**BRADLEY STOKE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**27 May 2021**

Minutes of the TWENTY NINTH Meeting of Bradley Stoke held at Brook Way Activity Centre, Brook Way, Bradley Stoke, at 7.00pm on Wednesday 27 May 2021. The Twenty Eighth meeting was originally arranged for Wednesday 6th May 2020, but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of eleven people were present at the meeting.

Councillors attending: Tom Aditya, Roger Avenin, Tony Griffiths, Edward He, Michael Hill, Ben Randles and Andy Ward.

Staff attending: Graham Baker and Sharon Petela.

The Town Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1 Appointment of Chair of the Town Meeting.**

Councillor Michael Hill, as Mayor and Chair of the Town Council, was proposed by Councillor Tom Aditya to chair the meeting, seconded by Councillor Tony Griffiths, proposal carried. Councillor Michael Hill duly took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors John Ashe, Keith Cranney, Terri Cullen, Fabrizio Fazzino, Brian Hopkinson, Angela Morey and Ed Rose. Officers Del McIntosh and Rachel Pullen.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Town Meeting 8 May 2019**

The Minutes of the last Town Meeting were taken as read and their adoption was proposed by Councillor Tom Aditya, seconded by Councillor Andy Ward, proposal carried.

**4 Reports from Committees**

The Annual Report was received *en bloc*. and the full Report is attached to these Minutes.

**4.1 Chairman’s Overview**

Councillor Tony Griffiths, Chair of the Council (2020/21) drew attention to his “View from the Chair” report which was included in the Annual Report. He commenteed that the final total for the Mayor’s Charities was £4,404.00.

**4.2 Finance Committee**

Councillor Ben Randles gave the following Finance Committee report:

I’ve had the privilege of chairing the Finance Committee in previous years and it continues to be a privilege. 2020/21 has been unbelievably challenging for everyone and I’m sure from a financial perspective it has been very stressful for many of our residents. The pandemic understandably has been front and centre in Council’s decision making this year.

Given the issues everyone has been subjected to this year, council officers have fully supported councillors running a sound budget and our financial outlook continues to look positive through affirmative action (some of which I have summarised below).

* In June 2020, Council was quick to react to the devastating financial impact of COVID-19, including the government-imposed premises closures, by drastically reducing the budgets across the board paying particular attention to the income budgets for the three Activity Centres which were reduced by 60% (£136,680 to £54,000).

* Like some businesses, we have been able to secure £55,853 of government support to date to offset some of the losses. In addition, some income has been secured during these closure periods as the pre-school and some front-line services, including NHS training, continued to operate from our sites throughout. Because of this income stream, the current hire income position has exceeded expectations and has outperformed the reduced budgets by £17.5K (£71,521).

* Council’s main annual income is the precept paid by the local community which accounted for 84.6% of BSTC’s annual income for 2020/21 and as this is set at the start of the year, local town and parish councils are in the fortunate position of having this guaranteed income which has not been impacted by events.

* All expenditures are well below expected budgets at this time, which produced a larger than expected year end surplus which was re-allocated to support future planned projects including the replacement of the very popular play area at Baileys Court, which has also recently secured net external funding of just over £41K (£44,195 - £3K grant fee) , and £100K has been reserved to support a future planned development to extend the Brook Way Activity Centre building following the successful expansion of the car park in 2019.

* Council run a 5 Year Forward Budget Plan which is constantly updated and allows Council to plan ahead whilst reserving funds to support and protect the future precept and services for the local community during unexpected periods such as the one currently being experienced. This financial mechanism provides Council with the ability to withstand adverse economic conditions which in turn has enabled Council to freeze the precept and hire charges for next year whilst maintaining and even expanding existing services for the community.

* Despite having gone through an unpleasant year so far, the BSTC financial prospects look bright, and Council has retained the greatly reduced hire income budgets for next year to further ensure a strong financial future moving even further ahead into 2023/24.

Through strong financial planning, Council has been able to protect the public purse and I hope that all in our community agree with the hard work we are putting in to serve you through effective budgeting and financial management; notably our steps to freeze the precept for the next financial year whilst also providing a stronger long-term forward financial plan. I also hope that this year begins to look more positive for us all more generally, as we optimistically get back to a relative way of normal living.

**4.3 Leisure, Youth and Amenities Committee**

Councillor Roger Avenin drew attention to his committee report which was included in the Annual Report. He commented that the Town Council is always keen to receive applications for grant funding from local groups and organisations.

He also commented that the Town Council is applying for Quality Gold status through the Local Council Awards Scheme.

**4.4 Planning and Environment Committee**

Unfortunately, the Chair of the Planning & Environment Committee had sent their apologies, but a report of the work of the committee was included in the Annual Report.

**5 General Discussion**

5.1 Councillor Tom Aditya commented that the COVID-19 pandemic vaccination programme in Bradley Stoke is progressing well and currently numbers of individuals in the town with COVID-19 remains low which is very positive news. An update from South Gloucestershire Council, Public Health team will be presented at the forthcoming South Gloucestershire Council, Community Engagement Forum which is taking place remotely (via Microsoft Team) on Thursday 8th June 2021 at 7.00pm.

Councillor Michael Hill thanked the Town Council officers and staff for all their hard work over the past year.

He then thanked everyone for attending the meeting and, there being no other business, closed the meeting at 7.15pm.