

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 JULY 2010 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, AS Downes, GJ Granter, D Hall, DP Loveridge, PGH Parker, KF Richards, Mrs GJ Slocombe, P Smeed and J Turner (JP)

Apologies: Cllrs Busby, Preece and Ms Raven

At the commencement of the meeting all stood for a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Roger Lavers, a former Mayor of the Town who had recently passed away

14/10 PUBLIC SPEAKING:

The Council were addressed by Mrs Sally Jones who spoke on regeneration issues for the town centre, complementing the recent success of the town hall refurbishment celebrations. She regretted that traders had not been better informed but was now keen to push for the town centre to become more viable, commenting upon the empty shops initiative and the consultancy employed to lead this. In reply it was explained that this was much more than window dressing, but that some of the issues raised would be better addressed to SDC.

Ms Linda Brigg also spoke to the Council on a series of issues, including vehicular counts and who was undertaking these; Bridgwater Town Hall and a desire to see the interior refurbished and back to full use; the role of the retail consultant; picking up from the previous meeting, the programme for bus shelter renewal; EDF and the desire for a northern by-pass to the town because of the traffic impact; the position with the new hospital; the action taken to remove the dead cow found in the river; impact of houses and jobs; and the need to appreciate healthy leisure lifestyles. She also asked for feedback on the police presentations at the previous meeting. The Mayor and Town Clerk responded to all these points, on the last item confirming that feedback would be obtained from the police at the next meeting.

Mr Bob Cudlipp then spoke on the subject of SDC accounts; the availability of the Bridgwater Town Council accounts; updating of the website; whether new Mayoral projects were planned; and the opposite positions adopted by Town councillors at the County Council's Regulation Committee consideration of the Wyndham Park Green application. Again, the Mayor and Town Clerk responded on each of the points, in the latter case confirming that this had been referred to an Independent Public Inquiry.

15/10 EDF PROPOSALS STAGE ONE AND STAGE TWO PUBLICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The Town Council received a presentation by Guy Braga, Communities Officer for the Community Council for Somerset. Mr Braga explained the role of the Community Council in facilitating dialogue employed by SDC and the West Somerset District Council and SCC. He explained that the next series of meetings would include highway and planning advice on the phase two plans with meetings at Express Park on 11 August and Sydenham Community Centre on 17 August. Questionnaires would also be made available and on-line. The presentation was confined to the role of the Community Council with an item on the EDF proposals later in the meeting.

The Mayor and Town Clerk explained the action they had taken in meeting with EDF emphasising the Town Council's position.

(Cllr David Hall declared a personal and prejudicial declaration of interest as Portfolio Holder for Economic Development with responsibility from Somerset County Council for relationships with EDF).

16/10 MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10/06/10 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

17/10 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 10/06/10:

- i. **Policing in Bridgwater** (Min 01/10) – the police would be formally invited to the next meeting to respond to a number of the points raised at the previous presentation by Sgt Charmaine Dyne. This would include specifically parking in St John Street and difficulties created generally by street parking, in particular Wellington Road;
- ii. **Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery** – Presidency (Min 11/10) appointments 2010/2011 – the Mayor confirmed that he had accepted the Presidency of the Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery and that this would be added to the list of appointments for future years and would run with the position of Mayor.

18/10 REPORT OF THE MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE 20/07/10:

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 20/07/10 (attached as an Appendix) were circulated. The Town Clerk drew attention to the issues discussed and in particular the interim management arrangements effective from 1st April 2010 and the renewal of the curatorial advisor or arrangement with Natalie Watson until 31 March 2011. Work was continuing in preparation for the formation of a Trust.

RESOLVED: That the decisions and recommendations be noted and adopted.

19/10 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (21/07/10):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 21/07/10 (attached as an Appendix) had been circulated and were introduced by the Chairman Cllr John Turner. With the Town Clerk, Cllr Turner highlighted several items including the Audit of Accounts 2009/2010 and out turn, the town hall buildings and future management and cultural partners, cemeteries and grants and ward grants 2010/2011.

RESOLVED: That the report be adopted and all matters covered in the Finance Committee resolutions be noted and approved, subject to the relevant minutes below.

20/10 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/2010 – OUT TURN AND GOVERNANCE:

The Town Clerk reported the completion of the accounts for the Town Council 2009/10, copies of which were available and for which income and expenditure and balance sheet and bank reconciliation had been circulated. The accounts had now been submitted to Messrs Moore Stephens the External Auditors.

RESOLVED: That the income and expenditure, balance sheet, bank reconciliation and the audit return for the year ended 31 March 2010 be approved as submitted and adopted and the governance statements approved.

21/10 TOWN HALL – BUILDINGS & MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL PARTNERS:

The Town Council received Minute 6 of the Finance Committee dated 26/07/10 and endorsed these resolutions, as follows: to permit further work to be developed.

RESOLVED: That in endorsing the recommendations, the report be approved and in principle the Town Council consider:-

1. support for the cultural partnership with the possibility of BTC taking on the lease of the Town Hall (theatre) and Charter Hall and associated areas with management control for day-to-day operation through a board consisting of representatives of BTC and the main user groups and to consider the best organisational model ie: formulation of the trust;
2. increasing the income and thereby reducing the deficit, for this the premises occupied on the THIS (to include the former bookshop) would have to be transferred to the cultural partnership to provide a "basic" annual income;
3. sourcing the remaining deficit via SDC and/or BTC;
4. seeking out grant aid to meet part or all of the annual deficit;
5. to authorise the Town Clerk to continue discussions with partners and SDC

22/10 CEMETERIES – QUANTOCK ROAD AND BRISTOL ROAD:

Cllr Mrs Slocombe reported on her visits to both cemeteries and complemented the conditions at Quantock Road. As previously discussed, a series of works/improvements were identified for Bristol Road including tree planting along the railway line, provision of shrubs around the car park area, restoring some graves and kerbing and agreeing the provision of two seats in appropriate positions – reference also to be passed on to Funeral Directors.

23/10 GRANTS 2010/2011 AND WARD GRANTS 2010/2011:

The Council noted the decisions taken by the Finance Committee in awarding grants in accordance with the Council's procedures and budget. Further information, as requested, had been obtained on the Bridgwater Sea Cadet Unit (and Royal Marine Detachment) and the new building proposals.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with the additional information supplied a grant of £2500 be made to the Bridgwater Sea Cadet Corps towards the building of an extension and alterations of the existing boat shop to form two class rooms and office and store.

(The Mayor Cllr Monteith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Bridgwater Sea Cadet Corps and the application and took no part in the consideration and did not vote thereon having left the room – Cllr Pat Parker in the Chair for this item).

24/10 WARD GRANTS 2010/2011:

Members noted the position with the ward budgets to the end of the financial year 2010/2011 in view of the elections due in that year.

25/10 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND INCOME:

RESOLVED: That the payments (including Section 137 payments) made since the last meeting recorded in the Town Clerk's report dated 22/07/10 and the credit income reported, be approved and confirmed.

26/10 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SEDGEMOOR (MIN 10/10):

Following the meeting of the Working Party representations had been submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Copies of individual representations received from members were also appended. Thanks were also expressed to the Working Party for their efforts.

27/10 EDF – STAGE ONE CONSULTATION REPORT AND STAGE TWO PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION (MIN 04/10.I AND MIN 15/10 ABOVE):

The Town Clerk confirmed that the next phase of consultation was underway and confirmed the variety of information that had been widely distributed. Associated development now proposed had a significant impact on the town as result of the preferred options and key issues remained around transportation and highway infrastructure and the impact of the associated development hostel sites. A presentation by EDF to the Town Council was planned for 19/08/10.

In the meantime, work continued closely with other interested parties and the Town Clerk had joined the A39 Working Group. Other issues had been raised in conjunction with the police and further contact would be made with ARUP.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's position as already stated by reinforced based on the phase one submission as now impacted upon by the stage two preferred options.

(Cllr Hall repeated the declaration of personal and prejudicial interest he had recorded in relation to Min 15/10 above).

28/10 NATIONAL GRID – HINKLEY POINT C CONNECTION PROJECT (MIN 04/10.I):

National Grid had completed a series of consultations and issued additional information to support their proposals. They had requested a nomination to attend the planned Community Forums.

RESOLVED: That Cllr David Preece be nominated on behalf of the Town Council.

29/10 BRIDGWATER MAGISTRATE'S COURT CLOSURE CONSULTATION:

The Town Council's support had been requested in the campaign to oppose the closure of the Court House used by the Sedgemoor Magistrates and the proposal that this should transfer to Taunton. Documented reasons had been supplied.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council state their united opposition to the closure of the Court House and unanimously support all those well documented reasons put forward in their response to the consultation.

30/10 WESSEX WATER – OPERATION CLEAN AND CLEAR:

The Town Clerk reported on the recent meeting with Wessex Water and the next phase of the works. Information leaflets were made available with work commencing shortly at the West Street/Broadway junction and would move through Penel Orlieu and High Street to the town centre. An exhibition was planned in Angel Place in September to illustrate the areas affected as work progressed.

RESOLVED: That this be noted and the concerns expressed about the impact on the town endorsed.

31/10 MAYORAL ITEMS:

- i. **Civic Service – 18/07/10** – the Mayor expressed his appreciation to all those who had attended this service and to the pupils of St Mary's School for the contribution the choir had made to the success of the event;
- ii. **Bridgwater and Taunton Canal** – the Mayor congratulated all those involved on the production of the excellent guide led by the Canal Wardens, which had been launched at Maunsell Lock recently.

32/10 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 22/07/10 (agenda item 10) and decisions taken as follows, as well as noting the additions recorded below:-

Decisions

1. SLCC Regional Conference (South West) – 2 December 2010 – attendance authorised;
2. Cycle parking in Somerset – Bridgwater planned locations – noted with suggestion of 'conservation area' treatment where appropriate;
3. DVD 'The Hinkley Experience' – Cllr Smeed nominated to take part;
15. Review of winter maintenance by SDC Highways – questionnaire to be circulated to all members

For Information (no additions)

33/10 DISABLED BAYS OUTSIDE H CABS:

To be referred to Police/PCSOs in light of use by taxis

34/10 EXEMPT ITEM – EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

RESOLVED: That press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the business recorded in Minute 35/10 on the grounds that this would involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100.1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

35/10 TOWN CLERK SALARY AND ADDITIONAL HOURS OF WORK:

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, as requested in Minute 3.iii of the Finance Committee presented a report on additional hours over and above the contracted term undertaken by the Town Clerk in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

RESOLVED: That an honorarium as set out in the report dated 22/07/10 by Cllr Turner be approved and awarded to the Town Clerk.

The meeting finished at 9.25pm

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Signed
Chairman