



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

Present - Councillors

T Heywood – (Outgoing Mayor)	L Leavy
L Redman – (Incoming Mayor)	M Lerry
S Aujla	R Lilley
G Burrows	D Loveridge
M Cresswell	K Pearce
J Cordiner	D Rodrigues
L Gibson	G Slocombe
G Granter	B Smedley

In Attendance:

David Mears PSLCC – Town Clerk and PS Joe Piscina. There was one member of the public and no members of the press present.

PS Piscina discussed local issues concerning ASB, drug issues and a recent incident at a local school. This incident had resulted in the setting up of monthly meetings with schools in the area. PS Piscina felt positive that things were moving in the right direction. This was followed by a question and answer session. No questions were received from the public in advance of the meeting.

PS Piscina left the meeting at 19.15.

TC2020/71 Election of Mayor (Chairman of the Council) and Acceptance of Office. (LGA 1972 s14 (1), 15 (1&2), 33 (1) and 34 (1&2))

Councillor Leigh Redman was nominated and accepted the nomination.

Proposed: Councillor Smedley Seconded: Councillor Loveridge

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Leigh Redman be elected Chairman of Bridgwater Town Council and Mayor of Bridgwater unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office until his successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2021.

Councillor Redman chaired the rest of the meeting.

- I. **New Mayor Announcements:** The Mayor thanked Cllr Heywood for his term as Mayor and thanked councillors for electing him as Mayor of Bridgwater.
- II. **Mayor's Appointment of Mace Bearer until May 2021** - Mr Chris Hocking had agreed to continue as Mace Bearer until May 2021;
- III. **Mayor's Chosen Charity until May 2021** - The Mayor had decided not to have a chosen charity but instead to donate any monies raised to local Covid-19 groups;
- IV. **Mayor's Cadet until May 2021** – office to arrange.

V. **Mayor's Chaplain until May2021** – none.

TC2020/72 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

There were no apologies for absence.

TC2020/73 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)

No declarations of interests declared.

TC2020/74 Election of Deputy Mayor (Vice Chairman of the Council)

Councillor Liz Leavy was nominated and accepted the nomination.

Proposed: Councillor Pearce Seconded: Councillor Lerry

RESOLVED - That Councillor Liz Leavy be elected Vice Chairman of Bridgwater Town Council and Deputy Mayor unless she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2021.

TC2020/75 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 20 August 2020 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1))

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday 20 August 2020 be signed as a correct record.

TC2020/76 To appoint a Leader of the Council

Councillor Brian Smedley was nominated and accepted the nomination.

Proposed: Councillor Pearce Seconded: Councillor Slocombe

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Brian Smedley be appointed as Leader of Bridgwater Town Council.

TC2020/77 To appoint a Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Kathy Pearce was nominated and accepted the nomination.

Proposed: Councillor Lerry Seconded: Councillor Slocombe.

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED - that Councillor Kathy Pearce be appointed Deputy Leader of Bridgwater Town Council.

Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group.

RESOLVED – to note that Councillor Gill Slocombe has accepted the position of Leader of the Opposition Group, with Councillor Diogo Rodrigues as Deputy Leader.

TC2020/78 Town Council Leader – update on matters of interest and forward plan *(NB no decisions can be taken)*

Councillor Smedley thanked everyone for their show of unity in the opening of a new council. He then went on to discuss briefly, as circulated, the changes of the Council structure, the Forward Plan, and the List of Priorities. This included working closely with Sedgemoor District Council, the opening of the Covid Testing Station, the unitary debate, climate change, plans for the Town Centre and Northgate, Town Deal Board, mitigation with EDF/HPC, waterways and docks, and the Arts Centre.

Councillor Smedley thanked PS Joe Piscina for his presence at the meeting and for starting the Police Liaison meetings, which the community had recognised as being crucial in shaping the priorities of the Police Force. Councillor Smedley also thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their work in this difficult time with particular strain on the budget.

Councillor Smedley then took questions from Councillors.

TC2020/79 Town Clerk's Oral Report – update on progress since the last meeting and items of information *(NB no decisions can be taken)*

The Town Clerk reported on the Covid Testing Station which was now operational from 8am – 8pm 7 days a week. Footfall was increasing with the rise in positive tests due somewhat to the increase in testing numbers. The centre was set to run initially for a six-month period with the possibility of the introduction of rapid testing and becoming a vaccination centre.

The Town Clerk was taking part in Unitary discussions with the Stronger Somerset Team.

The Christmas lights had been installed and the tree erected, with illumination set to take place on Friday 20th November 2020.

Finally, the Town Clerk reiterated the position of Councillors at committee meetings where they are not members of the committee to avoid future confusion.

The Town Clerk took questions from Councillors.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their hard work during this difficult time.

TC2020/80 Portfolio Holders – to receive written reports (if any) from Portfolio Holders *(NB no decisions can be taken¹ with the exception of those listed below)*

Councillor Slocombe asked for clarification on the closing date for Youth Grants. Councillor Cordiner responded as Portfolio Holder for Youth that two schools had so far agreed to zoom meetings which had to be held during school hours, and it was hoped this would commence in December.

Councillor Rodrigues asked which Portfolio Holder was responsible for Quantock Lodge – this now comes under the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Properties, Councillor Redman. This matter would be further dealt with in Exempt Session. He also asked for clarification on the position with the Arts Centre. The Town Clerk responded that this was a “full repairing” lease inherited from SDC. Further clarification will be circulated to Councillors in an email.

Recommendations from the Transport Liaison Group

- I. That this council requests that provision of EV charging facilities be an integral part of all planning development, to assist with climate emergency controls;
- II. That this council requests a review of town-centre parking with introduction of 20 mph speed limit and chicanes where practical and lower parking fees for EVs;
- III. That this council works with the relevant authorities to ensure that Residents’ parking schemes are promoted where applicable, with clear guidelines for making applications;
- IV. That this council makes it an aspiration for Bascule bridge to be closed to cars, as part of improved cycling/walking access to docks and town centre;
- V. That this council initiates an investigation into the prevalence of “engine idling” and a campaign to persuade car users to cease this practice;
- VI. That this council initiates a development of pedestrian and Home Zones in Bridgwater;
- VII. That this council initiates and support a “Bus It” campaign to encourage use of public transport.

RESOLVED – to adopt the recommendations of the Transport Liaison Group

TC2020/81 Review of Committee Structure – Councillor Smedley to present proposals on Committee memberships and appointments and:

- I. To reinstate all committees from January 2021, reapprove the terms of reference of committees and make appointment to the Planning and Premises Committees;

RESOLVED – To reinstate all committees from January 2021, to reapprove the terms of reference of committees and that the following councillors are appointed to the Planning Committee: Lerry*, Loveridge, Heywood, Smedley, Leavy, Burrows, Rodrigues and Lilley ***Cllr Lerry** as Chair and Premises Committee: Redman*, Smedley, Granter, Lerry, Pearce, Heywood Lilley And Cresswell with ***Cllr Redman** as chair

- II. To appoint the following Portfolio Holders and shadow Portfolio holders to the following areas:

2020/21 New List	Portfolios	Shadow Portfolios
Leader	Cllr Smedley	Cllr Slocombe
Property	Cllr Redman	Cllr Lilley
Community	Cllr Pearce	Cllr Cresswell
Economy & Personnel	Cllr Lerry	Cllr Rodrigues
Transport	Cllr Burrows	Cllr Slocombe
Art, Heritage & Culture	Cllr Leavy	Cllr Rodrigues
Youth	Cllr Cordiner	Cllr Aujla
Climate Emergency	Cllr Gibson	Cllr Aujla

RESOLVED – to appoint the Portfolio Holders and shadow Portfolio holders as listed above

III. To appoint the following councillors to the following outside bodies:

Outside Body	Designation	Appointee
Wyndham Lecture Trust meet once a year-look at investment and divide to secondary schools and college	Member	Lerry
Town Team	PFH Economy	Lerry & Town Clerk
Bridgwater Art Centre - now two full voting members	PFH Culture	Leavy & Smedley
Carnival Committee –	Member	Burrows
Bridgwater Cultural Partnership	PFH Culture	Lerry/Leavy & Town Clerk
Seed (trustee)	PFH Economy	Lerry
Inland Waterways Association and Docks	PFH Community	Pearce
Meads Steering Group	PFH Community	Pearce
Tidal Barrier Stakeholders	PFH Economy	Lerry
Tidal Barrier Enhancement	PFH Community	Pearce
Hamp Community Association	Ward member	Leavy
Sydenham Community Centre	2 x ward member	Granter & Loveridge
Victoria Park Community Centre	2 x ward member	Lerry & Cordiner
Bridgwater Memorial Homes	Member	Cresswell
Friends of Wembdon Road Cemetery - Mayor invited to be president. Ward councillors have asked for involvement.	Mayor	Redman Lilley & Slocombe
Together team	Member	Granter
Kingsdown Pavilion - in abeyance	PFH Premises	Redman
All EDF related bodies	PFH Premises	Redman & Town Clerk
Allotments (future option) Council have offered member participation as a future solution but will only put this forward if requested.	PFH Community	Pearce

RESOLVED - to appoint the above councillors to the outside bodies

TC2020/82 Calendar of Meetings – to adopt revise the calendar of meetings for municipal year 2020/21

RESOLVED - To adopt the revised calendar of meetings for municipal year 2020/21

Proposed: Councillor Smedley Seconded: Councillor Slocombe

TC2020/83 Review Council Policies and Procedures:

- I. Review of Standing Orders – recently revised (no changes required)
- II. Review of Financial Regulations – recently revised (no changes required)
- III. Review of Complaints Procedure – (no changes required)
- IV. Review of Community Grants Funding Policy – (no changes required)
- V. Review of Councillor – Officer – Employee Protocol – (no changes required)
- VI. Review of Health and Safety Statement General Policy – (no changes required)
- VII. Review of Recording of Meetings Policy – (no changes required)
- VIII. Review of Social Media Policy – (no changes required)
- IX. Review of Training and Development Policy – (no changes required)
- X. Review of Risk Management Scheme – (no changes required)
- XI. Review of Scheme of Delegation – (no changes required)
- XII. Review of Information and Data Protection Policy – (no changes required)
- XIII. Review of Retention and Disposal Policy- (no changes required)
- XIV. Review of The Management of Transferable Data Policy – (no changes required)
- XV. Review of Sustainable Transport Plan for Bridgwater – with amendments
(Councillor Burrows to highlight)
- XVI. Review of Publication Scheme

RESOLVED -

- a. To accept policies, I – XIV and XVI unamended
- b. That item XV, Review of Sustainable Transport Plan for Bridgwater – with amendments be adopted

TC2020/84 Allotments - to approve the request from the Bridgwater Allotments Association for water to be disconnected at one of the allotment sites, as all allotments have rain water harvesting in place

RESOLVED: That the request be approved subject to the Town Clerk receiving confirmation that all allotment holders are in agreement.

Proposed: Councillor Smedley Seconded: Councillor Pearce:

TC2020/85 Finance – to note the Year to Date Budget as of 11 November 2020

RESOLVED - to note the budget information for the year to date as of 11 November 2020.

TC2020/86 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 August, September and October 2020

RESOLVED - to note the items of expenditure and income for the months August, September and October 2020.

TC2020/87 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public – To agree that agenda item TC2020/88 and TC2020/89 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 - That the public be excluded for agenda items TC2020/88 and TC2020/89.

Proposed: Councillor Loveridge Seconded: Councillor Slocombe

The member of public left the meeting at 8.13pm,

TC2020/88 Lodge – to give full delegated authority for the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders for Premises and Economy to appoint contractors to refurbish the lodge and arrange the letting of the Lodge. Funds for the work to be taken from CIL and SDC

The Town Clerk gave an update on the current position with Quantock Lodge and the range of quotes received.

RESOLVED – that full delegated authority for the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Premises to appoint contractors to refurbish the lodge and arrange the letting of the Lodge. Funds for the work to be taken from CIL and sought from SDC

TC2020/89 Taunton Road – SDC plans and Town Council land – to receive an update from the Town Clerk and to give consent for the Town Clerk to continue discussions and support in principle to SDC plans

The Town Clerk gave an update on SDC plans and Town Council land.

RESOLVED – to give consent for the Town Clerk to continue discussions and support in principle to SDC plans

With no further business the meeting closed at 20.28

Signed Date