

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Ivybridge held remotely using Zoom, on Monday 11 January 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr A Laity (Town Mayor) Cllr T Parsons
Cllr T Bowden Cllr A Rea
Cllr M Cade Cllr L Rea
Cllr P Dredge Cllr A Spencer
Cllr S Hladkij Cllr E Silsbury
Cllr R Jago Cllr A Spencer
Cllr A Khong Cllr R Wilson
Cllr T Munro

In Attendance: Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Mrs L Lane (Minute Secretary)
Mr Lee Bray (Planning and Regeneration Consultant)
Cllr J Pearce (Leader, South Hams District Council)
Cllr H Bastone (Deputy Leader, South Hams District Council)
Cllr L Austen (South Hams District Council)

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting, and formally thanked Mrs Lesley Hughes, for all her hard work for the Town Council as Town Clerk and wished her well on her retirement. She then introduced Mr Jonathan Parsons, the new Town Clerk.

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

****Cllrs Pearce, Bastone and Abbott left the meeting at 7.21pm.
*Cllr Wilson left the meeting at 7.30pm.
*Mr Bray left the meeting at 7.49pm.***

- 20/120 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr K Pringle. Cllr R Wilson had advised that he needs to leave the meeting at 7.30.
- 20/121 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members were invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests. No interests were declared.
- 20/122 **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 7th December 2020 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Wilson confirmed and Cllr Laity seconded and the minutes were adopted.
- 20/123 **PLANNING COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2020 (copies previously circulated) were received. Cllr

Silsbury confirmed and Cllr Hladkij seconded and the minutes were adopted.

20/124 **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2020 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Wilson confirmed and Cllr Hladkij seconded and the minutes were adopted.

20/125 **SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REVISED REGENERATION PLANS:** The report (copy previously circulated) was considered. Mr Bray was called to speak on this. He advised that the report speaks for itself and reaffirms the Town Council's position, to lend support to the project with certain stipulations and reservations. It should not be viewed just as a business case but must support the regeneration of the town centre. By highlighting important things such as the footbridges and the skatepark, as SHDC continue their negotiations this will strengthen their arm to secure what the Town and District want to achieve. The figures from the CACI report do show that the Co-op will see a drop, however there will be an increase in footfall in the town which will drive the regeneration of the town. In terms of the lease, it would be very difficult to include a stipulation for there to be no bakery, and still successfully secure Aldi.

Cllr Silsbury raised concerns that there would not be enough car parking provision in the scheme. In 2019, SHDC issued over 100 parking permits for Ivybridge, there are only 125 spaces in the car park. There will not be enough parking spaces to accommodate the permit holders, those visiting Aldi and those coming into the town to use other shops and services. The Watermark and the Leisure Centre both require good parking facilities in order to provide a viable service and contribute to the regeneration of the town. She requested that this could be included in the report.

Cllr T Rea commented that he has read Mr Bray's report but cannot see mention of a replacement youth facility for the skate park. He and Cllrs Wilson and Hladkij had met with Rob Sekula and came to an agreement about what kind of facility was needed. He requested that this was written into the Town Council response. Cllr Wilson agreed with this.

Cllr Hladkij advised that she and Cllr Lannin had been on a site visit with Mr Sekula and were able to show him the specific area that they were talking about for a youth meeting place. Sadly, having the skate park in the town centre was not going to be a viable proposition. She requested that Mr Bray include this in his report. There were also discussions regarding trees and what was being suggested. Mr Sekula was very supportive and proactive. It is important to get this in place. Graham Wilson report also raised some very important points.

Cllr Cade was concerned that the Town Council's reservations could be shunted until the last minute when it is too late for them to be dealt with and the project goes ahead regardless of these. Some of the

reservations regarding trees and landscaping are quite significant. Must not lose sight that this project is to regenerate Ivybridge not just building an Aldi.

Cllr Jago appreciates what Cllr Cade said and agreed that we need to ensure that reservations continue to be pushed as we enter the planning phase. He then commented that he feels the Town Council do not have any power to stop this. What Aldi sell and impacts on the Co-op in his opinion are not the business of this Council. Need to be careful what stipulations are made to what any retailer using the site may do. It is already agreed in principle and we need to use the planning process to push for those changes to design that we have already asked for.

Cllr Lannin commented that PL:21 have put in their report which contains some interesting things that could offset the environmental impact of the Aldi store. Following the meeting with Mr Sekula, SHDC seem very keen to ensure that, while we cannot replace the mature trees, actions will be taken working alongside PL:21, the Ivybridge Bloomers and the Town Council. She went on to thank Mr Bray for his report and the information regarding the lease. She understands what Cllr Jago is saying in terms of private businesses but the aim of this is to regenerate the town centre and she is still concerned that the vibrancy of the town relies on the mix of shops. Also should Aldi offer online deliveries this could be detrimental – we want people to come into the town, not for it to act as a distribution hub. She has concerns but is generally in favour of the project and hopes that SHDC continues to listen to our concerns.

Cllr L Rea commented that this is an opportunity for change. If the £9million was offered for regeneration and Aldi had not been mentioned people would jump at the chance. This is a big opportunity for Ivybridge and what we have at the moment does not work. The community want the regeneration and Aldi and we need to work with them SHDC to ensure we get what we need in terms of the skate park. With regard to parking there are arguments for and against this but we need to rely less on cars. She is all in favour of this.

Cllr Parsons commented that he finds it hard to agree that people could do their shopping at Aldi in 20 minutes, and suggested that the free parking should be for 2 hours rather than an hour and a half to ensure customers have the time to use the rest of the town.

Cllr Dredge commented that on one hand we are saying it's not our business should the Co-op fail but on the other hand saying we want to support business in the town centre. He feels that we should be interested in all businesses in the town.

Cllr Bowden said that this is a wonderful opportunity for local traders to increase their business but they need to take the initiative. Aldi only sell a restricted selection of products He is fully in favour of the project.

The Mayor commented that members were being asked to receive Mr Bray's report and to agree a response, recommended to go with report along with the things that have been discussed in this meeting.

Cllr Jago queried why this is being discussed again as it has already been accepted.

The Mayor advised that we have been asked to respond to the latest development with Mr Bray's report

The Town Clerk advised that he thought it was important to share this as the significant retail report had come in with the revised proposal and it was an opportunity to feed into the discussion as SHDC are discussing whether to go ahead with it this month.

Mr Bray commented that need to bear in mind the SHDC retail report, which is an independent report, which shows some impacts but also overall an increase in footfall in the town. The site itself has certain limitations, only a certain amount of land for parking as well as the building and design and landscaping fit for the riverside setting. It will be hard to provide more parking spaces without environmental consequences. In terms of the design, recommendation D may want to add 'particularly in its relationship to the River Erme'. Where it talks about landscaping may wish to add 'to include tree planting in groups to enhance the landscape and biodiversity'. The youth building does get a brief mention in the report at the bottom of paragraph 23. This could appear under point E in the conclusion and recommendations 'provision of youth facilities and a youth building in the town centre'.

Cllr T Rea would welcome the youth building being emphasised and asked if we could be push for it to be instated before the skate park is demolished. Mr Bray confirmed that this could be asked for.

Cllr Parsons requested that his suggestion that the hour and a half free parking could be extended to two hours be included in the report. Mr Bray explained that it is a matter of scale. The size of the supermarket usually affects the length of free parking offered, Aldi may be resistant to this due to their requirements for turnover. If Members wish to include this, it could be another matter for negotiation.

It was put to the vote to accept Mr Bray's report with the amendments discussed. All were in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- receive and note the report, and to support the report once the amendments had been made; and
- for the Town Clerk to write a letter of support to SHDC including Councillor's concerns.

20/126

BUDGET AND PRECEPT: The background information (previously circulated) was considered.

Cllr T Rea requested that the vote on the budget be held as a recorded vote. He went on to pick out that he did not like the tone of the third paragraph of the budget report which refers to the challenging actions of some councillors but the role of councillors is to scrutinise and ask questions, and at times those questions can be awkward, but to bring this out in the public domain and suggest that

councillors display challenging behaviours he thinks is wrong. He said that for this reason he could not vote in favour of the budget should this remain in the report. He went on to suggest that the third paragraph of the budget report stops at the word 'played' having paid tribute to staff, and the latter part of the paragraph be erased.

The Mayor pointed out that the voting is to accept the figures in the budget not the report.

Cllr Parsons proposed the budget was accepted and Cllr Dredge seconded this.

Cllr Lannin asked whether there was going to be further debate on the budget.

Cllr Jago commented that not all councillors are on committees to have had these discussions in advance of the Council meeting. Firstly, he agreed with Cllr T Rea's comment above that this is not appropriate. He then went on to comment that he attended the finance training in November and had requested that the budget report be amended before it was put before them, mostly to make it understandable to the general public. He was under the impression that committees were to look at the detail and is unclear why the requests made at the meeting have not been included.

The Town Clerk advised that he had also attended the finance training and was aware Councillors were keen to put together pie charts etc to make things more clear, but feels that in order for Councillors to vote on the budget they do need the full figures as a pie charts wouldn't give the full picture. He was envisaging that this would be used at the Annual Town Meeting to make it clear for residents.

Cllr Jago said he appreciates this but what he has an issue is that he is consistently told that committees are to look at the detail, so why is he looking at the detail.

Cllr Jago went on to query the £8,000 in the budget for youth provision. As it seems very church led, he wanted an assurance that it will be open to all members of the community.

****It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3y as the meeting was approaching 60 minutes***

Cllr T Rea advised that the Bridge Project is run jointly by the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army who are plugging the gap left when Devon County Council pulled out of services in the town. The facility is open to all who need it and it is not an attempt to sell Christianity to those who attend. Councillors can be assured that the £8,000 is well spent.

Cllr Hladkij backed up Cllr T Rea's comments and advised that although they are Christian organisations it is open to all.

Cllr Munro added his support, noting that the Bridge Project does a great job.

Cllr Dredge pointed out that the Town Council is not allowed to provide funding to anything overtly religious.

The Town Clerk noted that the overall precept is not being put up but because of the reduction of the council tax base there is a small increase of 90p.

As previously requested it was put to a recorded vote:

FOR: Cllr Khong, Cllr Bowden, Cllr Munro, Cllr Cade, Cllr Dredge, Cllr Hladkij, Cllr Silsbury, Cllr Spencer, Cllr Parsons, Cllr Lannin, Cllr Laity.

AGAINST: There were no votes against.

ABSTAIN: Cllr Jago, Cllr T Rea, Cllr L Rea.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the budget and confirm the precept for 2020/21 in the sum of £502,412.

- 20/127 **HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION:** The Consultation on Housing Strategy (copy previously circulated) was considered. The Town Clerk noted that the method of response requested was individual responses and he would circulate the link to allow Councillors to respond.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the information, and for Councillors to provide their own responses.

- 20/128 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT:** The consultation document and report (copy previously circulated) were considered. All were happy to take the Town Clerk's recommendation for answering the question.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Town Clerk's recommended response.

- 20/129 **UPDATE AND INFORMATION:** Updates and notes of meetings attended by Councillors (copy previously circulated) were received.

Cllr Dredge advised that at the IDALC meeting, the main theme for most parishes was speeding. This was raised at the last DALC group, the equivalent group in North Devon has the same issue and had invited the Police and Crime Commissioner. He is of a mind to invite her to the next meeting, however the post is up for election which may cause a bit of a problem. It was interesting to note that a new member of IDALC was recommending to their Council that they should pull out of these meetings. Cllr Dredge advised them that it is a talking shop where they exchange information. During the meeting one of the parishes noted that they were looking to take on their local pub as a community asset, another parish advised that they had recently done this and offered advice and support. This is exactly the

purpose of IDALC and the new member changed their mind and saw the value of the meetings.

The Town Clerk advised that there is not going to be a February issue of the Ivybridge magazine so his article will be submitted for the next edition.

Cllr Lannin commented that she is looking forward to the new website. She also wished to thank Graham Wilson and Town Council officers for their work which has resulted in the new close pass signage which will hopefully make Western Road and other parts of Ivybridge more safe. Finally, she thanked Cllr Dredge for his report, working with neighbouring parishes is really useful.

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

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

IN COMMITTEE

20/130 **TREE DEDICATIONS AT FILHAM PARK:** The information regarding tree dedications (copies previously circulated) was considered.

A discussion followed and all were in agreement to go ahead with the naming of an area of woodland at Filham Park as set out in the report. The Town Clerk will inform Lesley Hughes and agree the most appropriate name with her. Oak signage was the preferred option.

It was **RESOLVED** to go ahead with the recommendation in the report.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.

Signed Date February 2021

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Report of the discussions during the adjournment of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr Croad was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following link which was circulated prior to the meeting:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDEVONCC/bulletins/2b420ed>

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

COUNCILLOR AUSTEN

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

Ivybridge Regeneration Project

I have long been an advocate of the Ivybridge Regeneration Project and I believe it is a necessity for the town given the challenges that its businesses are facing. I am convinced that an Aldi would increase footfall in the town centre and that the majority of people in the town would definitely want the plan to go ahead. I am sure you will all be aware that the Ivybridge Regeneration Project is on the Executive agenda for the end of the month. It has been a long road getting as far as we have, through the initial stages, the public consultation, multiple constructive meetings with the stakeholders and I believe the plan we now have is a major investment and a step forward for the town.

Business Grants

The Chancellor announces one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring, the one-off top-ups will be granted to closed businesses as follows:

- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000

The District Council will be involved in processing these and more information will follow.

Toilets Closed

Following an arson attack at the toilets in Ivybridge the toilets needed to close for repairs. Unfortunately, this happened at the weekend with damage to the male and disabled toilets. This follows several incidents of vandalism at these toilets over the last few weeks. The arson has been reported to the Police.

Covid Compliance Officers

We now have five new COVID Compliance Officers in the South Hams who have interacted with more than 100 businesses so far. Many of our local businesses were apprehensive and slightly anxious on the introduction of COVID 'Marshalls'. However, the team have emphasised that they are being supportive of the businesses during these difficult times by assisting with the understanding of the regulations and guidance in order for them to keep their staff and customers safe.

Disruption to Recycling and Waste Collection

Due to Covid-19 guidance, a number of drivers and crew have recently had to self-isolate. FCC Environment (UK) Limited, who carry out the collections on behalf of the authority, have managed to secure enough additional temporary staff to keep as many scheduled collections happening as possible and these have been prioritised. However, with so many replacement drivers in place who were unfamiliar with the locality, there was disruption to the collection of all types of waste. When the issue became known, individual workers potentially affected were identified swiftly and removed from collections immediately to safeguard the public and the rest of the workforce.

Cllr Lannin queried whether the new recycling arrangements for the South Hams were still due to be rolled out. Cllr Austen confirmed that they are and advised that the aim is to stagger the roll out across the South Hams but Ivybridge is likely to be one of the first places to receive this, hopefully mid to end of March 2021. He also noted that there may be issues with the existing bags used as they will need to stop sending these out to prevent waste. He also noted that residents will be able to recycle glass at kerbside under the new system.

Cllr Khong asked for an update following the recent arson attack on the toilets in the Leonards Road car park. Cllr Austen advised that the toilets are currently closed while they are being repaired. Residents have asked about CCTV for the area, this may be necessary as it is not the first time that the toilets have been targeted. At present he is not aware that anyone has been charged with this.

COUNCILLOR ABBOTT

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

I have little to report. However, as a statement of what I've done at SHDC, I submitted the following motion to Council with the intention the systems already set up for Covid can be used to support those suffering from problems over importing and exporting. It was passed with support across the Parties.

'Whilst recognising the valuable work being undertaken by the SHDC Officers in addressing the issues arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic, Council resolves to assist those residents and businesses within the District who are affected by the import and/or export problems arising at the end of the Transition Period for leaving the European Union using our established joint working arrangements across Devon and that are reflected in our existing work programmes and resources to do so.'

Further, this coming Thursday, there will be a review (by others) of the operations of LiveWest, with, amongst other questions, a query over current levels of insulation in their properties.

Finally, I was to take our new CE on a tour of Ivybridge East this Friday but this has been postponed due to the Covid restrictions.

GENERAL

The Mayor welcomed Cllrs Pearce and Bastone.

Cllr Pearce advised that on the twenty-eighth of January, the Executive, South Hams District Council, will be taking a decision on whether to proceed with the Aldi project. They have a report which is in favour of proceeding but it is a political decision spending nearly nine million pounds on the project to regenerate the town centre. They need to be certain that Ivybridge Town Council is on board with this, as the majority of residents are in favour of this going ahead. She recognised that the Town Council's report on this has brought up a few reservations, which SHDC share, but are confident that these can be resolved at the planning or design stage. She advised that this will provide significant employment in 30-40 secure jobs, offering good opportunities, particularly for younger people and will bring people into the town. Regarding concerns about the bridges, they have spoken to the owners of Glanvilles Mill and some work will be done to one or both of the bridges. The skate park and outside space for youths need to be included in the plan. Therefore, they are requesting that Ivybridge Town Council write a letter providing their support of the project and take this forward together.

Cllr Wilson commented that the overwhelming response from residents was that they want this to go ahead so he would support it. The key bit is tweaking things like the skate park and environmental impact on the town.

Cllr Bastone advised that he would circulate the Executive report when it is available for public consultation and will continue to engage with Town Councillors going forward, and will try to answer any questions.

Cllr Dredge commented that the Co-op are very proactive and put money into the town and local charities. They are likely to see their trade fall by 30%, it is sad to see that a company that supports the town will experience this.

Cllr Pearce advised that things should even out, population of Ivybridge is growing all the time. The Aldi will help to keep people in the town, it is not generally a shop where people do all of their week's shopping.

Cllr Austen agreed with the points that Cllr Dredge made regarding the Co-op. He has been approached by managers and staff from the Co-op asking him not to support the project. He understands their concern, however, he feels that the increase of footfall in the town from this project is desperately needed. The vast majority of residents do want the Aldi and will save money.

Cllr Lannin queried whether it is possible to include something in the lease to prevent the Aldi from having a bakery and butchery in the future so people use the existing shops in the town. Cllr Pearce advised that it would not be possible to restrict what Aldi sell, however they do not have a butchery, they only sell pre-packaged meat and a limited range of bakery products.

The public participation session closed at 7.21pm.