



## Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of Bridgwater Town Council held on Thursday 20 August 2020 at 19:00hrs

**Present** - Councillors

T Heywood – (Mayor)

S Aujla

G Burrows

M Cresswell

J Cordiner

L Gibson

G Granter

L Leavy

M Lerry

D Loveridge

L Redman

D Rodrigues

G Slocombe

B Smedley

**In Attendance:**

David Mears PSLCC – Town Clerk and Tim Deere-Jones.

Tim Deere-Jones gave a presentation on suspected increase of radioactivity doses to the public and marine environment from dredging at Hinkley Point. This was followed by a question and answer session. No questions were received from the public in advance of the meeting.

Mr Deere-Jones left the meeting at 19.25

There was no representative present from the Police team as they are not allowed to attend zoom meetings, however the Town Clerk had spoken with the Town Beat Sergeant and he had agreed to come into the Town Hall offices and meet with councillors via zoom next week.

**TC2020/55 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given** (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies were received from Councillor Lilley who was unable to attend due to personal reasons.

**RESOLVED:** To accept the apology and to approve the reason given.

**TC2020/56 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)

There were no interests declared.

**TC2020/57 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 5 March 2020, the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on 20 March 2020 and the Town Council Meeting held on 18 June 2020** (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1))

**RESOLVED:** To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 5 March 2020, the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting held on 20 March 2020 and the Town Council Meeting held on 18 June 2020.

### **TC2020/58 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor commented on a service he had attended at Wells Cathedral on 16<sup>th</sup> August, which had also been attended by mayors who, due to the unusual situation with Covid-19, were also holding their mayoral position for a second term. However moving forward the Mayor agreed to step down in November 2020.

**TC2020/59 Town Council Leader** – Councillor Smedley to update members on matters of interest and forward plan (*N.B no decisions can be taken<sup>1</sup>*)

Councillor Smedley thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their work in keeping the Town Council running on a limited operational basis, and the Executive members who have stepped in to take advisory roles during this difficult time.

The Forward Plan will be developing during the course of the year with the additional feature of Unitary developments. It was widely accepted that town and parishes would be integral to discussions with the next stage being direct engagement with Districts to hear their proposals. These will need to be discussed at Full Council.

**TC2020/60 Town Clerk's Oral Report** – update on progress since the last meeting and items of information (*N.B no decisions can be taken<sup>1</sup>*)

The Town Clerk reported that staff were now back working in the Town Hall offices with reception open to the public Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9am – 5pm.

Town Centre concerns - the Town Clerk had been appointed to the District Council Task Force Team, which received funding from District albeit with strings attached. There are concerns with the viability of the Town Centre, although on a positive note the bulk of Town Centre premises are under the rateable threshold which makes them more attractive for letting. The High Street will continue to close on a Friday to facilitate the market.

With regard to Unitary, the Town Clerk had attended a meeting with the Leader of District Council, Chief Executive, and the Leader of Town Council to discuss their proposals and the impact and benefit on Bridgwater and the Town Council. The Business Case needs to be submitted in September and to this end it may be necessary to call an Extra Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council in a matter of weeks.

**TC2020/61 Portfolio Holders – to receive written reports (if any) from Portfolio Holders** (*N.B no decisions can be taken<sup>1</sup>*)

Councillor Redman apologised for not presenting a report but was happy to take questions.

Councillor Burrows presented a written report on the transport portfolio and asked members to note that the date of the next Transport Forum was 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 and not December as

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<sup>1</sup>N. B Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business that is not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 Sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119).

written. There were also some amendments to the Transport Strategy which had been circulated for adoption at the next Council meeting.  
Councillor Pearce presented a written report on the community portfolio.

Councillor Lerry presented a written report on the economy and personnel portfolio.

Councillor Cordiner presented a written report on the youth portfolio.

**TC2020/62 Finance** – to adopt the recommended revised budget in light of the significant impact of Covid-19 on the council’s set budget for 2020/21

Councillor Smedley wished it noted that Sedgemoor District Council had awarded the Town Council a grant of £12,659 to assist with the shortfall of the council’s 2020/21 budget due to the impact of Covid-19.

**RESOLVED:** – to adopt the recommended revised budget in light of the significant impact of COVID-19 on the council’s set budget for 2020/21.

**TC2020/63 Finance** – to approve reopening of the revised general grant budget and to agree to recommended arrangement

**RESOLVED:** – to approve reopening of the revised general grant budget and to agree to recommended arrangements.

**TC2020/64 Finance** - to discuss arrangements for the Youth Grant Budget

Councillor Cordiner informed the councillors that it was proposed to relaunch the Youth Forum as soon as the schools reopened whereby the Forum would determine the Youth Grants

**TC2020/65 Finance** – to note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2019/20

**RESOLVED:** to note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2019/20

**TC2020/66 Finance** - to approve the Annual Governance Statement (s.1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20) (Account & Audit Regulations 2015)

**RESOLVED:** To approve the Annual Governance Statement (s.1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20).

**TC2020/67 Finance** - to approve the Annual Accounting Statement for the year ending 31 March 2020 (s.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20) (Account & Audit Regulations 2015)

Councillor Redman proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and staff for their work in preparing the Finance Reports.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Annual Accounting Statement for the year ending 31 March 2020 (s.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20)

**TC2020/68 Finance** – Accounts for Payment and Income - to note items of expenditure as approved under delegated authority or previous resolutions and income for July 2020

**RESOLVED:** to note the items of expenditure and income for July 2020.

**TC2020/69 Annual Council Meeting** – to agree to hold the Annual Council Meeting on 19 November 2020 and to discuss mayoral arrangements

**RESOLVED:** to agree to hold the Annual Council Meeting on 19 November 2020 and to discuss mayoral arrangements.

**TC2020/70 Committee Structure** – to receive an update from Councillor Smedley on the council’s Committee Structure and Portfolio Holder system

Councillor Smedley informed councillors that he would be circulating proposals with regard to the council’s Committee Structure and Portfolio Holders system, and was looking for suggestions and opinions prior to the Annual Council Meeting on 19 November 2020, which could then be voted upon.

With no further business the meeting closed at 20.21

Signed ..... Dated .....