

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 16 March 2020 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr: Maggie Ray (Chairman)

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

Also in attendance: Cllr Dave Rickard.

Prior to the meeting, councillors discussed, at length, the possible future impact of Covid19.

The Town Clerk reported that staff had been issued with advice and guidance on hygiene, distancing, sick pay, homeworking, and other matters. Council services would continue for the time being with appropriate precautions and in line with any Government guidance or regulation. Events would be considered individually. It was anticipated that the position might change in the coming days and actions would be taken accordingly.

The Town Clerk further advised that in light of the latest Government advice, all meetings were to be postponed following Planning Committee on 23 March, with the exception of the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Council Meeting, which would be minimal in terms of attendance and business. Agendas and supporting papers for Council meetings would still be issued to enable member input.

Mayoral appointments were to be cancelled until further notice.

These decisions had been taken under delegation and in consultation with the Leader and the Town Mayor, given the urgency of the situation.

The Clerk asked members for views on Town Council actions to be taken in support of the vulnerable. The following were considered:

- Co-ordination of local support groups, and collation of the available support;
- The development of a single point of contact for information and support;
- Financial and logistical support to Food Bank and other groups as appropriate; and
- Provision of mobile phones, protective screens and other equipment if required.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

79. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Geoffrey Ackerman and Barry Irvine.

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Sarah Carney declared an interest in agenda item 4 (Best Value & Scrutiny Committee, see minute 82 below) in respect of both the Burrough Harmony Centre and West Bay Discovery Centre (of the Bridport Area Development Trust).

Cllr Maggie Ray declared an interest in agenda item 4 (Best Value & Scrutiny Committee, see minute 82 below).

Cllr Martin Ray advised that he had not voted in committee on any item relating to grant awards (see minute 82 below) in which he had an interest.

Cllr Anne Rickard declared an interest in agenda item 4 (Best Value & Scrutiny Committee, see minute 82 below) as a member of Transition Town Bridport.

Cllr Dave Rickard declared an interest in agenda item 4 (Best Value & Scrutiny Committee, see minute 82 below) as a member of Transition Town Bridport.

81. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82. BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 3 March 2020 be received and the following recommendations be approved:

(min. 33) Investments Review 2019/20 and Strategy 2020/21

RESOLVED: (1) that the investments made in 2019/20 be noted as in the report.
(2) that the investments strategy be approved as drafted.

(min. 34) Asset Register

RESOLVED: that the Asset Register be approved and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make any final amendments, before it is signed by the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk.

(min. 35) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

RESOLVED: (1) that the Council's Standing Orders be approved for use without amendment, pending a review taking account of updated model provisions.
(2) that the Council's Financial Regulations be approved for use without amendment, pending a review taking account of updated model provisions.
(3) that the model Standing Orders be adapted for Bridport Town Council during 2020/21, and presented to the Sub-Committee for approval.
(4) that the model Financial Regulations be adapted for Bridport Town Council during 2020/21 and presented to the Sub-Committee for approval.

(min. 36) Community Grants

RESOLVED: that the following grants be paid:

Organisation	Amount
Bridport Youth Dance	£300
Dorset Blind Association	£250
Bridport Sea Cadets	£300
Bridport & District Citizens Advice	£500
Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington Village Hall Trust	£250
1st Charmouth Guides Note: Suggest approach Charmouth PC for remainder.	£125
Melplash Village Hall	£500
Bridport Community Orchard Group	£350
The Stepping Out Cancer Rehabilitation Community Group	£500
Bridport Community Shed	£250
Home-Start West Dorset	£500
Skills Training Bridport	£300
Bridport Gateway Club/West Dorset Mencap	£250
1st West Bay Sea Scouts Note: Request that boiler be electric not gas.	£100
Bridport Heritage Forum	£300
Bridport Child Contact Centre	£500
The Burrough Harmony Centre	£300
West Bay Discovery Centre (Bridport Area Development Trust)	£500
Chancery Trips	£500
Bridport Young Performers	£300
Allington Hill and Cooper's Wood & Field Community Group	£300
Bridport Area Tree Planting Campaign Note: Conditional on funding being ring-fenced for this project if the funding is held by Friends of the Earth.	£300
Salway Ash Primary School PTA	£300
BYPAT	£500
Transition Town Bridport Ltd.	£250
Loders Youth Club	£132
Total	£8,657

83. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 11 February 2020 be received and the following recommendation be approved:

(min. 5)

Market Issues

RESOLVED:

- (1) that a further report be provided on possible changes to market fees.
- (2) that the Dog Warden be consulted regarding dogs at Bridport Market.

RESOLVED: that a flexible approach be adopted towards market traders during the Coronavirus outbreak, including suspension of the 'four-week rule', whilst maintaining the quality of stalls that do attend.

84. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

(min. 55)

Raise the Roof Project

RESOLVED: that Bridport Town Council agree to be a partner in Raise the Roof Phase 2 and allocate a budget for design and construction of a community building for grant application purposes.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that a capital allocation of £15,000 be approved subject to the preparation of a detailed business plan.

85. SERVICES ADMINISTED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 3499.

Bus Station:

RESOLVED: that an additional £8,000 be agreed to be funded from the Town Plan projects budget.

Skate Park:

Cllr Karen Hunt declared an interest as an acquaintance of the group pursuing the indoor skate park.

A motion to agree a contribution of £2,500 to this project fell on the casting vote of the Chairman (4 for, 4 against, casting vote against). Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED: that £5,000 be agreed alongside the approved Dorset Council contribution, and that the group be recommended to approach Dorset Council for additional funding.

The vote on this resolution was 7 in favour, 2 against.

Town Centre electricity feeder pillars:

RESOLVED: that £5,000 be agreed for the installation from earmarked reserves.

Members suggested that any Christmas lights installation using a pillar in Bucky Doo Square be checked to ensure it is eco-friendly, and that a photovoltaic panel also be considered.

Other Matters

The Town Clerk advised that almost all of the agreed asset transfers from Dorset Council had been completed, save the former railway line and West Bay Play Area, which had been delayed by the need to ensure access for Dorset Council.

The Town Clerk further advised that scaffold was to be installed in the coming weeks to enable the exterior redecoration of the Town Hall. Members highlighted a preference for the timing to be sooner rather than later.

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

86. COMMUNITY BUS WORKING GROUP

The Town Clerk reported that the Community Bus Working Group had met on 12 March 2020 to consider submissions from three potential operators for the round-Bridport bus service.

Members considered the findings of the Working Group, and

RESOLVED: that of the three companies considered, Dorset Community Transport be awarded a contract to operate the service, with a preference for a trial period of nine months, and marketing of the service to young people.

87. BUDGET 2019/20 – EARMARKING

The Finance and Office Manager reported that, in line with previous years, budget headings underspent may be reserved, to help towards a balanced budget for the current financial year budget and to give flexibility for spending, outside of the formal annual accounts cycle.

RESOLVED: that the earmarking be carried out under delegation in line with the approach set out by the Finance and Office Manager.

88. PENSIONS DISCRETIONS POLICY – REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3500.

RESOLVED: that the existing Pensions Discretions Policy be confirmed, with no changes.

89. DAPTC SUBSCRIPTION

The Town Clerk reported that the annual DAPTC subscription would be due shortly, and asked members to consider whether the Council should renew.

RESOLVED: that the renewal of the Town Council's annual subscription to DAPTC be agreed.

Members noted with sadness the recent passing of Alan Thacker, Chairman of DAPTC and former West Dorset District Council member.

90. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Gill Massey reported that the Orchard Group was likely to cancel its annual MayFest event.

91. COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Clerk reported that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 March 2020.

92. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 5 of the 2019/20 accounts, in the sum of £221,056.02 which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This

having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

93. 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.

94. PROPERTY AND LEASING MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on negotiations between the Town Surveyor and potential tenants and community groups towards the provision of a community facility using a model similar to that adopted for The Grove. A detailed report would follow once discussions were finalised.

The Town Clerk further reported that the Town Surveyor had negotiated a new 5 year verge cutting contract with Dorset Council to 2025. A new 'cut and collect' mower was proposed, at an estimated cost of £26,800 net of disposal of other equipment. The mower was not electric but had been recommended by Dorset Council as the most environmentally friendly option as it should reduce cutting frequency and encourage wild flower growth. A timetable for moving all other equipment and vehicles over to electric was in preparation.

RESOLVED: that the purchase of a new mower to support the verge cutting contract be approved.

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

95. STAFFING UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported on the impending retirement of a Council officer. Arrangements were outline for the reallocation of some aspects of the officer's work, and recruitment to cover the remainder.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

The meeting closed at **9.15pm**.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 8 June 2020