

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 777-258-597) of  
**BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 5.30pm.

PRESENT Cllr Ian Bark – Town Mayor (in the Chair)

Cllr	Geoff Ackerman	Ros Kayes (from 7.12pm)
	Rose Allwork	Gill Massey
	Dave Bolwell	Maggie Ray
	Sarah Carney	Martin Ray
	Kelvin Clayton	Anne Rickard
	Karen Hunt	Dave Rickard
	Barry Irvine	Sarah Williams
	Julian Jones	Steve Williams

ALSO PRESENT Will Austin (Town Clerk), Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), Paul Fuszard (Finance and Office Manager) and Terri Foxwell (Tourist Information Centre Manager)

### **OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

Esmerelda Voegele-Downing and Tilda Best spoke as two of the three main organisers of the Black Lives Matter rally that had been peacefully held in Bridport the previous weekend. They outlined the background to the campaign, Bridport's history in relation to the slave trade and their expectations for future engagement and education. They hoped to see a lasting anti-racism presence, perhaps in the form of a plaque/public art, links with the Rights Respecting Group and Museum, and a review of policing in Dorset.

Members discussed:

- The potential for a racism focus at the Rights Respecting Steering Group.
- The additional benefit of the campaign for youth engagement.
- The need to highlight the historical context for Bridport, and to press for teaching of black history in schools.
- The well-organised recent Black Lives Matter event at Mountfield.

The Town Clerk agreed to pursue a letter to Dorset Police, liaison with the Rights Respecting Steering Group and a possible installation as part of the Bridport Sculpture Trail.

The Town Mayor thanked Esmerelda and Tilda for their address, at which point they left the meeting.

### **14. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Sandra Brown and (for lateness) Ros Kayes.

### **15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**16. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor (Chairman).

**17. STANDING ORDER 14(b)**

There were no questions pursuant to standing order 14(b).

**18. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1 June 2020 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Dave Bolwell.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1 June 2020 be received.

(b) FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8 June 2020 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Maggie Ray.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8 June 2020 be received and adopted, and that the recommendations therein be approved, as set out below: -

(Minute 7) REPORT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Finance and Officer Manager was thanked for all his work and for the good audit report.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Internal Auditor for the final visit of 2019/20 be received and approved.

(Minute 8) ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounts for 2019/20 be approved.

(Minute 10 (i)) CORONAVIRUS – RESPONSE AND IMPACT

RESOLVED: that a working group be established to review the Town Council Five-Year Plan, considering priorities, funding, and new requirements arising from COVID-19. The membership of this group to comprise the Mayor, Leader and committee/sub committee chairs.

(Minute 10 (ii)) CORONAVIRUS – RESPONSE AND IMPACT

RESOLVED: that a working group and remit be established to consider a post-COVID-19 community plan, engaging Bridport Business Chamber, Bridport Collaboration Group, and the Bridport Coronavirus Community Support Group. The Town Council membership to comprise Cllrs Rose Allwork, Sarah Carney and Sarah Williams.

(Minute 13) APPOINTMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED: that the list of representatives on outside bodies be approved as in Appendix 1 to the minutes, subject to any additional amendments at Full Council.

(c) ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 3 June 2020 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Kelvin Clayton.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 3 June 2020 be received and adopted.

**19. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2019/2020**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3520.

The Responsible Financial Officer summarised the process, culminating in the preparation of the annual accounts and highlighted

- Annual Internal Audit Report,
- Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement, and
- Section 2, the Accounting Statements for the year 2019/20

Each of the above were considered separately and each was moved and seconded, put to the vote and declared to be carried. It was therefore:

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 be noted, as attached to the report.
- (ii) that the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, Section 1, be approved as attached to the report.
- (iii) that the Accounting Statements 2019/20, Section 2, be approved as attached to the report.
- (iv) that the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

**20. MOTION ON SUPPORT TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

Councillors considered a motion from Cllr Dave Rickard submitted in accordance with Standing Order 11(a), and seconded at the meeting by Cllr Maggie Ray in respect of financial support to town and parish councils during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED: that the motion be amended and approved as follows and submitted to the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils:

### THE MOTION

#### **Bridport Town Council notes that:**

- a. Government departments, businesses, individuals, charitable organisations and principal local authorities have all seen specific funding support.
- b. Town and Parish councils are arguably the only sector of society not to have received some form of direct government support.
- c. Those councils in tourist areas like Dorset are suffering not only more costs in adapting to the regulations to protect our society and organising community support networks, but also from loss of revenue from the restriction of visitors.

#### **Bridport Town Council requests that Her Majesty's Government recognises that:**

- a. Town and Parish Councils are expected to rely on business income to supplement their precept revenue and, in the light of disappearing subsidies from higher authorities, are suffering financially during the present crisis.
- b. In many areas of our delivery of services and community support, we are no different from small businesses which currently are eligible for grants, loans and rate & tax reliefs to mitigate those financial shortfalls.

#### **Bridport Town Council therefore calls on Her Majesty's Government to:**

- a. Ensure that affected Town & Parish Councils are given financial support during and beyond the present crisis.

### **21. MOTION ON FIRES ON PUBLICLY AVAILABLE LAND**

Councillors considered the following motion from Cllr Sarah Williams submitted in accordance with Standing Order 11(a), and seconded at the meeting by Cllr Kelvin Clayton in respect of fires on publicly available land.

\*\*\*Cllr Ros Kayes joined the meeting at this point (7.12pm)\*\*\*

Following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED: that the motion be amended and approved as follows:

In light of the danger of fires caused by recent dry weather, and considering the strain placed on already stretched emergency services, this Council:

- a. Agrees to prohibit the lighting of fires of any form, including disposable barbecues, on any land owned or otherwise controlled by Bridport Town Council until further notice. This prohibition will remain in force until such time as reversed by the Council, and exceptions will be allowed only with the permission of the Council.
- b. Calls on landowners in the Bridport area to implement similar prohibitions.

## **22. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

RESOLVED: that the topic for discussion at the next full Council meeting would be whether the Town Council should embrace virtual meetings after COVID-19, return to physical meetings, or consider a hybrid of the two.

## **23. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Town Mayor reported on a meeting with the High Sheriff, the Mayoral blog that was under construction, and recognising the town's 'Lockdown Heroes'. He also placed on formal record the Council's thanks to Linda Bullock for her highly valued support and hard work during her 22-year career with the Town Council.

The Leader of the Council suggested that a photo of the Mayoress adorned with her chain should be arranged, that the Green Ring Route was up and running and that it was the former Leader, Cllr Sarah Williams', birthday.

The Town Clerk reported that Linda Bullock had arranged her leaving ceremony at Mountfield on the afternoon of Friday 26 June and that council would continue with the 5.30pm start time for evening meetings, with the exception of full council, which would revert to 7.00pm.

The Town Surveyor reported that the indoor skate park at Gore Cross was nearing completion and councillors were invited to view the facility.

The meeting closed at **7.37pm**

**The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 29 September 2020**