

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 558-139-565) of
BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL held on Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 7.00pm.

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

Cllr	Rose Allwork	Ros Kayes
	Dave Bolwell	Gill Massey
	Sarah Carney	Anne Rickard
	Kelvin Clayton	Dave Rickard
	Karen Hunt	Sarah Williams
	Julian Jones	Steve Williams

ALSO PRESENT Martyn Underhill (Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner), Inspectors Jonathan Wasey and Darren Stanton (Dorset Police), Will Austin (Town Clerk), Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), Terri Foxwell (Tourist Information Centre Manager), Paul Fuszard (Finance and Office Manager), one member of the public and one representative of the press.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

Policing in Bridport and Dorset

Martyn Underhill (Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)) introduced himself and his role, and outlined arrangements for the delayed PCC elections in May 2021. He also set out the Police role in managing and enforcing the law, in relation to COVID-19. He highlighted positive examples of issues that had been addressed during the pandemic, such as homeless people being accommodated and a reduction in hospital 'bed blocking'. He advised that he was responsible for strategy and funding, but not for operational decisions.

Inspector Darren Stanton outlined his role and that of his team. He advised that Bridport was among the safest areas in Dorset and that after some successes, there were no active threats from 'county lines', and highlighted some particular recent issues, including a haul of cannabis. He stressed that his team's work was led by the community and was not part of the emergency response arrangements.

Mr Underhill and Inspector Stanton addressed questions on:

- Recent race-related and hate crime incidents. The typical outcomes included prosecution in court punishable with fines, or in more serious cases, prison sentences.
- Two specific incidents of racial abuse and hate speech. A standard protocol was adopted in these circumstances and action was intended to be proportionate. Where the outcome was recorded as 'no further action', this was to indicate that the matter did not involve the courts, and not that the Police had not acted.
- Police stop and search practice. Recent statistics and the application of stop and search were outlined, and it was reported that there had been no instances in Bridport in the previous 12 months. Training was given to all officers, and body-worn cameras had helped. The PCC had challenged the Chief Constable with his ongoing concerns about tactics, and had set up a panel, including members of the public, to scrutinise the issue.

- Police priorities, force-wide and local. The PCC reminded members to lobby candidates for the next PCC election, and advised that he and the MP were supporting calls for an increase in the number of officers in Bridport.
- The Black Lives Matter protests. The law and the Police response to the recent protests were outlined.
- Force capacity. It was reported that an increase in capacity was expected in Bridport. The main priority was to address capacity in Lyme Regis, but a three-year uplift programme was expected to benefit Bridport, including a new Police Community Support Officer.
- Gatherings of groups and associated anti-social behaviour. The Police response drew on incident reports so that resources could be targeted. COVID-19 legislation was in use at present, but education would be used before enforcement. A Public Spaces Protection Order relating to alcohol was due to be reviewed and the Community Safety Team was working with Community Protection Warnings and courses. Work on anti-social behaviour with young people was ongoing, but most anti-social behaviour involved adults.

Councillors and members of the public considered:

- The impact of COVID-19 restrictions on domestic violence. Inspector Stanton reported an increase in incidents.
- Bridport's status as a Rights Respecting town and its links with Restorative Justice Panels. A local dialogue was requested on this. The PCC advised that he was restricted to a pan-Dorset approach.
- A request for a discussion about cycle safety. Inspector Stanton undertook to engage with Dorset Council ward members.

The PCC closed by recommending an early engagement with the incoming PCC following the May 2021 elections.

The Mayor thanked the PCC and the Inspectors for their attendance.

Public Forum

No matters were raised in the second, general part of the Public Forum.

37. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllrs Geoff Ackerman, Sandra Brown and Barry Irvine.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, and that the Town Mayor should sign the minutes at the earliest available opportunity.

40. STANDING ORDER 14(b)

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

41. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 26 September 2020 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Dave Bolwell.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 26 September 2020 be received and adopted.

(b) FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 November 2020 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Maggie Ray, who also outlined the reasons for each of the recommendations brought forward for Full Council approval.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 November 2020 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted, as set out below (each recommendation was moved, seconded and declared to be carried):-

(Minute 36) FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2020/21 – 2ND REVISION

RESOLVED: that the 2nd revision of the estimates for the year 2020/21 be approved.

(Minute 37) SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a grant of £5,000 per annum be agreed to 2020 Skate & Ride, pro rata for the remainder of 2020-21 and for three further years and subject to an agreed Service Level Agreement, delegated to the Chairman of the committee and the Town Surveyor.
- (v) that £50,000 be released from the climate emergency reserve for the Plottingham Car Park Solar Panels project.
- (vi) that the sale of access strips to the Old Railway Line, delegated to Town Surveyor, be approved.
- (vii) that the Outdoor Skate Park project be authorised to proceed and the available reserve funding be committed as match funding.

(Minute 38) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2019/20

RESOLVED: That the report and finding of the external auditor in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 be approved.

Members thanked the Finance and Office Manager for his work.

(Minute 47) TOWN COUNCIL CHARITY

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a working group be established to consider the matter further, comprising Cllrs Rose Allwork, Sarah Carney, Karen Hunt, Maggie Ray and Sarah Williams.
- (ii) that accounting advice be obtained.
- (iii) that a further report be provided to Full Council in January 2021.

(c) ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 4 November 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 4 November 2020 be received and adopted.

42. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3564, confirming that a review of community governance would be undertaken by Dorset Council during 2021.

Members considered:

Proactive and collaborative action involving parish councils.

A working group to coordinate the Town Council's involvement.

A need to incorporate the climate emergency, self-reliance, transport and collaboration.

Engagement with the Neighbourhood Plan Joint Councils Committee.

The potential implications for Council Tax.

The implications for democracy, elections and local services.

RESOLVED: that a working group be established, with a membership comprising Cllrs Rose Allwork, Ian Bark, Kelvin Clayton, Julian Jones, Ros Kayes, Dave Rickard and Sarah Williams.

RESOLVED: that the first meeting of the working group be held prior to the next Neighbourhood Plan Joint Councils Committee meeting.

43. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

RESOLVED: that the subject for the next Open Public Forum shall be Local Food, and that local food groups be invited.

44. COMMUNICATIONS

The following items were reported for information:

- (1) The Town Mayor reported his list of engagements, ENCL: 3565, and on his involvement with the Plastic Free Bridport initiative.
- (2) The Town Clerk reported on:
 - The COVID-19 vaccination programme – the Town Council was liaising with the Medical Centre over possible venues and there was no indication of the timetable as yet.
 - A water fountain in Bucky Doo Square – the Council was working with Wessex Water to provide a drinking fountain. This was proceeding under delegation, as members had previously indicated the desirability of such a facility.
- (3) The Leader of the Council reported that Cllr Chris Turner of Beaminster Town Council had been elected as Chair of the DAPTC Town and Larger Parish Councils Committee. The full DAPTC AGM had considered two motions proposed by the Town Council, and had been efficiently organised with 82 virtual attendees.

The meeting closed at **8.59pm**

The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 19 January 2021