

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Ivybridge held remotely using Zoom, on Monday 29 March 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr A Laity (Town Mayor) Cllr T Bowden Cllr M Cade Cllr P Dredge Cllr S Hladkij Cllr R Jago Cllr A Khong	Cllr T Munro Cllr T Parsons Cllr A Rea Cllr A Spencer Cllr E Silsbury Cllr A Spencer Cllr R Wilson
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In Attendance: Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
 Mrs L Lane (Minute Secretary)
 Mr R Bagwell (Stephens Scown LLP)
 Cllr V Abbott (South Hams District Council)

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Mr Bagwell.

An adjournment followed from 7.00pm to 7.15pm to allow any questions, reports or representations by the Police, County and District Councillors.

****Mr Bagwell left the meeting at 7.49pm***

- 20/139 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllrs K Pringle and L Rea.
- 20/140 **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.
- 20/141 **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 22nd February 2021 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Wilson confirmed and Cllr Laity seconded and the minutes were adopted.
- 20/142 **PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meetings held on 26th January 2021 and 16th February (copies previously circulated) were received. Cllr Silsbury confirmed and Cllr Bowden seconded and the minutes were adopted.
- 20/143 **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Wilson confirmed and Cllr Laity seconded and the minutes were adopted.

20/144 **THE WATERMARK COMMITTEE:** The Minutes of the meetings held on 26th January 2021 and 16th March 2021 (copy previously circulated) were received. Cllr Dredge confirmed and Cllr Bowden seconded and the minutes were adopted.

20/145 **STANDING ORDERS:** The Standing Orders (copy previously circulated) were considered.

The Mayor thanked the team who had been working on these, particularly Cllr Dredge who took the lead on this. They had taken 3 sets of Standing Orders and combined these into a 50 page colour coded document. Points were checked and all comments from Members were considered. The final draft had then been checked by Mr Bagwell who had confirmed that it was legal.

The Mayor then proposed that the Standing Orders were accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson.

Cllr Parsons thanked all those who had been involved with creating this document.

Cllr Lannin commented that she had two points about the flow of the document and whether things are in the correct places and one more debatable item. Cllr Dredge advised that the layout of the Standing Orders follows the NALC model standing orders, and it makes sense that this format should be followed. He advised that once the Standing Orders are approved he is happy to work to produce a more user friendly summary document. Must have the Standing Orders document as a backbone. It was then suggested that comments relating to the flow of the document should be passed to the Town Clerk. Cllr Lannin agreed to email her comments regarding this through to the Town Clerk.

Cllr Lannin went on to raise her main area of concern which related to section 4, the membership of the Policy and Resources Committee. She felt that due to this newer Councillors found it hard to have an input into important decisions and an opportunity for a wider range of Councillors having an input is being missed.

Cllr Wilson commented that there is a misconception about the Policy and Resources Committee. They monitor the budget but it is the Committees which set their policy and spend and make the decisions regarding this. Committee Chairs attend the Policy and Resources Committee so they can justify overspends etc. Past Mayors are included due to their experience. He feels the format of this committee is correct.

Cllr Lannin commented that she does not have a problem with Committee Chairs being on the Policy and Resources Committee. She feels that there is no opportunity for newer members to be on this committee.

Cllr Jago thanked the Town Clerk for reading through what he had sent him. He commented that a lot of work has gone into the Standing Orders and thanked those who had worked on them. He

went on to comment that it would be good to think about the accessibility of this information, and suggested a table setting out the rules of debate, motions, how votes work. Setting out responsibilities of the Council and communities etc. With regard to the Policy and Resources Committee, in the past his issue has been that it has not been written down how this Committee is made up. He understands why the Chairs and Mayor are included and queried the position of the Deputy Mayor and the role of the Member for the Internal Audit Function, how is this represented and how qualified.

Cllr Dredge responded to advise that he is happy to look at producing a more user friendly document to be used in conjunction with the Standing Orders. He went on to explain the Internal Audit role involves going through the figures that are discussed at the Policy and Resources Committee and financial policies. The first three or four items on the Policy and Resources Committee agendas are his. The role is quite a cornerstone of the Policy and Resources Committee, to explain the financial position. The Deputy Mayor is usually a committee chair and therefore is on the Policy and Resources Committee in this capacity.

Cllr Jago asked why the Internal Audit role is not voted on, unlike committee membership, Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Dredge advised that this role is appointed by Council at the beginning of each year.

Mr Bagwell advised that this is not a legal issue in this sense. Committee membership must comply with the Standing Orders.

The Town Clerk explained that the Internal Audit function is agreed along with the appointment of Committees and Representatives at the first meeting of the year. He also commented that he feels a comprehensive Standing Orders document is required but would support the production of a summary document and is happy to work on this with Cllr Dredge.

Mr Bagwell advised that the Standing Orders are based on NALC precedence, it is always sensible to follow precedence as it includes tried and tested drafting to ensure it stands up to scrutiny.

Cllr T Rea thanked all those who had worked on the Standing Orders. He went on to say that the Policy and Resources Committee is a problem for him and will continue to be a problem for the Council while members are selected differently to other committees. He feels that the Policy and Resources Committee has exceeded its remit in this review of Standing Orders, he thought that they were tasked with making recordings of meetings available and public participation at the Policy and Resources Committee. Not asked to revise the way that the Council forms its Policy and Resources Committee.

The Mayor advised that the Policy and Resources Committee were asked to carry out a review of the Standing Orders.

Cllr T Rea commented that he thinks the Policy and Resources Committee Should be elected by the whole council at the first meeting in May.

Cllr Dredge commented that NALC had released a new version of Standing Orders in 2020 so we would have had to revise ours to make sure that they are in line with these anyway.

It was put to the vote and members voted in favour of accepting the Standing Orders.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Standing Orders.

20/146

COMPLAINTS POLICY: The policy (copy previously circulated) was considered.

Cllr Lannin asked whether there could be an addition to item 146b, the Complaints Protocol to include the option of mediation as a way forwards if an informal discussion does not sort out the problem, if both parties were in agreement.

Cllr Dredge advised that mediation, if offered, would be by the Monitoring Officer following receipt of a complaint.

Cllr Lannin explained she was thinking of this as an option prior to it going to the Monitoring Officer.

Mr Bagwell explained that the main issue with this is the choice of mediator. As it involves a 3rd party who has experience of mediation, this can cause controversy as there is often a perception of bias. It can be put forward as a choice but would also need to include a mechanism for the choice of mediator so this would not cause a dispute.

Cllr Munro queried how the Complaints Sub Committee was comprised.

Cllr Dredge explained that it was set up by the previous Town Clerk who asked for volunteers from the Policy and Resources Committee.

Cllr Rea said that he welcomes and supports having a complaints policy, however as the Policy and Resources Committee excludes some Councillors so does this. He welcomes the first part, complaints by Councillors, and if complaints cannot be resolved informally, the proper recourse is the Monitoring Officer. With regard to the second part of the protocol, complaints about the Council or Committees, his understanding was that the Monitoring Officer would not deal with complaints about the Council corporately because its remit is individual Councillors breaching the code of conduct.

Mr Bagwell advised that the Monitoring Officer typically investigates complaints about individual Councillors. Where it refers to initially a. making a complaint to the Town Clerk, then b. to the Monitoring Officer, this should perhaps state in so far as the complaint relates to a Councillor.

Cllr Rea said that he felt the second part could be omitted as he doesn't believe that the Monitoring Officer would look at these complaints.

Cllr Dredge commented that he used to sit on the SHDC Committee. Most complaints were Councillors against Councillors or members of the public against Councillors. Cllr Dredge proposed the document was accepted and adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Parsons.

It was put to the vote and the majority voted to accept the Complaints Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept and adopt the Complaints Policy.

20/147

CLIMATE EMERGENCY: The report on the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and the recommendations (copies previously circulated) were considered.

Cllr Lannin thanked the Town Clerk for the proposal and asked Councillors to support this. The Town Council will keep trying to do what we can, however many of the decisions which affect our town are made outside of our remit, planning, public transport etc. We need to send a clear message to the Government in order to protect our town and residents. She proposed that the recommendations were accepted. Cllr Wilson seconded this.

It was put to the vote and Councillors voted in favour of accepting the recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report and accept the recommendations.

20/148

COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT (DEFERRED ITEM 20/136(e)):

The Risk Assessment (copy previously circulated) was considered. Cllr Lannin commented that she had proposed to try to simplify the risk assessment and to just summarise some points. She had noticed that her comments had been included along with the other points which she was trying to cover with her comments.

The Town Clerk advised that this section had already been slimmed down.

Cllr Dredge commented that there are further developments each year and he has done his best to produce a balanced document.

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

Cllr Rea commented that he fully supports Cllr Dredge and the document should be accepted now but continue to refine and amend as required.

Cllr Wilson proposed the Risk Assessment was adopted, Cllr Parsons seconded this.

It was put to the vote and all were in favour of adopting the Risk Assessment.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Risk Assessment.

20/149 **ANNUAL MEETING:** The report (copy previously circulated) was considered.
Cllr Rea commented that District Council elections are the following day.

All were in favour of moving the date of the Annual Meeting to Wednesday 5th May.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the information and to move the Annual Meeting to Wednesday 5th May.

20/150 **BUTTERPARK:** The report and recommendations (copy previously circulated) was considered.

The Town Clerk advised that the project was not moving as quickly as everyone would like it to be. The next stage is preparing for the agreement with the local housing provider to be signed.

The next stage is agreeing and publicising to get the finances lined up. South Hams District Council have approved the last tranche of the 106 funding for this project. The final element is the money we need to borrow in order to complete the project. There are two stages to this, to seek the authority to borrow from the MCHLG and to take out the loan. Normally Councils would go to the Public Works Loan Board which offers loans specifically to the Public Sector. These are the current interest rates which have been used. The money will not be drawn down until everything has been signed and sealed.

Cllr Wilson commented that the expected income versus borrowing would be good to see. Too much time and money has been invested to not proceed with this project. Disappointed by how long it has taken to get to this stage.

Cllr Khong queried whether Livewest had indicated that the Town Council would have any input into the tendering process.

The Town Clerk advised that discussions had been held regarding this but would be better discussed in confidential session.

Cllr Wilson commented that Livewest are involved with tenders all the time, best to leave this process to those who have the experience.

Cllr Jago agreed that it would be good to see the income figures. It is a big sum to borrow so would be good to see the affordability. He then went on to query whether there would be a lag time between the Council drawing down the loan and starting to pay interest, and the building being completed and us receiving income, and is this affordable?

The Town Clerk explained that the loan would be for the last £200,000 which will not be needed until right at the end. The lag time is expected to be months not over a year and there is the £18,000 in the budget to cover this loan payment so not relying on the income straight away.

Cllr Munro agreed that it would be useful to see the income figures. The Town Clerk explained that these would depend on what the acceptable social rent values were at the time but the income should cover the costs.

Cllr Jago replied that he is happy to support this but worried that it has dragged on for so long and the impact that it may have on Council finances. He requested that the Council be kept updated more frequently.

The Town Clerk advised that one of the requirements of requesting permission to borrow is publicising the updates so there will be a dedicated page on the website.

The Mayor proposed that the recommendations were accepted, Cllr Wilson seconded this.

It was put to the vote to accept the recommendations and all voted in favour.

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

20/151

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

Cllr Wilson thanked the Ivybridge Bloomers and Cllr Lannin for all their work around the Town.

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

The meeting closed at 8.08pm.

Signed Date May 2021

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Report of the discussions during the adjournment of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 29 March 2021

Apologies: Cllr Pringle

POLICE REPORT

The police were unable to attend the meeting but provided the following report which was circulated prior to the meeting:

I have reviewed reported Crime for the month of March, thus far. Crime remains low in, and around Ivybridge.

There are no series of crime. Out of the 19 Crimes I have just reviewed, many are very low level, 3 involve Communication offences, such as a text message or Facebook message. We have had two attempts to import controlled drugs via the postal system. Only small quantities which were intercepted due to procedures implemented by Royal Mail.

Although none in recent weeks, we did get some reports in early March of Persons going door-to-door, looking for work. Guttering or tree work seemed to be the theme. As always, we would discourage the occupant from engaging with this type of approach. Always use a reputable / recommended person to carry out works.

The above door-to-door approach quickly reached local Social Media and became associated with the theft of dogs. This was not the case and we made efforts to tackle the false information. We have not had any dog thefts in Ivybridge.

Sgt R Canning

Cllr Wilson commented that he had seen the police speaking with a group of 20 youngsters, he was impressed with how they dealt with them.

Cllr Dredge advised that he had just completed a 2 hour course on crime prevention, and has another 3 of these to do.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

COUNCILLOR ABBOTT

Cllr Abbot was in attendance and read out the following report.

Dear Councillor and Officers,

We are now within the pre-election period and I must be reserved in my comments.

We continue to support the Leisure Centre, with the latest action a forwarding of central funds (i.e. our taxes) of £170,985.

By a unanimous (cross party) vote, the Council will match-fund expenditure the Town would like to make to improve the business and tourist environment. It will come from an allocation of £275,000 across all of the Towns.

Further, by unanimous, cross-party agreement, there is an intention to make funds available for Climate Change & Biodiversity projects within each Ward. There is an allocation of £3,000 per Ward Member, to be spent on small projects or brought together for something larger.

There's been a cross party, short-run working group on our report back system for Councillors who attend external meetings. Although yet to be formally agreed, it looks like Councillors, whether full committee members or just observers, will report back with more of an analysis of the meetings and their impacts. I think there will be an improvement in the Council's understanding of external bodies and the benefits that might flow in two directions.

The District Council is suggesting a trial along the lines of motorhome owners have on the Continent (where they sometimes go by the name Aires). This from the website, <https://alanrogers.com/blog/introduction-to-motorhome-aires> "... entitlement does not allow car drivers to put up tents or set up caravans ... A motorhome is not deemed to be camping if it is self-sufficient; therefore the occupants can cook, eat, and sleep within the motorhome as long as they do not place anything outside. An onboard toilet is a necessity and waste water from sinks must not be discharged onto the ground or into containers that need to be placed outside." This is at the stage of initial discussions and could bring more tourists into Ivybridge.

I am grateful for recent liaison with the Town Clerk and the Ranger over litter pickers, imminent footpath clearance, and a debate with a neighbouring Parish over a footpath used by our residents, currently ending on the boundary of the Parish & Town.

As waste bins are free to be used as dog waste bins, I wonder what the Council thinks about converting our dog-waste-only bins to general litter bins? It might be supportive to have them even more clearly labelled (even if only by an impermanent sticker). Although there would be a purchase cost for replacements and a redeployment cost for putting them in new places, we could redistribute our local waste bins to empty areas or to areas of high use.

Cllr Wilson commented with regard to motorhomes, it is worth looking on Facebook as this is a good advertising point.

Cllr Wilson went on to comment with regard to the dog bins, the Town Council spend almost £200 per month on liners for dog waste bins, which are more expensive than liners for general waste bins. Also an additional cost for disposing of bags containing dog waste.

The Mayor queried whether this would be something for the Parks Committee to discuss. The Town Clerk agreed.

Cllr Lannin commented that she would support the redeployment of bins to where there is a need.

GENERAL

Cllr Lannin advised she had attended a couple of events over the weekend and provided the following information:

On 3 March I attended PL21's AGM, our first as a charity. On Sat 27 March I attended a River Clean organised by PL21 Trustee Tim Poat, which had a good turn of volunteers and collected a lot of rubbish from, or in danger of going into the River Erme.

On Sunday I attended the regular Sunday Bloomers session to help clear the Fore Street planters in preparation for their spruce up. All the plants were relocated to other areas around the centre of Ivybridge, and the Bloomers continue to do great work brightening up the green spaces around Ivybridge.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers that came on both days for their time and energy to help improve Ivybridge's environment for the benefit of everyone.

The public participation session closed at 7.15pm.