

Minutes of the meeting of **BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Dave Bolwell – Town Mayor (in the Chair)

Cllr	Geoff Ackerman	Julian Jones
	Rose Allwork	Gill Massey
	Ian Bark	Anne Rickard
	Sarah Carney	Dave Rickard
	Kelvin Clayton	Sarah Williams
		Steve Williams

ALSO PRESENT Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), Paul Fuszard (Finance & Office Manager), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager & Communities Initiative Officer), David Dixon (Project Manager & Communities Initiative Officer) until 7:20pm, Will Austin (Town Clerk), one member of the public, and, from 7:15pm, 1 member of the press.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

Cllr Ian Bark, as Deputy mayor, had attended the Colfox Academy prize giving recently, discussing various matters, including intentions to vote if 18 by election day, and the ID required to be able to do so. Consequently, he did express some disappointment that no young people were in attendance this evening.

Cllr Kelvin Clayton reported that he had approached a youth worker to encourage attendance, but there had been no apparent interest.

Elaine Leader spoke about beach matting at West Bay. The existing matting had been well received, and she requested that the council provide funding to double the area of matting available, to improve safety and ease of use, and to cater for its popularity. Responding to a question from Cllr Rose Allwork, Elaine advised that she had sought to raise funds from businesses, albeit that this was related to beach wheelchair provision, rather than matting.

40. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllrs Sandra Brown, Karen Hunt, Barry Irvine, Ros Kayes, Maggie Ray and Martin Ray.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Town Mayor.

43. STANDING ORDER 14(b)

There were no questions pursuant to Standing Order 14(b).

44. COMMITTEES

(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 4 December 2023 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Dave Bolwell.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 4 December 2023 be received and adopted.

(b) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8 January 2024 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Dave Bolwell.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8 January 2024 be received and adopted.

(c) FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 January 2024 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Sarah Williams.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 January 2024 be received and adopted, and that the recommendations therein be resolved, as set out below:

(Minute 51) FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2023/2024 – 3rd REVISION
(ENCL: 3866)

RESOLVED: that the 3rd revision of the estimates for the year 2023/2024 be approved.

(Minute 52) BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2024/2025

The Town Clerk summarised a report, setting out the draft budget and precept setting out options for 2024/25. Members thanked officers for the report and discussed the proposed budget and precept recommendation. Members noted the detailed discussions that had previously taken place at Finance & General Purposes Committee. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: (a) that the draft estimates for 2024/25 be approved as attached in Appendix A.

(b) that the proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 be approved as set out in Appendix B.

- (c) that the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved as a guide for future years, as in Appendix C, noting that each year's budget will be subject to separate approval.
- (d) that the draft capital programme and proposed use of reserves for 2024/25 and future years be approved, as set out in section 4 of the report and at Appendix D.
- (e) that in terms of the precept, Option 2 be approved, as set out in section 12 of the report, which increases the precept to £1,032,114 with a consequent annual Band 'D' charge of £189.21.

(Minute 55) REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2024/25 (ENCL: 3869)

RESOLVED: that the existing internal audit arrangements continue for 2024/25.

(Minute 56) RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL REVIEW (ENCL: 3870)

RESOLVED: that the Corporate Risk Assessment and the Management Strategy Policy be approved.

(d) **ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 10 January 2024 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 10 January 2024 be received and adopted.

Cllr Julian Jones asked what use the Town Council would make of the Food Security Plan approved at the meeting. The Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer advised that the Council was working with Bridport Food Matters on further consultation, and to identify those who could and would deliver the proposed actions.

45. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Consideration was given to a submission by Bradpole Parish Council, ENCL: 3872 regarding governance arrangements from 1 April 2024, and a request from Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council, ENCL: 3873 to ring-fence funding for nature reserves and play areas in the existing parish area.

Members discussed these at length, noting the following:

- Concerns about the bureaucracy associated with both proposals;

- That it would be for the new council to determine these matters after the election, and any decisions taken now would not be binding on the new council;
- That a reference to statements by the Council Leader had not interpreted these statements in the way he had intended;
- That new ward members should be involved in determining governance arrangements, and that such arrangements would require careful consideration of democracy and the council's ability to be responsive and flexible;
- The possibility that the new council might reinstate the Community Governance Working Group to consider governance matters;
- That input from the two parish councils would have been welcomed at this meeting, had representatives attended;
- Concerns about the viability of proposals for delegated authority;
- The existence of a play area improvement programme that negates the need for ring-fencing of funds; and
- The reduction in financial flexibility that arises from ring-fencing.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that

- (i) the request from Bradpole Parish Council be noted.
- (ii) the request by Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council be declined.

46. CIVIC EVENTS

The Town Clerk reported a number of events that may require council input.

RESOLVED: that

- (i) Commonwealth Day be observed, as in recent years.
- (ii) Mayor Making to be held on a date to be confirmed after further discussion between the Mayor for 2024/25, once elections have taken place, and the Mayor's secretary.
- (iii) The Mayor would attend events marking the 80th anniversary of D Day and that no additional support be provided.
- (iv) The 50th anniversary of the Town Council in April 2024 be marked at the Mayor Making ceremony.
- (v) Suggestions for ideas to recognise the service of retiring councillors be sent to the Town Clerk.

47. URGENT REQUESTS

The Town Clerk reported on:

- (i) a request to expand the existing beach matting at West Bay;
- (ii) a request to stage a new annual event at Asker Meadows; and
- (iii) matters relating to the repair of West Bay harbour wall.

Urgency dictated that these matters be resolved by Full Council, rather than referred back to committee in March. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that

- (i) Up to £4,000 be allocated for the provision of further beach matting.
- (ii) Further discussion of a new annual music event on Asker Meadows be delegated to the Town Surveyor, recognising that it was unlikely to be possible in 2024.
- (iii) The Town Council's involvement in the relocation of kiosks at West Bay and the provision of temporary toilets be delegated to the Town Surveyor.

48. DORSET TOWN OF CULTURE

RESOLVED: that Cllr Sarah Williams be appointed as the representative to the newly formed advisory group.

49. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Dave Rickard advised that the Arts Centre is holding an Open Day on Saturday 27 January 2024 and that he would be attending an Arts Centre Board meeting on Monday 29 January 2024.

50. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

RESOLVED: that there be no set topic for the next Public Forum, as it falls within the pre-election period.

51. ANNOUNCEMENTS & COMMUNICATIONS

The following items were reported for information:

The Town Mayor's list of engagements since the last Full Council was circulated at the meeting, noting that the Deputy Mayor had attended the Colfox Academy prize giving.

RESOLVED: that the Mayor's engagements be noted.

The meeting closed at **9:04pm**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 26 March 2024