

## SWT Full Council

Tuesday, 14th January, 2020,  
6.15 pm

The logo for Somerset West and Taunton, featuring the text "Somerset West and Taunton" in white on a teal background with a white swoosh at the bottom right.

The John Meikle Room - The Deane  
House

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**Members:** Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair), Simon Coles (Vice-Chair), Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Paul Bolton, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, Martin Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

### Agenda

**1. Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

**3. Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

**4. To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

**5. To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

**6. To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

**7. Receipt of Petition on behalf of My Theatre Matters (Brewhouse)**

(Pages 5 - 30)

**8. Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

During discussion of the following item(s) it may be necessary to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 13 13.02(e) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Executive will need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Recommend that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the

authority holding that information).

**9. Taunton Bus Station**

(Pages 31 - 46)

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Marcus Kravis Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development and Councillor Ross Henley Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources.

**10. Firepool**

(Pages 47 - 62)

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Marcus Kravis Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development.



**JAMES HASSETT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

## **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

### **Petitions to Council – Assessment Form**

On receipt of a Petition from the requisite number of people appealing to the Authority (more than 200 for it to be debated at the next ordinary Full Council), the Governance Team will ensure an assessment is made as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the request(s) in the Petition be approved at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

There are Excluded Matters which are matters that are excluded from the scope of the petitions duty and these are:

- a) Any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
- b) Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision;
- c) Any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment;
- d) Any matter which the Chair of the Council or relevant Committee believes to be scurrilous, offensive, improper, repetitious, capricious, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take;
- b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition;
- c) The name and address of the petition organiser

If valid, the first question to be addressed when assessing the Petition will be:-

“Can the request of the petitioner, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Petition can proceed towards discussion and potential resolution.

An example of a Petition which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the Petition is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Petition on The Brewhouse and Extinction Rebellion, the answer to the above question would clearly be 'no'.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Petition will be required to identify what will be needed if the Petition – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Governance Team will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Petition onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Petition – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

The Council will decide how to respond to the petition which may include;

- a) To take the action requested.
- b) Not to take the action requested for the reasons given in the debate.
- c) Refer the matter for further investigation.
- d) Refer the matter to the Council Executive for final decision.

A petitioner has the right to request a review of the steps taken in response to the petition if they are unhappy and that request shall be made to the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

## Petitions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Petition will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

### Details of the Petition -

#### Petition

#### ACTION REQUIRED:

1. Secure future funding to enable TTA to continue to deliver its current programmes of activity.
2. Invest in and work with TTA in order to deliver a much improved and sustainable arts venue the region deserves

#### Supplementary demands resulting from retraction of TTA Report:

3. Clarity about why planned TTA Report did not go to Full Council and who decided this.
4. For Councillors to receive TTA Report and make informed decision on future investment in TTA.
5. Decision about SWTC intentions with regards TTA future funding and Brewhouse redevelopment.

#### Questions to be addressed

- ***What additional resource would be required to ensure the Petition (if approved) could be implemented?***

1 – SWT Council has provided an increased amount of £160,000 in grant funding for 2019/20 Financial Year including an additional £28,000 on off funds, with £132,000 profiled per annum in the Financial Strategy for 20/21, subject to approval in annual budget setting. TTA is requesting an increase on that figure and a detailed breakdown of the figures are included within the attached confidential Appendices.

Supporting the request could increase the Council's expenditure by up to £450,000 (rounded) per year by 2023/4. This is not currently included in the Council's Financial Strategy or Medium Term Financial Plan. The implications of additional revenue support would likely be increased savings targets to be considered as a combination of reduction/cutting of other services based on corporate priorities or increased income generation targets through more ambitious commercial investment plans.

Officers and the Executive would have to assess the request of the petitioners and a report would have to be brought back to Council through Budget Setting for final approval setting out options for members to consider how this budget pressure could be met and what that would look like in detail. Should the Council agree in principle

to the request for additional revenue support for TTA, the request will have to be considered and a further report brought to Full Council including solutions to enable the Council to set a balanced budget.

In terms of support with securing future funding and enabling TTA to continue to deliver its current programmes of activity in a wider sense of definition other potential avenues could include enabling activities e.g. officer resource within the Economic Development expertise area supporting with bid writing/fundraising applications.

2 – Further capital funding to invest in and deliver an improved venue would have to be assessed against a number of criteria and adopted policies and strategies, namely the Council’s adopted Commercial Investment Strategy and the Council’s adopted Corporate Strategy.

The potential redevelopment of the existing Brewhouse is one part of a wider strategic question of Arts and Culture within the district, alongside the redevelopment of the town centre as a whole, including Firepool. Whilst these strategies are in development, it would be premature to commit any additional funds to the Brewhouse in isolation. The proposals for a redevelopment of the venue/building (circa £25 million) alongside would be a cost above and beyond the additional revenue support requested.

- ***What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?***

1 – Further Officer Investigation if supported.

The Leadership team and Executive would have to assess the request of the petitioners and a report would have to be brought back to Council for final approval setting out how this budget pressure could be met and what that would look like in detail in Feb 2020.

2 – Further Officer Investigation if supported.

Officers in the area of Commercial Investment would have to assess the request of the petitioners and a report would have to be brought back to Council for final approval setting out what this investment entailed for final decision.

- ***Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?***

1 – Further Council Approval would be required through Budget Setting.

Budget setting for financial year 2020/21 with final budget proposals, including financial pressures, priorities and savings plans, will be presented for consideration by Council in February 2020. It is a legal requirement that the Council sets a balanced budget each year and therefore important the Council remains financially resilient. Ultimately the Council has limited financial resources and will need to allocate these within affordability limits to agreed priorities.



2 – Further Approvals would be required in context of the wider town centre development, including Firepool, which would influence the decision to invest further capital funding into the redevelopment of the Brewhouse

- ***Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.***

1 – Yes

2 – Yes

**Likely timescale involved –**

1. The timescale for this would be aligned with the Budget Setting process for this and future financial years.
2. The timescale for this is potentially lengthy depending on the course of action decided upon.





## MY THEATRE MATTERS

### STATEMENT

Taunton Theatre Association reopened The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre in 2014, transforming it into a vibrant regional hub that nurtures and presents world-class talent. We are the largest provider of arts and culture in Somerset West and Taunton; delivering over 1,000 live performances, films, arts activities and exhibitions a year. 71,000 people attended events in 2018-19; audience growth this year is 21%.

Ambitious, yet realistic, plans commissioned by Taunton Deane Borough Council to redevelop The Brewhouse into a multipurpose flexible venue with a 750-seat theatre, dedicated cinema, 180-seat studio theatre, art gallery, library and community studios have been put on hold by Somerset West & Taunton Council. The redevelopment, based on a decade of research and feasibility studies, is designed to reinvigorate Taunton's town centre with far reaching benefits to the region and its people. The project, anticipated for the Brewhouse site, could be repurposed to provide a spectacular centrepiece for Firepool.

Aware that delays to the planned redevelopment combined with the Brewhouse's lack of seats and ageing facilities meant TTA would require increased investment, the Council asked TTA (on 1 Apr 2019) to request additional funding to sustain its operation over a five-year period. TTA has carried out considerable work at the Council's request on financial modelling and business planning, for the cost implications of a delay to the redevelopment and business model of redeveloped venue. A funding decision was due to be taken by Full Council on 8 Oct, hence our Councillor briefing on 2 September, reports and many meetings.

My Theatre Matters collected over 3,000 signatures through Change.Org and hard-copy petitions in two weeks, alongside a letter writing campaign to Councillors to demonstrate public support for TTA, its plans, and request funding to enable us to continue to deliver our high-quality, diverse arts and cultural offer.

On 30 Sep, SWTC Officers told us that the relevant report would not be presented to Councillors as planned.

### ACTION REQUIRED

1. Secure future funding to enable TTA to continue to deliver its current programmes of activity
2. Invest in and work with TTA in order to deliver a much improved and sustainable arts venue the region deserves.

### And, as supplementary resulting from retraction of TTA Report:

3. Clarity about why planned TTA report did not go to Full Council and who decided this.
4. For Councillors to receive TTA report and make informed decision on future investment in TTA.
5. Decision about SWTC intentions with regards TTA future funding and Brewhouse redevelopment.

### PETITION CREATED BY: Taunton Theatre Association Ltd

Petition authorized and presented by Val Hammond (Valerie Berry) Chair of TTA Ltd.

Taunton Theatre Association Ltd, The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre, Coal Orchard, Taunton, TA1 1JL

Contact details: [marketing@thebrewhouse.net](mailto:marketing@thebrewhouse.net)



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 9

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 10

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