a meeting on 6 January 2011. The Town Clerk reported on the outcomes and recommended representations in respect of the highway, transportation and environmental impacts on the town as a consequence of the proposals. The information supplied and the supporting appendices with the application raised a series of major concerns. Additional concerns were raised in response to the application to the Marine Management Organisation for a Harbour Empowerment Order, comprising the provision of a temporary jetty at Hinkley Point. Again traffic impacts in the construction phase, added to those referred above were of particular concern. Reference was also made to a further application approved by the SCC Regulation Committee relating to remediation works to remove contaminated spoil and provision of a relocated heli-pad.

**RESOLVED:** i) That the Town Clerk respond to each of the respective applications highlighting the concerns, particularly around highways, transportation and environmental impacts on the town and intended heavy goods vehicle routes and employee routes to Hinkley Point and associated development;

ii) that the opposition to the preliminary works application be based on the limited mitigation proposals put forward which in the view of the Town Council are completely unsatisfactory, emphasizing the need for more detailed traffic assessments and modelling information to substantiate edf's position;

iii) that the Town Council formerly request involvement and representation on the transport steering group (or specialist sub-group of the community forum).

iv) **SOMERSET HIGHWAYS 'BRIDGE OFFICE' AND TOWN BRIDGE XMAS LIGHTS** (Min 68/10.9) - The Town Clerk reported on the meeting of all interested parties convened on the bridge before the Xmas lights were removed, to follow up the issues raised by SCC. These were significant in terms of concerns about the security of the cast iron railings and the requirements for a licence and for Listed Building Consent. This meant that what had been in place over recent years, was unlikely to be acceptable and options for continuing to provide Xmas lighting in this location were now being examined.

**77/10 CLOSURE OF THE BRIDGWATER MAGISTRATES COURT** (Min 38/10 v.): Advice had now been received on the outcome of the consultation and the decision to close the Courthouse, despite the substantial opposition and the reasoned case put forward. The Town Clerk outlined the effect of the decisions taken by the Lord Chancellor across the south west. There were concerns that in reaching the decision in relation to Bridgwater, new parameters had been introduced which had not necessarily been identified in the published consultation documentation. As a consequence, judicial review was being considered and the Town Clerk recommended that the Town Council should formally object to the decision. **RESOLVED:** i) That the Town Council write to Her Majesty's Court Service objecting to the decision; ii) that the Sedgemoor Magistrates be advised of this and of the Town Council's willingness to consider supporting any action they may propose and iii) that if necessary an invitation be extended to the Chairman of the Bench to meet with the Town Council.

**78/10 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**  
**RESOLVED:** That the payments (inc. Section 137 payments) made since the last meeting recorded in Town Clerk's report dated 6 Jan 2011 be approved & confirmed, together with income including the capital receipt as per the agreement for the disposal of land at Chilton.

**79/10 MAYORAL ITEMS:**  
The Mayor referred to an event planned by service organisations involving a March from Bideford to Bulford, in aid of service charities. Involving some 1500 personnel, this would be routed through the town which was approximately halfway it was planned for the 27 May 2011 – a date beyond his Mayoral term. He invited the Council to offer support through the new incumbent Mayor.  
**RESOLVED:** That this be agreed – the organisation notified - and diaried.

**80/10 PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**  
The Town Clerk reported on correspondence and papers received: those for decision and those for information:

**RESOLVED:** That all items be noted as listed in the report dated 06 Jan 2011 and decisions taken as follows, as well as noting any additions recorded below:

**DECISIONS**

- 1 **Major infrastructure planning reform** – Nuclear Policy Statements and meetings on 12 Jan 2011 – representations to be submitted on the Council's position seeking to ensure local considerations and community interests taken into account.
- 2 **Bridgwater Retail Initiatives** – Advice Clinics on Merchandising and Customer Service, and opening business and related business initiatives including town centre signage and grant of 10k received through the Magnox South Socio-economic development scheme – progress report noted and grant accepted.
- 3 **Grant application & Ward Grant application** – Hamp Community Association in relation to funding of ReCreation & sponsoring activities – Grant of £5k & £1.5k Hamp ward grant approved.

**FOR INFORMATION:**

4 – 16 Noted.

*(Councillor Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 3 above and took no part in the consideration and did not vote thereon)*

**81/10 EXEMPT ITEMS – EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:**

**RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the business recorded in Minutes 82/10 & 83/10 on the grounds that this will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100.1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**82/10 TOWN HALL – FUTURE OF BUILDINGS AND MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL PARTNERS/USERS** (Min 62/10 i) The Town Clerk reported on further discussions and negotiations which had continued with SDC. He submitted recommendations to take this forward in accordance with the principles already established proposing amendments to the draft heads of terms and the way in which the transfer of the building, or parts of the building could be achieved and to continue the community usage beyond the threatened closure of 31 March 2011. Members unanimously supported a course of action to ensure continuity in the availability of the town hall to users, but acknowledged that this would only be viable with the benefit of the commercial rentals and a long term commitment from the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** i) That the previously agreed principles be confirmed ii) that the Town Council request the transfer of the freehold of the Town Hall Island Site (excluding the Engine Room and No. 50) as a community asset rather than leasehold and iii) that if SDC insist on a leasehold disposal of 125 years, the Town Council offer to take a lease of the accommodation excluding the vacant first and second floors, but including the Town Council accommodation and the commercial properties and the 'carnival centre' subject to final agreement on the illustrative plans of the accommodation and including first refusal on the 'Bridgwater Room' based on the draft heads of terms received from SDC – subject to negotiations and agreement on the following:

A peppercorn rent for the full 125 year term

Inclusion and transfer to BTC of all commercial properties within the site

Repair & refurbishment schedule (Schedule 5) revised to 10-year term & limited as per agreement

Increased transitional funding related to 5-year period:

Resolution of any TUPE issues to include indemnity to lessee.

Public liability insurance at £10m;

First refusal option for use by SDC or successors in relation to elections

That the objective of transfer to and creation of a Trust and managing body in the most appropriate form at the earliest opportunity continue to be pursued with the cultural partners and user groups

That the Town Clerk continue negotiations on the basis above and confer with the Mayor, Chairman of Finance Committee, and Chairman of Planning Panel as negotiations proceed.

**83/10 THE BRIDGWATER CUP 2010:**

**RESOLVED:** i) that having considered the worthy merits of the eligible nominations, the Cup be awarded to Bryan Gillard in recognition of his outstanding work as Chairman of the Friends of Blake Museum, former Councillor and Community Representative and Board member on various local organisations. ii) suitable presentation and photo opportunity be organised; and iii) that members recognise the work of others nominated and their invaluable support to the community and the nominees be thanked for their submissions.

The meeting finished at 9.40pm

signed ..... Chairman

