

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (Zoom ID: 814-0995-3441) of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Simon Batorski (Bridport Community Kitchen), Chris Everidge (BLAP) and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers for the Public Forum.

35. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barry Irvine.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 November 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record, and that the Chairman should sign the minutes at the earliest available opportunity.

Responding to queries raised by Cllr Karen Hunt, the Town Clerk reported that:

- Planting around tree trunks on the green area at Wellfields Drive/Acer Avenue had been carried out, with the approval of Dorset Council. The Town Council had not heard further from the Friends of Wellfields Group, about any future plans.
- The Working Group agreed by committee to look at a Rights Respecting Engagement Strategy and Action Plan had not yet been established. Community engagement capacity was not currently available for the expected follow-up work, and the group would meet once this capacity was identified.

38. CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 25 November 2021 and 16 December 2021 be received and adopted.

The Town Clerk advised that he would circulate details of the Energy Champions training programme.

39. RESILIENCE OFFICER RECRUITMENT

The Town Clerk reported that the Climate Action Sub Committee recommended the recruitment of a Resilience Officer, and this would be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 17 January 2022. He outlined the detail of the position, which would be for a fixed term of twelve months, funded from the Climate Emergency Reserve.

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

40. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Chairman reported his concern that public debate was becoming more and more polarised, as evidenced by 'toxic' discourse on issues such as the climate emergency and town centre access and movement arrangements. He asked members to consider how the Town Council could promote more healthy public debate, citing 'public narrative' approach, or the ideas of Michael Sandel, as possible approaches.

Members discussed possible approaches to healthy public debate, and topics for discussion, be sent to the Chairman.

41. HOMELESS 'POD'

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3682, setting out a request from Bridport Community Kitchen for the possible installation of an emergency sleeping pod in Bridport. The Clerk summarised the report and corrected one aspect relating to the type of 'pod' to be considered. This would be of built construction, rather than the 'tent' style referred to in the report.

With the agreement of the committee, Simon Batorski of Bridport Community Kitchen and Chris Everidge, Chair of the Bridport Local Area Partnership Homeless/Street Homeless Working Group, participated in discussion of this item. Mr Batorski advised that the need for a pod had been identified through the work of the Kitchen and its engagement with vulnerable street homeless people.

Members, Mrs Everidge, and Mr Batorski considered:

- The requirement for planning permission;
- Possible locations;
- The absence of empirical research into local need for support;
- The potential for the Bridport Local Area Partnership Homeless/Street Homeless Working Group to consider and lead a pod installation project;
- Existing examples of pod installations, including in Blandford;
- Links with other support for homeless people, including the delayed provision at Boldwood House;
- The possible implications of a recent review of the Housing Register by Dorset Council;
- Dorset Council's difficulties in continued provision of bed and breakfast accommodation;
- Capacity for project management and delivery;
- The increasing risk of homelessness, arising from the cost of living crisis;
- The hidden issue of 'sofa surfing';
- The number and size of pods;

- Potential Town Council support, including funding and land;
- The need for running costs and management of the facility to be considered; and
- The possible involvement of Crowdfunder in fundraising.

RESOLVED: that Bridport Town Council supports in principle the installation of an emergency sleeping pod, and requests that Bridport Local Area Partnership considers both the desirability of a pod, and its role in such a project, and reports back to the Town Council on its findings and decisions.

42. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Ian Bark reported that the Bridport Community Orchard Group would host the annual Wassail event on Sunday 16 January 2022.

RESOLVED: that the reports from outside bodies be noted.

43. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES

Cllr Dave Rickard reported that the Transition Town Bridport Core Group was scheduled to meet the following week, and would discuss the work of the Seeding Our Future Group, relating to a climate forum.

The meeting closed at **8.27pm**.

The next meeting of this committee will be held on 9 March 2022