

**Approved minutes of a Town Council meeting, held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in the rear garden of the Unionist Hall.**

**Present:** Councillors Anderton, K. Baker, Brownlow, Crawford, Fradley, Hood, Pickering, Robinson (Chair) and Skinner.

**Also in attendance:** County Councillor Groskop, District Councillor Trimmell and the Town Clerk.

There were no members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

**The meeting started at 19:30.**

**21/038 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillors A. Baker and Jones.

**21/039 Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Anderton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 21/056 as one of the payments was for his spouse.

Councillor Crawford declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 21/056 as one of the payments was for mileage incurred by her on Town Council business.

**21/040 Minutes of previous meetings**

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> April and 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve both sets of minutes as presented. The minutes were signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

**21/041 Public Question Time**

No members of the public were present.

**21/042 To review the action points from previous meetings  
Noted.**

**21/043 Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and Working  
Groups:**

- a) **Finance and Resources Committee** – to note the minutes from the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May and to consider the following recommendation: **That the Town Council allocates £26,500 of the underspend from the 2020-21 budget to earmarked reserves as follows: £15,000 to Station Road Car Park, £10,000 to replacement Play Equipment and £1,500 to Walking and Cycling.**

**The minutes were noted.**

The Chair explained that the proposed changes to the earmarked reserves had been recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee but changes to earmarked reserves needed to be formally endorsed at a Full Council meeting.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to allocate £26,500 of the underspend from the 2020-21 budget to earmarked reserves as follows: £15,000 to Station Road Car Park, £10,000 to replacement Play Equipment and £1,500 to Walking and Cycling.**

**b) Planning Committee** – to note the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.  
**Noted.**

**c) CEEWG** – to receive an update following the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June and to consider the following recommendation: **That the Town Council supports the latest Climate and Ecological Emergency bill.**

Councillor Hood reported that the minutes from the above meeting had been circulated and said that Councillor Jones had volunteered to act as the additional Councillor member of the group.

Councillor Hood went on to explain that the latest Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill was a private members bill tabled by Caroline Lucas of the Green Party, with the intention of prompting action on climate and ecology matters beyond the setting of targets. The bill mandated the formation of citizens' assemblies to make decisions on ecological matters.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Town Council supports the latest Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.**

**d) Retrofit Working Group** – to receive an update following the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June and to **nominate an additional Councillor to sit on the Working Group.**

Councillor Hood noted that the matter of recruitment of the new Retrofit Co-ordinator would be dealt with later in the meeting but said that the Retrofit Bruton project would be soft-launched at the Community Fête on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

Councillor Crawford said she would attend the next working group meeting with a view to possibly becoming a member.

***Action 210629/1: Councillor Crawford***

#### **21/044 Reports from District Councillor Lucy Trimnell and County Councillor Anna Groskop**

**District Councillor Lucy Trimnell** reported that:

- Recycle more started. All residents should have received collection calendars and guidance on how to segregate waste and recycling. For more information or to request additional bins, residents should go to SSDC's website, here:  
<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/recycle-more/>
- Some waste collections had been delayed across the county. Anyone whose bins had not been emptied should report the issue on the SSDC website here:  
<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/report-a-missed-bin-collection/>.

The Clerk was instructed to ask the Community Development Officer to put the waste collection calendar into the window of the Community Office.

***Action 210629/2: CDO***

**County Councillor Anna Groskop** reported that:

- SCC was launching another Covid recovery fund of £10 million for businesses and groups who have not yet had any financial support.
- Bruton Community Library had asked Councillor Groskop to thank the Town Council for the grant of £1871 for the 2021-22 financial year. The Library was applying for further grants to pay for building improvements and may ask the Town Council for additional support.

The Chair thanked Councillor Groskop for her written report, which had been circulated before the meeting.

#### **21/045 Correspondence**

To note letters of thanks from the Friends of Bruton Railway Station, South Somerset Community Accessible Transport and Mini Day Care for the grants recently paid by the Town Council.

**Noted.**

**21/046 To receive an update on progress with works to Station Road Car Park and agree any action to be taken.**

The Chair reminded Councillors that it had been agreed at the advisory meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May to engage GWD Consulting Engineers to carry out the client function for this project. An initial site meeting had taken place and a further meeting was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> July, after which, GWD would meet with the contractor chosen to carry out the work itself.

The Chair summarised the funding situation for the project. The Town Council contribution and MTIG grant funding amounted to £80,000. The more expensive of the two designs from the preferred contractor would require the Town Council to find an additional £45,000, which would likely have to be sourced from the Public Works Loan Board. Borrowing would require a community consultation, which would take some time to organise. The MTIG grant had to be spent by March 2022, with significant progress by March 2021, so it was important to progress the project as soon as possible. The Chair further pointed out that the lease the Town Council had on the car park site would expire in 13 years and asked Councillors if they felt the Town Council should borrow funds for the more expensive design on land that was not in the Council' ownership or if improvements to the car park should be made using the £80,000 available funding.

Councillors discussed the matter at length and raised the following points:

- The most important outcome of the project was a good surface for the car park, which would require minimal maintenance, with good drainage and no pot holes,.
- Some of the extras could be removed from the more expensive option to keep the project within budget.
- If a less expensive design was chosen, funds could be diverted from the general reserve to increase the amount available for the project without the need for borrowing.
- It was important to understand the full-life cost of the various options over the remaining length of the lease.
- The electric vehicle charging points could not be removed from the final design because part of the MTIG grant was to cover the cost of these.
- The current car park is already overcrowded, so the Town Council should seek negotiations with the land owner to open up the adjacent, higher area for additional car parking space and factor this into designs for the lower area.
- It was felt that the ground in the upper area was in better condition than the ground in the current car park and could be used as a long-stay or overflow facility.

The Clerk was instructed to email all Councillors to ask if they wanted to attend the next Zoom meeting with GWD on 7<sup>th</sup> July at 11am.

***Action 210629/3: Town Clerk***

**21/047 One Planet Bruton**

To consider a request from OPB to install a low hazel or willow fence at Packhorse Bridge to protect the pollinating plants recently planted there.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the request from One Planet Bruton to install a low willow or hazel fence at Packhorse Bridge.**

**21/048 BruBowl Working Group**

- a) To approve terms of reference for the Working Group.

Councillor Hood reported that he had met with BruBowl organisers in his role as a Director of the Bruton for Bruton Community Interest Company, to discuss applying for certain grants and funds that the Town Council would not be eligible for. The Chair noted that the Town Council would have to be careful to ensure that VAT was treated correctly from the outset.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the terms of reference for the BruBowl Working Group as presented.**

- b) To nominate three Councillors to sit on the Working Group

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Councillors Crawford, Pickering and Skinner would sit on the working group.**

- c) To agree to draw up tender documents based on the template provided by SSDC.

The Chair reported that the Clerk was due to meet with Steve Barnes from SSDC on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July to talk about the tender documents. SSDC was in the process of tendering for three skate parks itself, so it was a good time to speak with them about the process.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to use the tender documents supplied by SSDC as a basis for the BruBowl tender.**

The Chair noted that the Town Council had not yet agreed a maximum cost for the project, although BruBowl representatives had referred to a cost of £150,000. Councillor Pickering said that the group would be asking contractors for a fall-back design costing £100,000.

#### **21/049 Tree Warden**

To take nominations for the role of Town Council Tree Warden.

The Chair reminded Councillors that the post of Tree Warden had been left vacant at the Annual Town Meeting on May. The previous post-holder had been emailed to ask if they wished to continue in the role but had not responded.

**20:15** – Councillor Brownlow left the meeting.

The Chair noted that the Town Council was not obliged to appoint a Tree Warden but that all trees under the Council's control needed to be inspected by a suitably qualified arboriculturist every two years.

It was suggested that a representative from The Growing Space in Wincanton or One Planet Bruton might be interested in taking on the role and it was **agreed** that these groups should be approached. It was further **agreed** that the role could be advertised on social media and at the Community Fête

***Action 210629/4: Community Development Officer***

**20:17** – Councillor Brownlow returned to the meeting.

#### **21/050 Recruitment – Retrofit Project Officer**

a) To approve the job description and person specification for the post  
Councillor Hood reminded Councillors that it had previously been agreed to recruit a Retrofit Project Officer on a 15 month contract, to work alongside the Retrofit Co-ordinator. Recruitment activity for the Project Officer post would begin when the Co-ordinator had confirmed they would take up the post.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the job description and person specification for the Retrofit Project Officer post.  
Eight votes for; One abstention.**

b) To agree to advertise the post and the copy for the advert  
It was **agreed** to delegate this task to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Retrofit Steering Group.

- c) To agree Councillors to sit on the interview panel, which will include the Town Clerk, and a date(s) for the interviews to take place.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that Councillors K. Baker, Brownlow and Fradley would sit on the interview panel and that the power to recruit to the post should be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the interview panel.**

**Eight votes for; One abstention.**

**21/051 Play Equipment replacement quotes**

To consider quotes for the replacement of the multi-unit, see saw and roundabout. The Clerk reported that she had received five quotes and was waiting for one more. As such, it was **agreed** to defer this matter until a future meeting. The Clerk was instructed to ask the Community Development Officer seek grant funding for any shortfall in available funds and to liaise with Rebecca McClelland from the Jubilee Park Working Group.

***Action 210629/5: Town Clerk***

It was **agreed** to promote the replacement play equipment project at the Community Fête.

**21/052 Network Access Agreement**

To consider a request from Gigaclear to run cable under the Town Councils land at Burrowfield, in return for a one-off payment of £173 and to authorise the Clerk to sign the associated agreement.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the request from Gigaclear and that the Town Clerk was authorised to sign the associated agreement. The Clerk was instructed to obtain assurance from Gigaclear that the land would be made good after works had been completed.**

**Eight votes for; One abstention.**

***Action 210629/6: Town Clerk***

**21/053 Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

a) To note receipt of the Internal Auditor's end of financial year report.

**Noted.**

b) To approve section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, which was signed by the Chair.**

c) To approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, which was signed by the Chair.**

**21/054 Bank Reconciliations**

To approve the bank reconciliations for the HSBC current and deposit accounts to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and the Unity Trust current account to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

**Councillors noted the bank reconciliations.**

The Chair said that, in future, a Councillor who was not a bank signatory, would need to check the bank reconciliations in advance of meetings. Councillor Fradley volunteered to do this.

**21/055 Budget Position**

To note the budget report to 31st May 2021.

**Noted.**

The Clerk was instructed to arrange for the doors of the Community Hall to be painted. This would need to be arranged during times when the Community Hall was not in use as a vaccination centre on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

***Action 210629/7: Town Clerk***

**21/056 Accounts for Payment: Members to consider the schedule of payments (June 2021)**

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the payments as presented and that Councillors Anderton and Hood would authorise the payments via the Unity Trust Bank website.**

**21/057 Reports Council to receive reports from:**

**a) Members representing the Council on Outside/other bodies**

There were no reports from outside/other bodies.

**b) Town Councillors**

Councillor Brownlow reported that the **Abbey Ponds Working Group** was in discussions with Hauser and Wirth about the recently surfaced path. Hauser and Wirth felt that the new surface should have been extended to cover the area under the kissing gate near Durslade Community Garden. The Working Group's minutes mentioned the path being installed "up to" the kissing gate only. Councillor Brownlow summarised conversations between the Working Group and Hauser and Wirth, which had resulted in Hauser and Wirth asserting that the Town Council should pay for the surface to be extended to include the area under the kissing gate, which would cost approximately £800. Hauser and Wirth had also said that they would withhold their contribution of £6,000 towards the cost of the path until the extension had been completed. Councillor Brownlow pointed out that this would leave the Town Council in an awkward financial position because, as far as the contractor was concerned, the work had been completed and the invoice needed to be paid. Councillor Fradley noted that the contractor was scheduled to return to the site in September 2021 and June 2022 to assess any issues that may have arisen while the path bedded-in and it was felt that any extension to the path could be installed at one of these times.

The Council expressed its disappointment. Councillor Brownlow had drafted a letter to Hauser and Wirth, which laid out the facts of the situation. Councillor Brownlow was asked to share this letter with all Councillors for comment before it was sent.

**c) Action 210629/8: Councillor Brownlow**

Councillor Fradley reported that she had recently attended the NALC webinar "Reopening and reimagining your community buildings" and would feed back to the next Community Engagement Committee meeting.

**Action 210629/9: Councillor Fradley**

Councillor Pickering reported that street cleaning throughout Bruton had not been done. District Councillor Trimnell said she would email SSDC's Streetscene department for an update.

**Action 210629/10: District Councillor Trimnell**

Councillor Crawford reported that there were a lot of weeds in the river close to Church Bridge. The Chair suggested that Councillor Crawford should email her concerns to Councillor Jones, in his role as a member of Brue Crew.

**Action 210629/11: Councillor Crawford**

Councillor Brownlow reported that, following local concern regarding the number of HGVs passing through the town, he had organised a traffic monitoring day to record the numbers of HGVs passing Library Junction. Volunteers had received positive feedback from residents who wanted to get involved in future monitoring days, including some young people. The next step was to contact County Highways to find out if the Town Council would be allowed to contact companies whose HGVs were noted to have driven through the town.

**d) Chairman**

The Chairman of the Town Council was not present.

**21/058 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC - To consider exclusion of press and public for remainder of meeting under Public Bodies Admissions To Meetings Act 1960, Section 1 (2) on the grounds that discussion of the following business relates to confidential recruitment matters and a staff salary matter.**

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.**

**21:00** – District Councillor Trimnell and County Councillor Groskop left the meeting.

**21/059 Retrofit Co-ordinator Recruitment**

To receive and consider the recommendations of the recruitment panel.  
Councillor Hood reported that there had only been one applicant for the Retrofit Co-ordinator post but that they were extremely well qualified and experienced so they had been interviewed. The interview panel recommended appointing the applicant, subject to satisfactory references.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to appoint the applicant, as per the interview panel’s recommendation.  
Eight votes for; One abstention.**

**21/060 Assistant Clerk Recruitment**

To receive and consider the recommendations of the recruitment panel.  
The Chair reported that interviews had not been able to go ahead on 28<sup>th</sup> June as planned but had been rescheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> July. As a result, the Council was asked to delegate the power to recruit to the post to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the interview panel.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to delegate the power to recruit to the post of Assistant Clerk to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the interview panel.**

**21/061 To consider paying the Town Clerk for 30 of the additional hours worked to date.**

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to pay the Clerk for 30 of the additional hours worked but that any future additional hours worked would need to be agreed in advance.**

**The meeting ended 21:07.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**