



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in the Town Hall, Bideford on

Thursday 20 September 2024 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT:	North Ward:	Councillor D Bushby Councillor J Gordon Councillor K Hind
	South Ward:	Councillor S Inch Councillor Ms R Clarke Councillor P Lawrence
	West Ward:	Councillor T Inch Councillor M Taylor
	East Ward:	Councillor J Craigie Councillor Mrs J Gubb Councillor Mrs L Hellyer Councillor J A McKenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr Paul Swan (Town Clerk) Mr R D Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk) Mr A Curtis (Ranger Supervisor) Mr D Sparrey (D S Electrical) Sergeant G Clarke (Bideford Police Station) 8 x Member of the Public
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59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors C Hawkins (West Ward – personal) and T Inch (West Ward – personal).

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Councillor Mrs Gubb declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 18. (Member, Bideford Bridge Trust.).

61. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Representative of Zen Waters addressed the Members introducing their project which provides support and counselling for victims (and abusers) of domestic violence / sexual abuse and child

bullying. The initiative can provide an alternative for those not wishing to directly involve the Police. Their offer is in response to the rising rates of sexual crimes and domestic abuse, within the south west.

Zen Waters is fully funded and seeks to provide empowerment for victims.

Mr Avery took the opportunity to respond to Members questions in regard to the District Council's request for match funding for the "Playzone," earmarked for Pollyfield (Town Council Meeting 8 August, Minute Number 55.).

He explained that the facility would not be free for all, although later he conceded there would be an element of free time; it needs to make money. It will be "bookable," with priority given to women and girls, the economically challenged, disabled and those with long term health problems and ethnic minorities.

There will be three levels of charging: commercial, community and local organisation rates.

As noted at the last meeting, TDC have approached the Bridge Trust, departments within TDC and will look to source Section 106 monies. Mr Avery would like the funding support in place ASAP, preferably before the end of this financial year – although he believed finance could be accepted early into the new financial year.

Active Torridge will be responsible for the booking of the facility, maintenance and security.

The sand surface has a lifespan of ten years providing for football and multi sport activities (there will be a "sink" fund to replace the surface).

62. **MINUTES**

Councillor Craigie led a full and impassioned discussion on Minute Number 48. (reprise) representing discussion held at the close of the Meeting.

He believed that the minute needed to be amended to include,

"The three councillors were hostile when engaging with the Mayor."

During the debate Councillor S Inch indicated that he could not accept the wording, stating he did not "attack," the Mayor. He believed that the word hostile was very strong and members needed to be aware of the very important situation, in the event of an investigation, the Minutes would be referenced.

In the absence of Councillor T Inch, Councillor Mrs Hellyer (who questioned whether the Meeting had been closed and the need for the recording of the discussion) explained that his address could not be regarded as hostile especially as he sought to give a balanced view in the light of his (very heartfelt) personal family circumstances.

Following further discussion that included the process of investigation following a complaint to the TDC standards committee the Chairman called for a vote.

It was proposed by Councillor Craigie, seconded by Councillor Taylor and

RESOLVED: That Minute number 48 (Reprise) be amended to include the words,

“The three councillors were hostile when engaging with the Mayor.”

Given the vote was tied, the Mayor, as Chairman, gave her casting vote providing for the Minutes to be amended:

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 5, Abstention: 2)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 August 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record, the Mayor again having to provide the casting vote.

(Vote – For: 6, Against: 5, Abstention: 2)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was proposed by Councillor McKenize, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Order of Business be changed to allow for Item 6 to be brought forward.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0)

63. **BRIDGE LIGHTING REPAIR**

- a. The Chairman invited Mr Sparrey, DS Electrical, to address the Council.
- b. Mr Sparrey thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Council where he spoke on the challenges of the physical replacement of the Bridge Lights including:
 - Health and Safety.
 - Availability and high cost of specialist equipment.
 - Paucity of alternative solutions including the complexities of bespoke built equipment and their being “certified.”
 - Five year warranties (for the lights) that fly in the face of the actual mechanics of replacing them.
 - Two week road closure for the whole Bridge (6 pm – 6 am).
 - Additional cost of boarding the specialist crane driver for two weeks.
- c. Following discussion Councillor S Inch, mindful of the complexities, requested that Mr Sparrey continue his investigation to find an acceptable solution and provide a report of his findings to a future SF&GP Committee Meeting.
- d. The Chairman thanked Mr Sparrey for addressing the Council.

64. **PRESENTATION BY THE POLICE SERVICE**

- a. The Chairman invited Sergeant Clarke, to address the Council.
- b. Sergeant thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Council where he spoke about funding from the Devon and Cornwall Police Crime Commissioner and District Council that provided for Street Marshals until the end of December 2024.

He spoke about “Hot Spot Tier II” patrolling based on crime statistics that saw most of the work covering the central areas of the Town and directed members to various information streams that informed Police work.

Sergeant Clarke believed that the high visibility presence of the Jubilee Square Community Engagement Hub had “seen an improvement.”

Councillor Bushby agreed that the Community Hub had been a great success, the Street Marshals were similarly doing a great job; St Mary’s Church had seen improvements notwithstanding the recent installation of CCTV equipment.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer noted the reduction of “drinkers.”

Councillor Lawrence believed that the toilets in the vicinity of the Lundy Island Office were an unsafe area for females.

c. The Chairman thanked Sergeant Clarke for addressing the Council.

65. **ACCOUNTS**

To approve the payments listed.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0)

66. **DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT**

Members had sight of a report provided by Councillor Mrs Hellyer.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer advised that DCC had made entreaties to Central Government over the changes to the winter fuel allowance.

There had been recent “patch work,” to the roads in the area, more this year than the whole of last year. An addition of twelve million pounds had been secured for the budget (road maintenance).

The (Bideford Town Council) Rangers had done an amazing job to the Gammaton Finger Post.

There is a seven million pounds overspend on the Children’s special education needs budget which is being addressed by fifty eight schools “resource spaces” allowing for a small number to remain in the school system.

Devon and Torbay’s proposal to create a Combined County Authority has been given the green light by the Central Government (announced on 19 September 2024).

The result will see sixteen million pounds of capital funding invested in new green jobs, homes, skills and business growth and promote transition to a net-zero economy. (Councillor Mrs Hellyer suspected that the “door was open” for Plymouth to join although they may engage with Cornwall.)

Councillor S Inch had requested a Safety Order relating to several accidents at the traffic lights entrance / exit to the Asda supermarket.

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

The Town Clerk confirmed that locations had been finalised for the Pulse Project (Town Council Minutes 8 August, Minute Number 54. refers) allowing for the organisation to proceed with the planning applications.

68. **MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0)

69. **STAFFING, FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Mrs Gubb indicated that all Presentments received by the Manor Cour Jury should be considered.

Councillors Bushby and Mrs Hellyer agreed where those fell within the Council's remit.

Councillor S Inch in disagreeing noted that the Ford Rock improvements had been borne out of District Council working with the Town Council.

Councillor Hind indicated that his attendance at the Meeting had not been recorded.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 September 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0, Abstention: 2)

70. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

a. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 August 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0)

b. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

71. **TOURISM COMMITTEE**

Councillor S Inch stated that the Chudleigh Fort Picnic had been a great success for all those associated with the Tourism Committee.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

72. **DECARBONISATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 August 2024 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

73. **TWINNING**

a. **NOTICE OF MOTION.**

Submission by Councillor Mrs L Hellyer.

“To Investigate the possibility of Bideford, Devon twinning with Biddeford USA.

To receive a verbal report and presentation form former Councillor Andy Powell on the proposal to twin Bideford with Biddeford USA.”

Councillor McKenzie seconded the Motion.

The Chairman invited the former Councillor and Mayor of Bideford, Mr Powell to address the Members.

Councillor Powell thanked the Chairman and provided an historical and up to date narrative, that linked both the Towns of Bideford and Biddeford

He spoke of the benefits, the Americans are very receptive, and believed the act of twinning would simply formalise the (incredible) historic link.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hellyer, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Motion is supported.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0)

- b. To receive a request from the Town Council of Castiglione dei Pepoli, Italy on the proposal to twin the two Towns.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Hind and

RESOLVED: That the Council pursue the proposal to twin the Town of Bideford with the Italian Town of Castiglione dei Pepoli.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

74. **NOTICE OF MOTION.**

Submission by Councillor Gordon.

“To make council meetings transparent to the public I propose that they should be live streamed to the public and kept as a matter of record until the minutes of the meeting have been approved as an official record of the meeting.”

Councillor Gordon explained the benefits including the improvement of public participation and involvement.

Councillor McKenzie seconded the proposal.

Discussion ensued that included the merits and pitfalls of other Council systems, democracy seen to be at work, the Public’s appetite for the spectacle, a check on recorded minutes, general openness and cost.

It was proposed by Councillor Gordon, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Motion is supported.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 5)

75. **TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE**

Councillor Bushby advised the Operation Centre at East-the-Water had been granted planning permission.

76. **BRIDGE TRUST**

Councillor Mrs Gubb briefed Members on the income, expenditure, charitable donations and grants figures.

The business of the meeting having been concluded the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance at the meeting which concluded at 8.35 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:

Date:

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Town Council Meeting - 19 September 2024

Number (All) ▾

Row	Date Entered	PV	Description	Extended Description	Net	VAT	Gross
1	04/09/2024	(blank)	Amazon	Disposable wooden knives	6.66	1.33	7.99
2			Acorn	Seasonal worker	370.80	74.16	444.96
3	06/09/2024	(blank)	Amazon	Stationery	9.46	1.90	11.36
4				Charger Cables + Power bank - fast cha	56.26	4.74	61.00
5			Merry Harriers	Maintenance Items	4,000.00	800.00	4,800.00
6				Rowan Trees x four	157.50	31.50	189.00
7			A Touch of Class	Picture frame	296.00		296.00
8	09/09/2024	(blank)	HMRC	PAYE/NI	5,459.01		5,459.01
9			EDF	Decorative Lighting, Bideford Quay	369.88	73.98	443.86
10			EDF (CADCOEDA)	Bridge Floodlighting	64.16	3.21	67.37
11			C+R Construction SW Ltd	Caddsdwn Unit	67,000.00	13,400.00	80,400.00
12			Microsoft	License	123.60	24.72	148.32
13			Staff salaries inc Pension	SALARY	27,185.67		27,185.67
14	10/09/2024	(blank)	Blights	Fuel	38.21	7.64	45.85
15			Just Office	Stationery	24.95	4.99	29.94
16			Tamar	Maintenance Items	900.94	179.99	1,080.93
17			Earth Anchors	Seat x 2 + plaque	1,962.00	392.40	2,354.40
18	11/09/2024	(blank)	Acorn	Seasonal worker	370.80	74.16	444.96
19			Andrea Leiter	Swissmiss Catering	254.50		254.50
20	13/09/2024	(blank)	Taw Garages	Vehicle maintenance	111.59	22.32	133.91
21			Bideford Cobblers and Keys	Brass plaques with engraving	75.00		75.00
22			Robbie D Scaffolding	Scaffolding	280.00		280.00
23			Country Cottage Bakery	Refreshments - Torridge Clerks	20.70		20.70
24	16/09/2024	(blank)	RGB	Maintenance Items	160.00	32.00	192.00
25			EDF (D513)	14A Mill Street	37.69	1.88	39.57
26	19/09/2024	(blank)	Morrisons	Civic refreshments - 22 Sep 24	5.75	1.15	6.90
27			SW Communications	Line / Broadband provision	57.68	11.54	69.22
28			Acorn	Seasonal worker	370.80	74.16	444.96
29			S Goddard	Deposit refund - Tricks	25.00		25.00
30			D Dunckley	Chudleigh Fort - Face Painting	150.00		150.00
31	Grand Total				109,944.61	15,217.77	125,162.38

Bank Balances at 19/09/2024 - Current Account
 Bank Balances at 19/09/2024 - Deposit Account

£ 11,550.90
 £ 350,301.33