



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON TUESDAY 2nd JANUARY 2024

PRESENT:

Mayor: Cllr. F. Oppler; Cllrs: J. Barrett, J. Brooks, D. Dawes, S. Goodheart, R. Nash, Miss. C. Needs, N. Smith, Mrs. J. Warr, B. Waterhouse, P. Wells, P. Woodall (until Min. 157) and Mrs. G. Yeates (during Min. 132)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Assistant Clerk)
Mrs. R. Vervecken (Civic & Office Manager)
1 member of the public

The Meeting opened at 6.32pm

132. WELCOME BY MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed all those present. The Council's opening statement was read, and particular attention was drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of the fire alarm sounding and the Council's Standing Orders relating to public question time.

Cllr. Mrs. Yeates arrived at the Meeting

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND THEIR APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE AGREED CRITERIA

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Batley with the Clerk recommending that the reason given was acceptable. This absence was therefore **APPROVED** by Members.

No apologies were received by the Clerk from Cllrs. Ralph or Stanley. However, the Mayor advised those present that a member of Cllr. Stanley's family had been taken ill in hospital and this may be why he had not been in contact.

134. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda and are reminded that they should redeclare

their Interest before consideration of the item or as soon as the Interest becomes apparent and if not previously included on their Register of Interests to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

- a) the item they have the Interest in
- b) whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interest
- c) the nature of the Interest
- d) if it is an Ordinary Interest whether they intend to leave the meeting for the discussion and vote
- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable Interest, and therefore must leave the room for the discussion and vote, whether they will be exercising their right to speak on this matter under Public Question Time.

They then need to re-declare their Interest and the nature of the Interest at the commencement of the item or when the Interest becomes apparent. They should request that it be recorded in the Minutes that they will leave the meeting and will neither take part in discussion, nor vote on the item.

As per the Agenda, it is each Member's own responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable or Ordinary Interests notifiable under the Council's Code of Conduct, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

The Chair reminded Members to declare their Interests as any arise or again at the relative point in the meeting if they have already.

Cllr. Brooks declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor and advised he would redeclare his interest, if required, during the Meeting

Cllr. Goodheart declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor

Cllr. Nash declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor, as Deputy Leader of Arun District Council and as the Chair of the District Council's Economy Committee

Cllr. Miss. Needs declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor and as a member of the District Council's Economy Committee

Cllr. Oppler declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor

Cllr. Mrs. Warr declared an Ordinary Interest as an Arun District Councillor

Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest in the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board as a member of the Bognor Pier Trust C.I.C, and as a BID Levy payer in the Town

Cllr. Mrs. Yeates declared an Ordinary interest as an Arun District Councillor

135. TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AND WELCOME A REPRESENTATIVE FROM SUSSEX POLICE TO PROVIDE A REPORT ON LOCAL POLICING (IF AVAILABLE)

The Town Clerk confirmed that no representative was able to be present, having received apologies from Inspector Ross Wickings.

136. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30th OCTOBER 2023 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13th NOVEMBER 2023

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 30th October and the Extraordinary Meeting of 13th November 2023 were unanimously **APPROVED** by the Council as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

137. REPORTS FROM WSCC COUNTY AND ADC DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (IF AVAILABLE)

No reports had been received. However, the Town Clerk advised Members that Cllr. McDougall, an Arun District Councillor, had confirmed prior to the meeting that there were currently no updates to report due to the Christmas break, and gave apologies for being unable to attend as he had a prior engagement.

138. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from Councillors.

139. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

The member of the public seated in the public gallery had no questions, therefore, the meeting was not adjourned.

140. TO CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN DISPENSATION REQUESTS RECEIVED FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

There were no written dispensation requests received from Town Councillors.

141. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORTS, MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (OTHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA)

142. Policy and Resources Committee Meeting of 20th November 2023

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Waterhouse, reported. There were no recommendations to Council.

143. Planning and Licensing Committee Meetings of 31st October, 21st November, 5th December and 19th December 2023

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Mrs. Warr, reported. There were no recommendations to Council.

143.1 Min. 102.3 - 21st November 2023 - Planning application BR/238/23/OUT

Cllr. Wells expressed his surprise that the Committee decided to raise no objection to planning application BR/238/23/OUT, for the development of a new build four-storey block of 23 flats at 17 Durban Road, particularly given this area had recently fallen victim to severe flooding.

Cllr. Mrs. Yeates, a member of the Town Council's Planning and Licensing Committee, confirmed that she had not attended the meeting at which this application was discussed, but wished to clarify that although the address was registered as 'formerly Westside Supplies Unit', she no longer owns the unit and is currently trying to get the name changed, to reflect that she is not involved in this site or application.

144. Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee Meeting of 6th November 2023

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Brooks reported. There were no recommendations to Council.

There was some discussion about issues with the Christmas illuminations in and around the Town Centre this year, with the hope that a review would be completed ahead of next year. Mention was also made about the Town Council's Switch-On event with a Member wishing to see the stage area relocated for next year and for all areas of the Town Centre to benefit from the entertainment on offer at the event.

145. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 11th DECEMBER 2023 INCLUDING TO CONSIDER THE BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2024/25

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

It was suggested that Agenda items 11 and 12 be considered together. The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Waterhouse reported on the extensive discussions held on the Town Council's Budget and Precept for 2024/25, over the course of a few meetings. The Mayor concurred that these meetings had been inclusive and invited any Councillors present, who were not Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, to ask any questions, of which there were none.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** formal adoption of the Income and Expenditure Budget for 2024/25, and further unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that the various budget savings identified (a net

saving of £81,000 from the original computation) be placed in the Economic Development Fund, for such use as may be determined.

146. TO DECIDE THE AMOUNT FOR THE PRECEPT TO BE ISSUED FOR 2024/25

The Town Clerk's report, including the Budget Summary attached as an appendix, was **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Precept amount for 2024/25 of £999,504.

Cllr. Wells, as Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, took the opportunity to convey his pleasure at working with his fellow Town Councillors, to produce a 'balanced' budget, which whilst keeping costs down, still delivered important aspects for its residents, including funding the vital work of the Town Force team and a comprehensive events programme for 2024, amongst others. He believed that the Town Council, in recent years, had not publicised enough the good work it does for its constituents, and hoped that this budget would be well received by residents of the five Wards.

The Mayor concurred with the thoughts expressed by Cllr. Wells, further adding that he had been 'bowled over' by the willingness of his fellow Town Councillors to work together cohesively, for the betterment of the Town.

147. TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO BOOM COMMUNITY BANK AND TO AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Waterhouse, as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, reported on the recommendation and proposed a grant of £30,000. This was seconded by Cllr. Nash who reserved his right to speak.

A Member expressed some feelings of discomfort with the proposal and would like to review the initiative after any first sum was invested, before topping up the funding.

Mention was made of Worthing Borough Council's existing involvement with Boom Community Bank, and it was queried as to whether contact had been established with them, in order to receive their input and feedback in relation to the scheme. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had reached out to the Borough Council, as part of the due diligence checks (Min. 98.6 refers), and was advised that, due to the Christmas break, she could expect a reply early in the New Year which, at the time of the meeting, was still awaited.

As Seconder, Cllr. Nash spoke of the importance of the due diligence checks and ensuring that the Town Council's money was safe, as this was public money. He recalled from the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting that the Chair had

talked about in the first year putting in 12% to top up the scheme and reviewing it after that, which he saw as a sensible way forward. He spoke of 'landmarks' in the history of the Town Council, citing the setting up of Town Force as a good example. In his opinion, the setting up of a No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), through paying a grant of £30,000 to Boom Community Bank, funded from the Council's Economic Development Fund, could be the next 'big' landmark of this Administration. With many families in the five Wards of Bognor Regis experiencing financial difficulties, and in an attempt to break the connect with loan sharks, he felt that this could be a major step forward in helping residents, through no interest loans. Cllr. Nash confirmed that through conversations he'd had with Worthing Borough Council, the scheme seems to be working well and is having a positive impact on their residents.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **AGREE IN PRINCIPLE** that a grant of £30,000 be made to Boom Community Bank, funded from the Council's Economic Development Fund, to set up a No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), subject to the outcome of the due diligence checks, with any shortfall in the Fund being topped up on an annual basis through budgetary provision.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Town Council's Accountant, be given Delegated Authority in this matter.

Cllrs. Smith and Wells were proposed and seconded as the two named Councillors, to act on behalf of the Town Council as signatories for the Credit Union Account and to sign the required Resolution. Following a vote, it was **AGREED** to appoint both Cllrs. Smith and Wells as signatories, with them both being agreeable to providing the identification documents required to act in this capacity.

Members further **AGREED** that the key contact for communications would be the Clerk to the Council, Glenna Frost, with the Assistant Clerk, Joanne Davis, as a second.

148. TO FORMALLY RECEIVE THE MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEES, AND REFER ANY SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS DECIDED UPON DURING THE MEETING BACK TO THE RELEVANT COMMITTEE, AND RATIFY ANY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AS MAY BE NECESSARY

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to 'formally receive the reports, Minutes and recommendations of the Committee, and refer any suggested amendments decided upon at this meeting back to the relevant Committee'.

149. TO NOTE THE LIST OF PAYMENTS AND TRANSFERS MADE IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2023 AND TO NOTE THE BALANCES, BANK RECONCILIATIONS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS (DECEMBER NOT YET AVAILABLE) AND OUTTURN AND APPROVAL OF THE CONTENTS AND THEIR PUBLICATION

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** 'to note the payments and transfers

made in October and November 2023 and to note the balances, bank reconciliations and financial reports (December not yet available) and outturn and approval of the contents and their publication’.

150. TO NOTE UPDATES TO THE COUNCIL’S TERMS OF REFERENCE FOLLOWING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - MIN. 131 REFERS

The Assistant Clerk’s report, including the appendices, were **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** all of the Council’s updated Terms of Reference, unchanged from the versions attached to the report.

151. TO AGREE NEW NAME FOR THE PREVIOUS ‘EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE’ COMMITTEE - MIN. 131 REFERS

The Town Clerk’s report was **NOTED**.

A Member suggested ‘Environmental and Leisure’ would be an appropriate name for the Committee. There being no other suggestions, Members voted and **AGREED** this should be the name for the previous ‘Events, Promotion and Leisure’ Committee.

152. TO CONSIDER ANY ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO ‘OUTSIDE’ BODIES

The Town Clerk’s report was **NOTED**.

152.1 Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board

The Town Clerk reminded Members that further to meetings held with members of the Board, the organisation would be independent from the Town Council going forward. However, they would still be agreeable to having the existing Representatives from the Town Council, and for the two remaining Reserve Representative vacancies to be filled.

With no Member present volunteering to fill the current vacancies, Members **AGREED** to **DEFER** the two appointments of Reserve Representatives to the Annual Town Council Meeting in May 2024.

Cllr. Waterhouse left the Meeting

152.2 Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Civic & Office Manager confirmed that contact had been made with the Chamber of Commerce’s President, who reiterated that whilst the group had been inactive of late, they are still an entity and it is hoped that they will have more of a presence in Town again, soon.

Cllr. Brooks, as the Town Council’s Representative to the group, advised Members that progress to get the Chamber from its current ‘dormant’ state had been slow. Cllr. Brooks had met with the President to visit their Chichester counterpart, who were doing good work in their area, and was something to aspire to. He hoped that there would be more of an update available at a future

meeting.

Cllr. Waterhouse returned to the Meeting

The Mayor suggested and it was **AGREED** to **DEFER** any Reserve appointments to the Chamber of Commerce & Industry to the Annual Town Council Meeting in May 2024.

153. REGENERATION INCLUDING TO NOTE THE PUBLICATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION BOARD AGM HELD ON 13th SEPTEMBER 2023 (IF AVAILABLE) (DEFERRED FROM LAST MEETING – MIN. 120 REFERS)

The Town Clerk's report, which advised that the Minutes of the Bognor Regis Regeneration Board AGM held on 13th September 2023 were not yet available and would be Noted at the next meeting, was **NOTED**.

154. MAYOR'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

The report on the Mayor's activities was **NOTED**.

The Mayor spoke of a few of his highlights over the busy festive period of events. These included the Town Council's Christmas Lights Switch-On, for which he conveyed his thanks to the Events team for their hard work, as well as the Town Crier, Jane Smith, who he stated had 'excelled herself', at the event, commenting also on her waistcoat for the occasion. Whilst acknowledging and agreeing with some of the comments made earlier in the meeting, about the event, he felt it had generally been very well-received by the thousands in attendance.

He also cited the Duke of Gloucester's visit to the Bognor Regis Museum, to which he was invited to form part of the Welcoming Party, as an enjoyable event and important occasion for the Museum and Town itself.

155. TOWN CRIER'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

The report on the Town Crier's activities was **NOTED**.

156. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Members **NOTED** that reports had been received from the following representatives to other organisations and had been emailed to all Councillors.

156.1 Cllr. Woodall - BRTC/ADC Liaison Meetings; Bognor Regis Carnival Association; Grandad's Front Room; Southdowns Music Festival.

As the only Councillor to have submitted a report to officers, Cllr. Woodall sought clarification from the Town Clerk as to whether he was correct in completing the form, particularly if no meetings of the organisations had been attended.

The Town Clerk confirmed that all Councillors should be completing the report, which should be returned prior to each Council Meeting, for forwarding to Town Councillors for information, particularly to include any meetings attended of those organisations who receive any level of funding from the Town Council.

157. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE ARUN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS CONFERENCE HELD ON 1st DECEMBER 2023

The Town Clerk's report and relating appendix was **NOTED**.

Councillors discussed the Minutes of the meeting, with some agreeing they were too broad, and not specific enough to the Bognor Regis area.

Other concerns included issues not being quickly resolved, with lots of subjects requiring investigation and therefore 'going in circles'.

A dual-hatted Councillor, who had attended the ADALC Conference, was unsure of many of the comments made and how clear the information being reported was. Not many questions were taken on each subject, and the Councillor felt that a more targeted review of a lot of the important issues may be more appropriate.

Other Councillors agreed that some of the comments made were not accurate and it was reported that the Planning Policy Framework had been described as 'disappointing'. Members concurred that with a General Election taking place this year, and the current state of 'unrest' in the national government, not much is anticipated to be achieved through the forum this year.

Cllr. Woodall gave his apologies and left the Meeting

However, there was a 'spark of hope' with more groups seemingly interested in using this collaborative tool, which a year ago looked like it may terminate. It was hoped that these ADALC meetings may prove more useful in the future, as a vehicle to benefit local communities.

158. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee **NOTED** receipt of correspondence as detailed in the list, with the Clerk drawing attention to a response from ADC, in relation to the Brewer's Fayre site, which had been previously circulated to all Councillors.

159. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE INCLUDING: DIRECTOR'S REPORT, ANY URGENT ACTIONS TAKEN FOR RATIFICATION

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

160. TO RESOLVE TO MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS (S.O. 3.d) - (CONTRACTUAL)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the

public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw (S.O. 3d)
- Agenda item 27 (contractual).

Cllr. Waterhouse left the Meeting

161. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE - CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Cllr. Waterhouse returned to the Meeting

Members **NOTED** the proposed monthly budget for 2024 for The Bognor Pier Company Ltd, as appended the Town Clerk's confidential report, and previously circulated to Members.

The Meeting closed at 7.36pm