

Minutes of the meeting of **BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Town Hall on Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Anne Rickard – Town Mayor (in the Chair)

Cllr	Nigel Amor	Andrew Holdridge
	Ian Bark	Julian Jones
	Bridget Bolwell	Anna Killick
	Dave Bolwell	Ann Langridge
	Jonathan Bourbon	Patrick Mooney
	Sarah Carney	Nigel Rawlings
	Rob Casey	Dave Rickard
	Kelvin Clayton	Bev Thornton

ALSO PRESENT Simon Batorski (Bridport Community Kitchen), two members of the public, one representative of the press, Will Austin (Town Clerk) and Paul Fuszard (Finance and Office Manager).

## **OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

Simon Batorski presented to the meeting on the history and work of Bridport Community Kitchen, describing its early stages as a soup kitchen and subsequent expansion to provide a range of support services to vulnerable people, and to signpost to other services. He illustrated this through an example of a homeless man and his journey towards becoming part of the team running the Kitchen, who was shortly to move into a home. Others were not so fortunate and needed help from organisations such as the Town Council. More facilities were needed for people sleeping rough, and others in housing need. Responding to a question, Simon highlighted Boldwood House as an opportunity to provide accommodation.

A discussion highlighted:

- The challenges of, and work with, Magna Housing to bring Boldwood House back into community use;
- Possible locations for homeless ‘pods’;
- The need for a multi-agency approach;
- Consideration of housing as a priority for inclusion in the Town Council’s five-year plan;
- The support also provided by the Food Bank; and
- The help that could be provided through further community allotments.

The Mayor thanked Simon for his address.

Cllr Andy Holdridge spoke on the dangers of smart phones to children, and noted that other towns were looking at becoming smart phone free. He asked that the Council consider this and introduced Lizzie, a mother of four whose children attended local schools. Lizzie described how she felt uncomfortable with giving her child a smart phone, whilst also feeling pressured to do so. She had now given one of her children a phone without internet or social media, but had also noted the rise of the smart phone free movement. Joanne Evans spoke on the same topic, highlighting the addictive nature of smart phones, which could cause welfare issues,

bullying, self-harm and access to the 'dark web'. Joanne worked in criminal justice and was familiar with these toxic effects, particularly on young men. She asked the council to support parents, work with schools, and provide alternatives. She was happy to assist with further research.

The meeting welcomed the introduction of this issue, and the following were discussed:

- A desire for further information to inform the debate and possible action;
- A book named 'Stolen Focus' that might be informative;
- A request for a report to be drafted by Cllr Holdridge, for consideration by Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee;
- Other pressures on young people, such as fashion trends;
- The resource implications for the council of further work on this topic, and consideration of its inclusion in the council's five-year plan;
- A possible role of the Town Council in funding others' actions and/or working in partnership with others; and
- Previous Town Council partnership working, such as with Plastic-Free Bridport, that could provide a model for work on this issue.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Holdridge, Lizzie, and Joanne for their addresses.

## **17. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Sarah Williams, Steve Williams and David Worthington.

## **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **19. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor (Chairman).

## **20. STANDING ORDER 4(k)(vi)**

There were no questions pursuant to standing order 4(k)(vi).

## **21. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **(a) PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3 June 2024 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3 June 2024 be received.

### **(b) PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 24 June 2024 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Ian Bark.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 24 June 2024 be received and adopted, and that the recommendation therein be approved, as set out below:

(Minute 17) HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

RESOLVED: that a working group be created to consider the housing land supply and the Dorset Council Local Plan, comprising Cllrs Sarah Carney, Anna Killick, Jonathan Bourbon, and two further members elected by Full Council, with the remit "Initially to address the housing land supply issue, and then to consider the Dorset Council Local Plan, and to make recommendations to Planning Committee".

(c) **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 June 2024 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Paddy Mooney.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 June 2024 be received and adopted, and that the recommendations therein be approved, as set out below: -

(Minute 7) ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounts for 2023/24 be approved.

(Minute 10) APPOINTMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED: that the list of representatives on outside bodies be approved as in Appendix 1 to the minutes, subject to any additional amendments at Full Council.

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

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Social Wellbeing Committee held on 5 June 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 5 June 2024 be received and adopted.

**22. REPORTS**

Dorset Police neither attended or provided a report for consideration.

For Dorset Council, Cllr Dave Bolwell reported on a move to declare a nature emergency, and he had contacted the Town Clerk about the Town Council's

removal of glyphosate-based weedkiller from its work. This would be a matter for consideration at Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee.

The following reports from representatives to outside bodies were provided:

- Cllr Sarah Carney had attended the AGM of the Allington Hill, Coopers Wood and Field group, who had been pleased to receive the Town Council. It was hoped a ward meeting could be held in the wellbeing space.
- Cllr Dave Bolwell had attended a meeting of West Bay Community Forum, which had welcomed him as ward councillor. Discussions at the meeting were positive.
- Cllr Paddy Mooney had attended the AGM of Bridport Arts Centre Trust and had arranged to meet with the Director and Chair. He would report further after that meeting.

### **23. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2023/2024**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3912.

For the Town Council, and unusually following changes to community governance the former parish councils of Allington, Bothenhampton & Walditch, and Bradpole, the Town Clerk summarised the report and highlighted:

- The annual accounts;
- The Annual Internal Audit Report;
- Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Annual Governance Statement;
- Section 2 of the AGAR, the Accounting Statements for the year 2023/24;
- The Conflict of Interest with BDO LLP form; and
- The procedure for approval of the above, and for submission of returns for all four councils.

Each of the above were considered separately and each was moved and seconded, put to the vote and declared to be carried. It was therefore:

RESOLVED that, for Bridport Town Council:

- (i) the Council notes the Annual Internal Auditor Report;
- (ii) the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement;
- (iii) the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024;
- (iv) the Council declares that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP; and
- (v) the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED that, for Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council:

- (vi) the Council approves the annual accounts for 2023/2024;
- (vii) the Council notes the Annual Internal Auditor Report;
- (viii) the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement;
- (ix) the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024;
- (x) the Council declares that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP; and
- (xi) the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED that, for Bradpole Parish Council:

- (xii) the Council approves the annual accounts for 2023/2024;
- (xiii) the Council notes the Annual Internal Auditor Report;
- (xiv) the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement;
- (xv) the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024;
- (xvi) the Council declares that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP; and
- (xvii) the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED that, for Allington Parish Council:

- (xviii) the Council approves the annual accounts for 2023/2024;
- (xix) the Council approves the Certificate of Exemption for 2023/24
- (xx) the Council notes the Annual Internal Auditor Report;
- (xxi) the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement;
- (xxii) the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2023/2024;
- (xxiii) the Council declares that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP; and
- (xxiv) the Annual Return be signed and submitted to the External Auditor.

RESOLVED: that the Council thanks the Finance and Officer Manager for his hard work and diligence in producing the AGAR for submission.

#### **24. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

RESOLVED: that the subject of the open public forum at the next full council meeting shall be Bridport Youth & Community Centre.

#### **25. COMMUNICATIONS**

Consideration was given to the Town Mayor's engagements, ENCL: 3913. The Mayor reported one addition, attendance at D-Day talks and displays at the British Legion Hall on 25 May 2024.

Cllr Sarah Carney asked whether the Leader might introduce a 'blog'. The Leader said he would consider this.

Cllr Ian Bark reported as Leader that he had chaired a discussion about the Food Security Plan.

The Town Clerk reported on:  
Arrangements for Mayor Making;  
Feedback from Dorset Council on concerns about footpath W7/17. Cllrs Sarah Carney and Nigel Rawlings would be meeting with the Ranger to discuss.  
The impending closure of Sidney Gale House and councillor views on possible actions. Cllr Sarah Carney highlighted the need to involve Dorset County Hospital.  
Cllr Dave Rickard asked that more information be provided at the next Full Council meeting, and the Town Clerk agreed to pursue this.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm.

**The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 24 September 2024**