

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor P S Christie
Councillor D Bushby
Councillor T Johns
Councillor D McGeough

South Ward:

Councillor S Inch
Councillor Mrs S Langford
Councillor P Lawrence

West Ward:

Councillor Mrs K Corfe
Councillor C Hawkins
Councillor D Ratcliff (Town Mayor)

East Ward:

Councillor J Craigie
Councillor Mrs R Craigie
Councillor Mrs L Hellyer
Councillor Mrs J Gubb
Councillor J A McKenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs L Dixon-Chatfield (Asst to the Town Clerk)
1 x Member of the Press

153. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor J Herron (North Ward) – illness.

154. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Councillor P Christie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 16 (Trustee, Bridge Trust).

155. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

No members of the public were present.

156. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0)

157. ACCOUNTS

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Inch and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 13, Against: 0)

(Councillor McGeough joined the meeting at 6.33 pm.)

158. TO RECEIVE A WRITTEN REPORT FROM THE FIRE SERVICE

A written report had been submitted to Members and forms part of these minutes.

159. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT

A written report had been submitted to Members and forms part of these minutes.

a. The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs Hellyer to address the Council and thanked her for her help and the work she has put in as a Devon County Councillor for Bideford, especially with the Bideford Link Centre.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer reported that the Bideford, Holsworthy and Barnstaple Link Centres would be opening on 26th April but would be asking clients to book in for the first few weeks to ensure that there would be enough staff to cover the Centres. She added that from May to June the Bideford Centre would be de-camping to either the Arts Centre or Youth Club whilst essential maintenance work was carried out on the building.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer further explained that until there is an indication of being clear of Covid, no new referrals would be taken but the Centres would run drop-in sessions. She concluded that it was hoped that summer events could attract younger clients.

b. Members raised questions and comments, that included:

- Resident parking which is not being policed. Members had received complaints from residents who had paid for resident parking, but those spaces were being taken by others.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer responded that the zoning system had not worked in Bideford, for some reason and that she was expecting it to be overhauled in due course. She concluded that this could take some time, perhaps two years, but that this would resolve the problem of resident parking.

- Parking on the bend of Lime Grove was an issue, most of the time by large vans, and is causing dangerous navigating.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer explained that this does apply to a lot of roads in Bideford and that double yellow lines do not necessarily work as it just moved the problem on to somewhere else. But she agreed to ask Highways for a resolution to the problem,

- Devon County Council's investment in Fossil Fuels was an on-going concern, whereas investments with Russian connections was seen to be moving rapidly. Councillor Mrs Hellyer was asked to raise this with the County. The Councillor explained that County cannot divest quickly because they cannot sell in the current climate. She agreed to take the message back to County.

- A question of parking and speeding was raised and addressed to Devon County Councillor McGeough regarding the junction next to Rydon's Garage going into Raleigh Hill.

Councillor McGeough responded that this issue was currently being monitored and he would speak with his fellow County Councillors. He added that if the law is being broken it is a Police matter. He would look further at the issue.

- Councillor Inch was disappointed that he had not received any correspondence regarding the seven points he had raised at the previous Full Council meeting in March, to County Councillor Wilton-Love. He would have expected an acknowledgement at the least, even if the problems could not be resolved.

The Chairman agreed that that a letter to Councillor Wilton-Love would be sent, requesting answers to the points that had been raised.

c. The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Hellyer for addressing the Council.

160. COMMUNICATION BROUGHT FORWARD ON THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR / TOWN CLERK

The Clerk advised:

That emails had been coming through the Council website, from the Mayor. The wording on the emails is peculiar and the email address used is not valid. He advised Members NOT to reply to these emails.

The Mayor advised:

That the Town Council and Town Hall had hosted the Investiture of Beadle Mrs Valerie Morrish as Prime Warden for the Guild of Macebearers. He expressed his delight to have seen the Town Hall buzzing with guests from around the country and remarked on what a

great day it had been. He gave his thanks to the Office Staff and the Maintenance Team for their hard work in the preparation for the event.

Councillor Inch advised the Mayor that Bideford Town Band had won their section of the West of England contest last weekend in Cheltenham. Councillor Johns further advised that the Band would be going to the National Finals in September.

161. STAFFING, FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (SF&GP) COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 March 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0, Abstentions: 3)

162. ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 April 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1)

163. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 9 and 30 March 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

164. TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2022 were approved and adopted.

Councillor Mrs Craigie informed Councillor Mrs Gubb that the person organising the buffet for the Jubilee celebrations at the Pollyfield Centre, was unwell and would be unable to go ahead with this part of the event.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1)

165. NOTICE OF MOTION

Submission by Councillor P Christie.

“That Bideford Town Council write to the Devon Police Commissioner requesting that Bideford police station is put on the shortlist for reopening.”

Councillor Christie explained that since the Bideford Police Station had closed its front desk it had been difficult to try to get through to the numbers we were all supplied with. He had received information from an OPCC Press Release that some Police Stations were looking to re-open and that plans for Bideford were not yet fully agreed and signed off.

There was some discussion about whether the Police Station was technically closed and it was established that the front desk and custody suite were not manned, although the Police were using the building.

Councillor Christie continued that there was nothing stopping this Council from strongly requesting that the Station is re-opened. He added that the Press Release had mentioned “an area for face-to-face contact for the Police and Public”.

The Chairman stated that if there is a chance to get the Police Station re-opened and fully functioning, we should take it. He added that a letter needs to be sent to the OPCC stating this.

It was proposed by Councillor Christie, seconded by Councillor Bushby and

RESOLVED: That the Motion is supported, and a letter is sent to the OPCC requesting a fully functioning Police Station in Bideford, outlining the similarities to Exmouth.

166. BIDEFORD TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

- a. Members considered the Notes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2022, which were deferred from the Council Meeting of 3rd March.
- b. Members considered the Notes of the Meeting held on 23 March 2022.

167. TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE

The Chairman invited an update from one of the District Councillors.

Councillor Bushby reported the following:

- A new group, the Bideford Regeneration Board, had been set up, following on from the Levelling Up Fund and the Isaacs Yard bid. It was hoped that the group would be able to come up with regeneration ideas and smaller “quick wins” for the Town
- Councillor Bushby had raised a Motion to write to the South West Ambulance Service to voice concern over the response speed and unavailability of the service. He had copied in the Torridge and West Devon MP, Geoffrey Cox, who responded and indicated that he is monitoring the situation.
- The District Council had taken control from 1610 of Northam, Torrington and Holsworthy Swimming Pools and had set up Active Torridge to manage the centres. This group went live on 1st April and is looking forward to upgrading and providing a higher level of Service at the sites.
- Unfortunately, the Bideford Bay Chamber of Commerce has disbanded. Funds from the organisation’s accounts will be handed to the Bideford Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) and will be ringfenced for 12 months in the event that Chamber is re-formed. After 12 months, the ringfenced funds will be freed up for use by BTCP.

Councillor Mrs Craigie had attended a District Council Budget meeting and reported that Victoria Park had been rejected, meaning that the ring-fenced monies allocated for Play Equipment were not being drawn down. At that meeting there was a representative who is part of the group Friends of Victoria Park. She pointed out that Park is hugely popular with people from neighbouring towns as well as Bideford residents, because of its facilities. She asked the Chairman if this representative could be invited to attend a future Town Council meeting to make a presentation on what the Friends would like for the Park.

Councillor Mrs Langford noted that the District Council's Play Strategy for the Victoria Park was failing

Councillor Bushby noted that Victoria Park is looking neglected and that the District Council appear to be reluctant to commit any significant funds. He added that a letter from this Town Council is sent asking for urgent action to be taken.

The Chairman advised Councillor Mrs Craigie to speak with this Council's Office, giving them contact details and a brief outline. An invitation could then be sent to attend a Town Council meeting. He added that he had concerns that Victoria Park would deteriorate if it does not have the necessary funding to maintain it to its best standard. He asked all members if they agreed with this action – all assented.

Councillor Mrs Craigie reported that she sits on the Empty Homes Working Group and requested that the group had a mechanism for reporting back to Town Council.

The Chairman advised Councillor Mrs Craigie that the best way to do this would be to submit updates to this Council's Chairman and it would be reported through Mayor's/Town Clerk's Correspondence. He added that he had been assured by Devonshire Homes that the development at the Grange was providing a guaranteed 20% of dwellings built for affordable housing.

Councillor Mrs Corfe sought assurances. The Chairman responded saying that Devonshire Homes had made two presentations to this Council's Planning Committee where the matter had been discussed, and he reiterated that in his recent meeting with the Developers, they had again discussed this figure.

Councillor Christie had queried with the County Council how they arrived at their Section 106 monies for roads. He advised that the District Council have a meeting planned with the County to discuss this and how the Biodiversity funds are offset and where. Recently money for Biodiversity had been awarded in one area but apportioned to another.

Councillor Christie alerted Members to the email they would have received from the Office about the Local Plan. He pointed out that, as a Council, we are not putting in a corporate view and asked if Members would please use the link provided to put forward their personal views, and added that the more views submitted, the better it would be. Further, he asked Members to please highlight that the 30%

affordable housing on new developments is not being achieved. He suggested that a viability study by the land owner must be submitted before any planning application is subsequently submitted - should be drafted into / enshrined in the Local Plan. Councillor Christie explained that whilst the Local Plan is somewhat "clunky" it is important to make your views known so that it reflects the voice of the people.

Councillor Inch raised an issue with Northam Swimming Pool and asked why children are having to change outside in the Car Park before going in but when coming out of the Pool can change inside before leaving.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer agreed and had hoped that this would change and that the District Council had not taken on the same Management team.

Councillor Mrs Langford explained that she sits on the Active Torridge board and that there was much work to do to make improvements to the Pool and the services it provides. She expressed her enthusiasm that the bad practices carried out by 1610 would not be repeated. She admitted, though, that there would be teething problems and would enquire as to why children were still being asked to change outside before entering the facility. She would also raise it at the next Board meeting scheduled for next week.

Councillor Inch asked if there was a problem keeping or finding staff at the District Council as he had seen senior positions being advertised. He had noticed 2 on the Planning Team and 2 on Estate.

Councillor Bushby explained that there was not an issue that he was aware of and that it was difficult to hold staff back if they are on their career path.

168. BIDEFORD BRIDGE TRUST

Councillor Christie explained that the Trust were due to meet today but the meeting was postponed as the Steward has Covid. They will meet next week.

He added that a new, and younger, Trustee had joined the Bridge Trust.

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.29 pm.

Minute 158 refers:

REPORT FROM NEIL HOLE - Bideford Fire Station - March 2022

Station Commander Stn 04 Bideford - Business Safety Officer

As with most at the moment we are having rising numbers with positive cases of Covid which continues to give us difficulties.

Due to this my main aim is to keep the fire appliances at Bideford fully crewed for operational duties which we are doing with all personnel going above and beyond giving additional time for their community.

We now have 20 firefighters at Bideford with a new female recruit just starting her basic fitness and online examinations.

We have attended many incidents over the past six months including road traffic collisions, river rescues and fires. Some of these incidents have involved people with Covid so some of these are drawn out due to safety and involve vigorous decontamination on our part to ensure the virus is not brought back to station and all our kit and equipment is sterile ready for the next job.

We are still providing drivers with additional skills to assist the ambulance service crews due to their ever increasing demand.

There are currently no high level Fire Safety Enforcement Action taking place on any businesses in the Bideford area.

Home Fire Safety Checks for the elderly and vulnerable continue at a steady pace offering safety at home advice and providing items such as smoke detectors where necessary.

The fire service is running a cooking campaign for the over 65s providing vulnerable households with cooking timers and safety advice. This will be delivered through local events and through the media.

Thank you.

REPORT FOR BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL from County Cllr. Linda Hellyer March 2022

Since I last did a report, Dcc has set its budget for the next financial year 2022/23. This was the most difficult budget since 2009. The council only gets a 12month settlement from central government, which makes planning difficult, and they do not know how much the settlement will be the following year 2023/24.

The council has various statutory duties, and, as I have told you before, there are ever increasing demands on the services for children and vulnerable adults of working age. Consequently, 76%of the budget will be spent on 3% of the population that is the vulnerable children and adults of working age. Money has been taken from reserves to support vulnerable adults and the council is in talks with central government to get some funds back towards the overspend on children with special needs and disabilities.

Because the budget is very tight, Councillor's locality grants have been cut by £2000 for the next financial year. I would suggest that the groups e.g. sports clubs ask me for any money in May, when I get my locality budget. I think it will be quickly spent.

Dcc is currently in the process of divesting a "small" amount of Russian linked investments from the Pension fund. It is about £200m (0.01%) out of a £5 billion budget.

I have recently attended Childrens Scrutiny. DCC has to prepare for refugees from Ukraine. At the time of writing, we do not know how many children will be settled in Devon, or how many will be unaccompanied and needing foster homes or care placements.

I have also attended Health and Adult Care scrutiny, where I was able to raise the subject of our Link centre in Bideford. Because of Covid, and the need for risk assessments regarding number of attendees, the drop in sessions have not restarted. I have been pushing for them to restart at the earliest possible moment and am currently having meetings with DCC and the Devon Partnership Trust. I am hopeful that the drop-in sessions can resume after Easter. The link centre building in Gunstone Street is having is being refurbished in May, with new windows being installed, so we are looking to provide an alternative venue in the town centre. The link centre is a vital mental health resource for the town, and it will be good to see it fully open again.

As I write, at the next Dcc cabinet meeting there is an item to appoint a local contractor to do the work of refurbishing the Arts building and turning it into a shared space for Learn devon and Bideford Library.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have. Routine matters such as potholes, blocked drains and gullies, overgrown vegetation, streetlights etc can be reported direct to Devon County Council.

This can be done online, by googling Devon County Council report a problem. A page will come up with icons. . e.g. potholes. Click on the icon and follow the simple instructions. You will receive an automatic response with a tracking number.

Alternatively, you can telephone the customer care centre: 0345 155 1015

For highways issues telephone 0345 155 1004 Out of hours Highways EMERGENCIES ONLY 01392 380380 / 0345 155 1008

BIDEFORD BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Town Council Meeting - 7 April 2025					
PV NO	ALLOCATION	VAT	NET	TOTAL	
1 25/03	JAG Signs	Platinum Jubilee Signage - funded by Welcome Back Fund	101.50	507.50	609.00
2 31/03	Thomas Fattorini Ltd	BAR Sterling silver gift	10.84	54.21	65.05
3 31/03	Acom Recruitment Ltd	Seasonal Welcome Back Funded worker (wk end 27 Mar 22)	61.11	305.55	366.66
4 31/03	Blight's	Fuel	85.25	426.25	511.50
5 31/03	CTA Centre	Chapter eight reassessment examination / certification / card x 2	150.00	829.80	979.80
6 31/03	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	9.22	46.06	55.28
7 31/03	RGB	Maintenance Items	26.06	130.35	156.41
8 31/03	Jewson	Maintenance Items	7.85	39.25	47.10
9 DD	BT	Broadband	38.36	191.80	230.16
			490.19	2,530.77	3,020.96
		Bank Balances at 31 Mar 22 - Current Account	14,683.04		
		Bank Balances at 31 Mar 22 - Deposit Account	390,000.00		
Financial Year 2022/2023					
BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Town Council Meeting - 7 April 2022					
1 1	Annual Grant Payments	See attached spreadsheet		500.00	500.00
2 2	Atlantic Village TIC	Contribution - awarded in lieu of grant		1,000.00	1,000.00
3 3 - 42	Annual Grant Payments	See attached spreadsheet		66,200.00	66,200.00
4 43	R Coombes	Petty Cash		130.80	130.80
5 4/04	D S Electrical	Remove electric lighting box from tree	30.40	152.00	182.40
6 12/04	TDC	1 Queen Street non-domestic rate: 1 Apr 22 - 31 Mar 23		860.78	860.78
7 12/04	TDC	Recharge election costs Bideford South 2021		5,564.00	5,564.00
8 12/04	RGB	Maintenance items	12.98	64.90	77.88
9 12/04	DALC	DALC / NALC Affiliation Fee / Service Charge 2022 / 2023	100.97	1,545.00	1,645.97
10 12/04	DALC	Certificate in Local Council Administration: Registration Fee (£410) + Support Programme		770.00	770.00
11 12/04	Blight's	Fuel	19.67	46.33	66.00
12 12/04	EDF	Decorative Lighting, Bideford Quay	68.58	342.89	411.47
13 12/04	Just Office	Stationery	19.44	97.19	116.63
14 12/04	Acom Recruitment Ltd	Seasonal worker	61.11	305.55	366.66
12 DD	Clarity	Meter copy charge	6.61	33.03	39.64
13 DD	British Gas	Cooper Street	4.26	85.28	89.54
14 CC01	Ultimate Styling	Toyota Hi-Lux Rear Light (RH)		59.05	59.05
			324.02	77,756.80	78,080.82
		Bank Balances at 5 Apr 22 - Current Account	13,937.33		
		Bank Balances at 5 Apr 22 - Deposit Account	396,891.58		