

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Ivybridge held in The Watermark, Ivybridge, on Monday 18 September 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr A Spencer (Mayor) Cllr S Hladkij
Cllr V Abbott Cllr T Lannin
Cllr L Austen Cllr S Murphy
Cllr J Cole Cllr A Rea
Cllr P Dredge Cllr M Steele
Cllr A Khong Cllr S Weeks

In Attendance: Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Ms K Elliott-Turner (Incoming Town Clerk)
Mrs L Lane (Minute Secretary)
Cllr Dommett (South Hams District Council)
1 member of the press
10 members of the public

The Mayor, Cllr Spencer, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

An adjournment followed from 7.00pm to 7.21pm to allow for the presentations and any questions, reports or representations by the public, Police, County and District Councillors.

** 1 members of the public left at 7.49pm*

** 1 member of the press and 9 members of the public left at 8.11pm*

23/051 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllrs K Pringle who had a prior engagement, D Smith who was away and L Rea.

23/052 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members were invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests. Cllr Hladkij noted an interest in item 23-060 as she is a volunteer at the Bridge Project however it is not a pecuniary interest.

23/053 **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 7th August 2023 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Lannin confirmed and Cllr Hladkij seconded and the minutes were agreed to be accepted.

23/054 **PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meetings held on 24th July 2023 and 14th August 2023 (copies previously circulated) were received. Cllr Weeks confirmed and Cllr Hladkij seconded and the minutes from 24th July 2023 were agreed to be accepted.

Cllr Weeks confirmed and Cllr Hladkij seconded and the minutes from 14th August 2023 were agreed to be accepted.

Cllr Austen asked the Planning Committee Chair why the Palladium planning application was supported by the Planning Committee although there were a lot of objections and felt it should have been taken to Full Council.

The Town Clerk advised that the Planning Committee has full delegation. Also, the planning response needed to be submitted by 14 September 2023.

Cllr A Rea asked Cllr Austen whether he had attended the planning meeting. Cllr Austen advised that he had not.

Cllr A Rea said that no members of the public spoke against the application at the planning meeting. The main objections were about deliveries and being out of keeping with the street scene. As the site was previously motor sales they had frequent deliveries. The site is empty and derelict at present and subject to vandalism.

Cllr Weeks advised that the Planning Committee looked at all the objections. Palladium attended the meeting and were very willing to engage. With regard to the visual aspect, they explained options to adjust the height of the fence to preserve residents view of the Beacon and to improve the general appearance were being considered. The site is currently deteriorating and no one else has shown any interest in it and this is an opportunity for a successful local firm who employ local people to expand.

Cllr Hladkij commented that Palladium suggested that they are keeping their old site for storage so there will not be an empty unit.

23/055 **PARKS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2023 (copy previously circulated) were received.

Cllr Lannin advised that the Parks Committee had been on site visits to all the open spaces. They discussed ideas from these and looked at how they could be incorporated into the workplan. She thanked Officers for attending the site meetings. She advised that they had also discussed the cost and process for memorial benches and the cemetery policy and extension.

Cllr Lannin proposed and Cllr Weeks seconded and the minutes were agreed to be accepted.

23/056 **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 22th July 2023 (copy previously circulated) were received.

Cllr Dredge proposed and Cllr Khong seconded and the minutes were agreed to be accepted.

23/057 **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023 (copy previously circulated) were received. The Mayor proposed and Cllr Khong seconded and the minutes were agreed to be accepted.

23/058 **TOWN MAYOR'S & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S INTERESTS:** The functions and activities attended by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor for the period 1st August 2023 to 12th September 2023 (previously circulated) were noted.
Cllr Steele asked about the Community Association meeting. The Mayor advised that the minutes will be available in due course.

23/059 **CO-OPTION OF A COUNCIL MEMBER FOR IVYBRIDGE WEST WARD:** The applications were considered.

**The 4 prospective councillors chose to step out while this item was discussed*

Cllr Austen felt that there should have been an election. Cllr Murphy agreed with him.

The Town Clerk advised that it is not the Council's decision to call an election, members of the public need to do this.

The Mayor proposed to go ahead with the co-option.

Cllr Austen seconded and the majority were in favour with one abstention.

Members voted on the applicants and it took three rounds until there was an absolute majority for Ms Cao.

It was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Crystal Cao onto the Town Council.

23/060 **YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECTS:** The update and proposed expenditure (copy previously circulated) were considered. The Town Clerk advised that The Bridge Project have asked for £400 to fund refreshments for children through until Christmas. In the meantime, they are keen to join the group looking at training youth workers and other projects. Hopefully this will then enable a more strategic plan to spend the rest of the budgeted funding.
Cllr Dredge advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund has opened today.
Cllr A Rea proposed and Cllr Weeks seconded. All were in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to grant The Bridge Project £400 to cover the cost of providing free refreshments to young people for the next 3 months.

23/061 **UPDATES AND INFORMATION:** Updates on Councillor, Officer and Community activity (copy previously circulated) were considered.

Cllr Dredge had provided the following report from the GWR Community Rail & Stakeholder Conference 'Going Forward Together', held at Swindon on 13th September 2023 and by 'teams'.

The conference considered a number of themes and updates

- *Collaboration*
- *Integration and Accessibility*
- *Workforce Reform – Ticket Office changes*
- *Community and Sustainability*

- *Business Update.*

Collaboration

The Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper MP, thanked all the volunteers and institutions whose tireless efforts keep the community rail partnerships flourishing. He emphasised that it is far more than just watering the plants on station platforms.

Andrew Haines, Chief Executive Network Rail and Great British Railways Transmission Team, explained why the industry cannot go back to the pre- Covid model of operation which had run its day and failed to deliver. Fare income is now 75% of the pre-Covid level and demand for rail travel now follows a different pattern.

The Treasury is now making 'railway operating' decisions but in order to make the system more effective control needs to be decentralised to regional level in order to make it more responsive to local needs.

However, the new Elizabethan line is proving to be a great success.

An Oxfordshire County Councillor gave a political view of Oxford City's controversial.

A leading member of the Samaritans spoke of the financial assistance they receive from the GWR and the work they are able to do as a consequence.

Integration and Accessibility

Rachael Geliamassi, Managing Director of Stagecoach West and Board of Intelligent Transport, spoke of the need to integrate services, not just trains and buses, but also for the benefit of walkers and cyclists. She also spoke of the need to further develop rail bus services (such as Totnes/Dartmouth) and to integrate the fares for them with rail journeys

Luke Farley, GWR Transport Integration Manager, also spoke of the need for greater integration and for timetable integration with better signage and information.

He explained that DCC are concerned that as many settlements as possible can be connected by buses to main line stations for onwards journeys.

Two GWR Accessibility Mentors concentrate on getting people, or more likely groups of people, who are nervous about using rail travel to overcome their fears. They are also introducing Braille handrails and sensory toilets.

Workforce Reform - Ticket Office changes.

The arguments are now well rehearsed about the fact that no station hours will be lost and it is a question of multi-skilling staff to deal with other duties than just the sale of tickets following the very significant reduction in ticket purchasing from booking offices. Additionally, any closure will be phased over a period of time.

There were vociferous and heartfelt arguments from the audience and the GWR offices in attendance were left in do doubt as to the level of opposition.

Celebrating our Community Rail Partnerships – (not shown as a separate heading on the published agenda)

A new Community Rail Partnership has been set up in Oxfordshire.

GWR is hosting the national Community Rail Partnership Conference in 2024

There is a Customer and Community Fund of approaching 1£m but it has been oversubscribed by about 10 times in the current year. (I understand that there was a bid from Ivybridge)

Three new stations, Reading West, Marsh Barton and Portway Park and Ride have opened.

Many stations have been given improved facilities but nothing has been allocated to Ivybridge.

Community and Sustainability

Julian Moosai, Industrial Output Change Lead Great British Railways Transition Team, spoke of the need across the country to achieve national standards and practices to meet current cultural needs.

Dan Walker, Environment and De-carbonisation, talked about the de-carbonisation strategy being evolved which will entail the phasing out of the diesel fleet by 2040. However, fast charging will be an important element.

Savings are being made in many areas, for example, the introduction of recyclable coffee cups and the reduction of water usage at stations.

Rebecca Harris, Principal Planning & Integration Manager (Sustainability) Network Rail, spoke of making rail travel the greenest form of public transport bringing economic prosperity, equal opportunities and wellbeing,

Communities must be allowed to say what they want from railways in their area.

Resilience is needed to achieve changes.

Hannah McDonald, Executive Director Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership, was looking at leisure travel and tourism and the need to reduce the carbon footprint of tourism – but train travel is well down the list of offenders.

Business Updates

Marcus Jones, Western Route Director Network Rail, spoke about the decline in time performance particularly in recent years, but steps are being taken to bring about improvements.

Mark Hopwood, Managing Director GWR, spoke of the challenging year:

- *Poor performance*
- *Industrial action*
- *Ticket Office closure consultation*
- *Meeting financial challenges*
- *Opportunities to deliver improvements.*

Good news included the Elizabethan Line and new stations.

Addressing the key challenges, Mark summarised them as:

- *Reliability of infrastructure*
- *The need for better service from Hitachi*
- *Strengthening the fleet.*

Cllr Steele handed round a poster from Wild about The Erme. He advised that the River Erme is the most polluted of the 10 major rivers in the South Hams. Mothecombe Beach is the 10th highest for sewage discharge. They are looking at the water quality at Coastguards Beach which is at the mouth of the river. They have been working with Surfers against Sewage and feel there is a need for a public consultation.

Cllr Lannin advised that she has attended the joint parishes meeting regarding water quality. South West Water are in the process of replacing sewers in Modbury. The parishes downstream are keen to see the sewers changed for separate pipes for sewage and surface water. Unfortunately, South West Water have decided to just re line the existing drain. South West Water have no plans to install UV treatment at several of their sites. The parishes discussed what more could be done to lobby South West Water over these issues.

Cllr A Rea advised that he used to be a representative on the Beacon Medical Public Participation Group. Beacon are taking part in an

improvement week and want to speak to patients. They would be happy to set up a drop in session in Ivybridge if asked.
Cllr Weeks commented that she didn't feel it would be a problem getting people to engage with this.
Cllr Khong suggested offering them a room at The Watermark.
The Town Clerk agreed to look at availability.

Cllr Abbott advised that they have some ideas regarding the gazebo. They need to erect one of the existing gazebos to get an idea of size.
Cllr Weeks advised that they have a number of ideas of things to put on the stall including what each Council does, who the Councillors are, what to expect when contacting a Councillor and the standard of response.

Cllr Abbott advised that he has been delivering new stickers for the 4 Rivers Dementia Alliance. All the shops he has been to have been very welcoming and agreed to display the stickers.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the information.

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was resolved that the public and press be invited to withdraw.

IN COMMITTEE

23/062 **HERITAGE CENTRE:** The proposal for the Heritage Centre was considered.
The Town Clerk advised that members had heard what Ms Thatcher had to say during Public Participation.
A discussion took place about the value of the Heritage and Archive Group to the town and alternative venues.
Cllr Austen proposed that the Council agrees to enter negotiation into the long term let in principle of the Committee Room at the Town Hall to the Heritage and Archives Group at an inclusive rate of £9,500 per annum, to be reviewed annually.
Cllr Lannin seconded and all were in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to enter negotiation into the long term let in principle of the Committee Room at the Town Hall to the Heritage and Archives Group at an inclusive rate of £9,500 per annum, to be reviewed annually.

23/063 **BUTTERPARK:** The Town Clerk provided an update on Butterpark. The successful bidder is planning to provide a mix of shared ownership properties and social rent. He is meeting with them to discuss the project further tomorrow and hand over to the new Town Clerk to progress. Originally planning was to be submitted within 4 months however, the period to exchange may need to be extended to 24 weeks to allow for environmental surveys etc.

The Town Clerk advised that he is happy that they are motivated and wish to see this project go ahead.
Cllr Weeks thanked the Town Clerk for his work on this.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the information

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.

Signed: Date: 30 October 2023

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Report of the discussions during the adjournment of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 18th September 2023

POLICE

The police were unable to attend the meeting but had provided the following report prior to the meeting:

Earlier this week we had an incident on the bridge at the top of Fore Street where a female jumped from it. She had minor injuries all things considered but it drew a lot of attention with Fire, Ambulance and Air ambulance landing at the college. The person concerned was conveyed to hospital and given support.

We are also monitoring the ASB situation as there has been reduction over the school holidays, we will continue to show a presence in the evening and see if the situation changes now the schools have returned.

Cllr A Rea commented that he was at the scene and thanked the police and ambulance for their prompt response.

Cllr Abbott commented that councillors had requested a comparison of crimes vs prior year figures

Cllr Dredge advised that this may not provide an accurate comparison as the computer system and process of recording has changed so would not be comparing like with like.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

COUNCILLOR ABBOTT

Cllr Abbott had provided the following report which was circulated prior to the meeting:

Information via but not originating with the Council

If you become aware of someone who is worried about eviction or repossession of their home, then help is at hand from the government. There is free legal advice to help them keep their home and avoid costly court proceedings.

The Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service will be available from the moment a written notice is received by a tenant or a homeowner, providing them with legal representation in court, regardless of their financial circumstances. You can direct residents to find out more information from the Gov.UK website.

Residents who are struggling to keep up with bills can get some help through the Household Support Fund. The funding is there for those who are in most need of help with food, energy, water, household bills and

essentials. Please encourage people to apply online before Saturday 30 September.

'Let's Talk Teens and Pre-teens'

These are online support sessions aimed at parents and carers that offer the chance for a chat about some of the challenges facing young people today and to find out about tools available to support them.

The dates for the sessions are:

Tuesday 19 September (Teens) Thursday 21 September (Pre-Teens)

Tuesday 26 September (Teens) Thursday 28 September (Pre-Teens)

Tuesday 3 October (Teens) Thursday 5 October (Pre-Teens)

Sign up at this link: www.devon.cc/letstalk

Funding to save community spaces

Pubs, community halls, gardens, sports clubs and other treasured locations across the South Hams can benefit from government funding which gives local people the chance to save community assets that are at risk of being lost forever.

Communities can apply for Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding. The amount organisations need to match fund is 20%.

Applications for the latest opportunity are open until 11:59am on 11 October.

Local actions

Consequential to the work of Ivybridge Town Council advertising ourselves and the town as Dementia Friendly, Victor has restarted contacts with the officers at SHDC who can enable this across the District. This will be headed up by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Dan Thomas. There is a worry that many good activities need re-starting after Covid. We intend to run the Alzheimer's Society 5-minute introductory video prior to an SHDC Council Meeting.

The intention is to have a plan for trees along the Erme in a month. Victor has been in discussion with the Royal British Legion regional representative about the District Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Council is intending to take action on Council tax requirements, supporting those leaving care.

We are in the midst of finding our way through the legal implications of providing social housing.

*Nadine Dommett and Pablo Munoz, District Councillors, Ivybridge West
Matthew Steele and Victor Abbott, District Councillors, Ivybridge East*

Cllr Abbott advised that waste collection is not working in full yet for Ivybridge West due to a delay in production of new vehicles. Hoping that by next February this will be up and running properly.

Cllr Abbott went on to advise that a speaker could attend a future Council meeting to discuss the potential Freeport.

Cllr Austen felt that a speaker would be a good idea.

Cllr Austen asked whether there was an issue with attendance at meetings at Follaton House. He asked whether District Councillors were aware that their attendance is monitored and published.

Cllr Abbott advised that all meetings have been quorate, no meetings had been cancelled.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

COUNCILLOR CROAD

Cllr Croad did not attend the meeting

Cllr Lannin advised that she had a question for Cllr Croad, was there any feedback from the meeting regarding Twenty's Plenty?

GENERAL

Ms Thatcher read the following report about the Ivybridge Heritage and Archive Group:

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|--------|--|
| 2013 | Group started |
| 2014 | Ivybridge Mill Archives Group but changed to Ivybridge Heritage and Archives Group when our remit expanded to include all of Ivybridge rather than just the papermill. |
| 2015/6 | Section 106 agreement with Burringtons/Stowford Mill Development Group Space 1000 sq ft, 99 years, Peppercorn rent |

Although 4 premises have been discussed since then, none has been suitable for one reason or another and, since January 2022, in spite of our efforts, we have had no communication with the developers. We have now referred this back to the planners at SHDC as there is no possibility of being allocated a useable site for the foreseeable future.

In the ensuing 9/10 years we have undertaken a vast amount of research and to date on the following topics have:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Stowford Mill | 15 files and 12.3Gb data plus 8 boxed of sundry items including accounts books and paintings. |
| Photographs | 21 A4 folio files with 4000 photos. |
| Newspapers | 10 boxes of cuttings. |
| Census | All census from 1841 to 1921 have been analysed for data on Ivybridge and its residents and there are 20 files. The 1921 census has been digitised and a file is on display listing the 1,550 residents of the village in that year, the 25 |

roads they lived in and their occupations. To complement this, we have produced a booklet listing the 250 roads we have today with the source of their names.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| World Wars | 6 files. |
| Cemetery | Updated burial records and a cemetery map have been created. |
| Sundry | A further 20 files on various topics plus artefacts that we cannot put on display. |
| Computer | A further 78 Gb of data. |
| Heritage Walk | Well received and a complimentary illustrated booklet was given to all participants. |
| Booklets | Seven short booklets are available to purchase in the Library and we also created one to celebrate the blue plaque, dedicated to our local author and suffragist Mary Patricia Willcocks, which was unveiled in Exeter in June. |

We have attempted to keep our research publicly available through our website and via this have had enquiries from all over the world from people with family or work connections to Ivybridge.

Currently our photo albums are on display in the Library.

In view of the continuing uncertainty of ever finding a suitable location at Stowford Mill (our natural home) we are now exploring other possibilities. The potential offer of being based in the Town Hall would enable us to do all the things that we have been working towards. We could make our archives available to the public, recruit more members to help us run the archives, provide research facilities and take up partnerships with other local organisations. These could possibly include Dartmoor National Park, The Box (the Cottonian Collection), The Tate in London (JMW Turner), South Hams Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Sadly, we have already lost two county projects as we did not have anywhere that they could be based.

Finally, locating the Ivybridge Heritage Centre in the Town Hall would make it easily accessible to all and hopefully it could develop as a valuable destination with a reputation for excellence.

Cllr Abbott advised that residents had asked him whether there was any way of making contact with Ivybridge Community College as they were struggling to get hold of anyone.

Cllr Hladkij advised that she could provide an email address and had not had a problem getting a response.

The Town Clerk advised that there was also a public phone number.

Cllr Abbott also advised that a resident had enquired about damage caused to his property by a Council owned tree.

The Town Clerk advised that trees are inspected regularly and work carried out as required. The resident would need to contact his insurance company.

The co-option candidates were invited to speak.

Ms Cao thanked members for inviting her to speak. She advised that she is community minded and would like a chance to make a difference to local people. She has no political leanings and is driven by wanting to give back to the community. She is interested in young people and their mental health and wellbeing and would like to see accessible activities for them.

The public participation session closed at 7.21pm.