

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (Zoom ID: 820 4916 9697) of  
**BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 21 September 2021 at 7.00pm.

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

Cllr	Geoffrey Ackerman	Gill Massey
	Rose Allwork	Maggie Ray
	Ian Bark	Martin Ray
	Sarah Carney	Anne Rickard
	Kelvin Clayton	Dave Rickard
	Karen Hunt	Sarah Williams
	Ros Kayes	Steve Williams
	Julian Jones	

Also present: Will Austin (Town Clerk), Paul Fuszard (Finance and Office Manager), Terri Foxwell (Tourist Information Centre Manager) nine members of the public and two members of the press.

Prior to the meeting, the Town Mayor delivered a tribute to the late Bob Gillis, a much-loved and hugely well-respected Town Clerk for 11 years from 2007 to 2018, who had passed away recently. Further tributes were paid by Cllr Sarah Williams, Phyllida Culpin and John West. A minute's silence was observed.

#### **OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

The Town Clerk and the Council Leader introduced a discussion in respect of the current review of community governance being carried out by Dorset Council. They set out the background to the review and explained the rationale for draft proposals that would be discussed in the main agenda later in the meeting.

Sal Robinson, a resident of North Allington, in the Bridport Parish, asked about the impact of any Community Governance Review changes on the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk felt that any change would be minimal, or non-existent.

John West, as a resident of West Cliff, West Bay, suggested that the potential transfer of those residents from the Symondsbury Parish to Bridport Parish, to be entirely fair and equitable.

Phyllida Culpin indicated that there was some confusion amongst residents of Pymore, if a move en bloc to the Symondsbury Parish were to come to fruition.

Cllr Jim Basker, Chairman of Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council asked about the potential for democratic deficit, if the total number of councillors for the area reduced from 44 to 20. The Town Clerk advised that the proposed total would be numerically similar to many other towns, including some with much larger populations. The reduction would also assist in ensuring contested elections, which had not taken place in parished areas for some time.

Cllr Basker also commented that ward committees were used elsewhere and had no power or influence. The Town Clerk explained that such committees could be allocated full delegated powers and a budget.

Lynda Scott-Williams spoke as a former Parish Clerk in other areas and felt that there would be a certain element of 'local' loss, if Parish councils were consumed by a larger authority.

Carole Grey (presenting at the meeting as Carole Masset), Cllr Alan Smart, of Bradpole Parish Council, Cllr Colin Baker, Chairman of Bradpole Parish Council and Cllr Pelham Allen, of Symondsburry Parish Council were all present, but chose not to speak.

The Mayor thanked members of the public for their attendance and input.

**27. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllr Dave Bolwell.

**28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**29. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 be agreed as a correct record, and that the Mayor should sign the minutes at the earliest available opportunity.

**30. QUESTIONS, IF ANY, PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 14 (a and b)**

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

**31. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 28 June 2021 were presented by the Committee Vice Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 28 June 2021 be received.

(b) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 26 July 2021 were presented by the Committee Vice Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 26 July 2021 be received.

(c) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6 September 2021 were presented by the Committee Vice Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6 September 2021 be received.

(d) FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 13 September 2021 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 13 September 2021 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted, as set out below (each recommendation was moved, seconded and declared to be carried):-

(Minute 25) FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2021/22 – 1<sup>ST</sup> REVISION

RESOLVED: that the 1<sup>st</sup> revision of the estimates for the year 2021/22 be approved.

(Minute 27) EXTERNAL AUDIT 2020/21

RESOLVED: that the report and finding of the external auditor in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/2021 be approved.

Members thanked the Finance and Office Manager for his hard work and attention to detail in achieving a 25<sup>th</sup> successive annual report from the auditor with no matters of concern raised.

(e) ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 8 September 2021 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 8 September 2021 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted, as set out below (each recommendation was moved, seconded and declared to be carried):-

(Minute 19) TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION PETITION

RESOLVED: that the Town Council strongly supports the petition of the Bridport Carnival Committee to save the Torchlight Procession, and will promote it publicly and issue a statement of support.

### **32. INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM**

RESOLVED: that this item be deferred to a future Full Council meeting.

### **33. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3658.

The Town Clerk and Leader of the Council summarised the report, which set out three options for reform of governance arrangements in Bridport and the immediate surrounding parishes.

Members considered the report and proposals, including:

- Support for an extended Bridport parish, building on the strength of community spirit shown across the greater Bridport area during the pandemic;
- A need for further work on the fine detail of the proposals, working with Dorset Council and the parish councils affected;
- A two-year preparatory period between any agreed changes and their implementation in 2024;
- Opportunities for improved local representation and democracy presented by the proposed warding and ward committees;
- The fairness arising from levelling of Council Tax across the town and three parishes, which would result in increases for some, and reductions for the majority, including in the two most deprived areas of the town;
- Concerns that there were pockets of deprivation in the surrounding parishes;
- The availability of benefits for a small minority on low incomes that might see an increase;
- A need to clarify the Council Tax-setting arrangements for 2024-25, with changes to governance not taking place until after the commencement of the financial year;
- Concerns about misleading information published by other councils about the Town Council's proposals; and
- Whether or not the Council should retain two further, less preferred options in its submission.

RESOLVED: the draft submission at Appendix 1 be approved, with any further refinement delegated to the Council Leader, in consultation with the Community Governance Working Group and the Town Clerk.

### **34. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

RESOLVED: that the topic for discussion at the next full Council meeting shall be the Town Council's Access & Movement Study, which had originally been earmarked for this meeting.

### **35. BUDGET WORKING GROUP**

The Town Clerk summarised a request from the Finance & General Purposes Committee that Full Council agree any nominations for membership of the Budget Working Group over and above the seven members already approved by the Committee.

RESOLVED: that no further members be elected to the 2021/22 Budget Working Group.

### **36. COMMUNICATIONS**

The following items were reported for information:

- (1) The Town Mayor reported the list of engagements, ENCL: 3659, along with:
  - The latest edition of the Mayoral blog;
  - The launch of Green Week including a Mayoral proclamation;
  - An afternoon spent at the West Dorset Club; and
  - Attendance at the Battle of Britain Service.
- (2) The Leader reported that with the help of Terri Foxwell, he had submitted two applications for the NALC Star Council awards. Disappointingly the Council had not been shortlisted for either.
- (3) The Town Clerk thanked the Town Mayor for the Plastic Free Bridport campaign, the Charter Fair would take place this coming weekend, and the Town Mayor would be holding his Civic Day on Wednesday 22 September 2021, with the High Sheriff attending, with the theme being Green Bridport.

The meeting closed at **8.32pm**.

**The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 16 November 2021**