

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

**HELD ON THURSDAY 06 MARCH 2014 AT 7.30PM
AT THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER**

PRESENT: Cllr DP Loveridge (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), Cllrs SB Austen, DL Baker, AM Glassford, GJ Granter, MJ Lerry, WJ Monteith, AJ Moore, Mrs PM Morley, LP Redman, KF Richards, Mrs GJ Slocombe, BD Smedley, IC Tucker, and J Turner (JP)

Apology: Cllr Parker

64/13 POLICING IN BRIDGWATER:

Members were introduced to Neighbourhood Inspector Andy Pritchard who had taken over responsibility for the Division, including the town of Bridgwater. Inspector Pritchard was accompanied by Sergeant Chris Walls, Acting Town Centre Sergeant whilst Sergeant Elaine Linham played a leading role in the flooding emergencies, and PC Dave Scofield. Inspector Pritchard gave a brief summary of his career which now sees him taking over the Neighbourhood Inspector's role and outlined his key aims in terms of focusing on the fear of crime, providing accessibility and transparency with a concentration on local issues. He then outlined the key responsibilities over the recent period with the extra commitment through the emergency response to the flooding issues which, thankfully, was now moving from a response to a recovery phase. This was bringing with it additional challenges not least in protecting properties which had been subject to flooding. Inspector Pritchard outlined changes which might be expected over the next twelve months with the move to Express Park, which would lead to a staggered move of the different groups and departments, it was most likely that the local office would remain in Northgate until the end of the year. Action was now in hand to relocate to a local office, possibly at the SDC offices, to maintain, as promised, a beat force in the town centre. All these changes were likely to see the biggest change in 20 years of policing but with the opportunity of introducing significant time and resource savings through centralising offence charging. He was keen to work with local councillors and invited any to join and take part in any beat or police operation with a promised visit to the new police facility in due course.

PC Scofield then outlined the issues aside from the flooding emergency, which had been of particular concern in recent weeks. This highlighted the Bridgwater Retail Park and the securing of the gates, measures to combat offences by young drivers including speeding utilising CCTV and road traffic units, problems of rough sleepers, street drinking with the prospect of at least two ASBOs fairly soon, and, recently, action against mainstream drugs from outside the area culminating in the arrest of three persons.

Members then relayed various issues affecting different parts of the town including the Sydenham Estate, young drivers' activities in High Street and other parts of the town. The officers also responded to the recent Mercury headline emphasising the difference in detection rates and crime prevention measures rather than statistics gathered over a two year period on a national basis. The Mayor, emphasising comments made by Cllr Mrs Morley, thanked the Officers and the Force for their response to and support for all those affected by the major flooding problems.

65/13 PUBLIC SPEAKING:

i. **Ex-Magistrate's Court and Community Assets** – Ms Glen Burrows, on behalf of the Bridgwater and District Civic Society – addressed the Council - drawing on a letter submitted by the President HA Derek Gibson to Sedgemoor District Council seeking action to retain the Magistrate's Court building, a listed building of stature. In this context she drew attention to the community right to bid and aside from the Court House identified the Friends' Meeting House and the Hope Inn as other buildings where listing and protection as community assets would be appropriate. Members agreed to follow this up later in the meeting by considering the copy letter about the ex-Magistrate's Court house building.

ii. **Youth Provision in Bridgwater and the RollerCoaster** - a group of young people, Keiran Baker, Joshua Barrett, Kayy Chapman and Troy Baker spoke in support of the action planned by the Town Council to ensure future youth provision in Bridgwater, in particular the RollerCoaster, following the declared intention of the County Council to cease direct provision at 31/03/14. The young people explained the services presently provided at the RollerCoaster, the roles that each performed, some as Activators, in addition to being members of the respective clubs and the significant contribution from that provision for young people in the area. The members noted these representations and agreed that these would be taken into account in forming a specification for future provision following on from the transitional funding offered by SCC which the Town Council had agreed to take forward.

66/13 MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 09/01/14 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

67/13 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (09/01/14):

i. **Development Brief and Design Principles (draft) East of A38, Bristol Road and Housing Guild Proposed Development at Cattle Market (Min 56/13)** - Cllr Mrs Slocombe drew attention to the Public Meeting which had been convened by Mr Bob Cudlipp, a local resident, on 21/02/14 held at the Bridgwater and Albion Rugby Club in relation to the matter of the consultation of

the Development Brief and Design Principles. This Meeting had been attended by several members of the Town Council and the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk confirmed that the proceedings, with the agreement of those present had been recorded. Mrs Slocombe read a transcript of part of the Meeting and based on this complained that inaccurate comments had been made by Cllr Austen. She pointed out that notwithstanding what had been said, she – alone - had voted against the proposal at the Development Committee of SDC when the application by the Housing Guild had been dealt with. There was a brief exchange of view before the meeting moved on to next business.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council views, as previously determined, and confirmed by the Planning Panel, would be submitted also following up those from the Public Meeting. From the Public Meeting it had been anticipated that there would not be a single response but that a number of individuals would respond to the consultation questionnaire.

68/13 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (19/02/14):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the Meeting held on 19/02/14 (attached as an appendix) had been circulated and were introduced by the Chairman Cllr John Turner.

In accordance with Min 53/13 the Finance Committee had received and approved the detailed budget report and estimates.

Members noted in particular funding for provision for twinning initiatives which would be considered as an item and follow-up paper later in the meeting, various funding, grants and sponsorship decisions and the plan to provide a christmas tree outside on the Cornhill in 2014.

RESOLVED: That the report be approved and adopted.

(Cllr Smedley declared an interest in twinning and matters relating thereto, took no part in the discussion and did not vote thereon)

69/13 DETAILED BUDGET PAPER 2014/15 AND APPROVED PRECEPT (Min 53/13):

Following approval of the detailed budget by the Finance Committee, the Town Clerk submitted the summary estimates (by category) for 2014/15 which would appear in the Budget Book normally produced by SDC which also would show the income streams and the figure £8,470 secured from reserves to achieve a balanced budget.

RESOLVED: That the Budget Paper and supporting documents for the detailed budget be endorsed and confirmed.

70/13 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS:

RESOLVED: That the payments, including Section 137 payments, made during January and February (months 10 and 11) as circulated, be approved and confirmed and income received during the period together with the Cost Centre Reports be noted.

71/13 YOUTH SERVICES (Min 55/13i and 65/13ii):

The Town Clerk referred to the previous reports on Youth Service provision including consideration by the Finance Committee and advised that the application for the transitional funding at £40k had been completed. From this position it would be necessary to complete a specification drawing on current practice and examples, to obtain applications from potential suppliers of a service at the RollerCoaster to operate as soon as possible after the SCC withdrawal from direct provision. Transitional funding was designed to ensure that provision was maintained across the town and by effectively closing the expected gap in youth provision working out of the RollerCoaster would draw on the existing models elsewhere and provide a model for future provision across the town if this became necessary. It was still apparent that a commitment from the Town Council would be required beyond the transitional phase to maintain provision across the town. In this context, it was emphasised that youth provision in other locations was already identified within the Town Council budget. It was recommended that a small working group be nominated to complete the specification drawing on current practice and securing input from local users.

RESOLVED: That a Working Group comprised of the Mayor, Cllrs Baker, Redman and Tucker, together with the Town Clerk, be appointed to take this forward with input from the young people, to meet as soon as possible and with power to act in order to get the service up and running with a suitable provider.

72/13 TOWN HALL (Min 55/13ii):

The redecoration of the foyer and stairwells in both parts of the building had been completed. Carpets and floor coverings, where necessary, would next be replaced and in the meantime quotations had been obtained for the redecoration of the Charter Hall and the Burgess Room. Similarly, a ballpark figure for the redecoration of the Main Hall, although implementation would be particularly dependent on the programme of bookings and events, was also awaited.

73/13 SEDGEMOOR BUSINESS AWARDS - BTC SPONSORSHIP AWARD FOR INDEPENDENT TRADER/RETAILER OF THE YEAR (Min 59/13iv):

The Award in association with the BRI-Town Team aimed at town centre

businesses was included in the forthcoming Awards presentation. Significant interest had been generated for the Award to be presented by the Mayor on 20/03/14. Some places at the Award Ceremony may be available and information would be circulated.

74/13 SOMERSET LEVELS RELIEF FUND - ROYAL BATH & WEST SOCIETY:

The Town Clerk reported the letter from the leader of SCC seeking support from for the fund set up by the Royal Bath & West Society (SLRF) launched in 2013 to provide self help funding towards dredging and other flood prevention measures on the Levels. The Finance Committee, on behalf of the Council, had gifted £5,000 from the Grants Budget to support the flood victims via the Somerset Emergency Flood Relief Programme, with grants administered and managed by the Somerset Community Foundation. Members agreed that any further support, of whatever nature, should be deferred pending the submission of and approval of the 20 year Action Plan.

The Town Clerk indicated that a number of suggestions and funding support for victims had come forward and been passed on and the Mayor read a letter from the Mayor of Uherske Hradiste offering sympathy to the victims and a helping hand in whatever form might be of assistance.

Members acknowledged the Mayor's letter and a suitable response.

75/13 ANNUAL MEETING AND MAYOR MAKING 16/05/14:

Members discussed detailed arrangements for the Mayor Making meeting following a draft paper circulated.

RESOLVED: That the agenda and programme be prepared as now agreed.

76/13 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 27/02/14 (agenda item 10) and decisions taken as follows:

Decisions:

1. First Bus Fare Consultation Across West of England - **RESOLVED:** That no formal decision be made on behalf of the Council but members encouraged to use the online consultation running until 16/03/14;

2. Bridgwater Challenge: Celebration Mile Feasibility Study and Town Bridge - **RESOLVED:** That the Town Council support for the project be endorsed ensuring that individual elements are achievable and in this context given the proposed refurbishment works to the Town Bridge, the Council push for a lighting programme (with lights at a low level) being included and conceptionally contributing to the Celebration Mile and its objectives;
3. Ex-Magistrate's Court House Building, Northgate - **RESOLVED:** That the Town Council note the current position and the presentation to the Planning Panel due from the prospective developers of the Police Station, support the call for the Court House Building to be secured and a suitable user identified and in this context and having regard to Min 65/13 above, a Working Group comprising Cllrs Austen, Mrs Morley, Mrs Slocombe and Smedley, and a Civic Society representative be established to explore in the context of the future of the Court House Building, registration of Community Assets and Community Right to Buy;
4. Publication Project, Sketch Book of Bridgwater - **RESOLVED:** That the suggestion as per the example circulated and the provisional quotation be noted and referred to the Finance Committee for more detailed consideration in due course;
5. Grant Applications - **RESOLVED:** That the following Grant applications be approved – i Horsey Pavilion (North East Bridgwater Playing Pitches and Management - furniture fitting out) £2,495 subject to the Town Council receiving an invitation to be represented on the Management Committee; ii Westfield Church (roof) £2,500; iii 65 (Bridgwater and District) Squadron Royal Air Force Cadets (communication equipment) £450; iv ACTS Theatre Group (production 2014/15) referred to Finance Committee for approval of £2,500 in next financial year;
6. Ward Grant Applications - **RESOLVED:** That the following Ward Grants be approved – i Eastover - T-stop Cafe toilets for public use - revised to £462 excluding vat; and ii Westover – Arts Centre - provision of a public signboard in the Town Centre - £1,000;
7. Reverend Charles Chadwick - **RESOLVED:** That a suitable memento be obtained to be presented to Reverend Chadwick on his vacation of post of Vicar of the Parish of St Mary, anticipated in early May.

For Information:

Items 1 - 15 as circulated - noted.

77/13 BRIDGWATER INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME 2014 AND TWINNING POTENTIALS:

Arising from Min 68/13 above and the additional paper on town twinning, the Council examined the budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and the allocations to the individual groups. As a consequence of the twinning review members **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Grant aid to each twinning group - £300 annually - be continued with each twinning run through its own organisation;
2. that the Town Council recognise and endorse the wish of the La Ciotat Link Group to be operated as part of the Bridgwater International Programme;
3. that the Town Council explore the development of two potential Twinning – Primero (Italy) and Sarvar (Hungary) under the auspices of Bridgwater International and for the purposes of assessment allocate £300 to each in the next financial year;
4. that a Bridgwater Twinning Forum be established for the sharing of information and support to each other's projects;
5. that an annual conference be set up open to all internationalist groups;
6. that the Council continue to include civic support for twinning organisations at the discretion of each Mayor and to support the forthcoming visit by UH, the sum of £300 be allocated from this year's twinning budget; and
7. that twinning organisations be encouraged to pursue wherever possible European funding opportunities to match-fund, and acknowledge the Town Council commitment.

(Cllr Smedley declared an interest in twinning and matters relating thereto, took no part in the discussion and did not vote thereon)

The meeting finished at 9.30 pm

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Signed Chairman

