



# **BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

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## **MINUTES OF THE ONLINE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

### **PRESENT ONLINE:**

Cllr. M. Stanley (Chairman); Cllrs: J. Barrett,  
A. Cunard, J. Erskine, S. Goodheart, H. Jones,  
Ms. A. Sharples, Mrs. J. Warr and P. Woodall

### **IN ATTENDANCE ONLINE:**

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. S. Norman (Deputy Clerk)  
Mrs. J. Davis (Civic & Office Manager and Meeting  
Host)  
1 Councillor attended online via Zoom  
No members of the public attended via Zoom  
11 members of the public viewing via Facebook

***The Meeting opened at 6.32pm***

### **157. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Online Meeting being held in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 and reminded Members that the Meeting was being recorded by Bognor Regis Town Council, live streamed via Facebook and may also be recorded or filmed by any member of the public.

The Chairman advised that in the event of any loss of internet coverage or power cuts, steps would be taken to recover the connection. However, if connection could not be re-established the meeting would stand adjourned at the point of loss of connection, to be reconvened and continued at a publicised time in the future.

Finally, Members were reminded of the protocol for the Online Meeting, details of which had been circulated to all previously.

As all Members were present, there were no apologies for absence.

### **158. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

Members and Officers should declare an Interest by stating: -

- a) the item they have an Interest in
- b) whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Ordinary Interest
- c) the nature of the Interest
- d) if it is an Ordinary Interest whether they intend to leave the room for the discussion and vote
- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary 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.

In accordance with good practice, individual forms were available to those Councillors present in order that they could personally record their Interests - both Disclosable Pecuniary and Ordinary. These forms should be returned to the Committee Clerk at the end of the meeting to enable all declarations of Interest to be accurately recorded in the Minutes. Members were reminded that it is their responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Ordinary Interests notifiable under the Council's Code of Conduct, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

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

***Cllr. Erskine declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 19 due to his familial connection to the Regis School of Music and stated that he would not take part in any discussion and would abstain from any vote***

**159. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020**

Members were asked if there were any objections to the Minutes of the last Online Committee Meeting, held on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

There being no objections, the Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Online Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 as an accurate record of the proceedings and the Chairman stated that he would sign them.

**160. ADJOURNMENT FOR THE CHAIRMAN TO READ PUBLIC QUESTION AND STATEMENTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS**

The Chairman informed Members that there had been no correspondence received from members of the public regarding items on the Agenda. However, it was noted that questions had been received from two Councillors; Cllr. Brooks who was not on the Committee and also Cllr.

Goodheart who was present at the meeting. The Chairman proceeded to read out all the questions from Cllr. Brooks and stated that he would reply via email and copy to all. The Chairman then read out and answered the first three questions only from Cllr. Goodheart, as the remaining questions related to specific Agenda items and could be raised at the appropriate time.

**161. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT**

**161.1 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - Min. 144.8 - Car Parking Disc Scheme**

Having received notification from ADC that they would not be willing to extend the parking period under the scheme from 2 to 3 hours for the remainder of the year, after the meeting, ADC reversed this decision and the parking period is now 3 hours until the end of December.

Members had also requested that a review of the Town Council's contribution to the Parking Disc Scheme be undertaken and this was raised at the recent BRTC/ADC Liaison Meeting. The CEO of ADC advised that this was currently part way through a 3-year agreement to provide stability to all those involved and therefore a review would not be appropriate at the current time. However, it is possible that a review could be undertaken in the future in preparation for a further 3-year agreement but that it had to be accepted that any review could result in the Town Council's contribution increasing or decreasing.

**161.2 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - Min. 149.5 - BRSFL Funding Agreement**

The agreement, on the same terms as previously, has now been signed by both parties with the first payment under this agreement coming due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

**161.3 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 - Min. 125 - Fidelity Guarantee**

As Members know it is usual at this time of year for the Committee to review the level of Fidelity Guarantee with the last agreed level of cover being agreed as £150,000. However, Members should note that there has been a change in insurer and as a result the Town Council is provided with cover of £250,000 as standard, in excess of the level previously agreed by this Committee and therefore there will now be no requirement to consider the level of cover on an annual basis.

**161.4 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 - Min. 12 - Treasury Management Policy**

This policy has once again been considered by the Town Council's Accountant who has confirmed that no changes are necessary at the current time.

**161.5 Council Online Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 - Min. 224 - DWP Grant to Making Theatre Gaining Skills**

Hilary Strong of MTGS has advised that the DWP have now approved their grant application and they are now moving to the next stage which is a contract meeting to sort out a payment plan. Furthermore, they have

secured a lease at 58 Longford Road and will be setting up The Bognor Makerspace in partnership with Aldingbourne Trust.

**162. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT**

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

Following discussion Members unanimously **AGREED** that Town Force should undertake regular clearance of weeds from the paved splitter islands around the Squareabout and Orchard Way roundabouts where possible, and furthermore, that the Town Council's Accountant should identify the budget against which the Town Force time should be allocated.

**163. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE ONLINE HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Deputy Clerk's report, which included the notes from the Heritage Partnership Board Meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020, was **NOTED**.

***Cllr. Cunard declared an Ordinary Interest in the discussions at the HPB Meeting pertaining to the Picturedrome but noted that these only related to the history of the building and not his business as tenant***

**164. REPORT FROM THE PROJECTS OFFICER ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING ANY REPORTS ON MEETINGS WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD AND FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE PREVIOUS DECISIONS TAKEN REGARDING THE QUEENSWAY PLANTER REPLACEMENT - MIN. 144 REFERS**

The Projects Officer's report, and the updated report by the Deputy Clerk, were **NOTED**.

**164.1** With regard to the issue of the old Queensway Planters, concern was expressed about the upper London Road area which had been suggested as a location for some planters. Furthermore, a Member stated that there had been some comment from businesses in West Street opposed to the installation of new planters. However, the Chairman stated that this location had come from residents raising concerns about parked cars on the pavement, and furthermore the installation at this location had been agreed at the previous Meeting. Following the debate, and with an amendment to the original proposal, it was unanimously **AGREED** to allocate the 11 planters as follows:-

- \* West Street - 3 concrete planters
- \* Health Centre - 4 grey plastic planters
- \* Bedford Street - 4 grey plastic planters transferred to the ownership of the BID for future maintenance and planting

**164.2** With regard to the proposals from the BID, Members **AGREED** unanimously to further discussions with the BID regarding the potential art project, with a report back to this Committee in due course.

**164.3** Members discussed the charging to the BID for the removal of the planters to the temporary location in Bedford Street and acknowledged the challenges faced by traders and the support the BID provides. Members subsequently **AGREED** unanimously to give a 100% reduction to the charge for the resiting of the planters in Bedford Street, equating to £616 plus VAT.

**165. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ROUNDABOUT MAINTENANCE AND AGREE HOW TO PROCEED - MIN. 147 REFERS**

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

Members expressed their disappointment with the response from WSCC Highways to the Town Council's request for acknowledgment of the investment that the Town Council was making by the continued high level of maintenance of the roundabouts, which encouraged civic pride in the Town. Furthermore, Members were dismayed with the excessive charge of £200 per sign as it was noted that the Town Council could purchase a sign for £50 with Town Force carrying out the installation.

***Cllr. Jones informed Members that he had temporarily lost connection and as he had not heard all the debate, would abstain from any vote***

Following the debate it was **AGREED** that no decision would be taken on purchasing signs at the current time but instead a letter should be sent to the Leader of WSCC to express the disappointment and dismay at the decision taken by WSCC Highways regarding this signage, at a time when the Town Council is trying to forge partnership working. The matter would then be revisited by the Committee when a response was received.

**166. COUNCILLOR TRAINING INCLUDING REVIEW OF TRAINING UNDERTAKEN SO FAR THIS YEAR TOGETHER WITH RATIFICATION OF REQUIRED EXPENDITURE; POSTPONEMENT OF NALC SPRING CONFERENCE (MIN. 129 REFERS); AND TO CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS FROM CLLRS. BROOKS AND GOODHEART REGARDING FUTURE TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED**

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

Discussion took place regarding the non-attendance at booked and paid for courses and the waste of public funds. A Member suggested that the Town Council considers organising some in-house training which could give the potential for income if offered to other parishes. It was acknowledged by Members how important training is for Councillors. A Member also proposed

that the Committee consider a policy regarding Councillor training including any action should a booked and paid for course not be attended.

**166.1** Members **RATIFIED** the expenditure for the courses identified.

**166.2** Members **NOTED** the postponement of the NALC Spring Conference.

**166.3** With regard to the suggested training, it was **AGREED** that training on promotion issues, public speaking and Facebook Live would be investigated further, with a report back to this Committee for further consideration in due course.

**167. TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ONLINE MEETING OF THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

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

**167.1** Members unanimously **APPROVED** the recommended virement of a sum of £6,500 plus a contingency amount of £2,000, giving a total of £8,500 from the unused 2020/21 Events Budget towards the costs of the Christmas projection display.

**167.2** Members **AGREED** to defer the approval of the Seafront Promenade Shelter Poster Site Policy until the amended document, as agreed at the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, had been circulated.

**167.3** Members **APPROVED** the recommendation that £4,201.34 be funded from the Promotions Earmarked Reserves to meet the total estimated costs of this exercise in 2020/21 and furthermore, **APPROVED** the recommendation that an allowance of £2,000 per annum be made in future budgets for the costs of the annual stress testing that will be required.

**167.4** Members **APPROVED** the recommended Event Charging Policy.

**168. TO CONSIDER THE OUTCOME OF THE COVID SEMINAR AND AGREE NEXT STEPS**

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

Following discussion regarding the various suggestions put forward, it was unanimously **AGREED** that a Task and Finish Group be created, on which any Member of the Council can serve, to consider the impact of the COVID pandemic on Council services. Officer input will be required on the effect on services such as allotments and Town Force. It was further **AGREED** that Terms of Reference will be prepared and agreed under delegated authority by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee together with Cllr. Cunard and in liaison with the Town Clerk.

With regard to the impact on Town Council events and whether a "Plan B" was required for 2021, Members **AGREED** that this should be referred back to the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee for any further consideration as the Committee deems appropriate.

Finally, the Deputy Clerk reminded Members that the impact on staffing would also need to be assessed and this would fall under the remit of the Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing).

**169. ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - TO RATIFY EXPENDITURE OF £1,117 PLUS VAT FOR DELL LATITUDE 15 LAPTOPS**

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**, and Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RATIFY** expenditure of £1,117 plus VAT for 2 laptops.

**170. TO CONSIDER AND IF ACCEPTABLE RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL A CHANGE TO THE STANDING ORDERS TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO READ THEIR QUESTIONS DIRECT TO MEMBERS IF IN ATTENDANCE AT THE ZOOM MEETING**

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

Members debated the possibility of resuming "live, in person" questions from members of the public attending the Zoom meetings. However, some Members expressed concern and urged caution when having no control about what an individual might say at a broadcasted meeting. It was therefore suggested that measures to maintain control be investigated and ideas included pre-recorded questions or a time delay on questions or alternatively the whole meeting.

With regard to the latter suggestion of a delay to enable the Officer hosting the meeting time to cut off any undesirable comments, a Member stated that this would add a great deal of pressure to the Host who is already managing the meeting.

The Chairman also proposed clarification in the Standing Orders to show that public question time was for members of the public or Councillors not serving on the Committee only i.e. a Member of a Committee is unable to ask questions under the Public Speaking item.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the item being considered related only to the questions to the Chairman, who may elect to reply immediately at the meeting or in writing afterwards, and furthermore that there was no debate with the Committee Members on any matters raised under this public speaking Agenda item.

Following a vote it was unanimously **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that the Standing Orders include clarification that members serving on a Committee are not able to ask questions under the public question/statements Agenda item.

With regard to any amendment to the Standing Orders to permit the public to ask questions in person when attending a Zoom meeting, following the debate it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council the investigation of pre-recorded questions to facilitate this. Furthermore, the possibility and practicalities of a delay on the broadcast of the meeting would be investigated and a report back made. It was also noted that this matter may fall within the remit of the Task and Finish Group which will be assessing the impact on Council services.

**171. TO REVIEW THE DISTRIBUTION AND CONTENT OF THE 2020 TOWN NEWSLETTER, FOLLOWING DELAY IN PUBLICATION DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, NOTING PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY THIS COMMITTEE AT THE MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019 (MIN. 99 REFERS)**

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

Following discussion, Members unanimously **AGREED** that a Christmas card should be circulated to every household in the Bognor Regis wards. Suggestions included that it be from all Members of the Council and signed on their behalf by the Mayor. As a result of this decision the next issue of the full Newsletter would be in Spring 2021.

The Mayor offered to use his allowance to pay for an illustrator to design the card. There was also suggestion of the inclusion of a competition.

**172. TO NOTE EARMARKED RESERVES AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2020**

The Town Clerk's report, including the summary of the Earmarked Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, was **NOTED**.

**173. TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FOR A GRANT TO THE WEST END TRADERS FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTING AND AGREE ANY VIREMENT OF FUNDS**

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**, and a verbal update was provided following receipt of a further email from Cllr. Brooks.

Members noted the Town Clerk's comment that entering into a contract on the basis of only one quotation being sought would go against the Town Council's Financial Regulations. However, as is the case with Grant Aid, a grant could be awarded to the WEST Traders with a condition that evidence of expenditure be provided. Furthermore, any funds not spent on the Christmas trees would need to be returned to the Town Council.

There was great support from Members to help this area of the Town and it was suggested that the matter be looked at earlier for Christmas 2021.



**173.1** Following debate and consideration of the different ways the Town Council could support the West End and the 2020 Christmas trees display, it was unanimously **AGREED** to award a Grant of £5,000 to the West End Traders with the conditions that evidence of the tree purchase is provided and should there be any unutilised funds, that these are returned to the Town Council.

**173.2** With regard to the budget for this expenditure, Members unanimously **AGREED** to utilise the unused sum of £4,328 in the budgets for the 2020 Events Programme with the balance coming from General Reserves unless the Accountant is able to identify any other unutilised budget.

**174.** Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an extension to the Meeting of 15 minutes, as per S.O. 3aa.

**175. TO RATIFY RELEASE OF THE 2020-2021 2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER GRANT TO SCYP**

The Deputy Clerk's report was **NOTED**, and Members **RATIFIED** the release of the second quarter payment of £2,500 for the 2020-2021 Partnership Funding for SCYP (CREATE), as part of the Town Council's budget provision for the current financial year.

***Cllr. Erskine redeclared his Ordinary Interest and stated that he would take no part in the following debate***

**176. TO RECEIVE REQUEST FROM REGIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC (RSM) TO KEEP THE PROPORTION OF THE 2020 GRANT AID ALLOCATED TO THE RSM SUMMER FESTIVAL FOR THE 2021 EVENT**

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

Following discussion, and with Cllr. Erskine abstaining from the vote, Members **AGREED** to support the request from the Regis School of Music to retain the proportion of the Grant allocated to their Summer Festival (£600), for use in 2021.

**177. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING:-**

**177.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of August 2020 - previously copied to Councillors**

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

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of August 2020.

**177.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of June, July, August and September 2020, undertaken by the**

## **Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee in line with the Council's Financial Regulations**

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

### **178. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Committee **NOTED** receipt of correspondence as detailed in the lists.

The Town Clerk highlighted item 1 relating to a press release from the Bognor Regis Regeneration Board and item 200 from NALC about an event around Rebuilding Communities. With regard to the latter item, the Clerk asked Members to advise the Office as soon as possible should they wish to attend.

### **179. TO RESOLVE TO MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS (S.O. 3d) - (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 with broadcasting live to Zoom and social media streaming also terminated (S.O. 3d) - Agenda items 23 and 24 (contractual).

### **180. TOWN FORCE: NOTE OF OUTSTANDING DEBTORS**

The Committee **NOTED** the list (confidential).

### **181. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE (STAFFING) MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The Town Clerk's report, including the recommendations from the Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing), was **NOTED**.

Members subsequently **AGREED** to the recommendations made.

***The Meeting closed at 8.48pm***