

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING - HELD ON THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2015 7.30PM - CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER

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

Apologies: Cllrs Loveridge, Rodrigues and Smedley

33/15 BRIDGWATER MERCURY REPORTER:

The Mayor welcomed Harry Mottram, recently appointed to the Bridgwater Mercury staff covering the Bridgwater area.

34/15 PUBLIC SPEAKING (Adjournment):

Mrs Sally Jones spoke in relation to recent changes in the timetabling of the number 6 bus serving the Kendale Road/Victoria Road area into the Town Centre. The Saturday service had been deleted which was a significant inconvenience to residents, in particular the elderly. It was understood that this was a result of the reduction in County Council subsidies and Cllr Lerry confirmed that opposition was already being taken up, including submission of a petition seeking the reinstatement of the Saturday service.

35/15 TOGETHER TEAM - EAST BRIDGWATER (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SYDENHAM ONE PROJECT):

Kristy Blackwell, as the Lead Officer from SDC in the role of Together Team Co-ordinator, addressed members on progress with the project which had recently been formally launched. She explained the origin of the project based on a similar project in Taunton which had been Police led and which was now being rolled out to the Dunwear and Fairfax Wards. It involved multi-agency working and the bringing together of partners dealing with specific facilities, and issues including those directly affecting individual families. The project had two distinct elements in terms of case management and community cohesion and development. The formal launch had taken place on 15/09/15 with some 20+ organisations represented and Kristy distributed leaflets and background information put together by the professional partners. She explained the funding sources which included the Local Authorities, the Police and Crime Commissioner and funds secured through the Community Impact Mitigation Fund from the EDF/HPC source.

Members supported the project, welcoming the engagement which this offered

and emphasised the way in which this should continue to support community needs and desires.

The Mayor expressed the thanks of the Town Council for the presentation, offered the full support of the Town Council to the project and an invitation to Kristy to return as the project progressed.

36/15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 06/08/15:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 06/08/15 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

37/15 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES (06/08/15):

i. Affordable Housing Needs (Min 21/15) - Cllr Granter drew attention to a recent announcement on the numbers of children in temporary accommodation, much attributed to the numbers of houses being lost in the private rental sector. Drawing on the previous presentation he suggested that affordable housing efforts were not keeping up with need and there was a constant need to highlight this issue and the need for resolution.

ii. Community Assets Working Group (Min 24/15) - Members were updated on the situation with the (sale of) Cobblestones and agreed the need for a further meeting to be held.

iii. Forward Plan 2015/16 (Tracker) (Min 26/15) - Members noted the copies of the document circulated. The individual items were appropriately covered within the Agenda and Reports for the Meeting.

iv. Engine Room - Extension and Refurbishment Project - Party Wall (Min 28/15i) - The party wall survey had been completed and works were progressing, if slowly. A beam had been identified, not previously recognised, and this had been taken into account with a further update due.

38/15 REPORT OF THE TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY (11/08/15):

Decisions and recommendations arising from the meeting of the Working Party and the visit to the Town Hall held on 11/08/15 (attached as an appendix) were circulated. This included a document elaborating on the history of the Town Hall where the theatre was some 150 years old this year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chairman and Town Clerk convene a meeting of Town Hall users to be followed by a further meeting of the Working Party with the offer of a visit to the premises;

2. that the formal launch of the redecorated Hall be considered once the mural is back in place;
3. that the plans to meet with the Art Centre and Bridgwater College and other appropriate bodies in relation to co-programming be noted; and
4. that the Report be approved and endorsed.

39/15 REPORT OF THE TOWN DEVELOPMENT FORUM (Min 29/15):

The Report of the Town Development Forum which had concentrated on the Northgate site had been circulated. Members considered the specific recommendations and with additions RESOLVED to take forward the Town Development Forum recommendations as follows:

1. Not to object to the building of a primary school at this stage but request that SDC should produce a report in conjunction with SCC including a business case for the school as part of their proposals seeking to retain the Blake Hospital building if possible, with a view to consideration at a meeting in November;
2. to seek more information on “social enterprise” initiatives for a future meeting;
3. to request consideration that whatever development ends up on Northgate it should endeavour to use and support local tradesmen, local businesses etc to maximise benefits to the local economy;
4. that opposition be voiced to any Northgate development that would have an adverse effect on businesses in the traditional Town Centre;
5. to request that SDC investigate the possibility of the “expertise budget” not just being spent on commercial expertise and that this should have a focus on health and wellbeing, again for consideration at a future meeting;
6. that there should be wider discussion about the comprehensive vision for the Town and the next meeting of the TDF should seek to focus on the “Bridgwater Vision”; and
7. to support an objective that culture, leisure and recreation should be the leading components in any scheme for Northgate.

40/15 REPORT OF THE TWINNING FORUM (25/08/15):

Members acknowledged the Report which had been circulated including the possibilities of an event in April 2016. Reference was made to the opportunity for European Union resources but it was recognised that the pursuit of European finance raised capacity and resource issues in themselves.

RESOLVED: That the Report be noted and approved.

41/15 BRIDGWATER TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN:

Members were presented with an updated Action Plan which resulted from the

recent walk-about undertaken by councillors, officers, traders, shoppers and residents. Some of the issues identified and referenced were already being attended to. It was the intention to elaborate upon the Action Plan and thereby identify the areas for action and to identify organisations with responsibility for each of the items and the follow-up action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That this be pursued in conjunction with the local authorities and the Bridgwater Town Team.

42/15 REPORT OF THE EDF/HPC WORKING PARTY (26/08/15) (Min 28/15ii):

Members received the Report of the Working Party, taking particular note of information in relation to item 4 - Cycling, Bridgwater to Hinkley, item 7 - work on the "Golden Triangle" and item 9 - Community Impact Mitigation Fund (CIM) and the position with applications which had been submitted, approved, or were at the draft expression of interest position.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Report of the Working Party be approved;
2. that the Town Council support a request for a Bridgwater Cycling Group to join the EDF Transport Forum;
3. that SCC as Highway Authority, be advised that at the current time the Town Council do not favour the whole of the Golden Triangle being dealt with at once and request a formal programme for consideration and comment before any works commence;
4. that in terms of the Community Impact Mitigation Fund, with suitable amendments, the Town Council agree to the proposals for the Town Centre Enhancement and Renewal and the Blake Gardens improvement going forward through the submission of EOIs;
5. that the position on the Taunton Road environmental enhancement be reserved pending additional information and more detailed costings and funding allocations; and
6. that the draft report produced by Samuel Harper identifying locations for VMS signs within the town for consideration by the transport review group, be approved and submitted, putting down a marker for 2 additional signs which the Town Council believe may be needed longer term (and for which highway contingency money could be used) on approaches into the town centre from Westonzoyland Road/ St Johns St and Bath Rd.

43/15 REPORT OF THE BRIDGWATER LOCAL TRANSPORT FORUM (16/09/15):

Cllr Moira Brown introduced the Report of the Forum which had been welcomed and well received by the wide range of participants from many organisations.

Most forms of transport had been represented and it was hoped that this would be extended in coming ventures to, for example, all local bus companies. It was regretted that SCC Highways were not represented and it was agreed to press through SDC for County Highway representation at any future meetings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the terms of reference for the Transport Forum be endorsed:
2. that the outcomes of the Forum be supported and the findings taken forward as appropriate; and
3. that the Town Council request the support of the SDC in pursuing County Highway representation at future Forum.

44/15 REPORT OF THE YOUTH FORUM (17/09/15):

Members noted the Minutes which had been circulated.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Report be accepted and a further meeting of the Youth Forum be convened at an appropriate time; and
2. that organisations and individual members be encouraged to complete the Youth Census, circulated by Cllr Rodrigues.

45/15 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND RECEIPTS:

RESOLVED: That the payments including Section 137 payments made during August (month 5) as circulated be approved and confirmed, and income received during the period together with the cost centre report and bank reconciliations be noted.

46/15 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - REDUCING GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING:

The Town Clerk reported a letter received from SDC confirming that Council Tax Support Grant received from Government and passed on to towns and parishes by SDC would reduce from the current level to £0 in 2019/20.

RESOLVED: That in view of the severe implications for overall Town Council funding, this be referred to the Finance Committee to be taken into account in budget preparations from this year onward.

47/15 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/15 - COMPLETION:

RESOLVED: That the successful completion, without adverse comment, of the Audit be noted and welcomed.

48/15 BRIDGWATER FOOD BANK:

Cllr Lerry gave a report on his attendance at the annual meeting of the Food Bank and issued information on the procedures adopted and the usage in various areas both wards within the Town and the wider district. This was noted.

The Mayor drew attention to a forthcoming fundraising event for the Food Bank and welcomed support from any members wishing to attend.

49/15 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 date 21/09/15 (agenda item 15), and decisions taken as follows:

Decisions:

1. Statement of Gambling Policy 2016/19 - opportunity for members to comment available to 12/10/16;
2. Bridgwater Town Team and Snowflakes & Shopping Event - update on progress in relation to the Christmas lights switch-on;
3. Quantock Rd Cemetery - signage for layout of burial sections - **Resolved:** To approve expenditure of £3,300 approx within budget in terms of the quotation received from Durleigh Displays (option 1)
4. Bristol Rd Allotment Site and Ex-allotment Land Adjoining - short-term lease - **Resolved:** That the Town Clerk be authorised to complete the license and to agree terms with Wessex Water for the land for a work compound required in association with the renewal works of the pumping station in Bristol Rd.
5. Grant Applications 2015/16 - **Resolved:** That the applications from Sydenham Community Centre for core funding in the sum of £10,000 and from Sydenham Community Centre for project funding in the sum of £5,000; from the Bridgwater Baptist Church Access Project in the sum of £1,154 be approved and the application received from the Martial Arts organisation be referred to the Finance Committee;
6. Ward Grant Applications 2015/16 (Hamp) - **Resolved:** That the application from the Hamp Academy for the mural in the sum of £300 be approved; and
7. Eastover Sports Trust - that the information provided by the Mayor that the Sports Trust has now been wound up be noted, recognising their success in establishing the sports facilities and MUGA (multi-use games area) at Eastover Park.

For information:

Items 1 - 18 as circulated – noted.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm
Signed

..... Chairman