# Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 2nd April 2024 at the Morland Hub, Pearce Drive, Highbridge, TA9 3FU at 7 pm

**Present:** Councillors L. Millard (Chair), R. Baker, P. Clayton, M. Facey, G. Gudka, R. Keen, A. Mathews, B. Metcalfe, M. Murphy, S. Perry, C. Searing, B. Vickers, P. Wynn

**In attendance:** K. Noble (Town Clerk) and four members of the public.

# Public Participation:

A member of the public advised that the town clock was showing the wrong time.

# T24 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Flurry.

# T24 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

# T24 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27th February 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Town Council, held on 27th February 2024, were presented by the Mayor.

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

# T24 Matters arising from previous minutes

The Town Clerk is meeting with Somerset Council later this month regarding the Burnham Radio Station Memorial.

Due to difficulties in moving the Princess Management Committee meeting in May, Councillor Searing has been consulted and it has been agreed to keep the date of the meeting as scheduled on 28th May.

# T24 To receive Mayor’s report

The Mayor read out the following report “The Civic Awards Ceremony and Service was a wonderful celebration of our compassionate community.

The award winners demonstrated it beautifully. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Polly Marsh and High Sheriff, Rob Beckley, were both really impressed with our strong sense of community and all that we are doing to support our residents. Our charities and community groups have really stepped up to fill the service gap for the NHS and emergency services.

The response has been amazing and we can be very proud of all those concerned.

The Council has now launched a Dog Fouling Prevention Campaign. This comes up at every Annual Meeting and we are pleased to be using the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign materials to support our endeavours. We will be completing surveys for 1 week every quarter rather than a month during the year. This way we hope to continue to spread the message that dog fouling is a health risk to our children and presents a bad impression on our visitors. We would welcome more involvement and so please contact the Deputy Clerk if you would like to help. It is not onerous and you do not have to clear up the mess. We spray it and count how many we find at different locations. We will then put posters up in the most effective place and inform the dog warden.

I attended the LCN meeting. I made a very useful contact and have arranged a meeting with Sunita Mills who is the Head of Transportation at Somerset Council. This should help to inform the Climate and Ecology Working Group and Highbridge Regeneration work. Councillor Hendry has kindly agreed to represent the Council on a Focus Group looking at employing a Highways Steward within the LCN.

I continue to attend the LCN Focus Group on Young People. We are auditing provision across all parishes and then we will engage with the young people themselves. It is a useful group with professionals, volunteers and councillors working together.

Subsequent to the meeting at the Bay Centre, we have arranged for the Police and 3 of the residents to join us to discuss Police strategies and how we can make people feel more confident in their personal safety.

I was very pleased to open the Highbridge Arts Festival this year. I was also invited to close the festival after the last music class. This year I also had the added dimension of volunteering during the weeks of the festival. It was good to hear volunteers explain how much they enjoyed watching children grow and develop as they attend each year. We are very lucky to have such an amazing event that draws people from as far afield as Cardiff and Frome. My thanks to all those involved in such a great community event.

Over this last month I have met the local Lions Group, the Moose International and watched’ Into the Woods’ at the Princess Theatre. I have been pleased to hear many compliments about the Princess Theatre both during the Arts festival and talking to the theatre group who now use the Princess for their performances. They are impressed with the professional support that they receive and the effective organisation of the theatre. My thanks go to the theatre staff who work so hard to provide that service”.

# T24 To receive report from the Police

No report was provided. Sergeant Hardaway will be attending the Annual Towns meeting in April.

# T24 To receive any reports from Somerset Councillors

There were no reports provided at the meeting. Somerset Councillors advised they would be circulated later in the week.

1. **T24 To receive minutes of previous committee meetings** Planning Committee Meeting 21st February and 13th March No questions were raised.

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting 18th March No questions were raised.

Town Improvements Committee Meeting 25th March

The main topic of discussion was dog bins. No questions were raised.

# T24 To receive list of payments up to 22nd March 2024

The attached list of payments was received and noted and no queries raised.

# T24 To receive Town Council Accounts and earmarked reserves reports for month of February 2024

The accounts for February were received and no queries raised.

# T24 To receive reports from town councillor representatives appointed to outside bodies

Councillor Millard had attended a meeting of the Morland Hub Trustees. The application for The Hub to become a CIO has been submitted.

# T24 To receive Working Group update reports

* + Better BOS – Members of the group have generated some ideas for the long term vision for the town, but would like to both test these thoughts and generate further ideas from people and businesses in the town. The group wish to work collaboratively with other groups and organisations working to improve the town.

An open event is being planned, currently pencilled in for 28th April to share ideas and bring people together. The format will be a “walk-in” forum where participants can spend any length of time they wish reviewing learnings and ideas to date and inject their own thoughts. Specific invitations will go to groups that have a direct interest in the work, but anyone will be welcome to come along and participate.

The group is still planning to set up as a CIC but is reviewing the proposed constitution with respect to membership. New members and associates are needed, as unfortunately, a couple of founder members have had to withdraw. The group wish to involve a diverse group of stakeholders and utilise as much expertise as possible in order to drive the work, so we are seeking a more open structure to accommodate this.

The initial audit of the town centre has largely been brought together in one document and analysis and summarisation of findings is ongoing.

* + - Climate and Ecology – Burnham and Weston Solar Energy have acquired funding for a retrofit programme.

The Climate Adaptation Plan is out for consultation and will be brought to the Town Council when that process is complete.

* Princess Theatre – The Working Group have been looking at how different theatres are owned, managed and financed. Three members of the group visited The Blakehay and Brewhouse Theatres and will be arranging a visit to The Marine Theatre.

# T24 To consider request from the Climate and Ecology Working Group for the Council to host an Eco Festival on 1st June 2024 in the Apex Park

A lot was learnt from organising last year’s event. The maximum expenditure will be £500 this year. Questions raised were answered by Councillor Millard.

**Resolved** that the Council agree to organise an Eco Festival on 1st June, to be held in the Apex Park, to be funded from the Climate & Ecology budget.

# T24 To consider the report from the Office Accommodation Working Group

The report was considered.

**Resolved** that the Town Council will not pursue the purchase of the former SS&L building in Princess Street. An architect is to be appointed to produce plans for reconfiguring and upgrading of the Jaycroft Road Offices, to be paid from the maintenance earmarked reserve.

# T24 To consider the CCTV report

The CCTV is a valued service and the Council need to find a way to work with Somerset Council to keep the cameras working.

A lengthy discussion took place and concerns were raised regarding some cameras not working, the current budget available and the cost of future repairs.

**Resolved** that the Town Council will commit to a three year agreement, and the Town Clerk be delegated to negotiate with Somerset Council for this year’s contribution to be within the allocated budget. All cameras must be working at the start of the contract.

# T24 To consider the report from the Growing Group

An overview of the proposals was given and examples of the plants were shown. Councillor Perry and Mr Perry were thanked for all their research. The community involvement was also acknowledged.

Before Burnham and Highbridge in Bloom joined together, several planters were purchased and were put in storage by the District Council. The Town Clerk will look into this.

**Resolved** that Burnham and Highbridge in Bloom are given permission to plant and maintain the two Town Council flowerbeds in Highbridge for one year and can acknowledge sponsorship of the beds using plaques.

**Resolved** that the Town Council should seek permission from Somerset Council to plant and maintain the seven flowerbeds on the Esplanade for one year. That a maximum of £5,7820 is allocated from the devolution of services budget for the purchase of sustainable plants and associated sundries.

# T24 To approve the Planning Committee’s recommended response to the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities change to various permitted development rights consultation

**Resolved** the proposed response is approved subject to the following changes;

Question 7 – change to No.

Question 40 – Change to Don’t know.

# T24 To agree the committee meeting schedule for the 2024-2025 civic year

The April-June meeting dates were approved at the meeting held on 27th February 2024.

**Resolved** that the meeting scheduled is approved, subject to the amendment to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting in August.

# T24 To approve disbanding the Youth Council Committee

Councillor Millard advised that this is the wrong set up for the young voices and an online youth forum will be considered in the future.

**Resolved** that the Youth Council Committee is disbanded.

# T24 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for 13th May 2024 at 7 pm.

1. **T24 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.

# T24 Play area equipment contract

The Town Clerk gave Council an update on the contract.

**Resolved** that the proposed settlement is approved and that the Town Clerk seeks a response from the CIM funders.