



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 29th JANUARY 2024

PRESENT:

Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chair); Cllrs: J. Barrett, S. Goodheart (during Min. 110), Miss. C. Needs, F. Oppler, P. Ralph, N. Smith, P. Wells and P. Woodall

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Assistant Clerk)
2 Members seated in the public gallery
3 members of the public

The Meeting opened at 6.32pm

108. WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone present and read the Council's opening statement with particular attention drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of the fire alarm sounding and the Council's Standing Orders relating to public question time.

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

No apologies had been received from Cllr. Goodheart and could not therefore be approved.

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair addressed those Members present to ask if they wished to confirm any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

As noted on the Agenda, 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 temporarily leave the meeting for the discussion and vote

- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable Interest, and therefore must temporarily leave the meeting 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. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 16 as a member of the Bognor Pier Trust CIC

Cllr. Goodheart arrived at the Meeting

Cllr. Woodall declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 16 as the Town Council appointed Representative to the Bognor Regis Carnival Association

Cllr. Goodheart declared an Ordinary Interest in the event that Rox was discussed

111. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2023 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 8th JANUARY 2024

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th December 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th January 2024 and these were signed by the Chair.

112. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

The Chair adjourned the Meeting at 6.34pm

Two members of the public spoke in relation to Grant Aid 2024 applications that they had each submitted to the Town Council and referenced the level of funding that they had been awarded. Both speakers stated that without additional funding from the Town Council, it may not be possible for their events to go ahead.

Another member of the public spoke about the lack of lighting during the Christmas period in Queensway, Hotham Park, and along the seafront, including the bandstand. They also asked that the matter of inadequate lighting on Place St Maur be considered as a future Agenda item.

In response to the points raised concerning Grant Aid 2024 funding, Members commented that the Town Council was not the only stream of funding available to event organisers and suggested that these other avenues be explored. The possibility of helping other organisations, supported by Grant Aid, to obtain match-funding was also raised with comment made that whilst this was something that the Town Council would welcome requests for, this funding would always be subject to the Council's resource availability.

A Member seated in the public gallery briefly mentioned the Christmas Switch-On, to be discussed under Agenda item 7. However, the Town Clerk informed Members that, unfortunately, the Events Officer was unwell and would, therefore, be suggesting that the item be deferred until the Officer was able to attend a future meeting. Following a query from a Councillor, the Chair invited Members to email any feedback in reference to the Switch-On event to him, which he would then collate and pass on to the Events Officer to assist with the review. The same Member also mentioned a meeting that was due to be held to discuss the Christmas lights. The Clerk confirmed this to be the case and asked Members to email any questions for the contractor to her, prior to the meeting.

Referring to the request from the member of public for there to be more lighting on Place St Maur, the Vice-Chair suggested that Cllr. Goodheart, District Councillor for Hotham Ward, took this matter up with Arun District Council with a proposal that lighting could be attached to the hoarding that would likely be installed during the forthcoming redevelopment work to the theatre, adjacent to Place St Maur. Cllr. Goodheart was of the opinion that an approach from the Town Council would be stronger.

The Chair reconvened the Meeting at 6.51pm

113. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

113.1 20th November 2023 – Min. 76.2 New location for the Model Bathing Machine

Unfortunately, notification had been received by the Local History Society from the General Manager of The Royal Norfolk Hotel to inform them that after thorough consideration, as a company they had decided to decline the request to locate the Model Bathing Machine on a pole in the corner of the grounds of the hotel. The management had come to the conclusion that the proposed "object" was too large and may compromise the dignified manner their hotel had always maintained in Bognor Regis. Whilst respecting their decision, the news was very disappointing for the History Society who had already spent a significant amount of money on professional and planning application fees based on a previous verbal consent.

The project would therefore now be put into abeyance until an alternative location could be identified.

113.2 20th November 2023 – Min. 76.6 Community Banking Hub

Following Members previous agreement to write to Arun District Council, as Landlord of Bognor Regis Town Hall, to request that they consider the provision of a community banking hub in the building, the following response had been received from Karl Roberts, Interim Chief Executive and Director of Growth: -

"As you will be aware, the Council has decided to conduct a review of our future accommodation needs including the Town Hall. We now anticipate that this work will largely be undertaken during 2024. As a result, it would be prudent not to commit to any specific project involving the possible use of some of the Town Hall before the outcome of that review is known. I trust your members will appreciate the logic of such a decision at this time."

113.3 20th November 2023 – Min. 76.7 Two-Hour Free Parking Disc Scheme

Following Members decision to disagree with entering into a new two-year agreement, based on the proposals for changes to the scheme in Bognor Regis, it was reported at the last meeting that a request had been received from ADC to nominate two named BRTC representatives to sit on the ADC Working Party with the first meeting of this Working Party taking place on Monday 5th February 2024. As the Town Council were no longer funding partners in the Free Parking Scheme, confirmation was being sought by the Clerk regarding whether this was still applicable. Confirmation had been received from ADC that the decision made by the ADC Environment Committee on the 7th September 2023 still stood and the Town Council were invited to nominate two named representatives to sit on this Working Party. The decision regarding the named representatives had already been taken by the Council at the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting on 3rd October 2023 – Min. 98 refers where it was agreed that the Mayor and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee would be the Town Council Representatives. ADC has been advised accordingly.

113.4 20th November 2023 – Min. 77 Graffiti in the Town and letter to Sussex PCC

Members were reminded that it was agreed to write a letter to the Sussex PCC to highlight the Council's concerns in relation to the ongoing issue of graffiti in the Town. In response the Clerk had been advised that a copy of the Council's letter had been forwarded to the new District Commander (Arun and Chichester), Chief Inspector Will Keating-Jones so that he was aware, and he would arrange to meet with Town Council officers to discuss how we can work together on this issue. Whilst there is no additional funding available through the Sussex PCC at this time, it was suggested that an approach could be made to the Community Safety Partnership for extra funding. The new Immediate Justice project was also referenced which is being supervised by Superintendent Andy Saville which he would be happy to discuss with the Town Council. The Town Force Manager will make contact to see if this is something that can be progressed. A copy of the Clerk's

letter and the full response received from The Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner had been copied to Councillors under separate cover for their information.

113.5 11th December 2023 – Min. 98.5 Arun-wide Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)

Following Members decision not to support the request from ADC for the Town Council to financially contribute towards a BCRP initiative, the Clerk advised the ADC Community Safety Officer, Wellbeing and Communities of the decision taken and supplied an excerpt from the Minutes of the meeting for their reference and to reflect some of the discussion held. A response was received from the ADC Officer as follows: -

"I note the comment that "some members personally involved with the Disc system spoke of a perceived apathy amongst business users in Town who feel no action comes from reporting." This is a shame, as the proposed scheme is targeted at changing that by having a BCRP Manager who would drive action and feedback from relevant agencies to highlight the importance of reporting business crime and outcomes.

We will take a collective discussion at the next meeting to see whether this proposal can proceed as it was set out, or if an alternative arrangement may be taken forward."

113.6 8th January 2024 – Mins 106.1 and 106.2 Partnership Funding and Criteria

Following the decision taken at the last meeting to support Bognor Regis Seafront Lights and Southdowns Music Festival with a new three-year Partnership Funding Agreement on a decreasing scale, both organisations had been written to with details of the Committee's decision and provided with a new 'Funding Agreement' for signing. The Chairman of Southdowns Music Festival had already returned a signed copy of the agreement which had been countersigned and a copy returned for their records. A signed copy of the agreement from Bognor Regis Seafront Lights was awaited.

113.7 30th October 2023 – Town Council Min. 116 'Class B' Membership to the Bognor Regis BID

Following agreement at the September Town Council Meeting that the Council apply to become a 'Class B' member of the Bognor Regis BID, Members considered at their meeting in October the appointment of a Representative to be nominated as a 'Class B' member to the Bognor Regis BID, on behalf of the Town Council, and a Reserve Representative, to act as the named proxy, should the Representative be unavailable. Having submitted the application to the Bognor Regis BID along with a cheque for £120 as the voluntary membership fee including VAT, correspondence had been received from the Bognor Regis BID Ltd Board of Directors in response. The letter indicated that Directors interpreted the Town Council's application as more appropriate to "D" class Membership.

However, their membership document reflects that “To maintain political neutrality, no application for “D” class membership will be approved for individuals holding an elected public office.” As a stakeholder partner, rather than a commercial entity, and in light of the existing formal representation on the BID Board, Directors agreed that BRTC’s application for voluntary levy payer status was unnecessary and outside the BID’s remit to represent business interests.

As such, Directors unanimously declined to accept the membership application and the voluntary membership fee returned. The full response received from Bognor Regis BID Ltd Board of Directors had been copied to Councillors under separate cover for their information.

113.8 2nd January 2024 – Town Council Min. 146 BRTC 2024/25 Precept and Annual Budget Turnover requirement to qualify to be a Member of NALC Super Councils’ Network

Members were reminded that the Town Council’s Precept requirement for 2024/25 was set at £999,504 at the last Council Meeting held on 2nd January 2024 compared to £1,009,819 in the previous year. Having received correspondence from the Policy Manager at NALC seeking confirmation of the Council’s Precept level for this year, it had been confirmed that owing to the reduction in the Precept, BRTC no longer qualified to be on the NALC Super Councils’ Network for the 2024-25 financial year. The Super Councils’ Network is for the largest local councils which have an annual Precept of over £1m or an annual turnover of over £1.5m.

114. TO REVIEW THE CHRISTMAS SWITCH-ON EVENT 2023

In the absence of the Events Officer, it was **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item until the next meeting with Members asked to email any feedback to the Chair prior to this, which would be passed on to the Events Officer.

115. UPDATE ON PROPOSALS FOR EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR 2024 INCLUDING RATIFICATION OF DECISIONS WHERE REQUIRED

The Events Officer’s report was **NOTED**.

Having spoken favorably about previous Carols in the Park events, Members unanimously **AGREED** to **SUPPORT** in **PRINCIPLE** the Events Officer entering into discussions regarding working collaboratively with Arun Arts Ltd, and other organisations, to reinstate the event for 2024. A report will then be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting for a final decision when further details are available.

116. CONSIDERATION OF ALLOCATION OF TOWN FORCE TIME FOR EXTERNAL TOWN EVENTS 2024 – REPORT BY EVENTS OFFICER

The Events Officer’s report was **NOTED**.

The fact that the Town Council supported local events with Town Force time was welcomed, with comment made that it was important for the public to know that the Council also supports events in kind, on top of monetary funding.

Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommended Town Force hours for 2024 external town events.

117. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF 'D-DAY 80' OFFICIAL LAPEL BADGES, FOR ALL TOWN COUNCILLORS AND TOWN COUNCIL STAFF, TO BE FUNDED FROM THE CIVIC FUND

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

Whilst the lapel badges to commemorate this significant anniversary were considered a good idea, with a limited budget in the Civic Fund, Members **DISAGREED** that the Town Council should purchase one for all Councillors and staff. Instead, the link to buy the lapel badges would be circulated to all Members with anyone wishing to have one of the badges purchasing it themselves.

118. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT

The Town Force Manager's report was **NOTED**.

A Member expressed astonishment at the high number of hours that the Council's Town Force team spent removing graffiti in the Town during the month of August 2023.

119. INTERNAL AUDIT INCLUDING: - TO CONSIDER INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023/24 (INTERIM); TO REVIEW THE 2024/25 ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN AND TO CONSIDER ANY ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR INCLUSION

The Town Clerk's report, and the Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (Interim), was **NOTED**.

Members reviewed the key control tests detailed in the report, with no additional items for inclusion identified and unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of the Audit Plan for 2024/25 to the Town Council.

120. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL ASSESSMENT/REVIEW OF RISKS

The Assistant Clerk's report including the appendices was **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2023/2024 be referred to the Town Council for approval.

Once approved by Council, the Action Plan is to be signed by the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, and the Town Clerk.

121. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT FROM THE HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES AND TOWN FORCE LOCK-UP UNDERTAKEN BY WORKNEST ON 7th DECEMBER 2023

The Assistant Clerk's report, and the attached 2023 Health & Safety Inspection Safety Action Plan for the Town Hall and Town Force Lock-Up, was **NOTED**.

122. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE ANY ACTION IN RESPONSE TO REPAIRS REQUIRED TO A WALL AT THE SOUTHERN END OF GLOUCESTER ROAD

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

The long-term damage to the wall in Gloucester Road was discussed, including the persistent ambiguity as to who had responsibility for its repair and maintenance.

With the estimated cost for rebuilding the wall in the region of £2K-£2.5K plus VAT, including labour and materials, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to give the Town Clerk Delegated Authority to actively investigate the possibility of working in partnership with ADC and Butlin's. It was hoped that an agreement could be reached to share the cost of progressing this to a satisfactory conclusion and get this long outstanding matter resolved and the wall rebuilt.

123. TO CONSIDER THE CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS TO BE MET IN RELATION TO ADC MATCHFUNDING FOR EVENTS SUPPORTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL'S GRANT AID PROCESS AND IDENTIFY QUALIFYING RECIPIENTS

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

Cllrs. Wells and Woodall redeclared their Ordinary Interests

The Chair summarised the criteria previously used, as set out in the report, that would qualify event organisers as being eligible to potentially receive match-funding. The funds available, totaling £9,800, were to be used to enhance significant events put on by other event organisers that the Town Council already supported through its Grant Aid process, and which helped to promote tourism by bringing people into the Town.

Members agreed that the considerations upon which last year's further grant funding was released, were applicable to the match-funding on offer this year. The eligible event organisers for 2024, to whom Grant Aid had already been awarded, would need to meet the following: -

- The event is to have an impact on the town that the Council has confidence will happen and already be established and supported by the Town Council through its Grant Aid process to be eligible.
- The money is to be used to bring a new element to the existing event that will help promote tourism and increase footfall in the town for which they have already been awarded Grant Aid.
- The funding would not be for the purposes of supporting running costs such as security, first aid, insurance etc.
- The use of any additional funding awarded be solely used towards any new element of their existing event that is focused within the town only.
- Evidence of evaluation or feedback that has been received from previous years events that have been held by their organisation and details of the number of people attending is to be provided with the application. This will assist the Town Council in their evaluation of the benefits to tourism and increased footfall in the town by enhancing their event with additional match-funding.

Members **AGREED** that Bognor Pier Trust CIC, Bognor Regis Armed Forces Day, Bognor Regis Carnival Association and Southdowns Music Festival, as established events in the town that are supported through the Town Council's Grant Aid process for 2024, be written to and invited to apply for this additional funding, up to the value of the Grant Aid award previously received. They would be asked to explain what they would do differently, or what extra element they would bring to their event, if successful in securing additional funding. They would also be encouraged to put forward one or more differently costed options to enhance their event so that when considering the applications, the Town Council can seek a maximum return for the investment.

124. TO CONSIDER THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING LOCATION, FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS SCHEDULED FOR 11th MARCH 2024

The Assistant Clerk's report including the appendix was **NOTED**.

In view of the low level of attendees at Electors Meetings in recent years, it was not deemed necessary to source a large venue at cost when the Town Hall would likely accommodate the numbers expected.

Following concerns raised by members of the public around policing in the Town, shared with Councillors during an Online Community Open Forum in July 2023, it had been suggested that the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner be invited to speak at the next Annual Town Meeting of Electors. However, it was proposed to invite the new District Commander (Arun and Chichester) from Sussex Police, Chief Inspector Will Keating-Jones, as an alternative to the PCC.

Other suggested speakers included Karl Roberts, ADC's Interim Chief Executive and Director of Growth, to provide an update on the Alexandra Theatre, the Resort Director from Butlin's, and the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex.

Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that Chief Inspector Will Keating-Jones be invited in the first instance, to introduce himself as the new District Commander (Arun and Chichester) and to take questions at the Annual Town Meeting of Electors, with the other suggested invitees kept in mind. The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at Bognor Regis Town Hall on 11th March 2024, whereby doors will open at 6.30pm and the meeting to commence at 7pm.

125. TO CONSIDER DISSOLUTION OF BRTC 2 HOUR FREE PARKING LIAISON WORKING PARTY – MIN. 76.5 REFERS

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

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **DISSOLVE** the BRTC 2 Hour Free Parking Liaison Working Party owing to the fact that they are no longer a financial partner in the scheme.

Cllr. Oppler left the Meeting

126. REPORT ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING ANY REPORTS ON MEETINGS WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD

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

127. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MONTHLY COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT, FROM THE BOGNOR REGIS BID, FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2023

The Assistant Clerk's report, including the appendices providing an overview and summary of Community Warden interactions for the months of November and December 2023, was **NOTED**.

128. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -

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

128.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of December 2023 - previously copied to Councillors

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of December 2023.

128.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of November and December 2023, undertaken by the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee in line with the Council's Financial Regulations

The verification of bank reconciliations as detailed was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Oppler returned to the Meeting

129. CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee **NOTED** receipt of correspondence as detailed in the list previously circulated.

The Clerk read aloud an email received from the Bognor Regis Carnival Association in relation to the level of funding that they had been awarded by the Town Council following their application to Grant Aid 2024 to support their event. The email stated that having been awarded less money than they had applied for, it was possible that the Carnival would not go ahead this year unless the Town Council were able to offer further funding to them.

Cllr. Goodheart left the Meeting

As the request could not be immediately discussed, owing to it not being on the Agenda, the Clerk suggested that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee be called to allow the request to be considered quickly.

Following a vote, Members **DISAGREED** that an Extraordinary Meeting should be called to consider the request from the Bognor Regis Carnival Association for more funding from the Town Council. Cllr. Woodall **ABSTAINED** from voting and asked that this be recorded in the Minutes.

The Meeting closed at 7.44pm