



Minutes Town Improvements Committee

Date	22/05/2023
Time	19:00 -
Location	Council Chamber, Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Rd, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1LE
Chair	Cllr James Warren
Attendees	Cllr Peter Clayton, Cllr Mike Facey, Cllr Ganesh Gudka, Cllr Andrew Morgan, Cllr Catherine Searing, Katherine Noble Town Clerk, Cllr Barbara Vickers, Cllr James Warren and Cllr Paul Wynn
Absentees	Cllr Sue Barber and Cllr Mike Murphy

00.0 Public Participation

There were five member of the public present.

There were no registered speakers.

31.0.I23 To receive apologies for non-attendance

Apologies were received from Councillors Searing, Morgan and Wynn.

32.0.I23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this Agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

33.0.I23 To elect Committee Vice Chair for the ensuing year

Councillor Clayton proposed Councillor Facey, but this was not seconded.

Resolved Councillor Vickers was elected as Vice Chair of the Town Improvements Committee.

34.0.I23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Improvements Committee meeting held on 20/03/2023 (copy enclosed)



The minutes of the previous meeting of the Town Improvements Committee, held on 20th March 2023, were presented by the Chairman.

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

35.0.I23 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

36.0.I23 Formal announcements from the chair

The Chairman had no announcements.

37.0.I23 To note the most recent footfall and vacancy reports

The Committee requested that specific analysis on the footfall data is provided for a 3 month moving average against the previous year and a 12 month moving average against previous year and if possible a pre-pandemic benchmark.

The reports were noted.

38.0.I23 To note details of Armed Forces Day Parade on 01/07/2023 and agree expenditure

Somerset Council had now confirmed that the road closure was exempt from the £200 fee.

Resolved that £100 is allocated from the events budget for the Armed Forces Parade on 1st July. Members will be invited to attend.

39.0.I23 Verbal update from the High Street Task Force Working Group

Councillor Gudka circulated the following written report;

The 2nd workshop facilitated by the High Street Taskforce was held on 11th May. The Town Council was represented by me and the Deputy Clerk. Development Officers from Somerset Council, a few local residents, a business owner and the chair of the Burnham Chamber of Trade were also present. Some but not all the attendees had experience of previous regeneration projects in the town.



The facilitator, Toyubur Rahman, outlined trends affecting town centres across the country, including our own. He made a compelling case that because of trends such as the rise of internet shopping, out of town retail outlets and changes in demand patterns, the traditional High Street dominated by national retail brands was unlikely to be the model of the future.

The group did note some specific strengths that Burnham has, including the variety of independent outlets, its position on the coast with interesting tourist amenities on either side, and some legacy of events to draw in visitors.

We started to share some ideas for how the future town centre might prosper. In the long term, a High Street with a variety of businesses, covering retail, services, offices and social spaces, is likely to be more viable. Synergies with the sea front and local leisure amenities would need to be maximised.

Development of events may also be part of the solution and there was some discussion of what it would take to make life easier for event organisers.

These were very early and rough thoughts, and those present were conscious that we need to involve a wider variety of stakeholders, covering businesses, property owners, community groups and residents.

The facilitator presented the benefits of creating a strong "Placemaker" organisation or Town Board, including all stakeholders, to develop and lead change. The precise structure of that organisation would be up to the group to decide. It might ultimately be formed as a Business Improvement District (BID) or Community Interest Company (CIC) or remain a less formal entity. However, my understanding is that whilst the Town and County Councils would participate in the organisation, they would not dominate it or necessarily lead it. The ethos of such an organisation would need to be one of the local people taking control of the process rather than top-down changes being imposed upon them.

The next stage, if we choose to continue, is to hold a larger workshop to form a 12 Member Board. There will be an application process for those wishing to join the Board, who must show commitment, relevant experience and enthusiasm. Mr Rahman would be available to facilitate this meeting, and we expect this be externally funded. In preparation for



that meeting, the Somerset Council team will work with the local press to advertise the meeting and invite a wider variety of participants to attend it.

Whilst I understand that this will feel like a repeat of previous initiatives to many, I believe that we must keep trying to enable change in this way. I recommend that we continue to support this process and participate in it.

A query was raised regarding Officer time and where was the funding coming from. This is a government funded project and supported by Somerset Council.

The report was noted.

40.0.I23 To consider a traders request to support a makeover of the Market Street in Highbridge

The Committee agreed that it was not their place to give permission, but could encourage and enable the volunteers to make connections with other groups. The funding should come from Somerset Council.

Resolved that the Highbridge Councillors meet with the Traders to offer support.

41.0.I23 To consider recommendations from the Christmas Lights Working Group and agree actions

The Working Groups recommendations were considered.

Resolved that the purchase, installation and decoration of the two towns Christmas trees is a separate contract to the main lights. That the expressions of interest notice for the main contract is advertised with the budget of £21,000 ongoing for 3 years with a deadline of 15th June.

42.0.I23 To consider contacting Somerset Council to request installation of recycling bins on the seafront

Resolved that a request is made to Somerset Council for recycling bins to be placed on the seafront (to the left of the Jetty).



43.0.I23 To receive legacy clock update

The options were considered. There were some concerns raised regarding the proposed location, but it was agreed that the donors wishes should be respected.

Resolved that purchase of the option one clock (4800mm tall) is agree and that a site meeting is arranged to agree the exact installation location.

44.0.I23 To appoint working group to continue to progress with the Highbridge Regeneration Project

Resolved that the ward members for Highbridge and the Somerset Councillors ward members be invited to attend a meeting, to see if elements from the project can be taken forward.

45.0.I23 The next meeting of this committee will be held on Monday 10/07/2023

The next meeting of the Town Improvements Committee will be held on 10th July 2023.