

MINUTES

At the Annual Meeting of Trowbridge Town Council held in the Council Chamber at The Civic, Trowbridge on Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 19.00hrs.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Allsworth, Bates (Chair), Blackmore, Bridges, Cavill, Cooper, Hill, Jacob, Edward Kirk, Emily Kirk, Lincoln, Palmen, Piazza and Vigar.

Officers: Mr L. Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Mrs J Weimar, Mrs A Quick (Minutes)

Public: (in person) 7, (on TEAMS) 1

Police: Sergeant Charlotte Chilton

Press: Matthew McLaughlin (TEAMS)

The Mayor welcomed all present, in particular members of the public; B Mitchell, R Lomas, Rob Wall, Capt (Retd) Roy Zaman, Sgt Chilton and Jodie Hawkes.

3529 APOLOGIES

- a) Apologies were received from Cllrs Beaver, Blakemore, Bryant, Hoar and Trigg.
- b) **RESOLVED** to accepted apologies with reasons for absence.

3530 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- a. **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21st September 2021.
- b. There were no matters to be considered.

3531 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The Council received and considered;

- a) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Leisure & Services Committee 28th September 2021.
Cllr Bates presented the minutes.
- b) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Museum Committee 5th October 2021.
Cllr Bridges presented the minutes.
- c) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee 5th October 2021.
Cllr Cavill presented the minutes.
- d) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Town Development Committee 12th October and 9th November.
Cllr Hill presented the minutes.
- e) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee 2nd November.
Cllr Palmen presented the minutes.

3532 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) There were no Declarations of Interest declared.
- b) There were no Dispensation Requests received by the Town Clerk and not previously considered.

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3533 COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR

The council received communications from Mayor Denise Bates;

- a) Mayor's Engagements were presented, previously circulated with the Agenda.

The Mayor has been busy attending a number of engagements; Bath Cancer Support Group, Naval Association Dinner, Trowbridge Apple Festival, Twinning Events, Spitfire Event at The Town Hall, Studley Green Brownies, Oasis Academy, North Bradley and Paxcroft Primary Schools, Civic Ceremonies and Citizenship Ceremonies. The welcomes have been warm from the people who give up their time with passion and enthusiasm in and around the town. Please get involved in these organisations if you are able. It has been a privilege to attend with Rob and the team at the Downs Cemetery, laying crosses and wreaths which was a very special occasion. Thank you to Rob and all the volunteers. Remembrance Sunday service and war memorial went very well, thanks were given to the Royal British Legion and veterans. The Paxcroft Primary School bearers did immensely well so thank you to them too. It has been a wonderful few months and The Mayor is looking forward to coming months, with the privilege of celebrating this wonderful town.

3534 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Questions from the public were received as follows:

Mr Mitchell - Thanked the Mayor and Town Cllrs for attending the Cenotaph on Sunday, the most important town event in the calendar. The 2 police cadets were thanked for carrying the police standard and town standard. He recommends that the council approaches the young girl carrying the town standard to ask her to take on this role. We should place the Town Standard and the flag in this room to show respect to town and country.

Planning applications such as Innox Mills could leave town centre a ghost town. The whole council needs to look at the development as it is too big for one committee to decide. Large amounts of money are being spent on the town hall but councils must consider that Trowbridge is land locked so there is no need for people to come through Trowbridge unless they live or work in the town. Please consider this in terms of whether it is what the town wants. Will toilet facilities be included in this development, it is important that we don't have a new shopping centre.

Mr Lomas – Resident of Jasmine Way, Park Ward -

"By order of the agenda items I know I am pre-empting Sgt Chilton's report but having read the report and not having the chance to come in with questions or comment during the report I would like to make a few points now if I may. We will be shown on the front page of the report some encouraging figures, for example reported crime rate being reduced by 6% and further percentage drops in other specific crime rates over the last 12 months. All good, but I emphasise and please note that these are the statistics for Wiltshire and not Trowbridge. On the same page the meeting will be shown crime reported figures for Trowbridge CPT. These are overall figures for the year up to September 2021 and are quite disturbing in their own right but, with respect, without a comparison they do not show the whole worrying situation here in the town. I wonder how many of you, with your tight schedules, have dug deeper into the report and pulled up the actual crime map for the Trowbridge area.

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/wiltshire-police/trowbridge/?tab=CrimeMap>

Here you will find that the reported crime figure in Trowbridge CPT for the month of September 2021 is revealed as 702. The top three crimes in this area are listed as being Violence & Sexual Offences, ASB and criminal damage & arson. 702, that works out at not far off one serious crime reported every hour of every day for the full 30 days of September. Click back one month to August 2021 figures and you will see that 702 is actually a 10% rise on the month before. A further 10% increase since the last time I brought this serious issue to this meeting. These figures prompted me to look at the crime map figures for our neighbouring districts over the same period.

*More very disturbing reading I'm afraid. The Trowbridge crime rate for the month of September is: Westbury & Warminster reported crime in September = 338 = Trowbridge 107% higher
Devizes & Marlborough = 402 reported crime means Trowbridge 75% higher*

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Chippenham & Corsham = 501 reported crime means Trowbridge 40% higher
And compared to our nearest city, Bath = 330 reported crime means Trowbridge 112% higher
Surely no one can deny these are worrying facts and figures for someone who lives in Trowbridge.
Yes, you can look at figures and make them mean whatever you want them to mean. However, there is no getting away from it, that with figures like this it only shows one thing; it shows that the basic expectation of effective crime prevention IS drastically failing in Trowbridge. These figures also confirm what I, and many of you are seeing out there on the streets. As a resident I feel that I am being seriously let down. Crime prevention is seriously failing in my view. I have been attending meetings now for last few months and I still don't see this issue being discussed anywhere within the TTC process. I further have to accept that this meeting is not the forum for a debate but I am at a loss as to know where in the TC's process it can be debated.

I have been informed that the promised and long awaited ASB working group is finally going to come together this Thursday so I have a bit of hope, but can this Full Council Meeting assure me:

- a. That the working group will work to a full and appropriate agenda to tackle the full scope of rising crime in Trowbridge and not just ASB
- b. That the group will have the full authority to explore a full range of options for a way ahead in dealing with the issues and not just be a talking shop to discuss whether CCTV is affordable or not.
- c. That it will be made up of representatives of all the appropriate authorities, eg police, unitary council and qualified council officials
- d. Where will the group report their findings and recommendations, and
- e. where can I, as a concerned and worried member of the public see the outcomes and minuted updates.

If I have made the wrong assumption and this working group is not the forum to discuss the issue fully, where and when will it be tackled? If I recall correctly, it was suggested at the Policy and Resources meeting, earlier this month, that TTC should present fully at the next Area Board Mtg what exactly it requires from Wiltshire Police, will this be going ahead? I am sorry but with the seriousness of the increasing rate of crime, and the concerning rise in severity of crimes being committed, I really don't think this issue can be buried any longer."

Cllrs Edward Kirk and Piazza asked whether Ron Lomas could join the ASB working group. Cllr Palmen advised they would hold their first meeting to discuss whether this is possible.

Jodie Hawkes is supporting the motion proposed by Cllr Edward Kirk. It is right that the solicitors inform residents they will have a management fee but as many have supported in the past, you will be aware that this is not always the case. We have explored getting a refund from Wiltshire Council but the response is no. Rather than paying these companies we would hope that we could pay Trowbridge Council to manage the area. This would prevent us waiting 4-5 years for landscaping etc.

Cllr Edward Kirk – There is an issue with the Town Council having an input into these private management companies. Your estate charges should be used for managing the area. The only way is a ballot of residents giving evidence that work has not been conducted.

Roy Zaman, Chairman of Trowbridge Royal British Legion, in support of the Armed Forces Covenant. This is a move forwarded by the Government to show appreciation of all serving personnel and veterans. Trowbridge is a Military Town. The children in schools are proud of their parents and grandparents. To adopt the Covenant shows the people of Trowbridge that the military personnel and veterans are supported and are not to be disadvantaged.

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3535 POLICE MATTERS

A Police Report was received from Sergeant 2446 Charly Chilton, previously circulated. The following questions were asked;

In response to Ron Lomas' statement, for September we have 541 recorded incidents. Some were ASB, these are taken very seriously but there is a difference between an incident and a crime. An increase in reported incidents may partly be due to increase in reporting. Recorded crime from Nov-Oct shows a 1.4% drop in recorded crime in Trowbridge.

Ongoing work with partner agencies regarding ASB occurring in Castlemead area. Residents have been reporting very well which has succeeded in taking further action.

We have worked closely with the Housing Association re ASB in Charlotte Square. The Housing Association were involved and took action with support of the police to get this to court.

Two areas within Trowbridge are Cockhill and Woodmarsh area which have been a focus regarding speeding etc.

ELF (plain clothes & high visibility patrols) is launching in December re shop lifting in the run up to xmas.

Three new PCSOs have joined; Adam Smith (Adcroft & Seymour), William Brown (College & Drynham) and Amy Clifford (Studley Green & Broadmead)

We are giving people the option of handing in their knives to tackle knife crime nationally. This will involve education of carers, parents and schools.

QUESTION: Cllr Edward Kirk – how can the new PCSOs tackle the crime Mr Lomas identified?

ANSWER: The whole Neighbourhood police team work 7 days a week 7am-10pm. We also have response teams working out of Trowbridge. Mechanisms can be put in place sent to multiagency safeguarding hub and the perpetrator could be sent for voluntary work.

QUESTION: Cllr Cooper – is the Trowbridge Neighbourhood team fully staffed.

ANSWER: Yes, as of the 3 new PCSOs joining but one will be leaving shortly for which an advert has already gone up.

Cllr Bridges is unhappy that he did not receive the Police Report prior to the meeting. He requested to be sent all papers and Council Reports in the post prior to meetings.

Action – Hard copies to be posted to Cllrs Bridges and Blackmore in the future.

Sergeant Chilton left the meeting at 19.40.

3536 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION 211104 2320 FURLOUGH

The Council considered the following question submitted by Councillor Edward Kirk.

- i. **Why was Trowbridge Town Council so confident in its eligibility to claim furlough (including for a Head of Service) when other Town Councils were concerned there was a lack of clarity?**
- ii. **Did the fact that Trowbridge Town Council's level of General Reserves were below the recommended minimum of 3-months revenue expenditure influence the Town Clerk's decision to Furlough Staff?**

Town Clerk's Response:

- i. **The Town Clerk was confident enough with the interpretation of the regulations to commence the Furlough claim when the scheme commenced. The Leader and Town Clerk met with the Chief Executive and Leader of Wiltshire Council and they confirmed that our interpretation was the same as their own and that Wiltshire Council had furloughed staff in similar roles.**
- ii. **No.**

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3537 TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY 2021-2025

The Council considered the FINAL DRAFT Town Council Strategy 2021-2025.

Cllr Palmen introduced and proposed adoption of the Town Council Strategy, seconded by Cllr Hill. Cllr Hill spent the day in a climate and sustainability meeting which highlighted that on a national basis we are doing well. Cllr Piazza asked in terms of costing, why is this not included in the strategy? Cllr Palmen answered that the Financial Control section shows the council's position on Council Tax.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the Town Council Strategy 2021-2025.

Cllrs Edward Kirk and Piazza abstained, all others voted in favour.

3538 WESTBURY INCINERATOR

The Council considered the report from the Town Clerk and information from Westbury Town Council and a recommendation.

Cllr Vigar suggest we shouldn't be committing at this stage as we can't predict what will happen. Arla's objection is about the butter being tainted with a strange aroma. The environment agency have to give a permit to the incineration of material at this site.

Cllr Piazza proposed, Cllr Edward Kirk seconded an amendment to remove the words; 'at this stage'

Cllr Piazza voted in favour and all other councillors in attendance voted against.

THE AMENDMENT was LOST.

The **RECOMMENDATION** was proposed by Cllr Cooper, seconded by Cllr Vigar and it was:

RESOLVED: That Trowbridge Town Council supports Westbury Town Council's campaign against the proposed incinerator/energy from waste facility but at this stage is not able to commit funds to a legal challenge to the planning permission.

Cllr Piazza abstained.

All other councillors in attendance voted in favour.

Cllr Bridges objected to wasting time on recorded votes.

3539 MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The Council considered motions received from councillors.

A. MOTION: 210915 10:14 PLASTIC FREE TROWBRIDGE CAMPAIGN

The Council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Hoar; proposed by Cllr Palmen and seconded by Cllr Hill and it was;

RESOLVED that Trowbridge Town Council will fully endorse and commit to a plastic free Trowbridge campaign by working with the Chamber of Commerce to create, develop and promote an aspirational accreditation scheme for local businesses and the community. The council will also commit to continuing to phase out its own plastic use wherever possible.

All Voted in favour.

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Cllr Edward Kirk highlighted that there is no Government legislation on mail order companies plastic bags which is unfair for the businesses required to charge for using these. Cllr Jacob states this is something we can do to support local businesses and those making the effort to adhere to guidelines and advice. Cllr Piazza wants us to be inclusive in terms of universal design and possibly involve a representative from the disabled community.

B. MOTION 210928 22:58 ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Hill and it was;

RESOLVED that Trowbridge Town Council signs the Armed Forces Covenant.

A recorded vote was held.

All voted in favour.

C. MOTION 211103 08:22 ESTATE MANAGEMENT CHARGES

The Council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Edward Kirk and seconded by Cllr Emily Kirk;

MOTION:

That the Town Council seeks to resolve the financial injustice of Trowbridge residents living in areas with estate management charges (including Southview Park and Castle Mead) by calculating the amount that the Council would spend on green space services in these areas if the council was managing them and to pay this amount directly to the respective management companies on behalf of the residents, with an agreement from those estate management companies, that they will reduce the charge to residents by the same amount.

A recorded vote was held.

MOTION LOST.

A discussion was held between the Councillors. The Town Clerk clarified that it would not be legally correct to state that the Council provides any services that some residents cannot legally receive based upon where they live. He clarified that the Estate Management charges are a perpetual contract which is linked to the deeds of the property. Cllr Jacob states that if 70% of the residents together give evidence that service is not being provided they could change management company. Town Clerk clarified that The General Power of Competence would be used so we would not be open to legal challenge. Cllr Cooper questioned whether this is the right mechanism to use to rectify these inequities. Different management companies have different roles/success etc. Should we as a Town Council be condoning the use of Management Companies? Cllr Vigar stated that the principle on which you would do this is apportioning services to the precept. We must ensure these management companies are working at their best and support the auditing started by Cllr Jacob. Cllr Edward Kirk highlighted that we cannot change the legal obligation of the residents with a management company. We need to do something to ensure we are treating our residents fairly.

*3 members of the public left the meeting at 20.43
Cllr Palmen left the meeting at 20.43, returned 20.45*

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D. MOTION 21110319:51 CONSULTATION - LARGER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Edward Kirk.

MOTION:

That the Town Development Committee automatically refers any application with more than five dwellings to the next Full Council Meeting, requesting an extension to the deadline if necessary, so that all members of the town council are provided with an opportunity to vote on applications that will likely have a significant impact on Trowbridge. If an extension is not possible then an Extraordinary Council Meeting must be called.

Town Clerk's Report:

The town council is only a consultee on all planning applications impacting the town. Any individual, including councillors, can respond to a consultation. The vast majority of town councils deal with all planning applications through a committee system. Wiltshire Council, like other planning authorities also deals with the decision making regarding planning applications through a committee system.

Whilst time-extensions are regularly requested and approved for larger applications (typically these would be for 50 or more houses) this is to allow them to be deferred to the next Town Development committee, which would normally be for three or four weeks, giving that period of time for consideration of the application and in particular for the Clerk to write a report and raise any concerns for the committee to consider. Town Council meetings are normally two months apart and it is unlikely that time-extensions of this length would be granted, requiring extraordinary meetings. Experience suggests that if an extraordinary meeting is called it is unlikely to result in many more councillors attending than the ten councillors who are members of the committee. All councillors are able to attend all committee meetings and can speak at those meetings.

Significant applications are typically the result of lengthy consultation with the town council and often the subject of policy considerations by the whole council prior to actual applications being submitted. This is the case for Innox Mills and all of the WHSAP sites and Ashton Park. There are no other known significant applications that are likely to come forward that have not already been considered by and are subject to a policy position of the council.

A discussion was held and a recorded vote was taken.

MOTION LOST.

Mr Mitchell and Chair of the British Legion left the meeting at 21.04

Emily Kirk left the meeting at 21.04, returned at 21.07

E. MOTION 21110319:52 WHITE RIBBON

The Council considered the following motion submitted by Cllr Piazza.

MOTION:

- a) That Trowbridge Town Council becomes a White Ribbon Supporter Organisation;
- b) That Trowbridge Town Council continues to do everything in its power to build a town free from misogyny and violence against women and girls, working with its partners to achieve this goal.

Cllr Piazza stated this is an extremely important issue to be highlighted in our society. Cllr Palmen agreed and stated that other larger councils are looking to be accredited. Cllr Jacob stated that women are still experiencing fear and violence and this is a symbol of support, it is not about excluding other groups.

A recorded vote was taken.

ALL VOTED IN FAVOUR.

3540 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

None.

3541 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th January 2022.

Agenda to include;

- Receive a budget recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee
- Council Tax Precept Setting for 2022/23

3542 MEDIA RELEASES

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following press/social media releases:

The Strategy
Armed Forces Covenant
White Ribbon

Meeting Closed at 21.15

Signature

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APPENDIX RECORDED VOTES

Councillor	WESTBURY INCINERATOR	MOTION A PLASTIC FREE TROWBRIDGE	MOTION B ARMED FORCES COV.	MOTION C ESTATE MANAGEMENT CHARGES	MOTION D LARGER PLANNING APPLICATION	MOTION E WHITE RIBBON
Allsworth						
Bates						
Beaver						
Blackmore						
Blakemore						
Bridges						
Bryant						
Cave						
Cavill						
Cooper						
Halik						
Hill						
Hoar						
Jacob						
Edward Kirk						

Initials.....dated.....

Emily Kirk						
Lincoln						
Palmen						
Piazza						
Trigg						
Vigar						

	For	Against	Abstain
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Initials.....dated.....