



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ONLINE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2021

PRESENT ONLINE:

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

IN ATTENDANCE ONLINE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. S. Norman (Deputy Clerk/Meeting Host)
Mrs. J. Davis (Civic & Office Manager) (part of meeting)
1 member of the public attended via Zoom (at start of meeting)
9 members of the public viewing via Facebook (at start of meeting)

The Meeting opened at 6.31pm

193. 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.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Ms. Sharples due to another commitment.

194. 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.

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.

There were no declarations of Interests

195. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING HELD ON 30th NOVEMBER 2020

Members were asked if there were any objections to the Minutes of the last Online Committee Meeting, held on the 30th November 2020. It was noted that the Minutes had been forwarded to the Chairman and once agreed and duly signed, would be returned to the Town Clerk.

There being no objections, the Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Online Meeting held on 30th November 2020 as an accurate record of the proceedings and the Chairman duly signed them.

196. 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.

197. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

197.1 30th November 2020 - Min. 190 - Donation to Foodbank

An email was received on 8th January from the Bognor Regis Foodbank Coordinator, thanking the Town Council for the donation. A report has subsequently been received from the Foodbank advising that they

processed 208 vouchers and gave out over 4.5 tons of food over the Christmas period - feeding 580 people.

197.2 26th October 2020 - Min. 173 - Grant to West End Shops and Traders

After some initial teething problems with the incorrect payee details being provided to the office, the grant of £5,000 was made in time and the trees installed along the Aldwick Road shops. We will shortly be writing to the West End Shops and Traders to ask for their feedback on the installation and requesting the copy invoices etc. as agreed by this Committee together with reimbursement of any unused funds.

197.3 26th October 2020 - Min. 168 - COVID Seminar

A Meeting is being arranged for week commencing 25th January for those Councillors previously identified to review the content of the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group. It is planned that the Group will then meet on Monday 15th February at 6.30pm, via Zoom, to which all Councillors will be invited and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

197.4 26th October 2020 - Min. 164.2 - Planters Art Project

There has not been any further discussion with the BID regarding any potential art project due to the priority of their Christmas activities within the Town, but the matter will be raised at the next suitable meeting with the BID Administrator. However, Members should note that this project would only relate to the 4 plastic planters remaining in Bedford Street, ownership of which has already been transferred to the BID as agreed.

198. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT

The Town Force Manager's report, including the Appendix, was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Woodall temporarily left the Meeting due to technical difficulties and was not present for the vote

With regard to the discussion at the Meeting held on 26th October regarding the request to WSCC for signage to acknowledge the contribution of the Town Council to the high level of roundabout maintenance (Min. 165 refers), Members noted the responses from the Cllr. Elkins, WSCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure, as circulated with the report.

Following discussion, Members unanimously **AGREED** the proposal to proceed with the installation of signage on each of the 5 roundabouts maintained by the Town Council, at a cost of £82 plus VAT per sign, funded through the Town Force Equipment/Furniture Budget.

Members thanked Officers for their negotiations in reaching this acceptable conclusion.

199. UPDATE ON THE BOGNOR REGIS HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP BOARD (BRHPB)

Cllr. Woodall rejoined the Meeting during this item and apologised for his temporary absence

The Deputy Clerk's report, which included the booklet detailing novels and short stories that are connected to Bognor Regis, was **NOTED**.

Members acknowledged and thanked the Member of the Board who had compiled the novels booklet, which all agreed was an excellent publication.

200. REPORT FROM THE PROJECTS OFFICER ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING ANY REPORTS ON MEETINGS WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Projects Officer's report was **NOTED**.

Members thanked the BID for all their work to attract shoppers into the Town over this very difficult Christmas period. It was noted that, having also been discussed at the recent Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee Meeting, the Chairman of that Committee would be writing to the BID to convey these thanks.

201. TO NOTE THAT A JOINT ACTION GROUP (JAG) MEETING WAS HELD ON 27th NOVEMBER 2020

The Deputy Clerk's report, which referred to the JAG Meeting held on 27th November, was **NOTED**.

A Member asked how he could get more information about the JAG's activities and plans. It was noted that reports are not circulated due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of the contents. However, the Town Clerk stated that she would liaise with the Projects Officer, who attends these meetings on behalf of the Town Council, to ascertain what information could be released to Members.

202. INTERNAL AUDIT INCLUDING: TO CONSIDER INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2020-2021 (INTERIM); TO REVIEW THE 2021/22 ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN AND TO CONSIDER ANY ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR INCLUSION

202.1 To consider Internal Audit Report 2020-2021 (Interim)

The Town Clerk's report including the Internal Audit Report 2020-2021 (Interim), was **NOTED**.

Members welcomed the report that, once again, no significant issues had been identified by the Internal Auditor and thanked the Town Clerk and Officers for their work ensuring that the Town Council receives such a good report.

202.2 To review the 2021/22 Annual Audit Plan and to consider any additional items for inclusion

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 2021/22 to the Town Council.

203. TO CONSIDER THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT AS DEVELOPED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION AND AGREE ANY COMMENT TO ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the appended draft model Code of Conduct as prepared by the Local Government Association (LGA), was **NOTED**.

The report detailed that ADC will consider adoption of the Code in February and it was hoped that, in due course, Town and Parish Councils would agree to adopt any new ADC Code for their own purposes so that there was consistency and clarity across the District.

However, Members were not being asked to adopt the model document at the current time, but rather to make any comment prior to its consideration by the District Council.

It was noted that previously the Town Council had rejected adoption of the ADC Code of Conduct as it was not considered fit for purpose; instead, the Town Council had engaged consultants LCS, to advise on a bespoke Code which had been subsequently adopted by the Town Council.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **AGREED** that no comments on the LGA model should be relayed to ADC at the current time.

However, it was **AGREED** that any new Code adopted by ADC, together with the actual LGA model document, should be referred again to the consultants who advised the Council previously to make comment to this Committee on whether a new Code of Conduct for the Town Council should be considered.

204. TO CONSIDER THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING LOCATION, FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS SCHEDULED FOR 15th MARCH 2021

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the copy of the 2019 meeting Agenda, was **NOTED**.

204.1 Having considered the implication of the COVID pandemic and restrictions on the 2021 Electors' Meeting, Members unanimously **AGREED** to hold an online meeting on 15th March 2021, **NOTING** that as this would be a remote meeting there could be no voting or resolutions considered. The other standard Agenda items would still be included.

Cllr. Woodall briefly left the Meeting due to technical issues during the following debate but returned in time for the vote

204.2 Having decided to proceed with the online Electors' Meeting, Members discussed the content and unanimously **AGREED** to invite one of the following, listed in priority order: -

- * Rt Hon. Nick Gibb MP - Member of Parliament for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton
- * Representative from the CCG to talk about the pandemic response by the NHS and the vaccine rollout
- * Rt Hon. the Baroness Smith of Basildon

Other suggestions were made but it was agreed to ascertain if any of the three above were able to attend in the first instance.

With regard to the start time of the meeting, it was suggested that this should be determined on the basis of the availability and preference of the invited speaker. However, it was felt that a proposed start time of 7pm be considered initially and a final decision taken by the Town Clerk in liaison with the Town Mayor.

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

Cllr. Woodall again left the Meeting due to the technical issues and was not present for the vote on this item

The Deputy Clerk's report, including Appendices, was **NOTED**. Members considered the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2020/2021.

Members subsequently unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2020/2021 be referred to the Town Council for approval. Once approved by Council, the Action Plan is to be signed by the Town Mayor, as Chairman of the Council and the Town Clerk.

206. TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FROM CLLR. ERSKINE THAT ALL TRAINING COURSES BOOKED THROUGH THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE FUNDED BY THE COUNCIL WITH THE SOLE EXCEPTION OF ANY COURSE WHERE THE COUNCILLOR HAS FAILED TO ATTEND WITHOUT PROVIDING A REASON THAT IS DEEMED TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THIS COMMITTEE

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

Members discussed the matter and subsequently unanimously **AGREED** that all training courses booked through the Council should be funded by the Council with the sole exception of any course where the Councillor has

failed to attend without providing a reason that is deemed to be acceptable to this committee. In these circumstances, the cost of the course should be reimbursed to the Town Council by the Member.

207. TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDED POSTER, BANNER AND OUTDOOR DISPLAY OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FROM THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 20th OCTOBER 2020 (MIN. 107 REFERS)

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the Appended draft Policy, was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Woodall returned to the Meeting during the debate, apologising again for the technical difficulties, and was present for the vote

207.1 Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Poster, Banner and Outdoor Display Opportunities Policy as recommended by the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee at their Meeting held 20th October 2020.

207.2 Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the addition of the clause relating to lamppost banner sites as detailed below:

Other organisations may use the sites, but the Town Council Reserve the Right to recharge any associated costs.

208. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 7th DECEMBER 2020 (MIN. 124 REFERS) FOR ANY UNSPENT 2020/21 WARD ALLOCATION FUNDS TO BE EARMARKED AND CARRIED FORWARD FOR USE IN 2021/22

The Deputy Clerk's report was **NOTED** and following discussion, Members unanimously **AGREED** that any unspent 2020/21 Ward Allocation funds as of 31st March 2021 should be earmarked and carried forward for use in 2021/22.

209. TO CONSIDER THE MOTION FROM CLLR. J. ERSKINE, AS REFERRED FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 4th JANUARY 2021 (MIN. 339 REFERS) FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE HIDDEN DISABILITIES SUNFLOWER SCHEME

The Deputy Clerk's report was **NOTED**, including the following Motion from Cllr. Erskine:

"Arun District Council recently voted unanimously to officially recognise the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme. Cllr Edwards, who brought the motion to ADC has been aware of the Sunflower Lanyard since its inception. He worked at Gatwick Airport when it was developed and had

some input into the scheme as a manager within Passenger Security. Dealing with people who presented as difficult, nervous, and aggressive was a common occurrence. It was only when they dealt with the situation and discovered that the person had a hidden disability that the reason for their behaviour became apparent. So, in 2016, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower was designed and launched when London Gatwick Airport asked, "How can we identify that one of our passengers may have a non-obvious disability?". Led by Sara Marchant, a team created a simple sunflower design on a green background for a lanyard - a subtle but visible sign to enable airport staff to identify that the wearer (or someone with them) may require some extra help, time, or assistance when moving through the airport. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues, and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time.

Since its launch in 2016, it has now been adopted globally by major airports and venues and in the UK, by many supermarkets, railway and coach stations, leisure facilities, the NHS, a number of police, fire and ambulance services, and an increasing number of small and large businesses and organisations. Hidden disabilities can make people's lives particularly challenging, painful, or isolating. By wearing a sunflower lanyard, badge, or wristband someone is indicating they have a hidden disability and may find certain situations difficult or stressful, causing them to act differently. Covid19 has created a range of extra difficulties for people with hidden disabilities such as the wearing of face coverings in many public places. This can create complex issues for people with hidden disabilities and they may encounter stigma for not wearing a face covering despite being exempt under Government guidance. The success of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower and the positive response it has received has increased awareness of challenges adults and children with hidden disabilities can face. Hidden Disabilities Sunflower wearers now benefit more widely from help being offered to make their daily living a little easier.

This motion asks that Bognor Regis Town Council embrace this scheme at this time. Further, I am asking the members to support the following commitments:

- To officially recognise the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower*
- To officially promote what it stands for and its importance in breaking stigma*
- To help promote Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to local businesses and encourage them to formally look at recognising it*
- To promote that the Council offices are Hidden Disability friendly and promote the Sunflower on its buildings so people can identify the Council as Hidden Disability friendly*
- To actively promote and encourage other local Town and Parish Councils and West Sussex County Council to recognise the scheme*
- Provide training to all Council staff and members on the scheme and how we can support people using the scheme."*

Members discussed the need for further information as to how the adoption of the Scheme could be implemented particularly in relation to Town Council events and a Member questioned whether there would be any cost implications. It was also suggested that ADC be asked for details about their Action Plan, having recently adopted the Scheme.

Following the discussion, Members **AGREED** to adopt the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme and furthermore instructed Officers to investigate practical ways in which the scheme may be implemented with a report back to this Committee in due course.

210. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE 2021 NEWSLETTER

The report from the Civic & Officer Manager was **NOTED**.

Members were made aware that a final proof will, in due course, be circulated by email to all Councillors for comment, although there will be no further opportunity for content to be amended as this has already been agreed.

211. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON TRAINING - MIN. 166.3 REFERS

The Civic & Office Manager's report was **NOTED**. Members were also advised that details of all courses that the Office receive are circulated to all and Members invited to book onto the sessions.

211.1 The Town Clerk advised Members that the previous day a Councillor had provided details of a webinar being run by Public Policy Exchange titled "Tourism in the UK: Building for the Future and Supporting Further Growth" and details of this had been emailed to all Members of this Committee. The Councillor who forwarded the details had suggested that consideration was given to this forming part of any Promotions Training. Concern was expressed that, whilst the subject matter may be interesting, Tourism is within the remit of the District Council not the Town Council.

211.2 Public Speaking Training

Members unanimously **REJECTED** the proposal for expenditure of £345 plus VAT for a course titled "Public Speaking Skills for Councillors".

211.3 Facebook Live Training

Members **REJECTED** the proposal for expenditure of £345 plus VAT for a course titled "Get in front of the camera: How to build your confidence and engage with your community through video and Facebook Live".

211.4 Promotions Training

With regard to the webinar titled "Tourism in the UK: Building for the Future and Supporting Further Growth", Members unanimously **REJECTED** the proposal of Town Council expenditure for places to be booked on the webinar.

Finally, with regard to the request from Officers for guidance on the topics to be covered by promotions training, Members felt that there needed to be an objective or desired end result from any training. It was therefore **AGREED** that the Councillor who had originally suggested training under the heading of promotions, should be asked to give further details about the content and objective of the training, with a report back to this Committee in due course.

212. TO RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE AND GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLACE BRANDING CORE VALUES

The Projects Officer's report was **NOTED**.

The Chairman informed Members that the matter had been considered by the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee at their meeting the previous evening, but it had been necessary to defer the item in question due to lack of time and therefore no comments had been agreed by the Committee.

A Member commented that as this was a Council-wide policy, he could not support the recommendation to Council and would therefore abstain from the vote.

Following discussion, Members **REJECTED** the proposal to recommend the adoption of the Place Branding Core Values as identified in the report.

However, after the vote, it appeared that there had been some confusion amongst Members and they had not appreciated that by rejecting the proposal to recommend to Council, the matter could progress no further. The Member who had originally raised the objection to the recommendation, apologised if he had not explained himself properly, and stated that rather than objecting to the Place Branding Core Values, he was objecting to the decision to recommend to Council being taken by this Committee and would have preferred to have the matter referred to Council for debate and decision.

212.1 As the vote had already been completed, and in line with S.O. 7a, the Chairman suspended Standing Orders so that the Committee could determine whether the decision should be revisited.

212.2 Members **RESOLVED** that the previous decision should be reconsidered and therefore the Chairman reinstated Standing Orders.

212.3 Following further discussion, Members **AGREED** to retract the previous decision to reject the recommendation to Council.

212.4 An amended proposal was made, seconded and subsequently **AGREED** that consideration of the adoption and implementation of the Place Branding

Core Values should be referred to the next Council Meeting for consideration.

213. TO CONSIDER HOW TO RESPOND TO ANY REQUESTS FROM EVENT ORGANISATIONS TO EARMARK GRANT AID AWARDS UNTIL 2022

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

213.1 Grant Aid award for Bognor Regis Carnival

Members unanimously **AGREED** that the 2020 Grant Aid award should be earmarked for use towards the 2022 Carnival, subject to the previously stated conditions.

213.2 Request from other event organisers

Members unanimously **AGREED** that any similar requests to earmark funds for 2022 events should be approved on the understanding that this would be the final deferral of the grant and should an event not go ahead in 2022, the award should be withdrawn, and a new application submitted for Grant Aid 2023.

214. Members **RESOLVED** to an extension to the Meeting of 15 minutes in accordance with S.O. 3aa.

215. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS - MIN. 170 REFERS

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

215.1 Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that members of the public be offered the options of submitting a written question or alternatively a recording of their question, for insertion at the meeting at the appropriate time.

215.2 It was **AGREED** that the reintroduction of live public questions should be considered again and therefore the matter should be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of this Committee.

216. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -

216.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of December 2020 - previously copied to Councillors

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

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

216.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of October, November and December 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**.

217. CORRESPONDENCE

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

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

218.1 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 item 26 (contractual).

218.2 A Member raised concerns about conducting Confidential Business remotely and the potential for non-Council Members to be within earshot of the meeting in the homes of Councillors/staff. It was therefore **AGREED** that a Policy to protect against this situation should be considered at the next meeting.

219. TOWN FORCE: NOTE OF OUTSTANDING DEBTORS

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

The Meeting closed at 8.39pm