

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE  
of Bridport Town Council held in Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 6 November  
2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton  
Jonathan Bourbon Dave Rickard  
Julian Jones David Worthington  
Anne Rickard

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Ian Bark (leader ex officio), Theo Langon (volunteer),  
two members of the public, Will Austin (Town Clerk), and  
Caroline Pearce (Project Manager).

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Mr David Toplas introduced himself as a Loders resident, who was running a renewable energy project to introduce renewable electricity sources without reliance on the national grid. It should be cheap, green, resilient and controllable, and extends to electric vehicle charging and heat through a localised heating system, which would not require changes to household radiators or pipework. Mr Toplas' background was in energy projects and as this project was in Loders, he was looking to extend it to Bradpole, hence opening a dialogue with the Town Council. He was also in contact with Dorset Council.

The Town Clerk asked Mr Toplas what he wanted from the Town Council, and he advised that this was nebulous, as it was too early to say. Responding to a question from Cllr Julian Jones, he advised that the projects in Loders and Bradpole would be joint, rather than separate. He also replied to Cllr Dave Rickard about links with Sustainable Bridport and Dorset Community Energy, advising that he was already liaising with both.

### **22. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bridget Bolwell and Steve Williams.

### **23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **24. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 September 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Julian Jones asked whether Dorset Council was still using glyphosate-based weedkiller. The Town Clerk advised he was investigating this, as the position was unclear.

## 25. **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

Theo Langdon addressed members on community resilience work he was carrying out on behalf of Beaminster Town Council, and on a proposed letter of support tabled with the agenda. Mr Landgon advised that:

- The previous discussion with Bridport Town Council had elicited a desire to hear more about his work.
- He was a layman but was learning.
- There was a need to distinguish between long-term resilience and a long-term emergency, the latter being an emergency event lasting more than 72 hours.
- The response fell with the community to organise.
- Beaminster Town Council had withdrawn its emergency and resilience plan, due to confusion over roles and expectations. A group was being formed to look into this.
- He wanted the wider community to engage, which had prompted the request for a letter of support.

Members discussed Mr Langdon's work, and the need for a more prominent role to be played by Dorset Council as the emergency planning authority, alongside the community response. The draft letter of support was also discussed, and it was

RESOLVED: that subject to replacement of the words "this is not the case for the resilience planning elements" with the words "however, the case for longer term planning elements is unclear", the draft letter of support be agreed as tabled.

Members went on to consider a general update on a review of Bridport Town Council's Emergency & Resilience Plan. The Project Manager advised that this review was focusing initially on the emergency aspects, including developing the work of flood wardens further. Flood risk work also involved communication with recipients of sandbags, a more proactive approach to particularly vulnerable properties, and riparian responsibilities. Emergency contacts were being updated.

Members discussed recruiting additional flood wardens, especially in Walditch and Bradpole.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Project Manager be noted.

## 26. **PROJECT UPDATES**

Members considered updates from the Project Managers on Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan projects, and other projects falling within the committee's remit, ENCL: 3935, as follows:

- Town of Culture
- Food Security Plan
- Asker Meadows Nature Reserve
- Energy Champions
- River Water Quality
- Court Orchard Green
- Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036
- Flood Wardens scheme

Members discussed:

- The temporary pavilion at Asker Meadows, which was to be in part repurposed, with part remaining as seating.
- Monitoring of river quality by water guardians and other volunteers, submitting data to a central database, analysed by Dorset National Landscape. Wessex Water monitoring added to the available public data.
- The role of the Environment Agency in water monitoring, which raised concerns amongst members, about a lack of capacity. There was a need to engage with the Agency and the constituency MP, in addition to the existing channels of communication via CROWD.
- Funding for the water monitoring, which was from Dorset National Landscape and the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Project Manager be noted.

## **27. BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2024-29**

Members considered the Town Council's draft Five Year Plan, ENCL: 3936, including a request for any final changes within the committee's remit. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the committee offers no further comment on the draft five-year plan.

## **28. MUSIC IN BUCKY DOO SQUARE**

The Chairman reported on a complaint from one business about the volume of music in Bucky Doo Square. He advised that he had contacted the complainant, and the issue had been referred to officers for action. The Town Clerk reported that the arrangements had been reviewed and actions included a reminder to performers that requests to lower volume must be acted upon, and more proactive monitoring. A decibel monitor was available at the TIC, to assist with this.

Members discussed:

- The generally good performance of the TIC team in managing noise.
- Concerns that a single complaint, whilst important to consider, should not be given undue prominence.
- Whether the newly installed power supply might increase the amplification. The Town Clerk advised that it would not.

RESOLVED: that the reports of the Chairman and Town Clerk be noted.

## **29. COMMUNITY ENERGY**

The Chairman reported, following on from the earlier Public Forum discussion, that he had met with David Toplas. He advised that Mr Toplas lived in Guildford and had a second home in Loders. He further provided background to the Mill Group, of which Mr Toplas was a director, and the Loders project, which was seeking funding and was setting up as Eggardon CIC. Two options had been highlighted: (i) the involvement of Bradpole residents directly, or (ii) Town Council involvement in a geothermal energy project. The Chairman had contacted Dorset Community Energy, who had expressed some concerns about the project.

Members discussed:

- Solar energy for electricity, and geothermal for water, for heating. Solar was considered relatively straightforward, whereas geothermal was much more complex.
- The merits or otherwise of Town Council involvement in the project.
- The relative merits of profit vs not-for-profit enterprises.
- The retrofitting implications, including for listed buildings.
- Practical aspects and the realism of the proposals.
- The anticipated major cost which would likely be far beyond the Town Council's financial capacity.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council considers the project to be too large and too expensive for council involvement, and that no officer capacity is available to support the initiative.

### **30. COMMUNICATIONS/UPDATES ON OTHER ONGOING ISSUES**

Members considered a report submitted by Councillor Paddy Mooney, as representative to the Arts Centre, ENCL: 3937. Members welcomed the report as positive and showing that the Arts Centre was moving forward. The submission of a written report was also welcomed, as a good example to other councillors.

The Chairman also reported on some disappointment that carbon literacy training arranged by a Lyme Regis councillor had attracted little interest from Bridport councillors.

The meeting closed at **8.31pm**.

**The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 8 January 2025**