

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 10 MAY 2018 AT 7.30 PM
AT THE CHARTER HALL TOWN HALL BRIDGWATER

PRESENT: Cllr Graham Granter (Mayor of Bridgwater – in the Chair), 13 other members of the Town Council, and some 15 members of the public.

01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllrs Moore and Turner

02. WELCOME:

The Mayor welcomed members of the public to the 15th Annual Public Meeting of the Town Council since its inception in 2003.

03. POLICING IN BRIDGWATER:

PC Rob Brown accompanied by two PCSOs was in attendance on behalf of Sergeant Joe Piscina, the Town Neighbourhood Sergeant, who was otherwise engaged lecturing some 20 students as part of the “999 course” running again in 2018 through the Bridgwater and Taunton College.

PC Brown gave an update on the staffing situation, including new recruitment of PCSOs and training of police officers. In terms of policing the Town Centre, the force had links with the City of London police, drawing upon their methods for using more bicycles to improve coverage, accessibility and response. He also gave an update on recent speed watch activities and response to anti-social behaviour in and around the Town Centre which had seen significant improvement resulting from high profile actions. He responded briefly to questions.

The Mayor recorded thanks to Sergeant Joe Piscina and the Town Centre Teams in particular but also the teams covering the rest of the Town for their support and actions on the range of issues.

04. BRIDGWATER TIDAL BARRIER SCHEME - PRESENTATION AND UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (MR JOHN BUTTIVANT):

John Buttivant gave a presentation on the progress with the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme, drawing particularly on the newsletter which had been circulated in April 2018 outlining the proposals, why required, the stage of the project, work currently underway, the next steps, and the various consents required.

John particularly addressed the funding issues and the support through SDC, the LEP, SCC and the background of the Environment Agency 20 Year Action Plan of which this scheme was part of the plans to provide protection for up to 38,000 houses. Next steps would see the employment of consultants and the preparation of the Transport and Works Act Order.

John responded to questions on the costs and the benefits which had been costed as even more in relation to the cost increase of the project. Money for enhancement was welcome both downstream and upstream but in some situations would require match funding.

Those present welcomed the presentation and the Mayor thanked John Buttivant for the comprehensive coverage of the issues.

Note - Town Clerk undertook to send series of contacts, Federation of Small Businesses, etc to JB.

05. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING 2017:

The Minutes of the 14th Annual Town Public Meeting held on 11/05/17 had been circulated, received by members of the Council, and were available at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Town Public Meeting held on 11/05/17 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

06. MATTERS ARISING:

No specific matters were raised - the key issues following on from that meeting were addressed in the Resume of the Year 2017/18 and the Forward Plan Tracker for 2017/18.

07. BRIDGWATER POST OFFICE, EASTOVER:

The Mayor gave an update on the position with the Post Office in Eastover, which had been threatened with closure but had now reopened with a temporary Postmaster. The Town Clerk explained the position with the planning application which had been deferred seeking a change of use and which would be reconsidered at the next Development Control Committee in Sedgemoor. A number of representations had been made and continued in discussions with the Post Office to seek a permanent long term solution.

08. TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD SCHEMES - UPDATE FROM EDF/HPC TRANSPORT FORUM HELD ON 03/05/18:

The Town Clerk gave an update on the recent Transport Forum and the issues which had been discussed, including those for remaining major road schemes. The next major scheme envisaged improvements to the Quantock Road roundabout and the scheme details were currently being finalised. The County Council had agreed as soon as the programme of works was determined, and the contract finalised, to attend a meeting of the Town Council - this would include the finalisation of the improvements and the start and length of the contract. Associated road works in Bath Road were due to be completed in July/August with works at the junction of Wylde Road and Bristol Road to follow. Cllr Redman confirmed that the scheme for double glazing to help dwellings on the HGV routes from Junctions 23 and 24 had been fully publicised and interest from householders invited.

09. TRINITY HALL - FUTURE PLANS:

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had been reviewing the condition of Trinity Hall and considering the best way forward, judged against a long term expression of interest. This would be the subject of a consultation process, details of which would be presented in due course.

10. BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL - RESUME OF YEAR 2017/18:

Updated copies of this annual production were issued and introduced by the Mayor. The Town Clerk commented on the continuing increasing role of the Town Council and the wide ranging involvement in the community and all projects etc that affected community life. Copies of the document were available on the Town Council website.

The Mayor thanked all Town Councillors for their commitment and the Town Clerk and staff for major contributions.

11. FORWARD PLAN TRACKER 2017/18 AND ROUNDUP:

Cllr Smedley, Leader of the Town Council, spoke to the Forward Plan and highlighted the updates and actions promised from the previous Public Meeting, Town Council meetings and the regular Forum meetings which now covered a range of topics with the Town

Development Forum, a Transport Forum, working alongside EDF/HPC, the Youth Forum, a planned Tourism Forum and new environmental projects led by the Deputy Leader. The establishment of the forums supported the desire of the Town Council for continuing and improving public involvement and consultation processes which were proving highly successful.

Cllr Smedley also acknowledged the role of major institutions such as carnival, heritage and the museum, increasing work through the cultural partnership and the success of the Quayside Festival - to be repeated, twinning activities and international relations.

The Mayor congratulated all on the hard work and efforts put in.

From the floor, Mr Chapple, Chair of Bridgwater and District Civic Society, also commented in support of the History Day, the Quayside Festival and the expectation that parts of the Celebration Mile would come to fruition. He also drew attention to support the view on the Greater Bridgwater and, the future, with the redrawing of boundaries, re-establishing the wider Bridgwater community.

12. PUBLIC ISSUES:

Members of the public had been offered, and were given the opportunity to raise issues.

Robert Snelling - Community Radio and Sedgemoor FM - contacts and involvement of the Town Council confirmed.

Dave Chapple (speaking on behalf of the Friends of Bridgwater Station) - Bridgwater Station - proposals for a three month consultation on cross country trains and offer to write submission seeking Town Council, District Council and County Council support, and support from the surrounding area, to take forward increase in number of stopping trains at Bridgwater Station. **Agreed:** To thank Mr Chapple for raising the issue, for offering to prepare a representation, and to take to the Town Council (or Transport Forum, whichever is appropriate) to take forward in response to the consultation periods currently open.

Trisha Walsh - Issues related to recycling and plastics and the throwaway society - response from Cllr Kath Pearce in conjunction with Somerset Waste Partnership and SDC with plans to report to Community Scrutiny in September, and support bottle refill schemes and extra throughput of recycling with relevant publicity including food waste through the Saltlands Recycling Site. Reference also made to plans coming forward for the redevelopment at Northgate including Aldi relocation and new screen cinemas and leisure and commercial offering.

Sally Jones (Town Clerk on her behalf) - Issues in relation to the Chilton swimming facility operated by 1610 and availability for community use and discrimination across sectors of the community.

13. PUBLIC MEETING:

The Mayor thanked all those who had participated for their attendance and contributions and their interest in the Town and the Town Council's work and emphasised the continuing commitment of all those elected to the Town Council. He reminded all that the next elections for the Town Council would be held in May 2019.

The meeting finished at 9.07 pm

Signed
Chairman

