

Minutes Town Council

Date	06/03/2023
Time	19:00 -
Location	Council Chamber, Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Rd, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1LE
Chair	Cllr Lesley Millard
Attendees	Cllr Ross Baker, Cllr Peter Clayton, Cllr Alasdair Elrick, Cllr Julie Flurry, Cllr Ganesh Gudka, Cllr Roger Keen, Cllr Alan Matthews, Cllr Lesley Millard, Cllr Andrew Morgan, Cllr Mike Murphy, Cllr Sharon Perry, Cllr Catherine Searing, Katherine Noble Town Clerk and Cllr Barbara Vickers
Absentees	Cllr Sue Barber, Cllr Mike Facey, Cllr Benjamin Metcalfe, Cllr James Warren and Cllr Paul Wynn

00.0 Public Participation

There were 13 members of the public present. District Councillors Janet Keen and Phil Harvey were also present. One member of the public had registered to speak but was not present at the meeting.

19.0.T23 To receive apologies for non-attendance

Apologies were received from Councillors Barber, Facey, Warren and Wynn.

20.0.T23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this Agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

21.0.T23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16/01/2023 (copy enclosed)

The minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 16th January 2023 were presented by the Mayor.

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

22.0.T23 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

23.0.T23 To receive Mayors announcements

The Mayor read out the following statement;

"Over the last two months I have been doing a lot of work to support our Climate and Ecology Action Plan. I have met with the CEO of Burnham and Weston Solar Energy to finalise our work to support residents with the reduction of energy. She has now employed an Energy Advisory Officer who will give individual advice in the town. They are also working to establish Energy Hubs in both Burnham and Highbridge. I have also met with Mark Ford from Somerset Waste Partnership to explore way that we can work together to drive the Sustainability agenda in our Action Plan. They have now commissioned the employment of a Community Support Officer and we are looking forward to working with them.

I attended a webinar organised by Somerset Bus Partnership that was focused on building travel plans around the train stations. One of the speakers was from GWR who work from Highbridge Station. It was very apparent that they had done no work here and yet had made great changes at other stations. I have now contacted him and he is willing to come and talk to us about what they could do at Highbridge. Somerset Bus Partnership are also taking ideas to Somerset County Council detailing what we would like to see in Highbridge as we work to link bus, rail, bicycles and footpaths. I have spoken to Lara from 'Slow Ways'. They are creating a network of footpaths linking towns and cities around the country. There are several in our area and they need help verifying them. These will then be included on a map which will be made available nationally.

We have now formed a Steering Group to develop our Plastic Free status and increase the number of local champions both in schools and businesses. They will meet for the first time on the 1st March. We have representatives from the Working Group, Beach Clean team and local businesses. We will be holding an information evening for local Businesses in partnership with Burnham and Highbridge Chamber of



Commerce on March 22nd in Highbridge Community Hall. We are bringing together a variety of local organisations that work to support local businesses. I have met with various organisations who have been successful in developing sustainability projects in Weston Super Mare.

I have also been working to raise awareness of our Action Plan locally. I spoke at a recent Inner Wheel meeting, took part in a Beach Clean and also spoke at a deanery meeting for churches with in our area. This allowed me to explain our plan but also encourage churches to explore the 'Wilder Churchyards' initiative by Somerset Wildlife Trust. I had the pleasure of meeting 'Team Green' at King Alfred's school. The school has an important part to play in our Action Plan and it was good to start the conversation with such a dynamic and interesting group of young people.

Sadly, our Youth Groups were unable to elect any representatives onto our Youth Town Council. This means that our first YTC will be formed by students at King Alfred's but we will open up to the community groups every year to enable them to provide representatives in the future.

I have been pleased to expand my knowledge of the town by visiting Beaufort House, The Lighthouse (Residential Care for Brain Injured) and L and F Training in Highbridge, who provide opportunities for people to train and access work. All provide specific care and support in the town. I was pleased to support our local Rotary Club at the District Final of Young Chef. It was great to see the young people showing their brilliant skills and knowledge.

I attended the Holocaust Service in Highbridge to recognise the people who suffered so much and value the work of Frank Foley. It was good to see the local schools taking part in this special event.

I went to watch the Highbridge School of Dance perform at the MacMillan Theatre in Bridgwater. It is wonderful that we have such talent in our towns".

24.0.T23 To receive any reports from county councillors on county council relevant matters

County Councillor Clayton confirmed a copy of his report would be circulated to Members and made available on the website.

25.0.T23 To receive any reports from district councillors on district council relevant matters

District Councillor Keen confirmed she would not be standing in the next election.

District Councillor Keen hoped that her successor would take up the school report regarding excluded children.

District Councillor Harvey reiterated that the public toilets at Crosses Pen and Oxford Street will be replaced (see report).

No questions were raised.

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank the County and District Councillors for all their hard work, which was followed by a round of applause.

26.0.T23 To receive reports from town councillor representatives appointed to outside bodies

The Mayor gave an update regarding the Twinning Group and confirmed that representatives from Fritzlar would be visiting Burnham-on-Sea this year.

27.0.T23 To receive details of expenditure between 17/01/2023 - 01/03/2023

The list of payments were received and noted.

28.0.T23 To receive the town council accounts for the month of 31/01/2023

The report was received and noted.

29.0.T23 To receive minutes of previous committee meetings

There were no queries raised regarding the Committee Minutes.

30.0.T23 To consider expression of interest letter relating to the Princess Theatre

The Chair of the Princess Management Committee gave some background information and asked Councillors to take into account that a review of staff and the processes within the theatre is currently taking place, by two consultants with experience of running cultural venues in a local authority setting. The report is due at the end of the month. The Town Council has begun to consider its strategic aims for the next four years as part of its Corporate Plan, which will include the cultural life of the towns.

The Chair of the Princess Management Committee stated that it is important that both streams of work are concluded before the future management and/or ownership of the theatre is discussed. Fundamental questions including “what is it the Council wants from the Theatre” need to be answered before the Council considers its future management.

Resolved that the Council thanks Mr and Mrs Scott for the letter expressing an interest in the Princess Theatre. That the Council develops and publishes its vision and goals for the Theatre taking into account the strategic review currently being undertaken and the discussions within the Council, including a statement of how it envisages the Theatre contributions to the cultural life of the towns and the metrics through which these could be measured. That the matter is deferred until the Town Council meeting in June, once it has received the commissioned report. At this point, the Council can debate how its plan to deliver its goals regarding the Theatre could be managed. This may involve a formal, open tender process, where applications are invited from interested parties to submit business plans to deliver our vision and goals.

31.0.T23 To consider correspondence received from Somerset County Council regarding the poplar tree in Rectory Road and agree a response

The Mayor advised that a meeting was arranged with the Leader of the County Council, a Highways Arboriculturalist and representatives from the group that expressed concerns regarding the tree.

An independent arborists report commissioned by the County Council suggested that the tree may continue to live for another 5 years if



substantial works were carried out and if it were monitored every two years by a physical inspection and report. The cost of the works and the 2 yearly inspections would be in the region of £10,000, which would need to be paid for by the Town Council.

The Town Council would like to work with the County Council and to see what is important to the local residents regarding the site.

Resolved that the Town Council agrees that it would not be a good use of public money and would not fund the inspections. The Town Council would welcome the opportunity to work with the County Council and residents to create a wildlife haven and to replant a tree on the site.

32.0.T23 To receive verbal update from the Homelessness Working Group

Councillor Baker confirmed that a successful meeting had taken place. The Working Group are producing a database of services available to share, as there is a lack of awareness and communication.

33.0.T23 To consider report from the Office Accommodation Working Group

Councillor Gudka gave an overview of the circulated report.

Resolved that the Council adopts the actions recommended by the Working Group, as listed below, and that the Finance and Resources Committee agrees the budget and quotes for the investigatory work implied by these actions.

Actions recommended by the Working Group and approved;

1. The Clerk brings forward recommendations for changes at Jaycroft Road and cost implications, centred around safety for workers and accessibility in the short term.
2. Confirm formally that Somerset Council are willing and able to proceed, allowing the Council to investigate further the possible move into the Learning and Skills Centre (LSC) building on Princess Street.

This will require a valuation of the two buildings in question and a feasibility study of the move based on the work below.



3. Commission design work and costings to make the LSC building suitable for council offices including a council chamber, meeting rooms and office space for workers.
4. Commission costing of work at Learning and Skill Centre (LSC) on Princess Street to render it safe and usable.
5. Once this exploratory work has been completed, a comprehensive report will come to the Full Council and it will decide on future actions.

34.0.T23 To receive update from the Climate and Ecology Working Group

The Mayor gave an overview of the circulated report and the significant amount of work that has already been undertaken.

The Council is aware there are plans for tree planting for the Kings Coronation and those involved are asked to contact the Mayor, so this can be incorporated into the tree planting plan.

The Working Group were thanked for all their work.

35.0.T23 To note NPPF reforms consultation response

The Mayor gave an overview of the consultation, which was detailed and technical. The response was noted.

36.0.T23 To approve the meeting timetable for 2023/24

Council meetings scheduled on a Tuesday will be held at the Morland Hub in Highbridge and those scheduled on a Monday will be held at the Council Office in Burnham-on-Sea.

Drop in sessions will be held before Council. Details will be published

37.0.T23 To appoint a Working Group to review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations

Councillors Gudka, Millard, Clayton and Murphy were appointed to review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations.



38.0.T23 To appoint a Working Group to respond to the Somerset Statement of Community Involvement consultation

Councillors Vickers, Clayton and Elrick were appointed to respond to the Somerset Statement of Community Involvement consultation on behalf of the Council.

39.0.T23 Date of next Meeting

The Annual Towns Meeting will be held on 18th April at the Morland Hub.

The next Town Council meeting will be held on 15th May 2023.

40.0.T23 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Resolved to exclude members of the press and public as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

41.0.T23 Play area update

Members were given an update regarding the play area.

Resolved that a meeting is arranged with Sedgemoor District Council and the lead Town Councillors and Clerk, to discuss the agreed actions.