

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, on Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Niki McCretton (Lyric Theatre), Rosie Russell (Lyric Theatre), two members of the public, and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no representations at the Public Forum.

14. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Karen Hunt, Ros Kayes, and Barry Irvine, who had been granted a leave of absence for six months from 5 September 2022.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 June 2022 be confirmed as a true and correct record, signed by the Chairman.

17. CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Climate Action Sub Committee of 23 June 2022 be received and the decisions therein adopted.

18. ARTS AND CULTURE IN BRIDPORT

Niki McCretton of the Lyric Theatre presented to councillors on her work as owner of the theatre. She gave background on her purchase of the building as a creative space for artists and as a culturally important facility. She had been joined in her efforts by Rosie Russell as a youth expert, and both gave their time pro bono. The operating model involved hiring people to work rather than programming as happened at other venues. The building remained available for local people, even during the pandemic.

Rosie Russell reflected on the theatre's outreach work, linked to human rights and employing artists. Success in obtaining external funding enabled events such as The Plott and recently added murals at Plottingham Fields and St Mary's Fields, the latter being the work of Marina Renee Cemmick. The Lyric was an innovative

model, and the money spent by artists and users of the Lyric remained in the local economy. Their work with young people engaged them in positive discussion and included depth and learning.

Niki McCretton summarised, reflecting on the challenges to the arts and cultural sector, including loss of staff and funding. She sought members' support and advocacy.

Members thanked Niki and Rosie for their address, and welcomed the work of the Lyric Theatre. They discussed:

- Potential funding sources
- The benefits of creative outreach work as an engagement tool.
- The creative potential of young people.
- The relationship between creativity and politics.
- How councillors could advocate by speaking coherently about the Lyric's operating model.
- Links with the Rights Respecting agenda.
- Arts and cultural opportunities in the development of an investment plan for Bridport.
- Advocacy via the Mayor's Blog, and his work on a youth festival.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED: that Niki McCretton and Rosie Rusell be thanked for their work through the Lyric Theatre, and for their presentation to the committee.

Niki McCretton and Rosie Russell left the meeting at this point (7.51pm).

19. SERVICE 6 – BRIDPORT TO YEOVIL BUS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3741 setting out Dorset Council's announcement of the re-letting of the contract for the bus service, and including a briefing note drafted by Cllr Sarah Carney on work coordinated by Beaminster Town Council, in support of the retention and improvement of the service.

Members considered:

- The need to find out more about the tender process, and to gather data for evidence.
- The relative success of Devon County and Cornwall Councils in delivering bus services, and how this was achieved.
- Disappointment that the tender was to be let without prior local consultation.
- The level of subsidy provided by Dorset Council for bus services, which was low and had reduced dramatically in recent years according to a report of the Campaign for Better Transport.
- The need for an integrated transport and climate strategy, and a vision for the future.
- The enthusiasm expressed by Cllr Ray Bryan, Portfolio Holder for Transport at Dorset Council, for action to improve bus services.
- Costing work on bus services carried out by the Mayor.

RESOLVED: that Beaminster Town Council be supported and thanked for their work to retain and improve the Service 6 Bridport to Yeovil bus.

20. PROPOSED BRIDPORT PRIDE EVENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3742, setting out a proposal from two local volunteers to hold a Pride event.

Members welcomed the volunteers' work and the support offered by the Town Council, and

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

21. BEACH MATTING

The Town Clerk reported that beach matting that had been installed at West Bay and had been extremely well received by users and others. The Town Council had funded the matting but it was expected that this would be recouped from funds remaining in the Coastal Communities Fund administered by Dorset Coast Forum.

With the permission of the committee, Elaine Leader, a member of the public who had championed the campaign for the matting, reported on further work towards the provision of beach wheelchairs, including a platform chair for those who could not be transferred from a wheelchair. Parkdean Resorts' pool team had indicated a willingness to manage the chairs.

Members welcomed and endorsed the positive impact of the matting, and:

RESOLVED: that

- (i) The Town Council should continue to engage in the provision of beach wheelchairs; and
- (ii) Finance & General Purposes Committee be asked to commit up to £3,500 towards the cost.

22. COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had engaged in the development of a community-based hardship fund, and in the creation of a network of 'warm rooms' for use by people in fuel poverty.

Members welcomed the engagement and

RESOLVED: that the Town Council continue its work on a hardship fund and a warm rooms scheme.

23. FRIENDS OF WELLFIELDS

The Chairman reported that the Friends of Wellfields group was frustrated at a lack of progress with developing green spaces in the Wellfields Drive area. Opposition to proposals felt intimidating to members of the group, and as a result, he had offered to mediate and had been invited to the group's next meeting. He had also been asked to clarify land ownership of various strips of land.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Chairman be noted.

24. CHIDEOCK TO BRIDPORT PATH

Consideration was given to support for the campaign for a footpath linking Chideock and Bridport, ENCL: 3743.

Members welcomed the campaign and its contribution to the achievement of net zero carbon, and

RESOLVED: that the Chideock Path to Bridport campaign be supported.

25. BRIDPORT TREE PLANTING GROUP

Consideration was given to a proposal from the Bridport Tree Planting Group, ENCL: 3744, for a planting scheme at Flaxhayes.

Members welcomed the proposals, and discussed:

- The need for consideration of bamboo, and bird nesting in the area.
- The need for a sustainable volunteer group to maintain ongoing involvement.
- Town Council responsibilities for maintenance in the area.
- Whether Environment Agency approval was required.

RESOLVED: that the proposed planting scheme at Flaxhayes be approved, subject to detailed arrangements delegated to the Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer and the Town Surveyor.

26. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Sarah Carney reported that Dorset County Hospital would be announcing a collaboration with Dorset Healthcare, including a shared Board and Chief Executive. These proposals were aimed at improving patient care and did not represent a merger.

Cllr Ian Bark reported that Green Week would take place from 24 to 31 October 2022 and included apple pressing in the Community Orchard.

RESOLVED: that the reports from outside bodies be noted.

27. ISSUES FOR FUTURE REPORTS

RESOLVED: that the committee consider food resilience, including an invitation to the local food resilience group and Unite the Union.

28. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items to report.

The meeting closed at **8.50pm**.

The next meeting of this committee will be held on 9 November 2022 at 7.00pm