

# MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

# HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING ON 7<sup>TH</sup>SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7.00PM

This virtual meeting was held using Zoom software

(Voting was recorded by a show of hands where Councillors were able to access the meeting using a camera and could be seen by the Town Clerk; Councillors who had no access to a camera were asked to speak out or use the CHAT function on Zoom)

# PRESENT

Council Members The Mayor, Cllr A Coleman, Cllrs D Morehead - Deputy Town Mayor S Billett, J Byng, R Coleman, S Colllingridge, L Davies, C Edginton White, P Gittins MBE, P Harrison, H Lacy, M Maher, R Stanczyszyn

In attendance: 16 Members of the Public S Hudson - Town Clerk

- 9196 OPENING REMARKS The Mayor Cllr A Coleman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 9197 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None

#### 9198 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were reminded to submit their Register of Interests and to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Cllr C Edgington White declared an 'other disclosable interest' in agenda item 9221on going staffing matters as a friend of the ex-member of staff.

# 9199 COUNCILLORS' DISPENSATIONS

None requested

### 9200 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

#### i. Members of the public.

Members of the public and local residents spoke as follows:

# Speaker One

A new group has been set up in response to Black Lives Matter and the murder of George Floyd. The new non-political group, called the Bewdley Anti-Racism Group, wishes to raise awareness of racism and other injustices and celebrates diversity. The group is working with other local groups and the Bewdley School looking the town's black history; a walking tour of Bewdley is being developed looking at Bewdley's connections to slavery. A Facebook group has also been set up and links are being established with other rural towns. The focus of the group is an outward one that complements the Town Councils diversity and inclusion motion.

# Speaker Two

Two question may arise. Is the group Black Lives Matters in disguise and don't all lives' matter? Black Lives Matter was the catalyst for the formation of the group, highlighting black peoples everyday experience of racism. The group wish to support diversity, educate and inform as well as challenge. All lives matter but history shows that black people have disproportionately suffered. The group welcome the Town Councils support of the motion.

#### Speaker Three

Bewdley as part of Wyre Forest District has a low proportion of black and ethnic minorities residents, with less than 3% of the population. It is unclear why Black and ethnic minorities don't live in or visit Bewdley; the group are looking to increase Bewdley's welcome. Racism everywhere and Bewdley is no exception, various Bewdley facebook pages include both unconscious and conscious racism.

# Speaker Four

To test rasicm in Bewdley the group set up a number of facebook posts. The response to these posts demonstrated the number of people experiencing racism in this area and if residents are experiencing this then visitors must be too. A photograph posted of a group of young people holding a silent vigil in Bewdley received 174 comments most of which were racist in their nature. The group are asking the Town Council to work with them and other community groups to support meaningful anti-racism work in Bewdley.

#### Speaker Five

A resident and former Mayor of Bewdley spoke with regards to the post made by the Mayor Cllr A Coleman in response to facebook comments, which Cllr A Coleman subsequently said were a misunderstood. The statement made was untrue and showed a lack of local government knowledge. The Mayor was requested to make a full explanation as the comments were an insult and denigrated the work of Town Councillors past and present. The speaker looks forward to hearing an explanation later from the Mayor Cllr A Coleman and urged that the statement be withdrawn and that a formal apology made.

#### ii

# Representative members of the principal authorities

**Mr I Hardiman, WCC member for Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall** spoke on work he has undertaken on local issues.

- Kidderminster Road resurfacing is due to commence this week.
- The damaged wall at Pewterers Alley has been reported and will be followed up with the County Highways officer this week.
- Local residents have expressed concerns about social distancing on the narrow pavements of Bewdley bridge. Both Cllr I Hardiman and Cllr B Vale have requested that County Highways investigate the issue and will be followed up with the County Highways officer this week.
- Cats-eyes on the lower section of the bye-pass are still not working again this has been reported to County Highways.
- A resident reported an overgrown hedge near the Stourport Road County Highways are to instruct the landowner to cut this back.
- Having asked for an update on future flooding, a report has been received today from Cllr T Miller with different modelling options. Cllr Miller has agreed to visit the next Town Council meeting to discuss the report.

# iii Representatives of support services None

**9201 PRESENTATION BY THE DEVELOPER OF THE FORMER FIRE STATION SITE** A presentation was received on behalf on Lombard Group Developments Limited with regards to the redevelopment of the former fire station site in Dog lane. The site will be a mixed-use development; a convenience store, 6 residential units and parking.

Members raised a number of questions which included issues with the development being in the conservation area, height alteration, shop deliveries, proposed opening and closing times and car parking, also whether residents had been consulted on the project.

The developer confirmed that roof heights had been reduced at the pre-planning stage by approximately half a metre, conservation heritage assessments had been undertaken both above and below ground. Recycling had, as yet, not been considered. Opening and closing time would be agreed as part of the planning process but would expect normal Sainbury's shop opening times. All resident units would be upstairs. No consultation had been undertaken with local residents as this was the first part of the process. Deliveries will be made outside of opening hours and to the front of the shop.

#### 9202 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the draft minutes of the Town Council extraordinary meeting, held on 17/08/2020, as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

#### 9203 ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented the position as follows:

i. The updated schedule of accounts including approval of invoices to be paid and approval of invoices paid as a matter of urgency.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the schedule of payments as at 31/08/2020.

The following documents were presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee 22/07/2020

ii. Cllr C Edginton White raised a query with regards to a payment for £5937.50 dated 18.06.2020 – this payment related to an unspent grant funding returned Groundworks UK.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the bank reconciliation, cash balances and reserves as at 30/06/2020 - quarter 1.

Bewdley Town Council	
Cash Balances Period Ending 30/06/2	2020 Quarter 1
RECONCILIATION REPORT	
Summary	
GBP	
Statement beginning balance	111,618.00
Cheques and payments cleared (17)	-13,974.31
Deposits and other credits cleared (3)	974.34
Statement ending balance	98,618.03
Uncleared transactions as of 30/06/2020	-1,371.59
Register balance as of 30/06/2020	97,246.44
UNITY BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	
BANK BALANCE @ 30th JUNE 2020	10,652.92
SCOTTISH WIDOWS INVESTMENT	
BANK BALANCE @ 30th JUNE 2020	30,671.97
CAMBRIDGE BUILDING SOCIETY	
BANK BALANCE @ 30th JUNE 2020	30,000.00
PETTY CASH @ 30TH JUNE 2020	44.84
TOGETHER GROUP PETTY CASH @ 30TH JUNE 2020	150.00
Total Cash and Investments	168,766.17

iii.	It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>note</b> the current financial position actual against budget as
	at 30/06/2020 – quarter 1.

	It Income     1,000.00     1,000.00     0.00%     100.00%       400.00     -400.00     -400.00     -400.00     -400.00       ed     100.00     100.00     0.00%     100.00%       sheme     195.71     2,800.00     2,604.29     6.99%     93.01%       iccements 2020-21     200.00     -200.00     -     -       WFDC     8,948.00     8,790.00     -158.00     101.80%     -1.80%       income     1,300.00     1,300.00     0.00%     100.00%     -       eous Income     £     0.00     £     1,300.00     0.00%     100.00%       g1,175.00     182,350.00     91,175.00     50.00%     50.00%     -       Total Income     £100,918.71     £196,340.00     £     95,421.29     51.40%     48.60%       emses     2     0.00     1.000.00     0.00%     100.00%     -       ture     2     0.00     2,000.00     0.00%     100.00%     -       8 Town Signs     2,000.00     2,000.				
QUART	ER ONE	- APRIL	TO JUNE	<u>2020 </u>	
			Total		
	Actual	Budget	Remaining		
Income					
Christmas Event Income		1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%	100.00%
Schem	400.00		-400.00		
Interest Received		100.00	100.00	0.00%	100.00%
Lengthsman Scheme	195.71	2,800.00	2,604.29	6.99%	93.01%
Lifebuoys replacements 2020-21	200.00		-200.00		
Load St Toilets- WFDC	8,948.00	8,790.00	-158.00	101.80%	-1.80%
Miscellaneous Income			0.00		
Markets		1,300.00	1,300.00	0.00%	100.00%
Total Miscellaneous Income	£ 0.00	£ 1,300.00	£ 1,300.00	0.00%	100.00%
Precept	91,175.00	182,350.00	91,175.00	50.00%	50.00%
Total Income	£100,918.71	£196,340.00	£ 95,421.29	51.40%	48.60%
Expenses					
Capital Expenditure			0.00		
Lifebuoys		1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%	100.009
Notice Boards & Town Signs		2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%	100.009
Planters (Externally Funded)	1,257.96		-1,257.96		
Seats		2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%	100.009
Street Poles, baskets & tubs	•	250.00	250.00	0.00%	100.009
Town Clerk Office		2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%	100.009
VAS Signs		3,800.00	3,800.00	0.00%	100.009
Total Capital Expenditure	£ 1,257.96	£ 11,050.00	£ 9,792.04	11.38%	88.62%
Council Costs			0.00		
Badges & Shields		620.00	620.00	0.00%	100.009
Civic Award		200.00	200.00	0.00%	100.009
Civic Ceremonies		1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00%	100.009
Councillor Allowances		1,300.00	1,300.00	0.00%	100.009
Hats & Robes Maintenance		500.00	500.00	0.00%	100.009
Insurance Valuations		150.00	150.00	0.00%	100.009
Mayor's Chain Maintenance		1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%	100.009
Mayor's Expenses		5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00%	100.009
Mayoral Roll		200.00	200.00	0.00%	100.009
Public Meetings		100.00	100.00	0.00%	100.009
Total Council Costs	£ 0.00	£ 10,570.00		0.00%	
Election cost & Provision					
Employment Costs		5,000.00		0.00%	
Admin Apprentice	2 244 20	74,000.00		0.00%	100.009
	3,214.26		-3,214.26		
Load St Toilets Cleaner	2,298.27		-2,298.27		
Mayor's PA & Administrator	2,783.31		-2,783.31		
Town Clerk	9,449.82	450.00	-9,449.82	00.070	70.000
WFDC Admin Charge Total Employment Costs	120.00 £ 17,865.66	450.00 £ 74,450.00		26.67% 24.00%	

Millennium Green Maintenance	16.66	750.00		3.34	2.22%	97.78%
Operating Costs				0.00		
Advertising & Official notices		100.00	10	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Audit Fees	285.00	1,000.00	71	5.00	28.50%	71.50%
Broadband	80.31	500.00	41	9.69	16.06%	83.94%
Computer	25.00	200.00	17	5.00	12.50%	87.50%
Garage Rent- rear 14 Load st	1,026.81	4,500.00	3,47	3.19	22.82%	77.18%
Insurance		5,300.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Intruder Alarm		700.00	70	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Legal Fees -Less Prepayment 7000	3,381.25	5,000.00	1.61	0 75	67.63%	32.38%
Maintenance	430.00	1,500.00		8.75 0.00	28.67%	71.33%
Photocopier	205.34	1,500.00		4.66	13.69%	86.31%
Postage	203.54	200.00		0.48	14.76%	85.24%
Refreshments	23.32	150.00		0.40	0.00%	100.00%
ites	1.047.90	900.00		7.90	116.43%	-16.43%
Small Office Equipment	1,047.30	150.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Software & Support	1,060.00	5.000.00		0.00	21.20%	78.80%
Staff Advertising	1,000.00	50.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Staff Travel		150.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Stationery & Print	147.70	2,000.00		2.30	7.39%	92.62%
Subscriptions	1,647.73	2,000.00		2.27	82.39%	17.61%
Telephones	226.61	600.00		3.39	37.77%	62.23%
Town Clerk- Temp Cover	220.01	500.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Training- Staff	80.00	1,000.00		0.00	8.00%	92.00%
Travel & Training- Councillors	00.00	500.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Unity Bank Charges	29.85	150.00		0.15	19.90%	80.10%
Website	1,000.00	1,500.00		0.00	66.67%	33.33%
Total Operating Costs	£ 10,703.02	£ 35,150.00			30.45%	69.55%
Paddling Pool	,	5.000.00	5,000	1	0.00%	100.00%
Repayment	3,970.00	7,000.00	3,03		56.71%	43.29%
Town Events	-,	.,		0.00		
Carnival Fireworks		2.000.00	2,00		0.00%	100.00%
Christmas Festivities		5,000.00	5,000		0.00%	100.00%
Christmas Lights	212.32	11,500.00	11,28	7.68	1.85%	98.15%
VE DAY Grants		1,000.00	1,000	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Total Town Events	£ 212.32	£ 19,500.00	£ 19,287	7.68	1.09%	98.91%
Town Maintenance			(	0.00		
Bus Shelters cleaning & maint		1,000.00	1,000	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Churchyards		500.00	50	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
General Maintenance		2,000.00	2,000	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Lengthsman		2,800.00	2,80	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Lifebuoys		250.00	250	0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Load Street Toilets	187.83	1,000.00	812	2.17	18.78%	81.22%
Maintenance of existing seats		1,000.00	1,000		0.00%	100.00%
Signs & Notice Boards		500.00		0.00	0.00%	100.00%
Street Poles, Tubs & Baskets		3,000.00	3,000		0.00%	100.00%
Town Clock	294.16	200.00		4.16	147.08%	-47.08%
Wyre Hill Play Area	100.00	4,000.00	3,900		2.50%	97.50%
Total Town Maintenance	£ 581.99	£ 16,250.00	£ 15,66		3.58%	96.42%
Total Expenses	£ 34,607.61	£196,720.00	£ 162,112	2.39	17.59%	82.41%

# 9204 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Round-up of draft minutes, reports and updates arising since 06/07/2020:

#### i) Planning Committee,

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the planning minutes, as presented by Cllr S Billett, of the meeting held on 26/06/2020 and 30/07/2020 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27/08/2020.

ii) Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting held 22/07/2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Finance and General Purposes Committee's draft minutes 22/07/2020 as presented by Cllr R Stanczyszyn.

Approval sought for the recommendations as follows:

a) <u>Council Credit Card</u> – It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the use of the Unity Trust Bank credit card for Council purchases.

b) <u>Virements</u>- Prior to the agreement of the virements Cllr C Edginton White asked that the New Year's Eve fireworks display be agreed by Council.
It was **RESOLVED** that in principle financial support for the 2020 New Year's Eve fireworks display be **Approved**.

It was then **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the budget virements

# iii) Staffing Committee, meeting held 22/07/2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the staffing minutes, 22/06/2020

#### iv) Together Group meeting held 11/08/2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the together group notes 11/08/2020 and risk assessments. The group chairman Cllr J Byng confirmed that arrangement had been put in place to resume the meetings on 08/10/2020. The risk assessment provided related to the Together Group room hire.

# Prior to the next item on the agenda the Mayor Cllr A Coleman made the following statement:

Any complaints relating to elected members of our Town Council are dealt with by our principle authorities Monitoring Officer and appointed independent person. I believe no complaint relating to an elected member of the Council can go as an item on the agenda it was never done before. Therefore, I find myself in a position not to be able to make any further comments relating to the complaints before I seek legal advice. I strongly believe that the right procedure has not be followed and this item should not be on the agenda, but it is on the agenda so, Councillors can obviously exercise their right to speak if you wish to do so.

## 9205 SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS

Following the above comments CIIrs S Collingridge and L Davies expressed their great concerns at the Mayor CIIr A Coleman disingenuous statement and felt that the original facebook comments demeaned the value of the Council

The Mayor Cllr A Coleman made no further comments

The Town Clerk confirmed that inhouse training could be provided by Worcestershire CALC for a cost of £75 per session. Members were asked to confirm their availability via email to the Clerk.

# 9206 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS

Cllr R Stanczyszyn gave a verbal update; the neighbourhood plan cannot be progressed until the Environment Agency responses to the screening assessment. As long as their findings agree with those of Natural England and Historic England there should be no need for an SEA; the plan can then progress to the second section 14 consultation. It is not clear how this will proceed in the current situation.

### 9207 FLOOD DEFENCE GROUP

# 9208 BEWDLEY ANTI RACISM GROUP

Cllr S Billet presented the report and thanked those that contributed to the debate during public question time. Members were concerned that other inequalities and diverse groups should include being mindful of all areas on injustice. The Young Mayor also stated that this was a starting point and a catalyst to start other groups.

"Bewdley Town Council is committed to raising awareness of racism and other forms of injustice in order to make Bewdley a more inclusive and anti-racist community that welcomes, values and celebrates diversity. It will support groups and organisations in the town that share this objective with the Town Council."

It was **RESOLVED** to accept and **Adopt** the above statement.

# 9209 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Cllr R Stanczyszyn proposed some minor amendments to the wording of equality and diversity statement as presented. It was **RESOLVED** that these amendments be **Agreed**.

It was then **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the amended equality and diversity statement for publication on the Council's new website, within standing orders and policy documents.

# Equality & Diversity Statement

Bewdley Town Council believes in fairness, equality and values diversity.

The Town Council are working hard to **will** create a culture that celebrates diversity and welcomes difference; a place where everyone's rights and dignity are respected.

The Town Council are striving to **will** provide a work and social environment free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, and all forms of harassment and bullying. We want to achieve this for all our staff and our communities.

It is the Town Council's policy to treat everyone as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality, national origins, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, family circumstances, political beliefs, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, trade union membership, age, or any other unfair distinction in every interaction with our staff and residents.

The Town Council are demonstrating our commitment to equality and diversity through our day-to-day actions, we want Bewdley Town Council to be a welcoming environment where individual difference is celebrated in the places we live and work.

# 9210 CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON

Since the writing of the report the Town Clerk had had a meeting with Greatest Hits Radio and discussion were on-going. It was therefore thought that a Christmas Event Group should formed to review all options available. The Following Members will form the working group

- Cllrs A Coleman, C Edginton White, P Harrison and S Billett. The groups first meeting is to be arranged.

# 9211 CHRISTMAS LIGHT TENDER

The Christmas lights tender was presented for review. A query was raised with regards the optional street of lights between lamp posts. It was confirmed that this was not optional but had been standard for many years. The word optional was removed. It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the tender document.

# 9212 MAYORAL CHAIN REPAIRS

Members were provided with a quotation from Thomas Fattorini's for part or full repair of the mayoral chain. It was then **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the mayoral chain be fully repaired also that the chain box insert be remoulded to better fit the chain. The Mayor Cllr A Coleman confirmed that any shortfall in budgets should be taken from the Mayoral Allowance.

# 9213 BEWDLEY TOWN MARKET

The Town Clerk had a meeting with the market provider LSD Promotions to discuss the re-opening of the town market. Another meeting is to be held on 17/09/2020, with WFDC and LSD, to discuss the positioning of the stalls and social distancing arrangements.

# 9214 REMEMBRANCE DAY

Members were presented with advice received from NACO regarding the holding of Remembrance Day ceremonies. A working group, to include The Mayor, Cllr A Coleman, Cllrs C Edginton White, H Lacy and P Gittins MBE (also representing the Royal British Legion) are due to meet on 09/09/2020 to discuss how best to manage the ceremony within current Government guidelines.

# 9215 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATES

#### i. Toilets

WFDC continue to offer additional cleaning at weekends and to re-fill the hand sanitizer. There are still a number of outstanding repair issues, all of which have been reported. WFDC agreed that the toilet facilities could now be fully opened.

#### ii. No Parking Signs

WFDC have fitted new no parking signs on Severn Side South; reported incidents of illegal parking have decreased.

#### iii. Bollards

No further news of a fitting date from WCC.

#### iv. Planters

Four planters are in-situ; funding has been received for 3 more (curtesy of Cllrs Anna and Roger Colemans' District Funds). Adopt a planter - 12 expressions of interest were received; 12 applications sent out, only 1 has been returned. This may be due to the need for public liability insurance and the need for continual watering.

All applicants have been re-emailed; there has still been little response.

# v. Wyre Hill Sand Park

Complaints have been received about youths congregating in the park at night. The local Police have been informed as have the Friends group. Locking the gates is proving difficult, BTC do not have the capacity and neither do the Friend group. Dog mess has been reported in the park. The crawl tunnel in in need of further repair and the sand pits need topping up. The Friends Group wished to spend their funds on providing further equipment in the park (shop fronts). Members welcomed their support.

# 9216 ANNUAL PAY AWARDS

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the annual pay award for 2020-21 as being 2.75% backdated to April 2020 with an additional day's holiday for those employees with less than 5 years' service.

# 9217 LOCALISM

The notes from the Localism Group meeting 28/08/2020 were presented to Members. It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the initial priorities as being Load Street Toilets and 6A Load Street. Concerns were raised with regards to the museum and Guildhall and effects on the budget of any Town Council support contributions that may be required going forward. Also, the ownership status of the site and Council artefacts held should the museum and Guildhall become a trust.

Cllr C Edginton White confirmed a that a consultant's trust report is to be taken to the Museum Management Board on 08/09/2020; the Councillor also asked that the BTC corporate plan to be updated with the Councils next set of priorities. The Riverside North park was discussed as was the need for a joint statement from both WFDC and BTC with regards to the future of the paddling pool.

# 9218 MAYOR'S DIARY AND FUTURE EVENTS

i) The Mayor's diary

The Mayor announced a forthcoming visit from the High Sheriff of Worcestershire to Bewdley.

ii) Future Civic and Community events Mayor's Civic Sunday 27/009/2020 – postponed Remembrance Sunday – TBC

# 9219 ITEMS OF URGENCY OR TO NOTE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS None

- 9220 In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2), it was **RESOLVED** that the public and the press be excluded from the meeting to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to any of staff, legal matters or contractual arrangements, the publication of which would be prejudicial to the public interest
- 9221 ON-GOING STAFFING MATTERS It was RESOLVED to Agree two wording changes to the legal agreement.
- **9222 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING** Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 7pm

The meeting closed at 9.41pm

Signed..... Mayor/Chairman 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020