

# **BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 APRIL 2017 AT 7.30PM AT THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER**

**PRESENT:** Cllr AM Glassford (Mayor - in the Chair), Cllrs GJ Granter, P Johnstone, Ms L Leavy, MJ Lerry, DP Loveridge, AJ Moore, Mrs P Morley, LP Redman, D Rodrigues, and BD Smedley

Apologies: Cllrs Cresswell, Ms Pearce, Turner and Ms Wilson

### **91/16 PUBLIC SPEAKING (ADJOURNMENT): SOCIAL CARE SERVICES:**

Ms Deborah Munton addressed the Council to raise awareness of her concerns about what was happening as a result of the commissioning and outsourcing of social care services by SCC. She outlined her background in the health and social care service, the roles she had undertaken, and the stance she had taken as a registered manager with Somerset Care notifying the CQC that she was no longer prepared to continue. She highlighted issues related to service users, to care workers and office staff, data protection and staff management.

In closing, she challenged the Council in a situation where social care was part funded through Council Tax to assess whether the money was being spent wisely, anticipating the interest of the vulnerable within the local community.

Members acknowledged the comments, agreed that any campaign should be supported, and the issues explored with the possibility of inviting representation to a future meeting.

### **92/16 POLICING IN BRIDGWATER:**

PC Mark Loker of the Neighbourhood Town Centre Team, was introduced to the Council by the Mayor. In his first presentation to the Town Council representing Inspector Pritchard and Sergeant Piscina, he outlined his background, his concentration on dealing with youth issues and the police approach following Home Office guidance. In terms of recent issues in and around the Town Centre, he confirmed the action taken, the various orders which had been issued, including ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts) and other means of attacking relatively minor anti-social behaviour issues, such as begging through the District Council and the multi-agency approach.

Members appreciated the actions taken in addressing the problems, reiterating that the profile of police on the street was still a major benefit and this was aided by the presence of the police vehicle in the Town Centre on a regular basis.

Specific issues were raised by members and PC Loker took these away for examination.

Members confirmed the value of regular police communication and the intention of the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend the meeting on 24/05/17 (*noted – now confirmed for 29/06/17*) with the Town Development Forum. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner would also be holding a “drop-in” in Angel Place on 20/04/17.

Finally, PC Loker outlined the patrol plans which were being put in place for the Town Centre teams and presented posters carrying the make-up of the three teams covering Bridgwater, the Town Centre, Urban East, and Urban West and West Bridgwater.

**93/16 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 09/03/17:**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 09/03/17 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**94/16 REPORT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TWINNING FORUM (14/03/17):**

The Report of the Forum was received by members and introduced by Cllr Smedley. This was principally concerned with the arrangements for the Twinning weekend, which included events at Bar 27, the “This is It” former unit in Angel Place, and at the Arts Centre.

**RESOLVED:** That the Report be accepted and adopted and the events supported.

**95/16 REPORT OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT FORUM (16/03/17):**

Cllr Loveridge introduced the Report having taken over as Chairman following the resignation of Cllr Ms Brown. He emphasised the worth of the Forum with the breadth of representation and continuing to pursue Countywide issues. Particular issues had been raised about scooters and mopeds on cycle paths, and representations were continuing following news that the Railway Station improvements, part and parcel of the Celebration Mile proposals had been pushed back to 2018/19. This was being pursued.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Report be noted and the various actions confirmed, and
2. that representations in relation to improvements at Bridgwater Railway Station be supported.

**96/16 REPORT OF THE TOWN DEVELOPMENT FORUM (21/03/17):**

Cllr Smedley presented the Report of the Town Development Forum which had been devoted entirely to tourism and the efforts being made to promote tourism throughout Sedgemoor and related to Bridgwater in particular. The availability of resources coming forward as part of the Hinkley Point C project was welcomed, as was the linking of the English coastal path and routes and signage which would bring this into the heart of Bridgwater via the River Parrett. Members noted the summary of the town's tourism priorities which were fully supported.

**RESOLVED:** That the outcomes be noted and pursued as effectively as possible.

**97/16 REPORT OF THE MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE (27/03/17):**

The decisions and recommendations arising from the meeting held on 27/03/17 (attached as an appendix) were circulated and introduced by the Chairman - Cllr Loveridge. He praised, again, the outstanding work of the volunteers with the Museum now open again. Some concerns had been highlighted about future staffing roles, and plans for 2017 in hand to give this publicity and to encourage more volunteer support.

**RESOLVED:** That the Report be noted and approved.

**98/16 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (29/03/17):**

The decisions and recommendations arising from the meeting held on 29/03/17 (attached as an appendix) were circulated and introduced by the Chairman - Cllr Smedley and the Town Clerk. In approving the Report, particular note was taken of the review of grants process carried out by the Working Group, and Min 28 dealing with the Audit of Accounts 2016/17, in particular the action which would figure in the Intermediate Review response, and Min 29 the report of the Internal Auditor.

**RESOLVED:** That the Report be noted and approved.

**99/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (09/03/17):**

i. Forward Plan 2016/17 (Tracker) (Min 83/16i) - Relevant items were referred elsewhere on the Agenda. It was noted that the Environmental Report to be led by Cllr Ms Pearce, had been reprogrammed to a later date. Cllr Lerry confirmed that work was progressing with the Chamber of Commerce with the prospect of a Bridgwater Trades Delegation attending with colleagues in Bridgwater's twin town of Proverno, Italy.

- ii. Eastover Ward (Min 77/16) - the Town Clerk confirmed that four nominations had been confirmed for candidates standing in the Eastover Ward By-election.
- iii. Bridgwater Hospital - Mary Stanley Unit (Min 83/16iii) - members noted that the Bridgwater Trades Union Council had held an emergency meeting to discuss this issue, and were fully supportive of a campaign as discussed at the previous meeting.
- iv. Twenty MPH Road Speed Limit for All School Locations (Min 90/16) - Cllr Smedley had circulated and provided copies of the reply from County Cllr David Fothergill, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, setting out in detail the various issues. Members agreed to continue support for the campaign with the backing of the Transport Forum.
- v. Bridgwater Food Bank (Min 80/16) - members agreed to support the worth of the Bridgwater Food Bank, endorse their work in the community and support negotiations for a continuing location in the Town Centre, ideally on the existing site.
- vi. EDF/HPC and North Bridgwater Junction Improvements (Min 83/16ii) - the Town Clerk and Cllr Loveridge updated members on further progress with the junctions, and the prospect of a programme review with a likely further reduction in the length of the programme to completion. This weekly process continued to keep the pressure on EDF and contractors.
- vii. Bristol Road Land - Licensed to Wessex Water Authority (Min 89/16.4) - members were reminded that an extension to the licence had been agreed at the last meeting. Members agreed that the Town Clerk should follow up the Wessex Water Authority enquiry, as to whether the hardcore laid in the compound area should be left in-situ subject to any necessary consents.
- viii. Bridgwater Summer Event "Fuse" and Bridgwater Cultural Partners (Min 89/16) - members noted that Fuse were putting together a programme of events for the Town Centre for "Bridgwater QuaySide Festival" on 29/07/17. Members noted an anticipated application through the BCP for support for the involvement of local organisations from the funding of £7k set aside to support a town event. Fuse had also enquired whether the Town Hall might be available as a wet weather venue.

**100/16 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS;**

**RESOLVED:** That the payments, including section 137 payments made during February (month 11 - as submitted to the Finance Committee) and March (month

12) itemising all cheques and DDRs and receipts, be approved and confirmed and specific income received during the period together with the cost centre reports and bank reconciliations and investments be noted.

**101/16 YOUTH UNLIMITED AND ROLLERCOASTER (Min 84/16):**

The Town Clerk reported that together with the company the Youth Working Group had met with the Somerset Youth Service, and set up arrangements for a three year funding agreement which would provide at least part of the matched funding to work in conjunction with the BTC funding offered within the extended contract thereby ensuring the continuation of the Youth Club. This would support one evening per week, and subject to all conditions being met and the regular reporting processes being satisfactory, provide £11,400 over the three year period. The Town Council had also been invited to affiliate with Somerset Youth and Community Service which offered the possibility of providing access to a wider range of services etc.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposal be approved and the agreement be entered into alongside the renewed YULCIC Contract and the Town Council affiliate to the Somerset Youth and Community Service as invited.

**102/16 BRIDGWATER TIDAL BARRIER - FOLLOW UP MEETING WITH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION:**

The Meeting followed the announcement of the chosen site location (site 5) and the type of barrier (two vertical lift gates). The IWA explained their concerns related to the water penning issues and that it appeared the gates would not be provided with penstocks initially and the environmental impact assessment would not cover other than standard operational use of the barrier. It was understood SDC planned to meet in June to deal with the barrier matters. As a consequence, a series of steps were agreed in line with the BTC objective to secure “future proofing” which would take into account the IWA concerns and enable representations to SDC and the Environment Agency. Members supported the proposals as the way forward but recorded their disappointment at the outcome of the consultations with members expressing the view that the cheapest option was always most likely to go forward.

**103/16 COLLEY LANE LINK ROAD:**

Members noted that the Bridgwater Transportation Infrastructure Board had examined a number of major projects and in respect of the Colley Lane link road, identified a shortfall in the financing projections. Given the competitive nature of recent civil roadworks contracts, there was some thought that there may yet be some reduction in the budgeted figures. It seemed likely that any announcement of decision following the tender process would be left until after the election of the new County Council.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That notwithstanding this, the Town Council seek an explanation of the current situation in terms of shortfall in financing and delivery timescales;
2. that Alyn Jones, as the responsible Director, be invited to attend the next meeting to update members; and
3. to pursue the request from the Town Council for representation on the Infrastructure Board.

*(Cllr Loveridge declared an interest as a member of the Regulation Board and left the room during consideration of this item.)*

**104/16 MOTION:**

**Duly submitted in accordance with Standing Orders: “Fracking” - proposed by Cllr Brian Smedley and seconded by Cllr Kathy Pearce.**

“This Council recognise that areas of Somerset have been licensed for on-shore, unconventional oil and gas development which could include the process of fracking. Unless and until these activities can be shown to have a “social licence to operate” and that the consensus of scientific peer reviewed evidence indicates that they can be carried out without risk to public health, without risk to the environment, without risk to water contamination, without risk to our rural economy, and further that the industry as a whole can meet the three tests set by the Government’s Committee on Climate Change, the Parish of Bridgwater is resolved to be a “Frack-free Zone”.”

**RESOLVED:** That the motion as proposed and seconded be approved and adopted and taken forward as the policy of the Bridgwater Town Council in relation to Fracking.

**105/16 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 06/04/17 (agenda item 13), and decisions taken as follows:

**Decisions:**

1. Town Hall Defibrillator - the necessary consents had been cleared to proceed, the defibrillator can now be obtained as sourced - **Resolved:** that the Town Council proceed with the provision of the defibrillator in the agreed location

on the Town Hall front wall, alongside the main entrance.

2. Public Space Protection Orders - consultation by SDC - **Resolved:** that the Town Council support the implementation of the new orders and transfer of existing locations based on the evidence presented through multi-agency ASB meetings, Town Centre issues and the regular contact with police.

3. CIM Bids - the Town Clerk confirmed that agreements were being completed for the successful bids in relation to the North Petherton/South Bridgwater/Hamp/Town Centre/Cranleigh Gardens safer cycle route, and the Town Centre support and refurbishment. Cllr Loveridge requested that possibilities for noise insulation measures in respect of properties on the main corridors A39 and A38 through the Town should be explored through CIM and alternative sources - **Resolved:** that payment of the first account towards design costs of the cycling route be confirmed and the Town Clerk authorised to make payments in accordance with the schedule currently being finalised for the agreed contributions.

**For Information:**

Items 1 - 17 as circulated.

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm

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Signed            Chairman