

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 11 November 2019 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllr: Maggie Ray (Chairman)

Cllrs: Geoffrey Ackerman	Gill Massey
Rose Allwork	Martin Ray
Karen Hunt	Anne Rickard
Julian Jones	Sarah Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr Dave Rickard

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no speakers in the public forum.

### **40. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

### **41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **42. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the addition of the figure £311,457.10 to minute 39 as the total payment amount, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **43. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON WORKING GROUP**

The Town Clerk reported that there was one recommendation from the last meeting of the Working Group held on 22 October 2019, the notes of which had been circulated with the agenda. The recommendation was to develop a Markets Policy with input from councillors.

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 22 October 2019 be received and noted, and that the recommendation therein be adopted.

### **44. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2019/2020 – 2nd REVISION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3459.

RESOLVED: that the 2nd revision of the estimates for the year 2019/2020 be approved.

### **45. BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2019-24**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3461.

The Town Clerk reported that as agreed by the Council, the draft plan circulated with the agenda had been developed through a working party open to all members. It had met twice in October 2019. The draft plan also drew on consultation with officers and public engagement via a survey. The document incorporated contextual information on the Council, its governance and its services before setting out a mission, approach to community engagement, monitoring arrangements, strategic priorities and objectives. The remainder of the document listed the proposed projects for the life of the plan under four priority areas – Climate Emergency, For the Town, For the Community and For a Well-Run Council. The Climate Emergency priority had a single action – to deliver the Climate Emergency Action Plan, which itself contains a further 76 actions. This approach avoided duplication and the possibility of the two plans not being synchronised. The results of public engagement were shown as an appendix to the draft plan, and if approved, the document would be tabled for the next Full Council meeting.

Members considered the draft plan, and requested amendments as follows:

- That there be an explanation of the five-year duration of the plan, i.e. so that it matches with the current election cycle.
- That public admission to committee meetings be incorporated.
- That the final sentence of paragraph 2 in the ‘Cross Cutting Priority’ section be re-worded for clarity.
- That the term ‘community warehouse’ be removed from the ‘For the Town’ action plan.
- That the phrase “and enable change” be removed from the Values for Residents section.
- That the mission statement be updated to read “...offer, set within...”
- That the word “Three” be removed from the first page of the appendix to the plan.
- That the reference to consultation should explain how consultation responses will be used.

RECOMMEND: that subject to the changes discussed by the committee, the draft Bridport Town Council Five Year Plan 2019-24 be approved for consultation.

#### **46. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3462.

The Town Clerk reported that the tabled document has been updated since the agenda was published, following discussion at E&SW. The key change for this committee was in the Budget/Resources section at page 8 of the appendix to the report. This now read:

##### **Budget/Resources**

A meaningful action plan requires commitment of funding and resources. Bridport Town Council will:

- Agree a commitment to contribute £100k from BTC reserves in 2020 to kick start delivery of this action plan;
- Consider creating a dedicated staff post to drive and support the climate actions in this plan.
- Explore other sources of funding, including through grant applications.

The Clerk advised that it was for the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee to consider the content of the document. Finance & General Purposes Committee would need to agree the funding arrangements, and specifically at this stage the £100,000 requested from reserves.

Members discussed the financial requirement, noted that any reserve should be immediately available rather than in 2020 as indicated in the draft plan, and

RECOMMEND: that an earmarked reserve of £100,000 to support the Climate Emergency Action Plan be approved from 2019-20.

#### **47. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3463.

The Town Surveyor summarised the report, updating members on the following items.

- Lease of The Grove. The master lease and two sub-leases had been completed, and further sub-leases were nearing completion.
- Asset Transfers. Agreements were nearing completion.
- Bus Station. An initial officer meeting had taken place.
- Highway Verges. A five-year contract was being sought, and if agreed would require additional equipment for more efficient delivery, and for promotion of wild flower growth.
- Skate Park. A third party was looking to fund a project to replace the outdoor skate park and an initial meeting had been held.
- Tree planting programme. A programme for Asker Meadows was in place. A new planting scheme was under consideration, at Riverside Gardens or another suitable site.
- Play areas. West Bay Play Area had received the bronze award for accessibility/inclusivity at Dorset Tourism Awards.
- The cost of feasibility work for development at the Old Dairy site.
- The potential sale of parcels of land adjacent to the former railway line for access.
- Withdrawal of Coastal Communities funding for a boardwalk at East Beach.
- South Mill, in which an interest had been expressed.

Members considered:

- Surplus income from The Grove.
- The relocation of the History Centre from the Coach House.
- The demand for a music studio at the Bus Station.
- A bio-fuel conversion for grass-cutting equipment.
- The need for carbon impact to be considered in Council projects.
- The involvement of the Coastal Communities Team in alternative projects, following cancellation of the boardwalk at East Beach.
- The wildlife and environmental impact of selling parcels of land adjacent to the former railway line.

RECOMMEND: that

- (i) Delegated authority be given to the Town Surveyor to enter into agreement and purchase additional equipment for verge maintenance.

- (ii) £2,000 for feasibility work relating to the Old Dairy site be approved.
- (iii) Delegated authority is sought to enter into transfer agreements for parcels of land at the former railway line.
- (iv) The Town Clerk to respond to Dorset Coast Forum regarding the East Beach boardwalk project, and that the matter be considered by the Coastal Communities Team at the earliest opportunity.

#### **48. COMMUNITY BUS**

The Town Clerk reported that a review of the service was focused on three options:

1. Dorset Community Transport (DCT).
2. A local taxi firm.
3. A continuation of the existing service through First Wessex.

He advised that he was in contact with DCT and a local taxi firm, and the aim was to firm up a preferred option by the end of November 2019. If a change was agreed then this would most likely happen early in the New Year. In the meantime, passenger numbers were stable and very slightly increasing over time. Town councillors were committed to maintaining the service in whichever form was most cost effective.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Town Clerk be noted.

#### **49. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2018/2019**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3464.

The Town Clerk reported that the external auditor had examined the AGAR for 2018/2019 and had offered a clean bill of health. He said that this success was thanks to the work and diligence of the Finance Manager, which often went unnoticed. Despite the absence of comment, the report of the auditor would need to be accepted by the Council.

RECOMMEND: that the report and finding of the external auditor in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/2019 be approved.

RESOLVED: that Bridport Town Council thanks and congratulates the Finance & Office Manager for this achievement.

#### **50. INTERNAL AUDIT**

Consideration was given to a report of the internal auditor, ENCL: 3465.

The Town Clerk report that the internal auditor had examined April to August 2019.

RECOMMEND: that the report of the internal auditor be noted.

**51. NALC LARGER COUNCILS COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

The Town Clerk reported on a request from the Town Clerk to Weymouth Town Council for support in her possible election to the NALC Larger Councils Committee.

RESOLVED: that the request for support be agreed.

**52. SOCIAL PRESCRIBING**

The Town Clerk reported that there were no recommendations from the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee, and consequently no requirement to consider this item.

**53. TELEPHONE KIOSK ADOPTION**

The Town Clerk advised that the Planning Committee had recommended to F&GP Committee that it consider adopting a telephone kiosk in Court Orchard Road, should BT withdraw the payphone.

Members considered the potential uses, costs and resource requirements and

RESOLVED: that no application be made to adopt the telephone kiosk at Court Orchard Road at this time.

**54. DORSET COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN**

The Town Clerk reported that Dorset Council was consulting on its draft corporate plan. This was a significant document and the Clerk suggested it be considered at a working group.

Members discussed the need for all councillors to be engaged in this issue, with the support of Cllr Dave Bolwell who had been provided with information for briefing to town and parish councils.

RESOLVED: that the matter be considered at the next Full Council meeting.

**55. TOWN CRIER ENGAGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3460.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

**56. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following reports were received:

Community Orchard: Cllr Gill Massey advised that Wassailing would take place on 12 January 2020 in the Community Orchard.

Bridport Area Development Trust: Cllr Sarah Williams advised that the AGM was to be held on 15 November at 6pm. She would be standing down as the Town Council representative and a replacement would be sought at the next Full Council.

Christmas Cheer: Cllr Anne Rickard advised that a fundraising bingo event was to be held on 15 November 2019.

**57. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were tabled.

**58. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Town Clerk presented List 3 of the 2019/20 accounts, in the sum of £279,942.37, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting.

**59. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

*RESOLVED: "That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw."*

**60. PROPERTY AND LEASING MATTERS**

The Town Surveyor reported contractually confidential updates on The Grove, the WI Hall, the Community Shed, West Bay public WiFi and service/asset transfers.

RESOLVED: that a long-term lease be agreed with the Community Shed.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

The meeting closed at **8.56pm**

**The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 13 January 2020**