



## Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Bridgwater Town Council held on Friday 20 March 2020 at 17:30hrs in the Bridgwater Room, Town Hall, Bridgwater.

**Present** - Councillors

T Heywood – (Mayor)

G Burrows

L Gibson

M Lerry

K Pearce

L Redman

B Smedley

### In Attendance:

David Mears PSLCC – Town Clerk. There were no members of the public or press present.

### TC2020/36 To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies were received from S Aujla, J Cordiner, M Cresswell, G Granter, L Leavy, R Lilley, D Rodrigues and G Slocombe all due to concerns with COVID-19.

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

**TC2020/37 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

### TC2020/38 Coronavirus 'COVID-19'

I. to suspend all BTC meetings, standing orders and financial regulations

**RESOLVED** – that all BTC meetings, standing orders and financial regulations be suspended

II. to close all Town Council owned public used buildings

**RESOLVED** – to close all Town Council owned public used buildings

III. to delegate all powers and decision making of the council to the Town Clerk (*except those that are prohibited by legislation*) in conjunction with the appropriate Executive PFH as follows

- a. *Smedley - Finance, Communications, Art Centre, Museum*
- b. *Heywood - Civic engagements*
- c. *Redman - Town Hall, Premises, Hinkley Point, Carnival*
- d. *Lerry - Staff, Economy, Cemeteries, Planning*
- e. *Pearce - Community, Environment, Waterways*

- f. *Burrows - Transport*
- g. *Cordiner - Youth*
- h. *Gibson - Climate Change*

**RESOLVED** - to delegate all powers and decision making of the council to the Town Clerk (except those that are prohibited by legislation) in conjunction with the appropriate

- IV. That these actions should be in place until annual town council meeting of 21 May 2020; thus, allowing for plans for the Mayor Making to go ahead, but can be lifted at any time should the national emergency be downgraded and can be extended by the Town Clerk in consultation with and with the agreement of the majority of the portfolio holders if the situation is still prevalent

**RESOLVED** - That these actions should be in place until annual town council meeting of 21 May 2020; thus, allowing for plans for the Mayor Making to go ahead, but can be lifted at any time should the national emergency be downgraded and can be extended by the Town Clerk in consultation with and with the agreement of the majority of the portfolio holders if the situation is still prevalent

- V. Staff should be asked to work from home. No staff shall be penalised or forced to use holiday entitlement if work becomes in short supply or if their role doesn't lend itself to home working

**RESOLVED** – that all staff shall work from home for the foreseeable future

- VI. A system of virtual conferencing to be investigated for weekly link ups with the Town Clerk as controller

**RESOLVED** – that Zoom virtual conferencing to be used for weekly link ups with the Town Clerk as controller

- VII. A freeze on all grant funding and unessential planned spend until such a time as finances are clearer. This will not to apply to community centres, wages or where expenditure is contractual or essential to the running of the council. Cemeteries operations are exempt and the Town Clerk has full delegated authority over the running of the cemeteries

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- VIII. Getting communication right with regular daily announcements from a trusted source is important and the Leader should take on the role of External Communications pulling together information from the Local Authorities as issued with access to the town council web for dissemination. A statement from lead councillors at times is permitted.

**RESOLVED** - that the Leader should take on the role of External Communications pulling together information from the Local Authorities as issued with access to the town council web for dissemination. A statement from lead councillors at times is permitted

- IX. Setting up a Community Support group is something BTC should facilitate (but not run) and the PFH for Premises should be granted right of access to the Council premises to facilitate this demand as it develops whether this be resource hubs in the form of neighbourhood groups, village shops, delivery networks or storage.

**RESOLVED** - the PFH for Premises should be granted right of access to the Council premises to facilitate a COVID-19 Community Support Group as it develops whether this be resource hubs in the form of neighbourhood groups, village shops, delivery networks or storage

- X. To work with SDC & SCC as follows:

- a) We should ensure there is a plan in place for care for the elderly in the case of mass self-isolation and a plan for childcare for essential workers if schools and nurseries close
- b) All office jobs to be done remotely
- c) Minimisation of travel and movement
- d) Encourage social distancing
- e) More CV testing should be made available
- f) Noting that the Supply and Demand system will change drastically -alternatives should be put in place to deal with the potential for mass income loss -mortgage payments, council rents, council tax, utility bills, VAT, business rates -including a temporary suspension.
- g) Investigate the suspension of rent and rates payments for CV victims

**RESOLVED** – to work with SCC and SDC on the above aspirations.

With no further business the meeting closed at 17:36

Signed .....

Date .....