



Bradford on Avon
Town Council



Minutes of the Virtual Annual Town Council meeting of
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL
Held on Tuesday 2nd June 2020 at 7p.m.

Attendance – Town Council

Cllr E Franklin
Cllr D Garwood
Cllr S Gibson
Cllr A Kay
Cllr T Lomax
Cllr J Lynch*
Cllr S McNeill-Ritchie (Chairman)
Cllr D Newton (Leader of the Council)
Cllr J Parker
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr D Taylor
Mrs S Bartlett (Town Clerk)
Mr I Brown (Director of Operations)
Ms L Booth (Communications Manager)
Mr C Hogg (Green Spaces Officer)
*8.35pm left the meeting
Apologies: Cllr L Brown

Members of the Public: Sabrina Goddard, Liz Stephens, Rowena Quantrill, Richard Craft, Jeremy Wire, Sally Heselton and 6 others.

1. Election of Council Chairman and Mayor

Nominations for the position of Chairman and Town Mayor were received. Cllr Roberts nominated Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Gibson, Cllr Newton nominated Cllr McNeill-Ritchie, seconded by Cllr Garwood and with 4 votes in favour for Cllr Brown and 7 votes for Cllr McNeil-Ritchie it was **RESOLVED:** That Cllr Simon McNeill-Ritchie be elected as Chairman and Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

Due to inconsistency of the Mayor's wi-fi signal Cllr Taylor took the Chair, as Vice Chair.

2. Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Chairman agreed to sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office tomorrow.

3. Declarations of interest – none

4. Election of Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor and Leader of the Council

(i) The Chair asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman and Deputy Town Mayor. Cllr Gibson nominated Cllr Parker, seconded by Cllr Lynch, Cllr Newton nominated Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Franklin and with no further nominations and with 7 votes for Cllr Kay and 4 votes for Cllr Parker, it was **RESOLVED:** That Cllr Alex Kay be Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor for the year 2020-21.

(ii) Chairman asked for nominations for the Leader of the Council, Cllr Taylor nominated Cllr Newton, seconded by Cllr Kay and Cllr Roberts nominated Cllr Brown, seconded by Cllr Gibson and with 7 votes for Cllr Newton and 3 votes for Cllr Brown and 1 abstention it was **RESOLVED:** That Cllr Newton be Leader of the Council for the forthcoming year.

Vice-Chairman took the Chair due to technical difficulties with Chairman's wi-fi signal.

5. Selection of Committees and Terms of Reference

(i) Selection of members for Committees and Chairman for each committee - It was proposed by Cllr Newton seconded by Cllr Franklin and with 9 in favour and 1 abstention it was **RESOLVED**: to continue with the existing membership and Chairman for each committee.

(ii) Terms of Reference - It was proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Franklin and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: To re-adopt the Terms of Reference as circulated.

6. Register of Members pecuniary interests

Cllr Newton reported that Floaty Boaty was in the process of setting up as an independent charity, so a change would need to be made to the Chairman's, Cllr Lynch's and his register when this was completed, reflecting a non-pecuniary interest. Clerk reminded members if they have any changes to their Register of Members interests to advise her and she will update Wiltshire Council's website.

Cllr Roberts also reported a non-pecuniary interest in a charity musical event in aid of Bath's Royal United Hospital.

7. Minutes

Chairman returned to the meeting temporarily.

Cllr Lynch queried the date for the Annual Council meeting. His recollection was his proposal for mid-July. Cllr Newton explained that it was left open at the last meeting, based on the wording of the relevant Regulations. Chairman advised that he said not to be bound by any fixed time. In consultation with other Mayors, some had re-elected virtually using the new legislation, others decided not to have an Annual Council meeting and continue with their existing mayor.

The Chairman was continuing to have problems with his wi-fi signal, so the Vice-Chairman took the chair.

It was proposed by Cllr Franklin seconded by Cllr Newton and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED**: To accept the minutes from the Virtual Full Council meeting held on the 5th May 2020.

8. Matters arising – none

9. Minutes of Committees

It was noted that the Virtual Extraordinary Highways and Transport Committee took place on the 12th May 2020. Cllr Roberts wanted to know how Wiltshire Council were proceeding with the decision made at this meeting. Cllr Gibson said that any scheme depended on funding from the Department for Transport. She said it was futile to proceed until it was in place. Cllr Newton said that any news would be shared when it was available at a future Virtual Extraordinary Highways and Transport Committee. He said it was not helped by various people making representations to officers at Wiltshire Council.

10. Chairman's report

(i) The Chairman's report was noted.

(ii) The Chairman mentioned in his report outline planning permission for 71 houses at Malmesbury – Cllr Gibson said that Lyneham were also in a similar position to Malmesbury She advised that she argued against it using every part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) she could but to no avail at the recent Strategic Planning Committee. She thought that as the Lyneham scheme was approved on the same grounds of no 5 year land supply that it had serious repercussions for the the Bradford on Avon Neighbourhood Plan as we do not fully meet the criteria of Article 14 of the NPPF as our Neighbourhood Plan is more than 2 years year old and needs to be up-dated as soon as possible.

Chairman's signal improved temporarily.

Chairman advised that this council was the only council to reply to Malmesbury Town Council in their plea for support against their outline planning application. Vice Chairman explained that this should be discussed further at the next Environment and Planning Committee on the 17th June and invited Cllr Gibson to attend.

(iii) Cllr Franklin reported that it said in the Chairman's Report that the Council will be thanking the CEVs and their Street Champions for their hard work and service during this COVID-19 pandemic. She said they had delivered prescriptions, shopping, welfare checks and others. Cllr Newton said that a heartfelt thank you will be sent on behalf of the town to the Street Champions. He said some

deliveries are still being made and a communications message will be sent to them to ask if they were still available now, given the changing circumstances and if they had to return to work.

11. COVID-19 Pandemic

The Director of Operations explained his report. He said we had over 300 volunteers. He said that 675 requests had been completed by the C.E.V.s Street Champions. This figure was likely to be lower than the actual effort, as all the data had not been captured when the street champions had continued to support people on their own. He said that this was an average of 11 requests received per day. Last week the basketball and tennis courts were re-opened. The Town Council's green spaces were being carefully monitored. The Covid-19 expenses spreadsheet totalling £3,300 was noted. Cllr Kay advised that some reports of anti-social behaviour had been made to her from the river users. Cllr Newton said that following the arson incident at the Kingston play area last Sunday he would be meeting tomorrow various youth workers and the Police to discuss strategies going forward. Cllr Newton paid tribute to the staff of the Town Council for their help in facilitating the requests on a shift system to the Volunteers, and all of their work on the COVID-19 response.

12. Biodiversity on re-wilding and weed kill processes

The Biodiversity Report was considered in detail. Cllr Kay explained how different types of spaces would be treated with a biodiversity ethos. She said that the Preservation Trust was supportive of this on their land.

Rowena Quantrill said that she was pleased to see this item on the agenda. She thought that cutting hedges needed more details, as to the best time to do this. Also, the merits of ivy can be a good thing and does not always need ripping out. She said that there were already experts in the town who could help with a survey and gave the names to our Green Spaces Officer.

Liz Stephens in favour of a survey for plants and habitat. She would like to know which species would be included in any survey.

Sally Heselton said she thought this item was very proactive and that she had passed it on to other councils. She was interested in the educating side and would be interested to see any survey produced.

Jeremy Wire said that he was backing this item on the agenda.

Cllr Gibson said that Defra were already doing work on this in South Gloucestershire.

She thought it best to use the information we already have rather than spend huge amounts on consultancy.

Cllr Newton said that a gap analysis would be made to assist the green corridor in the Neighbourhood Plan. He said the costs would be approximately £3-4,000 but that the scope of work would need to be established, taking account of data already available, so as not to duplicate.

Green Spaces Officer said that he had been collating the amount of biodiversity that he was aware of. He was working towards providing information for the green infrastructure survey.

Cllr Lomax asked for an amendment to the motion to include removing peat use for compost in beds and hanging baskets to be phased out (added at the end of clause 1 of the Resolution).

Cllr Lynch said that he supported this proposal. He said that education was important. Nature trumps neatness. He said that the Council should work with the Highways and Transport up Mason's Lane as he would like to see this area for re-greening and re-wilding.

Chairman's signal popped in temporarily.

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Newton seconded by Cllr Franklin and with 10 in favour and 1 abstention it was **RESOLVED**: That the following instructions and measures shall apply to all areas owned, controlled or managed by the Town Council, currently and in the future, and including, as far as possible where such is leased to other parties, and in addition is applicable to all services that third- and fourth-party contractors and volunteers provide acting under Town Council auspices or with its support;

that:

1. with immediate effect, all use of glyphosate and other chemical weed-killers, and the use of peat-based composts will cease;
2. mowing operations that are not required for reasons of safety, maintenance of rights of way, or to promote the primary purpose of a site (i.e. sports), are ceased over part or all of the areas in question and/or with seasonal considerations in order to promote re-growth, re-wilding and regeneration of natural biodiversity

And further resolves that:

3. The Town Council will develop, by September 2020, a forward management plan to

define cutting patterns, with emphasis on allowing natural re-wilding as far as possible, in line with local eco-systems;

4. The Town Council will commission a third-party survey and expert analysis of biodiversity in the town, during the summer of 2020 to provide effective and timely information to inform 3, and to ensure that adequate resource is provided to Officers; and that this shall be annually updated.

It was subsequently noted by Councillor Kay that the Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust has also signalled its wholehearted support for the resolution.

13. Management Accounts Reports

Cllr Roberts said that he would like some clarity on the Highways and Transport Committee balances. The income and expenditure reports and balance sheets up to 29th February 31st March and 30th April 2020 were noted.

14. Accounts for payment

Cllr Roberts said that he had some queries on the payments lists. Town Clerk said that she would telephone Cllr Roberts and explain the items tomorrow.

It was proposed by Cllr Franklin seconded by Cllr Parker and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED:** To approve payroll and direct payments and invoices up to 29th February 31st March and 30th April 2020.

Chairman's signal popped back in.

15. Thanks from the Chairman

Chairman thanked Cllr Dan Taylor for being his Deputy over the last year and all his support and that he was delighted that Cllr Alex Kay would be his Deputy this year. He congratulated the Town Clerk on her 21 years' service to the Council. He wished Cllr Lynch a happy birthday for later this week.

The meeting closed at 8.39pm.

Members of the public who spoke at the Virtual Full Council meeting on the 2nd June 2020

1. Sabrina Goddard asked if Cllr Newton had any reply to his recent letter to Matt Hancock, concerning COVID-19 and one of the questions was will local R values and testing data be made available to all tiers of local government. Cllr Newton advised that he had received an automated reply of his letter but no response yet. He still did not know the 'R' number in the South West.
2. Richard Craft agreed with the item on Biodiversity. He said he hoped there will be a Management Plan to identify places where new trees will be placed. He said it was also difficult to socially distance along the Trowbridge Road with bulging hedges encroaching on the pavement width. Cllr Gibson suggested that this is something she had raised at Wiltshire Council and a polite letter needed to be sent to those house owners.