

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE
of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday
9 June 2021 at 7.00pm.

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk) 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 2021/22.

Councillor Kelvin Clayton took the Chair.

PUBLIC FORUM

Sheri Ahmet addressed members on the subject of verge maintenance. She advised that she was part of the new Friends of Wellfields Group that would be holding a consultation event in July. She was pleased to see that verges were being allowed to grow higher and that there were flowers on the roundabout. She had heard some mutterings about untidiness, that she considered might be a lack of awareness about biodiversity. Dorset Council has a reduced cutting regime and 'love your verges' signs and Sheri wondered if the Town Council might adopt this. She said she hoped the next cut would not be until August or September, although some areas such as recreation grounds were better if cut.

The Chairman thanked Sheri for her input.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Karen Hunt.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr Dave Rickard be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 March 2021 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on verge maintenance and Ash Die Back. On verge maintenance, he advised that verges had traditionally been cut several times through the spring and summer months. The purchase of the new Grillo mower last year aimed to reduce cutting frequency and promote wildflower growth by collecting grass cutting. To date the Council had not adopted a 'no mow May' policy and tailored the regime to resources, albeit conscious of the need to promote biodiversity. He reminded members that verges were only a small part of the Council's grounds maintenance work. Management plans were in place for Asker Meadows, Riverside Gardens, Jellyfields, Bothenhampton Nature Reserve and others, and aimed to promote biodiversity. The Clerk advised of the need to carry the community in any change of policy, and other organisations with grounds maintenance responsibilities in Bridport such as Magna Housing, Dorset Council and Highways England. He asked members to consider the next steps in developing policy.

The Clerk also reported that queries had been received about the policy in respect of Ash Die Back. This was a significant issue in Bothenhampton Nature Reserve (an area owned and controlled by Dorset Council, although the Town Council was in negotiations to transfer it) in particular. Discussions with them had suggested the appropriate policy was not to intervene until such time as a tree needs to be felled, and to replace when felling took place.

Members discussed:

- The importance of allowing verge growth in May for insect larvae to develop;
- The use of signage and education to explain a reduced verge cutting regime;
- The need to consider visibility at junctions;
- The activities of the Community Orchard Group as a good example; and
- Dorset Council's use of diesel-powered air blowers; and
- The need to develop a policy that was both effective in promoting biodiversity, and deliverable.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk should liaise with the Town Surveyor and the Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer to develop the approach to verge maintenance.

7. CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings of the Climate Action Sub Committee held on 25 March 2021, 29 April 2021 and 27 May 2021 be received and adopted.

8. 'LITTER LOTTO'

Consideration was given to a proposal by LitterAware, ENCL: 3626. The Town Clerk reported that the company had approached Cllr Ian Bark with an offer of engagement in the initiative described in the report, free to the first five councils that sign up. The free offer appeared to be conditional on agreement to promote Litterlotto locally and to support fundraising from local businesses.

Members considered the benefits of the proposal, and highlighted some concerns regarding advertising, impact on local businesses and potential unintended and unknown consequences of the approach offered.

RESOLVED: that the proposal from LitterAware be declined.

9. RURAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE – SEMINAR FEEDBACK

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3627. Cllr Carney summarised the report, which provided feedback on discussions at a recent seminar, covering both Integrated Care System (ICS), and Young People and Rural Isolation.

RESOLVED: That a representation of the ICS be invited to present to Full Council in September 2021.

10. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Clerk reported that the Chairman had requested this be added to the agenda, following up on background work already carried out by members, including the Chairman and the Mayor. The key matters were how to provide an attractive means of engagement, empowering young people to achieve change in Bridport, and in particular engaging the 'hard to reach' community. Traditional Youth Council approaches had not succeeded in this regard. Members were invited to discuss possible ways forward.

The Chairman reported that he had attended a NALC event that had highlighted the idea of co-opting young people onto the Council in a non-voting capacity.

Members considered:

- Meeting times and formats as an obstacle to engagement of young people;
- The need to attract young people with issues that are of interest to them;
- An example of an empty shop as a youth space;
- The difference between engaging young people in politics, which could be aimed at the 25-40 age group, and engaging youth as a wider objective;
- Providing young people with funding and control of that funding to generate involvement and a real sense of influence in the community;
- Reaching out to young people by visiting schools and knocking on doors; and
- Engagement with the Sir John Colfox Academy, using the Rights Respecting initiative as a way of engaging students.

The Chairman thanked a young person called Ronan for his attendance at the meeting, and the Mayor asked that he be put in contact with Ronan.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should approach the Sir John Colfox Academy to request that two to three councillors be invited to discuss youth engagement.

Members further discussed how and when young people might be involved, and how best to promote the council to a young audience.

RESOLVED: that a strategy be developed for the 25-40 years age group, and a separate strategy through the Sir John Colfox Academy for the under-25 age group.

11. BRIDPORT JOB CLUB

Cllr Clayton reported that Skills Training Bridport (STB) had been considering the way forward for its Job Club, and that one proposal was to separate the Job Club

from STB. Unfortunately, the position had been complicated by a decision by the co-ordinator, a volunteer, not to continue in the role. The Job Club was now looking for ways of continuing.

Members considered ways of recruiting a new co-ordinator, including advertising, liaison with the Job Centre and media/social media coverage.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Chairman be noted.

12. DRINKING FOUNTAINS

The Town Clerk reported that he was hopeful that Wessex Water would be able to commission the new fountain in Bucky Doo Square in the next few weeks. The Council had received a number of requests for additional fountains and the Clerk asked members to consider two – in West Bay by the play area, and at Plottingham Fields. Wessex Water had provided the first one at no cost, but the Council was not entitled to further free fountains. Following discussion, officers considered that it would be a good use of committee funds to provide the additional fountains, as a welcome service to the community and as a way of promoting the plastic-free agenda. The Clerk asked that members release the funds to allow the project to proceed.

Members recognised the community and environmental benefits of the initiative and

RESOLVED: that the committee budget be allocated for the provision of drinking fountains, with West Bay as a priority location.

13. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from councillors as representatives to outside bodies.

14. COMMUNICATIONS/UPDATES ON OTHER ONGOING ISSUES

Cllr Sarah Carney asked that an update be obtained from Dorset Council on their proposed installation of electric vehicle charging points in car parks, and that consideration be given to opportunities in Town Council car parks.

The Chairman reported that he had received a suggestion that the impact of Covid-19 be considered 'through a Rights Respecting lens'. Feedback would be sought from the recent Right Up Your Street project, led by the Lyric Theatre, for the Rights Respecting Town initiative.

The meeting closed at **8.54pm**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 8 September 2021