



**Minutes of Bridgwater Town Council held in the Auditorium on
Thursday 7 December 2023 at 19:00**

Present:

Councillors: Mick Lerry (Chair) Brian Smedley, Irena Hubble, Jacqui Solomon, Kathy Pearce, Leigh Redman, Liz Leavy, Rachel Lilley, Suria Aujla, Tim Mander.

In attendance: David Mears, Town Clerk – remotely via Teams, Lorna Williams - Democratic Services Officer, 2 Police and 1 Councillor from Somerset Council. There were no members of the Public or Press present.

Before the meeting started the Chair invited the Police to present their report of incidents reported to the police in the last 3 months for Bridgwater. The Police stated that the boundaries that make up the statistics are the ones used for the Local Community Networks which are different from the Towns boundaries. The Police agreed to produce an annual figure for statistics. The PCSO who has a remit for safer streets gave the lack of lighting and CCTV in public areas as the top concerns of the public.

TC2023/98 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN (LGA 1972 S85 (1))

RESOLVED: Apologies were received and reasons approved from Councillors Loveridge and Slocombe who were unwell, Councillor Heywood who had prior engagement, Councillor Marsh who had a family emergency and Councillor Morgan who had a work commitment.

TC2023/99 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 declarations of interest received.



TC2023/100 TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2023, (LGA 1972 SCH 12, PARA 41(1))

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 12 October 2023 be signed as a correct record.

TC2023/101 MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLVED: The Mayor has attended the following events: The tree planting at Wembdon Cemetery, presented a wreath to the Poppy Train to Paddington, Remembrance Sunday events, presented 2 awards at the Chamber of Commerce awards ceremony, attended the Snowflakes event and switched on the Christmas lights. The Mayor thanked his Deputy for attending the History Day in his absence.

TC2023/102 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: The updated report was noted.

TC2023/103 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK

RESOLVED: The Clerk informed the meeting that the Legal Notice for the 'disposal of land from Somerset Council to Bridgwater Town Council' has been issued; this means that the public are able to make comments and objections which may delay the process but probably would not stop it from happening. It was also noted that ReCreation will be opening next week.

The Devolution Pilot has already been agreed and the Town Council already have a budget for what is coming over – but not yet for the increase in staffing, this will need to go to the Staffing sub-committee. It was noted that the statutory deadline for submitting the budget to Somerset Council is 29 February 2024. There will be a need for an extra-ordinary Full Town Council Meeting as the figures for the budget will not be ready for the next Full Council meeting on 18 January 2024.



TC2023/104 TO RECEIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS REPORTS AND CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED: The reports from Portfolio Holders of, Community, Culture and Heritage, Economy & Staffing, Property and Youth were noted.

TC2023/105 TO RECEIVE OUTSIDE BODIES REPORTS

RESOLVED: No reports were received.

TC2023/106 TO RECEIVE THE PROJECTS OFFICER'S REPORT

To adopt the recommendations contained therein. In addition to approve using funds from reserves to convert the identified rooms into residential accommodation and to give delegated authority to the town clerk in conjunction with the portfolio holder for properties to commence tendering and to award tenders for the work and to commence works.

RESOLVED: To adopt the recommendations in the report and approve using the funds from reserves.

TC2023/107 TO NOTE THE ACTION LIST

RESOLVED: The Action List was noted.

TC2023/108 FINANCE - TO NOTE THE YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET AS OF 5TH DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: To note.

TC2023/109 FINANCE – TO NOTE THE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & INCOME RECEIVED FOR NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: To note.



TC2023/110 TO NOTE THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL FOR THE DRAFT BUDGET PREPARATION AND DEVOLUTION

RESOLVED: Item noted.

The Chair thanked David for his Devolution work in delivering the ambition that the council have.

TC2023/111 TO RATIFY THE TOWN CLERK'S DECISION THAT THE COUNCIL LEASES A UNIT AT AXE ROAD TO HOUSE THE PARK AND OPEN SPACES TEAM

RESOLVED: To agree with the decision to lease units at Axe Road.

TC2023/112 MOTION FROM CLLR SMEDLEY - TO AMEND STANDING ORDER 3E TO INCLUDE:

To ask a question or speak at a meeting, you will need to submit your request to a member of the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting. You can request to speak at a council meeting by emailing your full name, the agenda item and your question to the Democratic Services Team emailing enquiries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk

Any requests need to be received by 5pm on the day that provides 2 clear working days before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Thursday, requests need to be received by 5pm on the Monday prior to the meeting.

The Chair will invite you to speak at the beginning of the meeting under the agenda item Public Question Time, but speaking is limited to 3 minutes. You can only speak to the Council or Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item, then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the group.

Councillor Smedley added amendments to the motion – You can request to speak at a council meeting by emailing *or writing* your full name.....
But speaking is limited to 3 minutes *unless the Chair invites additional time.*

RESOLVED: To amend standing order 3e as per motion and amendment.



TC2023/113 TO AUTHORISE THE TOWN CLERK IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROPERTIES PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO LIAISE WITH THE AGENTS OF THE FORMER ROYAL BRITISH LEGION BUILDING IN CASTLE STREET

to ascertain a sale price of the property and to develop a proposal to submit to the Government’s Community Ownership Fund. The Town Clerk may use funds from the professional fees budget to appoint a bid writer due to timescales.

RESOLVED: To authorise the Town Clerk and Properties Portfolio Holder to liaise with the agents of the former Royal British Legion Building in Castle Street. And to recommend that the Property Committee look at developing a list of Assets of Community Value to create a Property Asset Register.

TC2023/114 TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 18th January 2024

RESOLVED. To note.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20:19

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Signed.....

Dated.....