**BOVEY TRACEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON**

**WEDNESDAY 26TH MARCH 2025 at 7.00PM**

**Present:**

Cllr A Allen Cllr G Kennedy
Cllr U Arnold Cllr L Robilliard-Webb

Cllr S Brooke Cllr S Simmons

Cllr C Day Cllr C West

Cllr M Evans

*\*\*County Cllr*

*\*District Cllr*

**In attendance:**

Cllr S Morgan\*

Mr Mark Wells – Town Clerk

Ms Amy Christie – Assistant Town Clerk14 Nominees for the Community Awards 2024-25

52 members of the public including representatives of various organisations

*The meeting was chaired by the Town Mayor, Cllr Brooke.*

**1. Welcome and Introductions:**

Cllr Brooke welcomed all those attending and reiterated how great it was to see such a good turnout. Cllr Brooke thanked the town and said she is fortunate to have served as the Town Mayor for 5 years.

**2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting – 27th March 2024:**

i) The Minutes of the previous Annual Town Meeting held on 27th March 2024 *(\*copy previously circulated)* were approved as a correct record and duly signed.

ii) The Town Mayor provided a report highlighting what the Town Council has been involved in over the last 12 months.

The Riverside Community Centre continues to be an ideal hub for both council and community activities, providing a welcoming resource alongside the library and Information Centre.

In delivering our core responsibilities, we have remained committed to enhancing the lives of residents in the parish. Our support for town events, including the annual Remembrance Service and the provision of Christmas lights for Bovey Tracey and Heathfield, remains strong. We have also collaborated with various community groups to provide support for residents. For instance, we have funded the Citizens Advice Service, co-located with the Social Supermarket and the Community Fridge. Unfortunately, the service in Heathfield has been discontinued due to low uptake.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Mark Wells, our Town Clerk, the Assistant Town Clerk, and our Groundsmen Roger and Peter, for their dedication and commitment in working together to support the councillors in maintaining and improving our parish. Our policies and processes are continually reviewed to strengthen and enhance the strategic and financial operations of the council.

Bovey Tracey Town Council remains steadfast in our commitment to integrating the climate emergency declaration into all council services and activities, ensuring the environmental impact of our decisions is carefully considered. Over the past two years, we have successfully reduced carbon emissions from the Council's activities by 1.7 tonnes.

Thanks to the solar panels installed at Riverside, our electricity emissions have decreased by 2 tonnes. Additionally, the trees we've distributed at giveaways and planted through local initiatives are now maturing and absorbing increasing amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, further reducing our emissions by 1.8 tonnes. However, the increased gas usage for heating Riverside has resulted in an additional 2.4 tonnes of carbon emissions compared to the 2021/22 baseline.

While our overall emissions are lower than in 2021/22, we still emitted just over 9 tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2023/24. The majority of these emissions stemmed from our use of gas, electricity, and the BTTC vehicle. We are actively exploring ways to further maximize electricity reduction through our solar panels and are considering strategies to decrease our gas usage. Although we have searched for an electric vehicle suitable for our operations, the market is not yet sufficiently developed. We will continue to monitor this closely in the coming years. In light of these developments, we are reviewing our net zero target timeline and exploring the most effective ways to achieve the Council's declared climate and ecology emergency goals.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work in continuing to provide high-quality services and enhancing the environment for residents. Their work is conducted through Full Council and the three committees: Finances, Resources & General Purposes; Recreation, Parks, and Property; and Planning & Environment. Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings.

Our Town Clerk has continued to inform and guide our activities and manage our budget effectively. Consequently, we have maintained a reasonably healthy level of reserves, ensuring a sound financial footing. Our financial processes are stringently audited, both internally and externally, to ensure compliance with the law and best practices, and to use your money wisely.

As we know, a Parish Council receives its funding from a small portion of the local Council Tax, referred to as the Parish Precept. The Council has agreed on a budget of £389,000 for the forthcoming year. To fund this expenditure, the Precept will increase by 9%, raising the Band D Council Tax for Bovey Parish to £102.53 per annum (from £93.40). This increase relates to several key areas, and a more detailed breakdown is available upon request.

The redevelopment of Mill Marsh Park Play Area has been highly successful and is used by families daily. As a council, we will continue to invest in our green spaces to enable residents to access free, high-quality outdoor pursuits. Recent consultations have helped with the redesign of the outdoor exercise area in Mill Marsh Park, with work anticipated to commence in July. This will be funded jointly by a grant from the Lotteries Fund and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Each year, countless visitors enjoy our parks, and at times, visitors outnumber residents. In October 2024, we were thrilled to receive Gold in our first entry to the main element of South West in Bloom. Congratulations to all who contributed, including our hard-working groundsmen, Roger and Peter, and the amazing groups that entered the It's Your Neighbourhood section, such as Bovey Tracey Primary School. Special thanks to all businesses that entered and achieved excellent results and to the businesses who displayed hanging baskets and decorated their windows. In addition, the Town received the following awards:

It’s Your Neighbourhood Award

Friends of Mill Marsh Park – Outstanding

Bovey Tracey Garden Club – Outstanding (for St Mary's Well)

Bovey Tracey Primary School – Outstanding

Bovey Tracey Garden Club – Outstanding

Growing Spaces – Establishing

South West in Bloom Commercial, Leisure & Business Award

Brookside Restaurant – Gold

Bell Inn – Gold

Cromwell Arms – Gold

Dolphin Hotel – Gold

Café 360 – Silver Gilt

We continue to support local groups with grants, including Bovey Youth Café, Teignbridge Citizens Advice and the Children’s Hub.

Last year, the Town Council took over the redundant Football Pavilion at the Recreation Ground, previously a strain on the Football Club's finances, and it has now been let for use as a gym.

A special thanks to Heathfield residents and Cllrs Mills-Brown and Robillard-Webb of the Heathfield Action Team. The 21 members are collaboratively raising local concerns. Supported by the local policing team, they're working to address these issues. Your dedication provides invaluable support and inspiration, improving our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed so much to our community over the past year, and we look forward to continuing to work alongside you.

**3. Community Awards 2025:**

Cllr Allencongratulated the nominees for the Community Awards and read out their names and nomination briefs. Cllr Allen and Cllr Brooke jointly presented the following awards:

**Young Citizen of the Year** – Winner: Isabella Baker

Nominees – Faye Jackson, Charlotte Fulton, Jacob Challenger, Irvine Drewett, Aron Monahan

**Community Champion** – Winner: Riverside Surgery Befrienders

Nominees – Chris Robillard and Moor Social Volunteers

**Environmental Champion** – Winner: Bovey Tacey Community Fridge

Nominees – Eleanor Moseley

**Honorary Representative of the Lord of the Manor** – Marion Edwards.

Marion Edwards was presented with a certificate for Honorary Representative of the Lord of the Manor by Cllr Tony Allen. Marion Edwars gave a short acceptance speech and provided a thank you to all of those involved in the projects.

**4. Community Reports**

16 reports from District Councillors and clubs, societies, charities, schools, churches and other organisations were received and noted *(\*copies previously circulated).*

Copies of all reports that were submitted are available via [www.boveytracey.gov.uk](http://www.boveytracey.gov.uk) or on request.

25 members of the public left the meeting at 7:55pm.

**6. Public Question Time:**

A member of the public spoke in relation to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and asked if it can be used for road infrastructure projects.

*The Town Clerk confirmed CIL can help fund infrastructure demands on the community. CIL levy received by the Town Council however is a much smaller proportion than that which is received by the District and County Council’s.*

A member of the public enquired about the replacement of the cantilever walkway along Station Road.

*The Town Clerk advised that Devon County Council have recently undertaken some survey work in Mill Marsh Park and the adjacent field to ascertain foundation levels etc and are looking to design and install a replacement scheme ahead of the summer of 2026.*

A member of the public asked if devolution will affect the local tier of government.

*Cllr Brooke advised responded to say that the impact of devolution and local government reorganisation on town and parish councils is unknown at this stage. There are five options currently being considered for the County area of Devon and more will be known when a preferred option is agreed.*

A member of the public spoke in relation to the Dolphin Hotel and asked the Town Council for comment on its involvement and discussions with the owners.

*Cllr Brooke responded, advising that the Town Council is aware that the landlord is currently seeking a new tenant and has not involved itself any further.*

The Town Council encouraged the public to bring questions or suggestions to future Town Council meetings.

Cllr Brooke thanked all the residents for what they do in the town and thanked everyone for attending this evening.

**Meeting closed at 8:09pm**