

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE
of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 5 June 2024
at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman from item 2)

Bridget Bolwell	Dave Rickard
Jonathan Bourbon	Bev Thornton
Julian Jones	David Worthington
Anne Rickard	

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager), David Dixon (Project Manager), four representatives of Precision Football Arena, two youth representatives for the Town of Culture initiative, and 14 members of the public.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: that Cllr Kelvin Clayton be elected Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

Cllr Kelvin Clayton took the Chair.

PUBLIC FORUM

Karin Schafer addressed members expressing her concerns about net zero. She considered the issues to be complicated and threatening. She had established from a Freedom of Information request that eleven Dorset Council staff were involved in net zero at a cost of £529,000. Their target was to be carbon neutral by 2050, with other targets prior to that, affecting cars, cattle, and farmers, who were worried. Ms Schafer added that the farming aspect included those with a single hen, to accord with bird flu requirements and that it was strange that there was a vaccine. Ms Schafer added that she loved cars and sheep and that there was no future without them.

Cllr Julian Jones offered a brief explanation of net zero carbon objective, which was to offset carbon, rather than to eliminate it.

The Chair thanked Ms Schafer for her address and added that he was happy to meet separately on the issues raised.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ann Langridge and Steve Williams.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr Dave Rickard be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 March 2024 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. PRECISION FOOTBALL ARENA

Four representatives of Precision Football Arena presented on a proposal for an indoor football and community facility at the Horn Park Quarry Business Park near Beaminster. An accompanying slideshow set out the proposal in outline, highlighting the benefits as:

- A reliable and dedicated training facility that was not weather-dependent;
- Potentially attracting 200 footballers for Bridport Youth FC;
- A positive development for inclusivity and community engagement;
- A facility for wider community and sporting uses beyond football; and
- Providing opportunities for health and wellbeing.

The initial funding target was £30,000 and running costs were estimated at £22,000 per annum. A Crowdfunder had raised £25,000 and the remainder of the initial funding was needed to enable the facility to open by September 2024. The group sought to foster a relationship with the Town Council, and to attract Town Council funding support.

Members considered:

- The location, and difficulties travelling to and from it;
- The type of building to be used, which was reported to be a storage unit at present;
- A need for accessibility and inclusivity;
- The potential for transport services and lift-sharing, and the need to avoid any unsafe cycling and walking;
- Whether other town councils in the proposed 35-mile radius had been approached for funding support. The group advised that only Beaminster Town Council had been contacted to date; and
- The amount of funding to be requested from the Town Council. The group advised that it did not have a fixed figure to request.

RESOLVED: that the proposal be welcomed, and that it be further considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

7. PROJECT UPDATES

The Project Managers reported on:

- A proposed seating and gathering area, and a temporary 'pavilion' to be constructed as part of the Town of Culture initiative, which was welcomed by members;

- A request from the Asker Meadows Nature Reserve Group to consider allowing the Friends of Rivers Group to manage the Town Councils fishing rights along the River Asker;

RESOLVED: that a partnership for fishing rights be explored further, along with a possible code of practice, with a view to establishing a pilot scheme and that the matter be considered again by the committee.

- A proposed review of the Asker Meadows Management Plan;

RESOLVED: that a task and finish group be established to consider a review of the Asker Meadows Management Plan, membership to include Cllrs Jonathan Bourbon and Dave Rickard.

- Ongoing work on river monitoring, which was welcomed by members who also thanked volunteers for their work;
- The work of the Edible Bridport group, including the creation of four new sites for community growing, and the possibility of Town Council funding and/or other support;

RESOLVED: that (i) the Edible Bridport group be invited to present to the committee, (ii) support be provided insofar as is possible within existing delegated funding, and (iii) the group be advised to approach the Community Kitchen and Food Banks for further potential growing sites.

- Progress with improvements at Court Orchard Green, where trees had been planted and new goalposts installed. Installation of new play equipment would begin shortly; and
- The awarding of Wessex Watermark and Bee Friendly status to Bridport, which members welcomed.

RESOLVED: that the reports of the Project Managers be noted.

8. TOWN OF CULTURE – BRIDPORT 2024

The Project Manager summarised the Dorset Town of Culture initiative, which resulted from a bid to the Arts Development Company that had been accepted in January 2024. A budget of £15,000 from Dorset Council matched by the Town Council.

Youth representatives James and Alani summarised the youth ‘strand’ of the initiative, covering recruitment of participants, a proposed senior mentor role, opportunities for events and activities, the objective of providing skills training through the initiative, and the naming of the youth strand, which would be TOCIYA (Town of Culture Initiative for Young Adults).

Members welcomed progress with TOCIYA and its associated activities. The Project Manager advised that further funding bids were being pursued to supplement the support provided by Bridport Town Council and Dorset Council.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

9. **TOWN COUNCIL FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

Consideration was given to a draft Town Council Plan 2024-29, ENCL: 3907.

Members discussed:

- A need for the community engagement activity referred to on page 8 to be followed through in the remainder of the plan;
- The addition of a completion date for the Skilling Oval project;
- Concerns that 'digital by default' should not disadvantage those without access to digital communications; and
- The absence of reference to emergency housing.

The Town Clerk advised that the plan should be finalised by September, and it was therefore

RESOLVED: that members should submit any further comments to the Project Manager by the end of June 2024.

10. **CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Project Managers provided updates on:

- Work with Magna Housing to promote retro fit energy conservation of the social rented sector in Bridport;
- Work with Wessex Community Assets and local Community Land Trusts to support low carbon solutions for social housing, including retrofit and new build;
- Support delivery of the Bridport Food Security Plan - land under horticultural production, new food enterprises, stronger local food supply chains;
- Support the piloting of the Bridport Learning Hub to drive skills and training required for net zero transition.

Responding to a question about extending the Food Security Plan beyond Bridport, the Project Manager advised that it had been presented to several wider audiences and that the Food Festival would be a further opportunity.

RESOLVED: that the reports be noted.

11. **COMMUNICATIONS / UPDATES ON OTHER ONGOING ISSUES**

The Town Clerk reported that the implementation of the town centre 20mph zone would likely be delayed a second time due to pre-election period rules.

The Chairman reported that

- Theo Langdon would be invited to report on his ongoing resilience work;
- He was concerned at reports of hate speech and abuse. Cllr Anne Rickard advised she would address these through her role as Town Mayor.

The meeting closed at **8.54pm**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 4 September 2024