

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 711-316-077) ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Wednesday 3 June 2020 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman from item 2)

Ian Bark	Ros Kayes
Sarah Carney	Anne Rickard
Karen Hunt	Dave Rickard
Barry Irvine	Steve Williams

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Julian Jones, Will Austin (Town Clerk), David Dixon (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer) and two members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr Kelvin Clayton be elected Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

Councillor Kelvin Clayton took the Chair.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr Dave Rickard be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public requested to speak at the Public Forum.

3. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Town Clerk advised members that the tabled report, ENCL: 3513, was an update on Climate Emergency Action Plan activity. This work was being overseen by a dedicated sub committee and the update had been tabled to the committee for information and comment, but not for decisions.

Members discussed:

- The location of a possible solar PV array.
- The need to consider additional staffing capacity to deliver the action plan.
- Possible grant support for a solar PV array.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

7. PEDESTRIAN/CYCLING ACCESS

The Town Clerk reported on emergency changes to highway arrangements to better enable social distancing:

- The use of laybys in the town centre for market stalls.
- A road closure at The Esplanade in West Bay.
- The closure of part of George Street in West Bay. This had been agreed but was not yet in place.
- Changes in the Harbour Green area to encourage social distancing by visiting motorcyclists.

Members discussed:

- The need to ensure that the car park in front of The George public house remained available.
- Whether the changes at George Street should be accompanied by a one-way system.
- Whether the changes at West Bay would be improved further by moving the bus stop to West Bay Road.

The Town Clerk outlined further potential changes that were under discussion:

- The use of Barrack Street for market stalls.
- A possible one-way system on South Street to provide more space for better social distancing.

The Clerk invited members to consider comments and additional measures. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer advised of a distinction between immediate urgent changes and other longer term measures to feed into the Neighbourhood Plan Access and Movement project.

Members discussed:

- The merits of a partial closure of South Street and the opportunity to assess the impact for consideration over the longer term.
- Whether social distancing should be referred to as physical distancing.
- Whether the changes at South Street would be enhanced by reversing the one-way system in Gundry Lane.
- The need to complete the missing length of cycle route on Sea Road South, and ensure that all existing routes are complete, safe and accessible.
- The narrowing of pavements by goods displayed outside shops, and by pedestrians stopping to socialise, sometimes made worse due to dogs on leads.
- Concerns about the pedestrian arrangements near the Medical Centre where the road and pavement narrowed.
- The need to ensure that cyclists and emergency access are considered in changing access to Barrack Street.
- Consideration of additional cycle parking to encourage cycling.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Town Clerk be noted, and member comments be fed into further discussions.

8. BRIDPORT GREEN ROUTE

The Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer reported on progress with the Green Route project. The route had been launched informally, a leaflet had been produced and was ready for distribution, and family walks were proposed for July 2020.

Cllr Ian Bark noted that the initiative could be covered in the Mayoral blog.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer be noted.

9. RIGHTS RESPECTING PROJECT

The Town Clerk reported that the Rights Respecting Steering Group had not met since the last meeting of the committee, but had engaged in informal discussion about possible Town Council actions and a statement of commitment. A draft was presented to members. If agreed by the Steering Group, this would be brought forward for formal consideration.

Cllrs Dave Rickard and Kelvin Clayton advised members not to comment on the draft until the Steering Group had considered it. Cllr Anne Rickard added that there was a need to ensure that Town Council actions were not excessively onerous.

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

10. 5G MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3514, which outlined actions by other town councils in respect of 5G mobile communications, and the health and privacy concerns raised.

Members discussed:

- The merits or otherwise of the available evidence of an adverse impact on health.
- The need to ensure that privacy was not compromised by 5G.
- Concerns about surveillance.
- Concerns that scientific evidence might be manipulated.
- The merits of adopting the precautionary principle in relation to the rollout of 5G.
- The extent to which the issue might be the result of unwarranted conspiracy theories.
- The need to prioritise other known health risks such as road safety.
- Concerns about the reliability of some publicity opposing 5G.
- The dangers for the community of rejecting new technology.
- The lack of community input into the development of 5G and control over its use, and concerns that control might be in the hands of US and Chinese corporate interests.
- The large number of aerials required.

The Town Clerk advised that any member was at liberty to bring forward a motion on the subject.

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

11. DOG WARDEN SERVICE

The Town Clerk reported on a suggestion by Dorset Council that the Town Council consider employing a Dog Warden.

Members discussed:

- Whether the costs would be recouped.
- Whether problems with dogs and dog mess had worsened during the COVID-19 lockdown.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council is unable to consider employing a Dog Warden, unless support funding is provided by Dorset Council.

12. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Ian Bark reported that he was engaging with the Plastic Free Bridport group and would report back from meetings.

Cllr Kelvin Clayton reported that the Bridport Youth & Community Centre would continue to furlough staff until early July at the earliest. Planning was being undertaken to enable the Centre to reopen at the earliest opportunity.

13. COMMUNICATIONS/UPDATES ON OTHER ONGOING ISSUES

The Town Clerk reported that:

- Bridport Market would be expanded from 3 June 2020 to include non-essential stalls, with appropriate social distancing arrangements.
- The return of some officers from home working to the office base at Mountfield.
- Members might usefully begin to consider whether virtual meetings should continue in whole or in part.

The Chairman said he hoped that the next committee meeting would be a physical meeting. Cllr Dave Rickard considered that the arrangements in Parliament were a denial of democracy. A hybrid virtual/actual meeting could be considered, but whatever the solution, the ability to vote should not be compromised. Cllr Ian Bark expressed concern that public access to virtual meetings was not as straightforward as for physical meetings.

The meeting closed at **8.26pm**.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 9 September 2020