

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

**HELD ON THURSDAY 06 AUGUST 2015 AT 7.30PM
AT THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER**

PRESENT: Cllr LP Redman (Mayor – in the Chair), Cllrs M Cresswell, AM Glassford, P Johnstone, Ms L Levy, M Lerry, DP Loveridge, AJ Moore, Mrs PM Morley, Ms K Pearce, D Rodrigues, BD Smedley, J Turner (JP) and Ms S Wilson

Apologies: Cllrs Ms Brown, and Granter

20/15 PUBLIC SPEAKING (adjournment):

Mr David Preece spoke in relation to three matters:

1. Public Speaking - questioning where this was applied in the Agenda in terms of the agenda and public speaking guidance;
2. The application of the six month rule in relation to properties registered as Community Assets; and
3. The cost invoice for a Freedom of Information request where he had not been advised of the cost in advance.

The Town Clerk responded confirming the BTC practice in relation to public speaking and the Agenda; acknowledging the six month rule (which Cllr Smedley subsequently expanded upon); and offering an apology for non-advice in advance of the cost of the FOI which had taken longer to research than anticipated.

21/15 AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS (Min 18/15.5):

Members received a presentation from Esther Carter, Housing Project Development Officer, and Allison Griffin, Corporate Director, in relation to affordable housing needs.

Ms Carter explained the activities of the Housing Team and the way in which these had grown with the impact of house price rises. Research was based on various surveys and she outlined the schemes with which the Affordable Housing Team were concerned designed to help those in need. Through the Enabling Team, accommodation in various sectors at affordable prices was secured, some in collaboration with other Local Authorities. The presentation would be circulated by email.

Mrs Griffin expanded further on the housing need in the district, impacts on families resulting from benefit changes, and the targets in housing provision

which the District Council had set. This included a number of specific sites within the Town where support through the EDF/HPC finance was playing a major role in bringing forward provision. Both Esther and Allison dealt with questions raised by members commenting in particular on provision of housing by Local Authorities, traditionally, and over recent years, and Parker Morris standards.

22/15 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11/06/15:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11/06/15 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

23/15 POLICE REPORT:

Police representation was not in attendance but members requested that concerns about anti-social behaviour at the Docks, including over-night camping, should be raised. Ward members confirmed their involvement with police and collective actions which were being pursued.

24/15 COMMUNITY ASSETS WORKING GROUP - MEETING HELD 07/07/15:

Cllr Smedley, the Chairman of the Working Group, gave members an update on the issues discussed, including the Hope Inn, the subject of a recent Planning decision, and the Magistrate's Court where addition to the Community Asset Register had been refused. A planning application in respect of this site was expected shortly and was being progressed with local involvement. Following representations from the Bridgwater and District Civic Society several other buildings had been suggested for addition to the Community Assets Register and background information was being investigated so that these properties could be further considered. Cllr Smedley expanded on the issue raised by Mr David Preece in respect of the six month rule and the opportunity this afforded where a property was added to the Community Asset Register for community engagement and to give the community the opportunity to mobilise a bid.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

25/15 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (15/07/15):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 15/07/15 (attached as an appendix) had been circulated and were introduced by the Chairman, Cllr John Turner.

Cllr Turner and the Town Clerk confirmed the position in relation to Twinning Grants and to the general Grant approved for the part-rental at Bristol Road for the Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee. The latter would be reviewed in

future years.

RESOLVED: That the report be approved and adopted.

(Cllr Smedley declared an interest in respect of Grants related to Twinning, where these involved Bridgwater International; and Cllr Johnson in respect of the Homburg twinning, took no part in the consideration and did not vote thereon.)

26/15 FORWARD PLAN 2015/16 (TRACKER):

Members received an update on the Forward Plan progress in relation to creation of forums and dates for prospective meetings including circulation of copies of the Forward Plan Tracker for 2015/16. Mention was made particularly in relation to the Town Development Forum on 12/08/15; Town Hall Inspection and Town Hall Working Party on 11/08/15; Twinning Forum on 25/08/15; Town Centre Walkabout and EDF/HPC Working Party on 26/08/15; and Transport Forum on 16/09/15. Progress was noted in each area of activity.

27/15 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS:

RESOLVED: That the payments, including Section 137 payments made during June and July (months 3 and 4) as circulated be approved and confirmed, and income received during the period together with the Cost Centre reports and bank reconciliations be noted.

28/15 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (11/06/15):

- i. **Engine Room - Extension and Refurbishment Project - Party Wall (Min 15/15i)** - work underway on site with a further report to follow;
- ii. **EDF/HPC Working Party and Meetings on Traffic Schemes (Min 15/15ii)** - Members were given an update following the re-opening of St Mary Street/Taunton Road and interim completion of the works. As reported in Min 26/15 above, a meeting of the Working Party had been arranged to consider Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) bids and other outstanding and related matters.

29/15 NORTHGATE AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT FORUM (Min 18/15.iv and Min 26/15 above):

Members noted that the first issue for the TDF would be the Northgate site and were advised of the amended Resolution in relation to Northgate as passed by SDC. Advice was also given on the delegate list and the search by SCC for an additional primary school need – for which part of the Northgate site offered a possibility.

RESOLVED: That the following resolution be noted leading to further consideration:

"1. Officers continue to develop proposals to facilitate market interest in the development potential of Northgate and to continue dialogue and discussions with SCC and BTC;

2. A new Landowner Agreement be entered into with SCC, the details of which shall be reported back for agreement to a future Executive, by the end of September 2015;

3. A budget of up to £50,000 to allow the appointment of external property advice (jointly with SCC) on a call-off basis as may be required - this to be funded from the Community Development Fund;

4. A detailed project plan, including a Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan, be prepared by the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Leader by the end of August 2015;

5. Any further discussions with developers should be based on leisure and recreation and the preservation of historical buildings and green space."

30/15 BRIDGWATER PARISH CLUSTER GROUP MEETING - 24/06/15:

Members noted the meeting of the Cluster Group, which had included a presentation in relation to the Bridgwater Bay Tidal Lagoon and developing proposals. Members awaited further information on progress.

31/15 TOWN HALL RE-DECORATION PROGRAMME:

The Town Clerk reported the excellent progress being made in the re-decoration of the main Town Hall and Theatre. This had presented the opportunity to examine closely the mural above the stage in order to assess the worth of cleaning and restoration. A professional report on the condition and options had a quotation had been obtained.

The Town Clerk explained the advice and the benefits of removing the individual panels which made up the mural so that the cleaning and restoration could be undertaken off-site. A minor addition to the scaffolding, whilst still in place, would enable removal for the works, estimated to take three to four weeks.

RESOLVED: That in view of the specialist nature of the works to be undertaken, including removal, cleaning, stripping of varnish, repairing holes and damaged edges, re-touching and re-colouring, varnishing and re-installing, the quotation received from House of Talbot in sum of £4,600 plus VAT be accepted and the work undertaken immediately whilst the re-decoration programme proceeds to completion.

32/15 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 30/07/15 (agenda item 10) and decisions taken as follows:

Decisions:

1. **The Together Team - East Bridgwater:-** launch event 15/09/15 (details circulated) - invitation confirmed for Kristy Blackwell SDC Lead Officer to attend Town Council Meeting on 24/09/15 to outline scheme progress and ambitions - **RESOLVED:** That these arrangements be noted, together with the draft communication and media protocol as now issued;
2. **Bridgwater Town Evacuation Plan** - retail guidance and plans for table-top exercise in October 2015 - **RESOLVED:** That the exercise to test the resilience of the Plan be supported and the follow-up planning meeting on 11/08/15 noted;
3. **Bridgwater Heritage Regeneration Partnership (BHRP)** - **RESOLVED:** That the meeting held on 30/06/15 and decisions be noted;
4. **Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)** - invitation to Town Council to join - **RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adhere to their previous decision and do not take up the membership, although the Town Clerk continue enquiries as to the level of membership fee applicable;
5. **Grant Applications 2015/16** - **RESOLVED:** That the applications from Hamp Community Association for core funding in the sum of £10,000, and from the Hamp Community Association for project funding in the sum of £5,000 be approved;
6. **SDC Statement of Gambling Policy 2016-2019 (consultation)** - **RESOLVED:** That copies of the consultation document be circulated for members examination with a view to consideration at the next Town Council Meeting to respond to the consultation by end date of 12/10/15.

For Information:

Items 1 - 12 as circulated - noted.

The meeting finished at 8.25 pm

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Signed Chairman