

**Approved minutes of a Town Council meeting, held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 in the rear garden of the Unionist Hall.**

**Present:** Councillors Brownlow, Buckland, Crawford, Fradley, Hood, Jones (Chair) and Pickering.

**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 19:31.**

**21/085 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Anderton, A. Baker, K. Baker, Day and Robinson.

**21/086 Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Buckland declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 21/099, as it related to payments to his employer.

**21/087 Minutes of previous meetings**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes as presented.**

**21/088 Public Question Time**

No members of the public were present.

**21/089 To review the action points from previous meetings**

The Clerk summarised progress on recent action points, all of which were either complete or in-hand.

**21/090 Minutes and Recommendations from Committees and Working Groups:**

- a) Planning Committee** – to note the minutes of the meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 24<sup>th</sup> August. **To elect a Chair of the Planning Committee, following the resignation of the current Chair.**

Councillors **noted** the minutes.

Councillor Fradley was nominated for the position of Chair to the Planning Committee by Councillor Pickering and seconded by Councillor Buckland. There being no further nominations, **Councillor Fradley was unanimously voted as the Chair of the Planning Committee.**

- b) Jubilee Park Development Programme Working Group** - to note the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July and consider any recommendations.

**Noted.** The Chair reported that the new second Assistant Clerk would be providing support to the Working Group in future.

- c) **CEEWG** – to receive an update following the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> August and to consider the following recommendation: **That the Town Council resolves to:**
- in this year of COP26 add our voice to calls by the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport & others for a joint local & national government Task Force to plan action to reach ‘net zero’ emissions. Such a partnership can set appropriate regulations benchmarks and targets and create the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable.
  - write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26 , the Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the Council supports the formation of a local and national Government task force to plan action to reach ‘net zero’ emissions and that the Chair would write to Alok Sharma MP to that effect.**

*Action 210831/1: Chairman*

- d) **Retrofit Working Group** – to receive an update following the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

Councillor Hood reported that he had distributed the notes from the above meeting. The new Retrofit Co-ordinator would take up her post on 6<sup>th</sup> September. The Retrofit service would be launched at the beginning of October and would be publicised locally. The Retrofit Co-ordinator would give a presentation to Councillors and a date for this would be confirmed soon. In response to a question from Councillor Pickering, Councillor Hood said that he would speak to the Retrofit Co-ordinator about a similar presentation being made to the public. Interviews for the Retrofit Project Officer would take place soon.

**21/091 Library Junction** - to consider plans submitted by Somerset County Council for changes to the layout of Library Junction and agree any comments to submit.

It was **agreed** to defer this matter because Councillor Hood had secured an extension to the deadline for comments, meaning that the Transport Committee would consider the plans at its next meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September, and would make a recommendation for consideration at the Full Council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

The Chair asked all Councillors to make members of the public and business owners aware of the consultation and encourage them to comment on the plans.

**21/092 Reports from District Councillor Lucy Trimnell and County Councillor Anna Groskop.**

**District Councillor Trimnell** reported that the recent problems with kerbside waste collections were improving, although some missed collections were still being reported. A specific issue with the publicised suspension of garden waste collections had caused annoyance because a relief collection carried out after the suspension date had not been publicised to the public. Garden waste collections would resume on 13<sup>th</sup> September, some 10 weeks after the previous collection. Householders were being asked not to overfill their garden waste bins. Any bin found to weight over 40kg would not be emptied. There was some general discussion about waste collections. Councillor Trimnell said she would be able to send details of any forthcoming missed collections to the Town Clerk for local publication.

**County Councillor Groskop** reported that she had received many complaints about the recent road closures in the Parish and their associated signage. Regarding the recent decision for a single unitary authority in Somerset, Councillor Groskop said that a decision would soon

have to be made on ward boundaries for the county. There followed some general discussion about the recent road closures and the associated signage difficulties.

### **21/093 Station Road Car Park**

- a) To note a report on electric vehicle charging options and agree any action to be taken.

Referring to his report, Councillor Hood said that, of the three companies he had contacted about the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points, only one had returned his call (Instavolt), one had replied to an email and the third had not responded at all. As such, Councillor Hood felt that the two best options for further investigation were Instavolt and Scottish Power. Scottish Power (SP) was new to the market and had only installed EV chargers in Scotland so far. However, SSDC was working in partnership with SP to install EV chargers in its public car parks, which demonstrated that SP was looking to expand its network in the area. Instavolt had a good reputation, being the second highest rated EV charging provider in the country, and had a much larger network of chargers. The model offered by both companies involved the lease of the required land to them in return for financial compensation to the landowner or site operator, depending on the length of the lease. Councillor Hood said that it was important to ensure that the electricity network would be able to power EV chargers at the site.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Councillors Anderton, Jones, Pickering and Robinson and the Clerk were given delegated responsibility to decide whether to go forward with Instavolt or Scottish Power as the preferred provider of electric vehicle charging points at Station Road car park and that GWD Consulting would be asked to find out whether the electricity network would be robust enough to power the chargers.**

*Action 210831/2: Town Clerk*

- b) To consider reallocating funds from earmarked reserves to supplement the funds already allocated from grants and the Town Council's budget.

The Chair reported that he had communicated with the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Clerk regarding the possible reallocation of earmarked reserves to supplement the grant funding already in place for the project.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to reallocate the following earmarked reserves to the Station Road car park project:**

- £5,000 from the Community Building fund to be replaced in future years
- £5,000 from the Project and Grant fund, leaving a balance of £4,400
- £5,000 from the Walls Maintenance fund, leaving a balance of £4,500
- £5,000 from the General Reserve

*Action 210831/3: Town Clerk*

### **21/094 Somerset Unitary Authority**

- a) To consider forming a trial Local Community Network with Castle Cary and Wincanton Town Councils.

The Chair reported that an initial meeting between Bruton, Castle Cary and Wincanton Town Councils would take place on either 10<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> September and would be attended by Chairs and Clerks. Councillor Robinson would also attend in his role as CEO of the Somerset Association of Local Councils. In addition, Somerset County Council was organising a conference to discuss the Local Government review on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

- b) To consider whether to support the rescheduling of town and parish council elections from 2023 to 2022, to align with elections to the shadow unitary authority.

The Chair explained that there would be budgetary and turnout implications if Town Council elections were held in a different year to the unitary elections.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the change of election year for the Town Council from 2023 to 2022.**

**21/095 SALC and Somerset County Council “Opening Up Safely” grant** – to consider applying for a grant and to agree Councillors to work on project ideas.

The following ideas were suggested:

- Community consultation work relating to BruBowl
- Conversion of the Eastfield site.
- Litterpick and tidy-up of the town.
- Coffee morning
- Support for organisations in Bruton that have not been able to meet due to the pandemic
- Hubs for young people to set up businesses/pop-up shops/Grow Hubs/Grow Shops

The Clerk was instructed to feed these ideas back to the Community Development Officer for further investigation.

**Action 210831/4: CDO**

**21/096 GWR Customer and Community Programme** – to note the availability of grants and consider making an application.

The Clerk was instructed to ask the Community Development Officer to follow this up.

**Action 210831/5: CDO**

**21/097 Bank Reconciliations**

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

It was **agreed** to defer this matter to the next meeting because the Clerk was waiting for the internal auditor to return the 2020-21 financial paper work before she could reconcile the HSBC current account.

**21/098 Budget Position**

To note the budget report to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

**Noted.**

**21/099 Accounts for Payment - Members to consider the schedule of payments (August 2021)**

**20:18** - Councillor Buckland left the meeting due to the disclosable pecuniary interest declared at item 21/086.

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to approve the payments as presented.**

**20:18** – Councillor Buckland returned to the meeting.

**21/100 Reports Council to receive reports from:**

a) Members representing the Council on outside/other bodies – **No reports received.**

b) Town Councillors

Councillor Crawford said that there should be a pavement from Station Road to the Railway bridge. This matter would be referred to the Transport Committee.

Councillor Brownlow reported that he had attended the NALC event “Planning and Power” and would circulate his notes soon. All speakers at the event had been critical of the Government’s Planning White Paper and concerns were raised about the future of Neighbourhood Plans and local democracy. Councillor Brownlow expressed an interest in attending the NALC event “Future Communities” in December.

Councillor Pickering expressed concern at the number of road closures that had taken place recently in Bruton and said that damage to some buildings and pavements had been caused. This matter would be referred to the Transport Committee.

Councillor Crawford reported that grass cuttings had been left on the Abbey Ponds footpath after the edges had been tidied up. Councillor Buckland said he would arrange for a leaf blower to be taken to the site to remove the cuttings.

**c) Chairman**

The Chairman reported that one of the Assistant Clerks had written a Neighbourhood Plan report, which would be presented to the council at the September Full Council meeting.

**21/101 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 information regarding a third party organisation.**

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

**20:24** – District Councillor Trimmell and County Councillor Groskop left the meeting.

**21/102 To receive a report regarding a recent meeting relating to a third party organisation and consider nominating an asset of community value.**

**RESOLVED: It was proposed and unanimously agreed to authorise the Community Development Officer to continue talks with the current occupiers of the building and also to register the building as an asset of community value.**

*Action 210831/6: CDO*

**The meeting ended at 20:31.**

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