



Minutes of Bridgwater Town Council held in the Auditorium on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 19:00

Present:

Councillors, Lerry (Chair), Smedley, Loveridge, Slocombe, Hubble, Solomon, Pearce, Leavy, Marsh, Aujla, and Mander

Officers: David Mears, Town Clerk and Amy Storey, Office Administration Assistant

There were 11 members of the public and no press or members of the Police present.

Public Question time: A petition in regard to the Members Allowance was received by a member of the public which will be reviewed by the Town Council. The petition was followed by questions relating to the Council Tax in correlation to the Members Allowance.

TC2024/16 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: To receive apologies for Councillors, Heywood, Lilley, Morgan, Rodrigues, and Redman.

TC2024/17 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)

RESOLVED: No declarations of interests were received.

TC2024/18 TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024, (LGA 1972 SCH 12, PARA 41(1))

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 1 February 2024 as a correct record.

TC2024/19 MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS



RESOLVED: The Mayor attended the Showman's Guild Luncheon, the Mayor and Mayoress visited the three local pantries in Bridgwater and presented a cheque of £700 to each pantry from the money raised this past year, and the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress welcomed a visit from the American Exchange Students from Bridgwater and Taunton College, which has been running for the last 30 years.

TC2024/20 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL LEADER CLLR SMEDLEY TO UPDATE MEMBERS ON MATTERS OF INTEREST (N.B NO DECISIONS CAN BE TAKEN(1))

RESOLVED: To receive a report from the Town Council Leader, Councillor Smedley, once the staff structure has been set.

TC2024/21 TO RECIEVE AN ORAL UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON DEVOLUTION

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk gave an oral update on the TOUPE transfer from Somerset Council to Bridgwater Town Council which will take place on 1 May 2024 and announced the new Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Sally Jones, and the new Director of Amenities, Scott Mason. There will also be some improvements to the bins and bollards around the Town Centre, as well as the new website, which will be going to a public panel to test.

No questions were received.

TC2024/22 TO RECEIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS REPORTS AND CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

TC2024/22.1 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

RESOLVED: Councillor Slocombe asked the following questions:

1. Where will the street cleaning will take place? The Town Clerk confirmed this will take place across the whole of Bridgwater.
2. How much the cost for the pond at Quantock Road Cemetery will cost? Costs are currently being explored.
3. Are there plans for the tents by the allotments on Fairfield to be removed? It is best to engage with Street Link.

No more questions were received.

TC2024/22.2 ECONOMY AND STAFFING

RESOLVED: Councillor Aujla asked the following questions:



1. Who is the board for the Town Deal? Leader of Somerset Council, Chamber of Commerce
2. Is the new website and Destination Bridgwater part of the Town Team funding? Yes, it is funded by the Town Team and Animation Bridgwater.

Councillor Slocombe asked the following questions:

1. Any further with the Docks and where we are financially? No current updates.
2. Is the Town Hall suitable for the step-up project? Yes, the Town Hall is a preferred site.

No further questions were received.

TC2024/22.3 PROPERTY

RESOLVED: Councillor Slocombe asked the following questions:

1. Have the Town Hall had any feedback from the consultation? Not a firm update.
2. Can anything be said regarding the lease at this time? The Art Centre staff are in favour of Bridgwater Town Council taking on the lease and are happy to be getting on with the artistic side. There is a positive future for them.
3. Is the property next to the Art Centre repaired? Yes, there have been no complaints from the owner.

No further questions were asked.

TC2024/23 TO RECEIVE OUTSIDE BODIES REPORTS

RESOLVED: No Outside Bodies Reports were received.

TC2024/24 TO NOTE THE ACTION LIST

RESOLVED: To note.

TC2024/25 FINANCE - TO NOTE THE YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET AS OF 6TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED: To note.



TC2024/26 FINANCE – TO NOTE THE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENTS & INCOME RECEIVED FOR FEBRUARY 2024 To note items of expenditure as approved under delegated authority or under previous Council/Committee decisions

RESOLVED: To note.

TC2024/27 BANK MANDATE To agree to remove the existing Finance Officer, add the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and the new Finance Officer to the Bank Mandate

RESOLVED: To agree to remove the existing Finance Officer and add the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and the new Finance Officer to the Bank Mandate.

TC2024/28 MOTION PROPOSAL BY CLLR LEAVY

That this council confirms its support for Bridgwater Carnival and steps in to provide funding to Bridgwater Carnival (that was previously funded by Somerset Council that has now been withdrawn) for safety barriers and additional toilets for Bridgwater's 2024 carnival. This funding (£16,000) to be taken from the Community Development 'Devolution Contingency' budget for the financial year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: That Bridgwater Town Council confirms its support for Bridgwater Carnival and steps in to provide funding to Bridgwater Carnival for safety barriers and additional toilets for Bridgwater's 2024 carnival. This funding (£16,000) to be taken from the Community Development 'Devolution Contingency' budget for the financial year 2024/25.

TC2024/29 THE MEADS

to take over ownership and responsibility for the Meads from Somerset Council

RESOLVED: That Bridgwater Town Council will take over the ownership and responsibility of the Meads from Somerset Council.

TC2024/30 TO CONSIDER REPLACING THE WELCOME TO BRIDGWATER SIGN ON THE APPROACH FROM THE A39 AT THE NEW COCKERHURST FARM DEVELOPMENT

RESOLVED: To replace the Welcome to Bridgwater sign on the approach from the A39 at the new Cockerhurst Farm development.

TC2024/31 TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES AS THE COUNCIL'S THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER (RFO, S151 LGA1972)



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and that the Town Clerk and CEO is the Deputy RFO from 15 April 2024 as recommended by the interview panel.

RESOLVED: To confirm the appointment of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer.

TC2024/32 TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING Thursday May 9th 2024

RESOLVED: To note.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **20:12**

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Signed.....

Dated.....