

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 09 JANUARY 2014 AT 7.30PM
AT THE BURGESS ROOM TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER

PRESENT: Cllr DP Loveridge (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), Cllrs SB Austen, D Baker, AM Glassford, MJ Lerry, AJ Moore, KF Richards, Mrs GJ Slocombe, IC Tucker, and J Turner (JP)

Apologies: Cllrs Granter, Monteith, Redman and Smedley

46/13 YMCA ACCESS FM RADIO (104.2) (Min 34/13):

Mr Tom Copestake, Station Co-ordinator addressed the Council giving a background to the establishment of the Community Radio Station, generally working in an 8 mile radius of Bridgwater, and outlining the origins of the joint application with the Engine Room and the grant of the licence. The station set out with five main strands aimed at the targeted audience and were now looking to broaden their activities with more direct community work in specialist areas such as primary and secondary schools and targeted outside broadcasts. Some 28 volunteers supported the station's activities, 41% under 18, and 72% male but were looking to broaden the age and gender range percentages. Roughly 50% of broadcasts was new material. The first year had cost some £34k with support from the YMCA in particular where the station was based but was likely to be more costly going forward as the range of broadcasts was extended. An initial application for support funding to the Town Council had been declined, although it was hoped that this could be reviewed. The licence terms prevented advertising revenue and therefore funding had to be obtained from other sources.

47/13 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPRESENTATIVES VISIT TO CHINA AND FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT SHANDONG PROVINCE (Min 44/13ii):

Mr Steve Leahy, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, gave a report on the visit to the Peoples' Republic of China and Shandong Province. This had been set up through the Cultural Exchange in company with representatives of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and as part of a trade delegation, particularly exploring markets and opportunities in the beer, cider and spirit industries. There had been particular interest in the cider making processes and opportunities. Mr Leahy described the business opportunities, and the ways particular to the Chinese, in which those could be developed. Although the Chamber representatives had focussed on Bridgwater this was as part of the wider association with the South West essential, for example, when population ratios were factored.

A direct result of the visit was likely to be the development of two factories in the Bridgwater area; at least one of the other participants had been offered facilities to develop a production unit in Shandong.

The letter provided by the Mayor had been well received and a preliminary Friendship Exchange offering to explore long term opportunities had been completed. Mr Leahy made a presentation to the Mayor marking the Friendship Exchange. It was expected that further exchanges would take place in the coming months and to the similar festival next year with the backing of the Chinese government; this was essential. It was particularly relevant at this time with the likely involvement of Chinese investment in relation to Hinkley and the emphasis this may place of contracts and the desire to maintain a developing work on the local supply chain opportunities. Members acknowledged the Friendship Agreement, the ground rules laid down and the plaque.

Members asked that any follow up visits should be reported back fully and elected members at all levels kept fully appraised.

48/13 POLICING IN BRIDGWATER (Min 32/13):

PCSO Dan Wheller was in attendance and outlined matters with which the force had been concerned in the past few weeks. This included road traffic initiatives aimed at younger drivers, continuing issues with vehicles using New Road and the still outstanding issues in the Fore Street pedestrianised section. Over Christmas the night time economy had generally produced little problem although some issues were still of concern, particularly the College Rag Day, later into the evening.

PCSO Wheller also introduced the appointment of the new District Inspector, Inspector Andrew Pritchard. With the planned move early in 2014 to Express Park, local officers were still seeking a Town Centre location. The Town Clerk confirmed that contact had been made with Inspector Pritchard and an early meeting was planned upon which the latter would be a key agenda item.

49/13 EDF HPC – COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORT FORUMS:

The Town Clerk gave a brief update on the progress with HPC since the “Strike Price” agreement. Plans of improvements at Sandford Corner and, more importantly, the Taunton Road/Broadway junction had been received but had not progressed further. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Environment Agency had begun the generic design assessment on new nuclear reactors. The Town Council had supported representations to ensure that activities on all three sites at Hinkley - decommissioning of A, operation of B and construction of C – were fully co-ordinated to minimise the impact of activities on local communities and the highway network. Assurances had been received.

50/13 MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 07/11/13 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

51/13 REPORT OF THE MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE (18/11/13):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 18/11/13 (attached as an appendix) had been circulated. As a consequence of recent flooding in Blake Gardens and St Saviours Avenue, representations had been followed up with SDC (Phil Perkins) about the consequences of the removal of the flap on the outfall of the Durleigh Brook into the River Parrett.

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

52/13 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (19/11/13):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 19/11/13 (attached as an appendix) had been circulated and were introduced by the Chairman, Cllr John Turner.

Mrs Slocombe commented on the appreciation of users of the shower chair at Trinity pool, grant aided by the Town Council.

Cllr Turner made particular reference to Min 18 in relation to the budget and setting of the precept.

RESOLVED: That the report be approved and adopted.

53/13 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15:

Based on the Report of the Finance Committee (Min 18) and the information supplied in relation to the tax base and the anticipated shortfall grant, members were recommended to accept the principle of a continuation budget and to submit a precept requirement at the

same level as the past three years. This would enable a detailed budget to be prepared by Cost Centre, and taking account of the precept, the level of grant, anticipated income and, if necessary, a small reservation from balances to be submitted for detailed consideration by the Finance Committee at a meeting to be arranged.

RESOLVED: That the principle of a continuation budget be adopted and budget and estimates finalised on this basis setting a Town Council precept of 49.80 per band D for 2014/15 (the same level as 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14) – securing funding from the billing authority billing £529,139 being precept £437,534 and grant £91,606; and that a meeting of the Finance Committee be arranged to approve the detailed budget and estimates.

54/13 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS:

RESOLVED:

That the payments, including the Section 137 payments, made during November and December (months 8 and 9) as circulated, be approved and confirmed, and income received during the period together with Cost Centre Reports be noted.

55/13 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES :

- i. **Youth Services** (Min 39/13i) – The Town Clerk reported on a further meeting of the Sedgemoor Community Youth Forum and gave an update on the exercise to map current provision in and around the Town. Following a further meeting with Jeff Brown, a draft proposal had been submitted for consideration by the Town Council in the light of changes to service, effective from the end of March which illustrated how a gap in youth provision working out of the Roller-Coaster might be covered. This would involve the Town Council acting as purveyor to support the transition of delivery away from the Somerset County Council management. This would also offer the ability to assist the development of a strategic approach to youth provision across the Town.

RESOLVED: That the proposals in the paper be approved in principle and referred to the Finance Committee to determine the role and involvement of the Town Council with invitation to Geoff Brown to attend at the meeting.

- ii. **Town Hall** (Min 37/13) – The Town Clerk gave an update on the items covered in the previous report of the Working Party, confirming that work would start on the redecoration of the foyers and stairwells in February, and that work in progress was reviewing the sound equipment and the outdated intercom system.
- iii. **Post Office Relocation** (Min 40/13) – Arrangements were in hand for the official opening of the Post Office in Eastover on Friday 17/01/14 at 11.00 am.
- iv. **New Hospital Birthing Unit** (Min 44/13i) – Members were delighted to hear that representations had been successful and the new Unit was to be named “The Mary Stanley Midwifery-led Unit”.

56/13 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT CATTLE MARKET AND BRISTOL ROAD LANDS (Min 41/13) AND HOUSING GUILD RESIDENTIAL APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES (DRAFT) EAST OF A38 BRISTOL ROAD, BRIDGWATER:

The Town Clerk reported that the Planning Application for 200 units on the old Cattle Market site had been approved subject to various conditions and requirements. Major concerns remained about access which for the specific development included ingress via lower Bath Road as well as access onto and from Bristol Road. Following representations the draft DB and DP was being substantially revised. It was hoped that there would be a presentation on

this to the Planning Panel on 16/01/14 to which all members were invited. Members noted that further discussion with the Council's Agent about the impact and options to take the Town Council development interest forward, would then proceed.

57/13 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014/15:

RESOLVED: That the draft calendar for 2014/15 be approved, noting that further amendments may be required before the calendar is finalised.

58/13 MAYORAL ITEMS:

The Mayor thanked all those members who had attended the successful sponsorship day at the Bridgwater and Albion Rugby Club. Members noted that a reservation had been made for the sponsorship of the Bridgwater Cricket Club versus Weston-Super-Mare fixture on 21/06/14.

On the Saturday it had been suggested that the Town Council should take a sponsorship board at each of the three main sporting venues as a lasting mark of the Town Council's support.

RESOLVED: That sponsorship boards be obtained at the Rugby, Football and Cricket Clubs contained within budget.

59/13 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 02/01/14 (Agenda item 12) and decisions taken as follows:

Decisions:

1. Christmas Lights and Snowflakes and Shopping – **RESOLVED:** That following another successful year, the contract be re-tendered subject to budget for a five year term and the possibility of restoring a Christmas tree outside of the Cornhill be re-examined;
2. Bridgwater Challenge: Celebration Mile Feasibility Study – **RESOLVED:** That noting the close ties with the recently adopted Eastover SPD a presentation to members on the CMFS be arranged with the object of pursuing what is achievable;
3. John Kendall Tapestry: Mayor 1469: St Mary's Church – **RESOLVED:** That the tapestry which has been erected on the wall at back of the Corporation Pews be gifted to St Mary's Church as part of the process of securing a faculty;
4. BRI – Town Team – **RESOLVED:** That the possibility of Town Council sponsorship of a trader or retail award in Bridgwater town at the Sedgemoor Awards be explored for the 2014 event within the available budget;
5. North East Bridgwater Primary Academy Consultation – **RESOLVED:** That the representation submitted by Cllr Lerry be endorsed by the Town Council;
6. Hamp Post Office, Allen Road – **RESOLVED:** That no comment be offered on the welcomed planned changes;
7. A Draft Vision for the Somerset Levels and Moors – **RESOLVED:** That no adverse comment be offered; but acknowledge may help effort to combat extremes of flooding and EA response.

8. Western Power Distribution: Invitation to the Stakeholder Workshop on the WPD Business Plan 2015/2023 – **RESOLVED:** That the Council be not represented;
9. SASP: Development of programme for disability bowls in Somerset – **RESOLVED:** That the request for equipment to support the initiative be noted and referred as appropriate;
10. Grant Applications and Ward Grant Applications – **RESOLVED:** That the application from the Arts Centre be referred to the Finance Committee for decision.

For information:

Items 1/23 as circulated – noted.

60/13 EXEMPT ITEMS – exclusion of Press and Public:

RESOLVED: That the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of business recorded in Minutes 61, 62 and 63/13 on the grounds that this would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

61/13 46 HIGH STREET, BRIDGWATER (REFLECTIONS) PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE:

The Town Clerk reported on the request from the present lessee to assign the lease and the steps being undertaken to verify the prospective tenants.

RESOLVED: That subject to the satisfactory outcome of reference checks, one or other of the options for the assignment be approved for the remainder of the lease term on the current terms and conditions, subject to confirmation by the Town Clerk, Mayor and Chairman of the Finance Committee.

62/13 34 HIGH STREET, BRIDGWATER – FUTURE USE OF ROOMS ABOVE AND ROOMS TO THE REAR OF THE TOWN HALL:

The Town Clerk reported interest in additional accommodation from the lessee of 34 High Street and, as reported earlier, an in-town location for a satellite police office.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be requested to follow up the interests to secure best use of the accommodation and meet the requirements of the Town Council and other interested parties subject to terms and conditions being agreed and referred to the Mayor and Chairman of the Finance Committee for confirmation.

63/13 THE BRIDGWATER CUP 2013:

RESOLVED:

1. That having considered the worthy merits of eligible nominations, the Cup be awarded to Keith and Margaret Robinson in recognition of their services to the people and community of Bridgwater through their long standing major roles within the Bridgwater Pantomime Society productions over the many years; that a presentation on the most suitable occasion be arranged; and
2. that members recognise the work of others nominated and their invaluable support to the community, and all nominees be thanked for their submissions.

The Meeting finished at 9.23 pm:

Signed

Chairman

