



Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of Bridgwater Town Council held on Thursday 17 December 2020 at 19:00hrs

Present - Councillors

L Redman – (Mayor)	M Lerry
G Burrows	D Loveridge
M Cresswell – joined the meeting at ...	G Slocombe
J Cordiner	B Smedley
L Leavy	

In Attendance:

David Mears PSLCC – Town Clerk, Amy Storey - Administrative Assistant and Fiona Tuck - Finance Assistant. There were no members of the public or press in attendance.

No questions were received from the public in advance of the meeting.

Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported on the "world-wide" coverage resulting from the Christmas Lights switch-on, with in excess of 3 million views on YouTube and had been reported on many television programmes. On 17th December the Mayor had judged a picture competition at Sydenham Improvement Centre and on 18th he would be presenting the cup for the Decorated Window competition.

TC2020/90 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies were received from Councillor Gibson, who had no internet connection, and Councillor Rodrigues, who has a work engagement.

RESOLVED – to accept the apologies and to approve the reasons given.

TC2020/91 Declarations of interests - Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

Councillor Pearce declared a Pecuniary Interest in agenda item TC2020/102 and Councillor Slocombe declared a non-Pecuniary Interest in TC2020/102.

TC2020/92 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Thursday 19 November 2020 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1))

RESOLVED – to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Thursday 19 November 2020.

TC2020/93 Town Council Leader – update on progress since the last meeting and items of information (*NB no decisions can be taken¹*)

Councillor Smedley updated members on the five identified priorities of the Forward Plan as passed at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. He expressed his hope that the Council would return to physical meetings in the near future.

TC2020/94 Town Clerk's Report – update on progress since the last meeting and items of information (N.B. no decisions can be taken¹)

The Town Clerk thanked all Councillors and Council Staff for their work during this difficult year, and Fiona Tuck for her help whilst the office was short-staffed. We now have two new members of staff who were exceeding all expectations and had fitted in well.

The office would be closing at noon on Christmas Eve until 4th January. Cemeteries Administrator would continue to monitor the cemeteries mail box and a system was in place with funeral directors. Cemeteries ground staff would be monitoring bins etc on a rota basis and would be available to work if required. The Town Clerk would monitor voice mails.

The Town Centre website should be launched in the forthcoming week – a special thanks to the new Administration Assistant for her help in getting the website up and running.

The Mayor endorsed the Town Clerk's thanks and also expressed a formal vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and staff on behalf of the Council.

TC2020/95 Portfolio Holders – to receive written reports and Forum minutes (if any) from Portfolio Holders (*N.B no decisions can be taken¹*)

Transport Portfolio – Councillor Slocombe informed Councillor Burrows (Portfolio holder for Transport) that all taxis had now received a formal notification that engine idling must cease.

Councillor Burrows reported that she had spoken to County regarding parking and had requested "reminder" signs be posted in Eastover.

Economy and Personnel Portfolio – Councillor Lerry reported that cemeteries were operating within budget projections and were on line to make a saving of between £50 – £60K. Praise had been received from a funeral director on the service provided by both admin and grounds staff. Councillor Lerry welcomed new staff members to the team.

TC2020/96 Cemeteries – reservations (pre-purchase) of burial rights – to discuss the attached report and to resolve (or not) to accept the Cemeteries Administrators recommendations contained therein

The Town Clerk answered questions on behalf of the Cemeteries Administrator.

RESOLVED – to accept the report and:

- that with effect from 1st January 2021 the Council will no longer allow coffin burial spaces available for reservation (with the exception when a cohabitation couple wish to be buried next to each other rather than in one double plot); and
- That with effect from 1st January 2021 the Town Council no longer allow the reservation of burial plots for ashes only unless the plot has been identified as unusable as a coffin burial plot due to the reasons as outlined in 3 (c) of the report

TC2020/97 Market Charter – to receive the Town Clerk’s report and to resolve (or not) to make a request to Sedgemoor District Council for this Council to obtain the Market Charter, on-street concessions and events licence

Councillor Slocombe declared a non-Pecuniary Interest in this item.

RESOLVED – to accept the Town Clerk’s report and to request Sedgemoor District Council that the Town Council to obtain the Market Charter, on street concessions and events licence.

TC2020/98 Finance – to receive and discuss the draft budget for 2021-22

RESOLVED – to accept the draft budget subject to formal adoption in January 2021.

TC2020/99 Finance – to note the Year to Date Budget as of 11 December 2020

RESOLVED – to note the Year to Date Budget as of 11 December 2020.

TC2020/100 Finance –Accounts for Payment and Income – to note items of expenditure as approved under delegated authority or under previous Council/Committee decisions and income received for November 2020

RESOLVED – to note the items of expenditure and income for November 2020.

TC2020/101 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public – to agree that agenda item TC2020/102 be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

RESOLVED – to exclude members of the press and public for agenda item TC2020/102.

Councillor Pearce declared a Pecuniary Interest and left the meeting.

TC2020/102 Bridgwater Docks – to receive the Town Clerk’s Report on the current state of play and options for the future and to resolve to accept the recommendations contained therein

RESOLVED – to accept the Town Clerk’s report and the recommendations contained therein.

With no further business the meeting closed at 19:58

Signed Date