

Draft minutes of the meeting of Bury St Edmunds Town Council held remotely via video conferencing on Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Thompson (Town Mayor), Augustine, Bouché, Chung, Everitt, Higgins, D Hind, K Hind, Iannelli-Popham, Rayner, Turner, Waterman, Whittingham and Williamson.

Also present: Greg Luton (Town Clerk), Sue Hindry (Assistant Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Julie Sturgeon (Allotments and Administrative Assistant), Inspector Matt Paisley and PCSO Mark Ellis (Suffolk Constabulary) and a reporter from the Bury Free Press.

1. To receive apologies for absence and reasons

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Parker and Rout.

1.1 To consider any written requests received for approval of reasons for absence
None.

2. To receive declarations of interest and additions to registers

All District Councillors are advised to declare as follows: *'... that I may vote differently at District Council level from that recorded at this meeting at that other tier of local government'*. Cllrs Augustine, Chung, Everitt, D Hind, Rayner, Thompson, Waterman and Williamson declared a local non-pecuniary interest as a District Councillor.

3. To consider written applications by a member for dispensation, from the restrictions in section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 and specify the period for which any dispensation has effect

None.

4. To confirm, adopt and sign the minutes of the 19 August 2020 meeting of the Council

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/165/23/Sep/20:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting of 19 August 2020 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

5. Public Forum

None.

6. To note the Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that the business of the Town Council under Covid restrictions was still running normally, albeit with staff working from home and all meetings done virtually. Allotments were coming to an end of the growing season and snagging was taking place at 79 Whiting Street. He reported on the work of the PCSOs, and the forthcoming plans for Abbey 1000 and the Town Council/Bury Free Press community awards.

7. To note the RFO's Report

The RFO reported that there is, overall, a significant underspend, due mainly to Covid 19, except in direct overheads such as salaries, office accommodation and insurance, in the current year's budget. This will be taken into account in the forthcoming budget discussions for the next financial year, which will begin shortly.

8. To consider the renewal of the sponsored PCSO contract

A discussion took place about the renewal of the sponsored PCSO contract, including the inclusion of agreed Town Council priorities, to run from 01 January 2021. It was agreed that the two Council-funded PCSOs continue to make a positive impact in the Town and provide a valuable additional resource and the contract should continue for a further two years. A draft contract would be circulated to be finalised at the next Council meeting.

(Cllr Waterman left the meeting very briefly during this discussion due to technological issues.)

9. To consider ways to ensure every member of the Council can participate fully in its official activities for the remainder of the time that its business must be transacted in a socially-distanced way.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/166/23/Sep/20:**

That the proposal be amended to include future Town Councillors.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/167/23/Sep/20:**

That single-hatted Town Councillors, including those joining the Council in the future, be provided with fully-functioning laptops or tablets or the equivalent, where the Councillor cannot access Outlook, MS Teams or the Walled Garden from their own device; (2) West Suffolk District Council be approached to work with Town Councillors and Town Council Officers to offer 'clinics' where individuals can try to resolve their issues at mutually convenient times and (3) it be established whether it is possible for councillors to 'double up' in remote meetings so that more than one councillor is able to join the same call from the same device (e.g. Councillor 'A' would sit with Councillor 'B' in front of one laptop).

10. To consider a proposal to support a simple system to ease financial difficulties for residents who cannot go out to shop for essentials

(Cllr Bouché left the meeting very briefly early on during this discussion due to technological issues.)

The proposal was discussed to reimburse volunteers for expenditure incurred purchasing food and other essential items on behalf of a resident who is unable to shop for themselves and who has no other way of obtaining these items, following which the resident would be invoiced by the Council for this expenditure.

An amendment to extend the Locality Budget scheme to enable Councillors to allocate £200 to Covid projects, with the caveats that volunteers not be required to produce bank accounts and constitution, fell.

Following advice from Officers about the legalities of such a proposal, it was further amended to become an agreement 'in principle' with the details to be worked up for approval at a future meeting.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/168/23/Sep/20:**

That the principle of providing support for residents who cannot go out to shop for essentials be accepted and a detailed plan be worked up for consideration at a future meeting.

11. To adopt the meetings schedule for the remainder of the civic year to May 2021

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/169/23/Sep/20:**

That the meetings of the Planning Licensing & Finance committee meet at 6pm and the meetings schedule, as amended, be adopted.

12. To note the arrangements for the 2021 Bury St Edmunds Community Awards

Accompanying paper, and discussions, which were generally supportive, were noted.

13. To receive the report and adopt the recommendations of the Planning Licensing and Finance committee meetings of:

13.1 26 August 2020

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/170/23/Sep/20:**

That the minutes of the Planning, Licensing and Finance Committee meeting of 26 August 2020 be received.

13.2 9 September 2020

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/171/23/Sep/20:**

That the August 2020 bank reconciliations, budget line item expenditure, final payments list and cash book reports be adopted and signed.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/172/23/Sep/20:**

That the minutes of the Planning, Licensing and Finance committee meeting of 9 September 2020 be received, and the recommendation therein be adopted.

14. To receive the report and adopt the recommendations of the Staffing and Employment committee meeting of:

14.1 11 March 2020

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/173/23/Sep/20:**

That the minutes of the Staffing and Employment committee meeting of 11 March 2020 be received, and the recommendation therein be adopted.

15. To approve the payments list for September 2020

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/174/23/Sep/20:**

That the September 2020 payments list be approved.

16. To appoint a new cheque signatory

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/175/23/Sep/20:**

That two cheque signatories be appointed.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/176/23/Sep/20:**

That Councillors Everitt and Higgins be appointed as cheque signatories.

17. Following the cancellation of the 2020 Bury St Edmunds Carnival due to the Covid-19 restrictions, to permit the BSE Carnival committee to retain (i) the Locality Budget funding award of £400 for Abbey Gardens entertainment and (ii) the grant funding award of £798 for road closures, provided that it is spent for the same purpose in 2021

This item was not required.

18. To consider the action plan to address the four recommendations made in the Independent Internal Audit report for the year ended 31 March 2020

Three of the four recommendations were accepted. However, it was not considered necessary to appoint a Town Council compliance officer to take the lead in data protection, data information management and freedom of information issues for the Council, or to appoint a DPO service provider.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/177/23/Sep/20:**

That minutes of committee meetings be published on the Council's website, to further enhance the overall transparency of the Council's governance arrangements.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/178/23/Sep/20:**

That a review of the contents of the website be carried out as soon as practicably possible in order to ensure that all published information and documents on the website are up to date and reflect the current aims and objectives, governance policies, practices and performance measurements.

Resolution Record No. **BSETC/179/23/Sep/20:**

That the Fidelity Guarantee (Employee/Councillor Dishonesty) Insurance cover be reviewed each year prior to the receipt of the Precept and increased, if necessary, to ensure that the maximum amount of bank and cash balances held by the Council is fully insured.

19. To consider the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which aim to ensure reasonable adjustments to websites are made, so they are accessible to people with various disabilities:

19.1 To approve the Action plan and note progress to date to achieve compliance.

Item deferred to the next meeting

19.2 To approve the Website Accessibility statement.

Item deferred to the next meeting

20. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 28 October 2020**

The meeting ended at 9.13pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____