

**DRAFT Minutes of the Town Council meeting held virtually (on line) via Zoom
on Tuesday January 26th, 2021 at 7.30pm**

A video-recording of this meeting can be seen on BrutonTown Council's Youtube channel by clicking on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLRmZOo1ISo>

Present: Councillors: Anderton, Abi Baker, Karen Baker, Brownlow, Buckland, Crawford, Day, Hood, Jones, Pickering, Robinson and Skinner
In the chair: Councillor Jones
In Attendance: District Councillor Lucy Trimmell
County Councillor Anna Groskop
The Assistant Town Clerk
The Community Development Officer
2 members of the public

- 20/143 Welcome and Apologies for absence**
The Chairman welcomed Councillors and those attending. No Councillors were absent
- 20/144 Minutes of previous meetings**
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 [For-against-abstain] that the minutes of the Full Council meeting of 24th November 2020 be adopted as a true and accurate record.
Attention was drawn to an omission in the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 6th January which was duly corrected.
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 that the corrected minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Full Council of 6th January 2021 be adopted as a true and accurate record.
- 20/145 Public question time**
There were no questions or comments from members of the public.
- 20/146 Declarations of Interests**
Councillor Buckland declared an interest in respect of payments to SLR, his employer.
It was noted that Councillors are not required to declare an interest in budget items unless they have a very direct relationship with them.
- 20/147 Co-option of a new Town Councillor**
The Council were encouraged that no fewer than six residents seat put their names forward for co-option to fill the seat left vacant when Steve Hall resigned in December. After three rounds of voting Carol Fradley was chosen by a majority of Councillors
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 that Carol Fradley be invited to sign a declaration of acceptance of office before the Council's February meeting.

20/148

Reports from District Councillor Lucy Trimmell and County Councillor Anna Groskop.

Councillor Groskop thanked Steve Hall for the major contribution he had made to Bruton and the Town Council. She went on to report that:

- The roll-out of vaccines in Somerset is going well and there are realistic hopes of cutting the death rate by c.85%.
- Somerset County Council (SCC) is in discussion with Natural England and Wessex Water about reducing the discharge of phosphates in the Somerset Levels catchment area. Pending resolution of the problem new developments will only be granted planning consent where arrangements have been made to neutralise any increase in phosphate discharges.
- Construction vehicles using Darkey Lane to access the new housing development are damaging the verges and endangering pedestrians.

Councillor Trimmell reported that:

- Successful South Somerset District Council (SSDC) green initiatives include E-scooters, tree planting and carbon reduction business grants.
- SSDC is investing £23m. in arts and entertainment, including a project to increase the capacity of the Octagon Theatre by c.50%.
- Local enterprises afflicted by compulsory lockdowns are urged to apply to SSDC for a Coronavirus Business Support grant.
- SSDC's Area East Committee is not meeting at present on account of the deployment of staff in support of the vaccination programme but the Committee is likely to resume its work in March. Pending the solution of the phosphates problem few planning applications are likely to go forward.

In response to questions Councillor Trimmell agreed to press SSDC to repair the pedestrian bridge on Riverside Walk and to look into SSDC's withdrawal of funding support for the Community Office, a valuable local amenity.

20/149

Recommendations from the Finance & Resources Committee

Councillor Robinson explained that the budget has been designed to fund new projects and meet necessary demands without imposing extra burdens on Council Taxpayers facing the costs of the pandemic and lockdowns. This was made easier by underspending this year, particularly on staff salaries.

It was RESOLVED 11-0-1 to agree the following:

- i. The budget as set out in Appendix 1, below**
- ii. A precept demand for £138,411, equating to £145.74 in Council Tax for a Band D household, an increase of 0.29% on 2020-21.**
- iii. In-year transfers to earmarked reserves as detailed in the budget set out in Appendix 1, below.**

20/150

Climate Emergency Community Fund Bid

Councillor Hood described progress on the bid to secure funding for the Retrofit project and explained that should only partial funding be secured the project would be adjusted proportionately if practicable.

It was RESOLVED 10-0-2

- i. To reaffirm support for the Retrofit project as agreed by Council resolution 20/70 of 25th August, 2020.**
- ii. To direct the Retrofit Working Group to draw up a 'break-even' budget for the Project in line with the bid outcome, along with proposals for recruitment, and to bring both to the Full Council meeting on March 30th 2021 for decision.**

- 20/151 Engine House Community Larder**
The Community Development Officer reported that the Wessex Water Recovery Fund had awarded a grant of £1k. to convert the Engine House into a Community Larder. Councillors agreed to look into the relative merits of using volunteer labour and of employing professional builders.
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 to obtain three quotes from local builders for the building work required.
- 20/152 Bruton Coronavirus Response**
Bruton Surgery had reported that some local residents may face genuine difficulties getting to Wincanton for Covid-19 vaccinations and Councillors agreed that in such an event it would be appropriate for the Council to help. The Community Development Officer reported on the need for volunteers to help with Covid-19 tests when schools reopen fully and on local initiatives, including fund-raising, to provide laptops for schoolchildren working from home.
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 to seek funding of £1k. from Somerset Community Foundation's Coronavirus Rapid Response Fund to provide laptops for local schoolchildren, and to provide match-funding from the Council's reserves equal to the amount awarded.
- 20/153 Market Town Investment Group (MTIG) Funding Bids**
The Community Development Officer reported that she had prepared bids amounting to c.£60k. for three elements of the proposed Station Road car park upgrade, namely the driveway, sustainable drainage, and electric car charging points. After a brief discussion Councillors agreed that this would best be considered along with other aspects of the car park project under item 20/159 (below).
- 20/154 Town Clerk Recruitment**
The post has been widely advertised and some highly qualified Clerks have expressed an interest.
It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 that Councillors Anderton, Karen Baker, Brownlow, Day and Jones be appointed to serve on an interview panel.
- 20/155 Minutes from Committees**
Council took note of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 16th December and the planning recommendation of 18th December, 2020.
- 20/156 Reports**
There were no reports on outside bodies, or from the Chairman. Councillors discussed an abnormally large lorry load which had made its way through the town with considerable difficulty, and delays to the repair of the damaged wall by the Durslade allotments.
- 20/157 Accounts for Payment**
Councillor Robinson in his capacity as Acting Responsible Financial Officer presented accounts for payment and thanked the locum Clerk Zoe Godden for helping with them.

Councillor Buckland left the meeting temporarily

It was RESOLVED 9-0-3 to approve the accounts for payment

Councillor Buckland returned to the meeting

20/158

Confidential Business

It was RESOLVED 12-0-0 to exclude the press and the public from the last item on the Agenda since it relates to a commercially sensitive matter.

20/159

Station Road Car Park

The Council discussed responses to the invitation to tender and considered the best way forward.

It was RESOLVED 11-0-1 to undertake the following steps to advance the project:

- **submit a Pre-Application Planning Enquiry**
- **allocate up to £1k. for professional advice on the tendering and to seek such advice**
- **set up a Zoom meeting with a company which had submitted a tender in order to discuss tender details and obtain references**
- **form a task and finish group comprising Councillors Anderton, Buckland, Hood, Jones and Robinson to undertake due diligence in respect of tenders submitted.**

The meeting ended at 9.29 pm

Members of Council considered the following matters in the exercise of their functions: Equal opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.