

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

**HELD ON THURSDAY 03 DECEMBER 2015 AT 7.30PM
AT THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER**

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

Apologies: Cllrs Cresswell, Granter and Rodrigues

61/15 POLICING IN AVON & SOMERSET & BRIDGWATER (Min 50/15)

The Mayor introduced and welcomed Sue Mountstevens, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, and Inspector Andrew Pritchard and Sergeant Ryan Edwards, as Police Representatives. This followed issues raised at the previous meeting about policing in Bridgwater and an invitation to attend the Town Council.

Ms Mountstevens outlined her role since elected PCCs replaced the previous Police Authorities and in particular the duty to hold the Chief Constable to account, differentiation from the operational activities and the production of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan, now specific to each of the Police Districts within the whole force area. She drew particular attention to the financial pressures faced by the police and detailed impacts of the spending review and which would impact in the coming financial year although details would not be known until December. In coping with these budget impacts the Force were investing more in protection of children, cyber crime and those most vulnerable in society. To combat budget reductions the police were looking at greater collaboration between forces, and in operational terms, working through specialists with flexibility alongside the neighbourhood teams. Particular efforts were also being made to tackle drug problems where there was evidence that gangs from major cities were moving operations into county towns locally.

Inspector Pritchard and Sergeant Edwards gave an update on policing locally following on from the issues raised.

Members then raised a number of questions, particularly around policing numbers, policing of major events, support for officers on the beat and PCSOs and the bedding in of the operating model – the matrix. The PCC and the officers dealt with all these points.

In accordance with the usual practice, the Mayor also adjourned the meeting to enable District Cllr Mrs Slocombe to raise a question she had registered in

relation to policing of major events which it was made clear would be policed with PCSOs etc on duty but that there would be further thinking in co-operation with organisers about support which could be offered.

The Mayor raised a series of issues in relation to the anticipated impacts of the EDF project with increasing numbers of workers and families moving into the area, particularly at the peak of construction, and noted that Sergeant Crago, the officer responsible for relations with the EDF/HPC project had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Town Council.

Sergeant Edwards also gave an update specific to Bridgwater and extended an invite to the Town Council to visit the new Police Headquarters at Express Park. Sergeant Edwards made particular mention of police support for the Together Team activities and the importance of partnerships with all agencies in the Together Team/East Bridgwater activities.

The Mayor thanked Ms Mountstevens and the officers for the information they had imparted.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Bridgwater Town Council thank the Police and Crime Commissioner for attending the Town Council Meeting and for her frankness in delivery;
2. that the issues and responses be noted both from the PCC and the operational officers; and
3. that the invitation be extended to Sergeant Crago to attend the next meeting.

62/15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29/10/15:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29/10/15 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

63/15 REPORT OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT FORUM:

The Report of the Transport Forum held on 02/11/15 was submitted and introduced by the Chairman Cllr Moira Brown. In presenting the Report she emphasised the need for joined up thinking and that the next meeting of the Forum would include invites to representatives of both County Council and the District Council. The attendance of the Bus Company representatives had been extremely useful and she emphasised the need for all members to respond to the current consultation on bus services from the County Council. It had also been suggested that the Town Council should be represented on Travel/Watch South

West. Members agreed that this should be passed on to the Transport Forum with a recommendation of support and Cllr Loveridge indicated an anticipated invitation to membership which he would readily take up in support of the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the Report be noted and those issues referred to taken forward.

64/15 REPORT OF THE EDF/HPC WORKING PARTY:

The Report of the EDF/HPC Working Party held on 26/11/15 was submitted and introduced by the Chairman Cllr Redman. Members noted the content and that the information in relation to the Community Mitigation Fund and possible sources of match funding had been taken up through the Finance Committee. Members also noted the position with the Blake Gardens Improvement Scheme where although the EOI had been approved the initial submission had been knocked back seeking more detail and information on the specific elements of the project and funding.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Report be noted and decisions endorsed;
2. that the support for the Blake Gardens Improvement Scheme be confirmed and clarified as necessary and
3. that in terms of the Sports, Leisure and Recreational Open Space Funding Strategy 2015/16 and finance earmarked by EDF, the Town Council support commitment of funding within Bridgwater and recommend that the Bristol Road Playing Fields are brought back into use, including the provision of new facilities and junior soccer pitches.

65/15 REPORT OF THE TOWN DEVELOPMENT FORUM (Min 52/15):

The Report of the Town Development Forum held on 26/11/15 was submitted and introduced by the Chairman Cllr Smedley. This had concentrated on the Northgate draft Master Plan which, in the main had been supported through the Forum and subsequently by SDC. The Forum was in favour of the retention of the former workhouse building and the request that the County Council in putting forward proposals for a new junior school re-examine adaptation as part of the scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Report be noted and objectives supported throughout the continuing Master Plan consultation and progressive steps.

66/15 REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (02/12/15) (Min 54/15):

The decisions and recommendations arising from the meeting held on 02/12/15 (attached as an appendix) had been circulated were introduced by the Chairman Cllr John Turner.

Particular attention was paid to Min 26 dealing with the budget and draft estimates for the financial year 2016/17 and to an additional explanatory paper produced by Cllr Smedley providing information on the recommendations from the Finance Committee. This included supporting papers in relation to the precept request, earmarked funds and the estimates drawn from information on the precept, grant and tax base.

RESOLVED: That the Report be approved and adopted.

67/15 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17:

Based on the Report of the Finance Committee (Min 26) and the information supplied in relation to the tax base, the anticipated short-fall grant and the high level principles established, it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the budget be approved and adopted, requiring a Town Council precept of 51.50 per band D (the first increase since 2011/12) raising £477,993;
2. that the detailed budget paper for 2016/17 as presented be approved with funding requirements for the year at £728,855 with grant at £67,734, estimated income at £140,495, earmarked allocation to Town Hall at £30,000 and allocation from other sources at £12,633;
3. that the updated Earmarked Funds Report including restricted reserves, be noted and approved; and
4. that the Town Clerk and RFO recommendation for a variation of investment funds with the CCLA, Public Sector Deposit Fund to include transfer of £100,000 from that fund (currently £400,000) and an additional £100,000 to the Local Authority Property Fund be approved.

68/15 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS:

RESOLVED: That the payments including Section 137 payments made during October (month 7) as circulated and previously considered by the Finance Committee, be approved and confirmed, and income received during the period together with the cost centre reports and bank reconciliations be noted.

69/15 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (29/10/15):

i. Forward Plan 2015/16 (Tracker) (Min 57/15i) - members noted the document as previously circulated and the items referred elsewhere in the agenda.

ii. Engine Room - extension and refurbishment project - party wall (Min 57/15ii) - the Town Clerk confirmed that works were continuing to progress and there had been no sign of issues affecting the party walls.

iii. Town Hall Working Party/Creative Centres Meeting (Min 57/15iii) - the second meeting of the Cultural/Arts representatives had been held examining the programming of theatres, creative venues etc, and plans for joint working together with possible opportunities for additional funding projects. **RESOLVED:** That this be noted and Cllrs Redman and Ms Wilson nominated to take part and support the activities.

iv. Bristol Road Ex-Allotment Site and Temporary Wessex Water Compound (Min 57/15v) - the Town Clerk confirmed that the planning application was under consideration and that subject to the grant of consent the terms of a license for a 65 week programme of works to commence in the New Year had been agreed which would provide Wessex Water with a temporary compound on the former Bristol Road Allotment Site. He confirmed the favourable terms of the license as advised in the budget paper.

70/15 LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION - REVIEW OF CORE STRATEGY:

The Chairman of the Planning Panel Cllr Lerry introduced the draft paper he had produced following the Local Planning Consultation presentation at the Planning Panel.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman's Report on the Review of the Local Plan setting out the comments from the Town Council be approved and endorsed and submitted within the Consultation.

71/15 FORUM ACTIONS:

Cllr Smedley presented a summary version of decisions taken by the Town Development Forum, within the Town Centre Action Plan, the Transport Forum and the Youth Forum, and it was

RESOLVED: That the recommendations and decisions as set out be taken forward.

72/15 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 26/11/15 (agenda item 12), and decisions taken as follows:

Decisions:

1. Bridgwater Town Team and Christmas Lights Switch-on and Snowflakes and Shopping Event - That the successful completion of the events and the actions of the Town Team advanced by Cllr Loveridge as the Town Team representative be endorsed;
2. Sedgemoor CCTV and Radio Links of the Somerset Businesses Against Crime - That this is seen as a vital tool in combating crime and the Town Clerk undertake a review and update on usage;
3. Bristol Road Cemetery - Yew tree maintenance - That the exercise of experimental works with tension wiring be noted and the Town Clerk consider the best means of progressing these works in conjunction with SDC;
4. Fore Street Burger Stall - kiosk proposal - That members examine the outline of the proposal and provide the Town Clerk with comments; and
5. Grant Applications 2015/16 and Ward Grant Applications – That these be approved as recommended in the references from the Finance Committee subject to the additional information requested.

For information:

Items 1 - 16 as circulated - noted.

73/15 SEASONS GREETINGS

The Mayor and members exchanged complements of the Season.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

.....
Signed Chairman