



# BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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## MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF BOGNOR REGIS HELD ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

### PRESENT (BRTC)

Cllr P Dillon - Deputy Town Mayor (in the chair)  
Cllr J Brooks  
Cllr J Cosgrove  
Cllr T Gardiner  
Cllr S Goodheart  
Cllr D Maconachie  
Cllr P Woodall  
(Note: Cllrs Brooks, Dillon and Maconachie are also Arun District Councillors)

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs G Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs S Holmes (Head of Street Scene and Leisure Services)  
Mrs H Knight (Civic and Support Services Manager)  
Mrs R Hambleton (Minutes Secretary)  
Mr G Chambers (LCS Ltd, Town Council Consultant)  
One representative of the press  
Approximately 14 members of the public of which 7 were Electors

### COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting  
Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
Notes of the informal meeting of Members of the public and BRTC held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

### *The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm*

1. The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Dillon welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Chambers, the Town Council's Consultant, who had been working with the Town Council on its Corporate Strategy and other projects.

Mr Chambers gave a presentation detailing: the history of the Picturedrome Cinema; the background to the purchase of the Bognor Pier Company Ltd. and its asset, the Picturedrome Cinema, by the Town Council; the addition of 2

screens proposed at an Elector's meeting, including the process undertaken by the Town Council to achieve this and the decision made by the Town Council to proceed with the expansion at their meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at a cost of no more than £850,000; the 2 Stage Open Book process undertaken to find a contractor; and the rescission motion put by 4 Councillors. Mr Chambers highlighted the various public consultations undertaken by the Town Council which showed overwhelming support for the Picturedrome Cinema and the addition of a 4<sup>th</sup> screen, including the current consultation, which to date showed approximately 91% of respondents were in favour of the expansion. He explained that there had been delays to the estimate for the construction of the 4<sup>th</sup> screen, caused by the roofing works overrunning which had prevented access to the site. He confirmed that the £850,000 build cost would include the pre-construction costs of £61,000 which the Town Council was committed to on top of the fees. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes.

Questions asked and comments made included:

Whether the Town Council could comment on the recent Independent Report recently produced. The Town Clerk advised that no comment could be made on the report at this time, as it had not yet been seen by Councillors but it would form part of the report for the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Extraordinary Council meeting. However it was fair to say at this point that nothing major had been highlighted.

If the Town Council does not proceed with the expansion of the 4<sup>th</sup> screen what will be the total cost? The Town Clerk advised that including the internal review the costs had risen to around £116,000 so far.

The build figure rising once work begins, was questioned. Mr Chambers confirmed that it is a fixed price.

Councillors, without exception, were asked to put their entire weight behind whatever the final decision is as this had become such a divisive subject.

Request that if over £850,000, the Council moves on.

It was proposed that if the build figure is slightly over, that the Town Council consider the figure, as the public would be willing to support it. The Town Council should take on board what the public are saying and get on with it.

A member of the public expressed concern that discussions haven't yet taken place regarding financing by way of capital grant or additional shares and the articles of memorandum of the Bognor Pier Co. Ltd. was queried. Mr Chambers explained the relationship between the Town Council and the Bognor Pier Co. Ltd. including the management fee charged by the Town Council.

Evidence to substantiate that the Picturedrome encourages out of area visitors was requested.

The risk to the Town Council if the expansion proceeds was debated. It was felt that a 4<sup>th</sup> screen will protect the cinema against future risk and will appeal to other operators in the event one was required.

Praise for the clear and helpful presentation was given by members of the public.

The Deputy Town Mayor thanked Mr Chambers for the presentation and the meeting continued.

**2. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING.**

The Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 were considered and agreed as a true record, and signed by the Deputy Town Mayor as presiding Chairman.

It was agreed that the business of the meeting continue as per the proposals on the agenda.

**3. MOTION PROPOSED BY CLLR. J. COSGROVE AND SECONDED BY CLLR. J. BROOKS**

**Supports the addition of the 4th Screen to the Picturedrome on the basis decided by the Town Council on 4th March 2015, funded through extra rent and surplus available to the Bognor Regis Pier Company owned by the Council;**

**Rejects any alternative funding proposal which would involve the operator being expected to fund an extension to a building he does not own and/or which could result in major increases in ticket prices at the Cinema;**

**Rejects any plans not to proceed with the 4th Screen which would leave the Council with a major debt which could not be recovered except by raiding Council reserves and/or increasing the Council precept on local tax payers;**

**And to Resolve accordingly**

Cllr. Cosgrove spoke for the motion. He outlined the recent background and why the Council was in the position it was in following the recission motion.

Cllr. Brooks seconded the motion. A member of the public put forward an amendment to item 4 of the motion, that: 'Assuming the final build price is at, below or does not significantly exceed £850,000 rejects any plans not to proceed with the 4th Screen which would leave the Council with a major debt which could not be recovered except by raiding Council reserves and/or increasing the Council precept on local tax payers'. This was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the original motion.

Those present commented/discussed:

That it would be irregular for the tenant to fund any expansion.

The Town Council is paying for the shell, the operator will fit it out at a cost to him.

Current and future investment by the operator was highlighted.

If the expansion doesn't proceed, it will cost in excess of £116,000.

It was pointed out that there were risks in investing in the current economic climate.

Comment was made that it was a secure investment as rents will continue to rise. There will be rent reviews. In 20 years the Town Council will have a superb investment for the future of the town.

The evidence is there, that the cinema is a tourist attraction. People use the cinema and come from throughout the area, it is difficult to get tickets. A seaside town needs its own cinema.

If the 4<sup>th</sup> screen does not proceed it will cost the Council in excess of £116,000. If the figures are over budget, for example £860,000/£870,000, it would not be sensible to pull out as this committed money will be lost.

Comment was also made that the figure of £850,000 should be adhered to, that the Council should not proceed if this is exceeded.

The Town Council was commended on its partnership with the Cinema Operator. The building looks the best it has in 20 years and it's the single most popular decision taken by the Town Council.

The process of non-electors speaking at Electors meetings was questioned. The Town Mayor advised that non-electors could speak at these meetings but not vote.

A query was raised regarding the finances of the Bognor Pier Co. Ltd and reserves. The Town Clerk advised that she would contact the Accountant and respond to the request.

Following a right to reply by the proposer, a vote was taken on the 3 motions as amended.

This meeting of Electors of Bognor Regis:

### **Part 1**

Supports the addition of the 4th Screen to the Picturedrome on the basis decided by the Town Council on 4th March 2015, funded through extra rent and surplus available to the Bognor Regis Pier Company owned by the Council;

A vote was taken and the result was 6 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was **RESOLVED**.

A courtesy Non-Electors vote was taken, 6 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

### **Part 2**

Rejects any alternative funding proposal which would involve the operator being expected to fund an extension to a building he does not own and/or which could result in major increases in ticket prices at the Cinema;

A vote was taken and the result was 5 in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was **RESOLVED**.

A courtesy Non-Electors vote was taken, 7 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

**Part 3**

Assuming the final build price is at, below or does not significantly exceed £850,000, rejects any plans not to proceed with the 4th Screen which would leave the Council with a major debt which could not be recovered except by raiding Council reserves and/or increasing the Council precept on local tax payers;

A vote was taken and the result was 6 in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was **RESOLVED**.

A courtesy Non-Electors vote was taken, 6 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

***The Deputy Town Mayor thanked all present for attending.***

***The Meeting closed at 8.30***