

# BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 MAY 2017 AT 7.00 PM AT THE CHARTER HALL, TOWN HALL, BRIDGWATER

PRESENT: Cllr Alex Glassford (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), 12 other members of the Town Council, and some 15 members of the public.

### 01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllrs Mrs Morley, Redman and Turner

### 02. WELCOME:

The Mayor welcomed members of the public to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Meeting of the Town Council since its inception in 2003.

### 03. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING 2016:

The Minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Public Meeting held on 19/05/16 had been circulated, received by members of the Council, and were available at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Annual Town Public Meeting held on 19/05/16 be confirmed, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 04. MATTERS ARISING:

No specific matters were raised - the key issues following on from that meeting were addressed in Resume of the Year 2016/17 and the Forward Plan Tracker for 2016/17.

### 05. SOCIAL CARE SERVICES - SOMERSET CARE (RESPONSE TO MIN 91/16 (13/04/17) - PUBLIC SPEAKING) - PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIRMAN MR CHRIS DAVIES CBE DL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE DR JANE TOWNSON:

The Mayor introduced the speakers. This opportunity arose following issues raised by Ms Deborah Munton at the meeting of the Town Council held on 13/04/17. Having heard those comments, the Town Council had decided that the issue should be further explored and offered the opportunity to respond to Somerset Care.

Mr Davies and Dr Townson addressed the meeting, outlining the business of Somerset Care and the vital services provided with some 290 people in Sedgemoor relying on that care largely through a service commissioned by SCC. They responded to various issues raised about staffing and training, and the various measures of the service. This included the explanation of staff numbers, operational activities, skills and sharing opportunities.

They explained that since the issues had been raised through the Town Council and addressed in the Bridgwater Mercury, they had prepared a response and were in the throws of reporting to the SCC Safeguarding Team. They were happy to share this review with the Town Council, and the Safeguarding Team had agreed to this action. Mr Davies and Dr Townson went on to explain ways in which the service was being modified and with new features being rolled out across the entire workforce, also working in smaller teams and working with new care packages. This was all seeking to address an over-stretched service where funding remained strictly controlled. Mr Davies and Dr Townson responded to a number of questions relating to the organisation, financing and protection of clients. They also responded on the form of contracts available which remained attempting the best with the restricted funding available.

Members of the public, both carers and clients, raised a number of points following on from the issues which Ms Munton had laid on the table at the previous meeting. In the majority, these resulted from individual cases where it was not appropriate for the issues to be raised in a public forum.

*In the event, upon advice, the Mayor adjourned the meeting to enable the representatives of Somerset Care to meet individually with those from the audience who wished to take matters forward, so that these may be either addressed immediately or through an appointment process.*

The Mayor thereupon reconvened the meeting where the Town Council RESOLVED to pursue their interest in the issues, to seek a copy of the report which had been offered, and to view any public issues upon receipt of the information.

#### **06. POLICING IN BRIDGWATER:**

Sergeant Joe Piscina confirmed that he had now been appointed permanently to lead the Bridgwater Team and that Sergeant Ryan Edwards had similarly been appointed, based in Burnham to the Northern Rural area.

Sergeant Piscina explained a number of successes with eight warrants issued in the fight against drugs and real benefits from a reduction from the previous year. He also explained the actions taken against rogue traders and the response to congregations of youths in the Town Centre. Action in the latter, had resulted in some issues in locations around the Town Centre which were also being dealt with. Sergeant Piscina explained increasing use of Twitter and social media aimed against crime with priorities assessed via greater use of police website.

Members welcomed the continuing regular police presence at Town Council meetings, and noted a further visit planned by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Actions taken were welcomed and members identified specific locations - Hamp, New Road, Victoria Park, the Docks, Anson Way and Piggy Hill still requiring action. Where increased patrols were evident, improvements were noted. The public and members played emphasis on the desire to see more police on the beat, and the hope that some of the changes in procedures through new technology would free up extra time. Some existing issues remained in relation to the Docks and drug exchanges near New town Lock and the Brick Sofa and similar targeting at Blake Gardens.

The Mayor thanked Sergeant Piscina for his forthright presentation and for the collective efforts to respond to ongoing issues.

#### **07. TRANSPORTATION UPDATE (REF "GOLDEN TRIANGLE" AND EDF/HPC ASSOCIATED WORKS):**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the situation in relation to the Golden Triangle confirming progress. The Riders junction had been transferred and was operating satisfactorily with surfacing now planned in early June. The Bristol Road/The Drove end would shortly see letters delivered to residents, which would also pick up on SCC Highway works to follow the EDF programme with surfacing planned overnight from Monday 22/05/17. It was noted that traffic management arrangements would vary and change as the surfacing works progressed. Otherwise works were on track with the prospect of a reduced programme from the 29 weeks.

**08. BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL - RESUME OF YEAR 2016/17:**

Updated copies of this annual production were issued and introduced by the Mayor. The Town Clerk commented on the further increasing role of the Town Council and the wide ranging involvement in the community and all projects etc that affected community life. Copies of the document were available on the Town Council website.

**09. FORWARD PLAN TRACKER 2016/17:**

Cllr Smedley, Leader of the Town Council, spoke to the Forward Plan and highlighted the updates and actions promised from the previous Public Meeting and regular Forum meetings. The document was circulated listing actions taken on a monthly basis including those from Town Council meetings. The establishment of the forums and the desire for continuing and improving public involvement and consultation processes were proving successful with Cllr Smedley confirming the various areas covered. Cllr Smedley, in closing, highlighted the final identified priorities for 2016/17.

**10. PUBLIC ISSUES:**

Members of the public were offered the opportunity to raise issues.

Reference was made to the Docks, and the desire of volunteers to promote improvements. Reference for further examination was also made to the planned new school to open in September and the access routes thereto. Issues were raised about parents vehicle parking with additional pressure expected on Anson Way, and the need to ensure that pathway and cycleway linking across the Brewery Field was fit for purpose.

An issue was raised in relation to the continuing demand for extra housing provision with a number of sites in and around the Town earmarked in the Core Strategy Review. Emphasis was placed on the need to make available affordable housing which showed significant demands.

**11. PUBLIC MEETING:**

The Mayor thanked all those who had participated for their attendance and contributions and their interest in the Town and the Town Council's work and emphasised the continuing commitment of all those elected to the Town Council.

The meeting finished at 9.00 pm

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Signed  
Chairman