



# BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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

### **HELD ON MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

#### **PRESENT:**

Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chairman); Cllrs: A. Cunard (from Min. 55), J. Erskine, W. Smith, and Mrs. J. Warr

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. J. Davis (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms. H. Allen (Bognor Regis BID) (part of meeting)  
Cllr. P. Woodall in the public gallery  
3 members of the public  
1 member of the Press

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

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

The Chairman 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.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Barrett due to a Mayoral engagement, Cllr. Mrs. Daniells who was on annual leave and Cllr. Goodheart who was unwell. No apologies had been received from Cllr. Stanley.

#### **52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman 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 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 Interest***

**53. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2022**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and these were signed by the Chairman.

**54. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS**

***The Chairman adjourned the Meeting at 6.34pm***

A local business owner spoke of the recent rise in anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre and stated that businesses are struggling, particularly the independent ones. He believed that more police are needed, not Community Wardens, in the Town Centre. A lot of the problems are caused by homeless people, of which the business owner had counted 14. Apparently, Stonepillow have not been conducting outreach work in the Town Centre for 10 weeks.

A fellow local business owner echoed the comments and described the Town Centre as a ticking time bomb. There is concern that drug users have the potential to lash out, Station Square is a "hell hole", and too many alcohol licences are being issued within the Town Centre which exacerbates the anti-social behaviour issues. It is felt that there is a lack of acknowledgement from Sussex Police that there is a problem. Business Wardens tackle anti-social behaviour effectively and it was suggested that there be more of them.

***The Chairman reconvened the Meeting at 6.50pm***

## **55. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

### ***Cllr. Cunard arrived at the Meeting***

#### **55.1 1<sup>st</sup> August - Min. 35.1 - Terms of Reference for the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee**

Members had noted at the last meeting that the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee had agreed to defer the review of their Terms of Reference until the next meeting following questions that had been raised by a Member.

The Clerk had reported to Members that a review of all the Terms of Reference would be undertaken by the Clerk working with Pete Cooper over the next few months. This would be following further liaison with individual Members on their proposals for changes to be made thus enabling these to be updated with draft amended documents considered by each Committee later in the year for approval before recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee and Council.

Subsequently, to the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting, it had been suggested that a face-to-face meeting with Members and Pete Cooper would be the preferred way forward. The Town Clerk will be liaising with Pete Cooper to establish if this is possible and will report back with some possible dates for this to take place in due course.

#### **55.2 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 – Min. 42 Notice of Motion regarding lowering of the legal voting age to 16**

At the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021, the Motion regarding lowering of the legal voting age was carried, and it was agreed to write to the relevant Minister and the local Member of Parliament requesting that due consideration is given to lowering the legal voting age to 16, urging swift action on this matter with a view to 16-year olds being given the opportunity to vote at the 2023 local elections.

Upon receipt of the Town Council's letter, the Local MP, Nick Gibb wrote to Paul Scully MP, as the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for London and the following response was received in early August 2022, which was subsequently forwarded on to the Town Clerk.

*"Thank you for your correspondence of 9 September 2021, sent on behalf of Bognor Regis Town Council, regarding lowering the voting age in England. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding.*

*The Government has no plans to lower the voting age, having been elected on a manifesto commitment to retain the current franchise at 18. The age of 18 is recognised in the vast majority of democratic countries as the age at which an individual becomes an adult. Accordingly, the vast majority of liberal democracies worldwide consider 18 the right age to enfranchise young people.*

*While it is true that young people are able to do certain things at the ages of 16 and 17, including working and paying taxes, full citizenship rights are not accrued until an individual reaches their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. For example, citizens are not called upon to participate in jury service until the age of 18 or above. Those under the age of 18 also require parental consent in order to join the armed forces reserves. Young people in the reserves cannot be sent into action before the age of 18. Likewise, taxation has never been formally connected to democratic representation in our country in modern times.*

*The Scottish and Welsh Governments are responsible for the franchise for local elections in Scotland and Wales, as well as elections to the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.*

*Thank you for taking the time to share Bognor Regis Town Council's concerns."*

### **55.3 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Min 138.1 - Fishermen's Huts**

The last update from ADC regarding this matter that was reported to Members indicated that ADC were struggling to get the Bognor Fisherman's Association to engage with them.

The situation appeared to improve in July when a further update was received from ADC confirming that the lines of communication appeared to be opening. I therefore confirmed from the Town Council's point of view that once the lines of communication were open between the BFA and ADC as far as the legal side of things is concerned with agreement reached between them both regarding the BFA continuing to operate from the units and how this will happen, then it would be good to get the showers reconnected for the summer period. This would clearly need proper documentation identifying the individual responsibilities and suggested a site visit be arranged with reps from BRTC, ADC and BFA to clarify the current position once they could confirm that ADC are happy with BFA continuing to operate from the site.

As no further response was forthcoming, I emailed for a further update and received the following response: -

*"Sorry no progress yet. BFA not engaging so we are looking at other options. If your members raise this with you or in public can you encourage your members to use any influence they have to get the BFA to engage with us."*

### **56. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT (IF AVAILABLE)**

Owing to staff sickness, there was no Town Force report available.

**57. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC ASKING THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL LOOK AT WAYS TO REDUCE THE PRECEPT 2023/24 IN LIGHT OF THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS (REFERRED FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022)**

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

A brief discussion took place around ideas such as reducing the budgets for events, or grants, for example but these were not favourable as events organised by the Town Council provide free entertainment, and grant applicants would be facing their own difficulties. A Member commented that reducing budgets may only result in a negligible decrease in the precept, whereas cutting services would be evident to residents.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk what the timetable for budget setting was. The Clerk advised that liaison work with the Town Council's Accountant begins mid-October, whilst Committees consider their budget requirements for the coming year in readiness to be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that, as requested in the report, any suggestions in relation to the draft budget should be emailed to her, copying in the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, as soon as possible.

**58. TO CONSIDER FUTURE PROVISION OF THE BOGNOR REGIS 2-HOUR FREE PARKING DISCS INCLUDING REQUEST TO ADC FOR EXTENSION TO A FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT FOR THE SCHEME GOING FORWARD**

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

Members were in full support of the continuation of provision in relation to the Bognor Regis 2 Hour Free Parking Scheme and were in favour of looking at a five-year agreement with Arun District Council.

It was **AGREED** by Members that ADC are not requested to undertake a review of the Town Council's financial contribution to the scheme.

In considering the proposals submitted to the Town Council, the Bognor Regis BID Co-Ordinator was invited by the Chairman to address Members and respond to any questions. Discussion about payment methods, and paperless discs, took place with the BID Co-Ordinator thanking Members for their feedback and stating that the suggestions made would be researched.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to support the following recommendations, submitted to the Town Council by the Bognor Regis BID Co-Ordinator, in relation to the 2 Hour Free Parking Disc Scheme for 2023-2028 (subject to agreement by ADC): -

- 58.1** At the earliest opportunity, and to support ongoing investment in the viability of Bognor Regis Town Centre, Bognor Regis Town Council join Bognor Regis BID in formally committing to the ongoing provision of the 2 Hour Parking Disc Scheme.
- 58.2** Prior to budgets being set for 2023/24, all partners at Bognor Regis Town Council, Arun District Council and Bognor Regis BID commit to the principle of a five-year agreement and commence negotiations for ongoing provision covering the period 2023-2028 (for discs sold in 2024-2029).
- 58.3** While mindful of Arun District Council’s duty to maximise and prudently manage income from commercial enterprises for the benefit of the whole district, Bognor Regis Town Council and Bognor Regis BID jointly approach Arun to cap partner contributions at the current rate.
- 58.4** Mindful of the economic and environmental impact of over-production, parking disc production be capped at 27,000 per annum, reflecting realistic volumes of sales based on monitoring, and minimising wastage.
- 58.5** To support all partners’ economic ability to participate in the ongoing provision of the scheme at the proposed capped rates, no changes are made to the number of Bognor Regis car parks included in the scheme.
- 58.6** As an agreement in principle, the face value charged for the 2 Hour Parking Disc be increased from £2 to £3 for the duration of the period 2023-28 to support additional production costs, the continuation of Town Centre events and activities and, mindful of current economic pressures impacting businesses, to allow an increase in the small gross profit on sales by retailers from 40 pence to 50 pence per disc (an uplift in 25%).
- 58.7** That profits generated by disc sales to retailers are ringfenced for the specific purpose of contributing to the delivery of an annual, high-quality event in a central location in Bognor Regis, with all associated promotion, to be delivered by Bognor Regis BID, with equal branding and credit assigned to Bognor Regis Town Council.
- 58.8** That, to maintain the quality of the offer and promote positive messaging, the disc remains unsponsored, featuring only the logos of the participating partners to emphasise the investment of key local stakeholders in the ongoing viability of Bognor Regis.
- 58.9** That the rear of the disc be used to inform consumers that their purchase directly contributes to the delivery of a high-quality annual event for Bognor Regis, thus contributing to resident/visitor engagement and the development of pride in place through information sharing.

**59. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNITY WARDEN SCHEME IN BOGNOR REGIS, AS A JOINT INITIATIVE BETWEEN THE TOWN AND DISTRICT COUNCILS, AND TO AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS – MIN. 30 REFERS AND TO NOTE LETTER FROM BOGNOR REGIS BID**

The Assistant Clerk's report, including the draft bespoke model, letter from the BID Co-Ordinator and Warden overview, were **NOTED**.

The Chairman asked for an update and the Town Clerk reiterated the feedback provided in the report. Town Council Officers had worked with the Bognor Regis BID Co-Ordinator, as instructed by Members, to draft a bespoke model of the Community Warden scheme for Bognor Regis. The proposal had included three Wardens covering the five Wards, categorised into Zones 1-3, with one of the Wardens focused on Zone 1 to support businesses (Hotham and Marine Wards). However, at a follow-up meeting, Arun District Council were keen to point out that any Community Warden scheme operated by them would not provide a direct 'Business Warden' service.

Community Wardens, in general, were then discussed with several Members stating that they were not in support of financially supporting a Community Warden scheme in Bognor Regis, with comment made by one Member that they would be more in favour of paying for dedicated police presence instead. A Member expressed disappointment that Officers had been asked to put so much work into this proposal when it had not been evident that there was strong support for the proposal when Members first considered it.

Members unanimously **DISAGREED** to entering into partnership with Arun District Council for a Community Warden scheme in Bognor Regis to be jointly funded by the Town and District Council.

Discussion then turned to the current Warden provision in the Town Centre, managed by the Bognor Regis BID, which Bognor Regis Town Council have supported in recent years through partnership funding of £10,000 per year. As outlined in a letter to the Town Clerk from the BID, which was **NOTED** by Members, should the BID achieve a second term at ballot, then they would fund a dedicated Business Crime Reduction Partnership Co-Ordinator, providing 5 day a week presence in and around the Town Centre. They could not, however, also afford to support with funding for Business Wardens but would offer to manage the scheme on behalf of the Town Council if they took on the provision of Wardens with full funding of £36,000 per year.

Whilst some Members felt that businesses would suffer if there was no Warden provision in the Town Centre, a Member disagreed and felt that there was no justification for the Town Council to fund it, particularly if it was necessary to cut other service budgets or raise the Precept in order to find the money. The Member stated that a proportion of Council Tax goes towards Sussex Police, and he was concerned that the more provision supplied by the Town Council, the more the Police would pull back from the

Town Centre as they would think it was already covered. With approval from the Chairman, a local business owner seated in the public gallery, spoke in support of the comments made and believed that the police needed to step up. In his opinion, the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner had no reality of what is going on in the Town Centre.

Ultimately, it was felt that Warden provision for the Town Centre in Bognor Regis should be looked at seriously and it was agreed to include the matter when budgets for 2023/24 are considered at the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**60. TO CONSIDER AMENDMENTS TO THE FLEXIBLE COMMUNITY FUND FORMS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – MIN. 26.1 REFERS**

The Assistant Clerk's report, including the appended current application form/guidelines detailing the recommended amendments was **NOTED**.

- 60.1** In considering the recommendation from the Community Engagement and Environment Committee, to exclude Limited Companies from being eligible to submit an application for the Flexible Community Fund, Members disputed that such companies had many lines of credit available to them.

Members, therefore, **DISAGREED** with the recommendation that 'Company Ltd. By Guarantee' should be removed as an option to select in response to question 4 of the Flexible Community Fund application form.

- 60.2** Members did, however, **AGREE** with the recommendation from the Community Engagement and Environment Committee that the wording in question 14 of the Flexible Community Fund application form should be amended so that it is in line with the wording agreed in question 18 of the Grant Aid application form.

**61. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TO ALLOCATE A BUDGET OF £150, FOR THE PURCHASE OF PLAQUES AND TROPHIES FOR AWARDED TO BUSINESSES DEMONSTRATING GOOD PRACTICE WITH REGARDS TO RECYCLING AND GREEN ISSUES – MIN. 32 REFERS**

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

Having first considered this award at the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022, and subsequently deferring the matter back to the Community Engagement and Environment Committee, Members continued to be concerned as to how businesses would be evaluated without a criterion agreed as to how prizes would be awarded.



The Assistant Clerk advised that, as a result of a conversation she'd had with the Bognor Regis BID Co-Ordinator earlier that day, it had been suggested that the Town Council contact Dr Jorge Gutic, Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Business at the University of Chichester. It was understood that Dr Gutic has students who are working with local businesses on environmentally friendly and sustainable working practices. It was felt that this could be an opportunity for the Town Council to work in collaboration with the University by involving the students in the nomination process for businesses demonstrating good practice with regards to recycling and green issues.

The Chairman of the Community Engagement and Environment Committee, Cllr. Smith, was present at the meeting and agreed that he was happy to take the suggestion back to his Committee Members and **WITHDREW** the recommendation for a budget of £150 for the purchase of plaques and trophies for the time being.

**62. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATE FROM JOINT ACTION GROUP (JAG) FOLLOWING THE MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 (IF AVAILABLE)**

There was no update available from the Joint Action Group Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022. It was, therefore, **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item to the next meeting.

**63. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> JULY AND 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

The Assistant Clerk's report, including the appended Notes of the Heritage Partnership Board Meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were **NOTED**.

**64. REPORT FROM THE PROJECTS OFFICER ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING ANY REPORTS ON MEETINGS WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD (IF AVAILABLE)**

With no reports available, it was **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item to the next meeting.

**65. TO RECEIVE AND IF ACCEPTABLE RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE FOLLOWING UPDATED DOCUMENTS: -**

- **Equality Policy Statement**
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (New) – Min. 44 refers**
- **Modern Slavery Policy (New) – Min. 44 refers**

The Assistant Clerk's report, including the three appended documents, was **NOTED** and Members **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council, with no amendments, the adoption of the documents as listed above.

A vote of thanks was recorded to the Assistant Clerk for her work on these policies.

**66. CONSIDERATION OF SIGNING UP TO THE CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE**

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

A Member stated that they were very much in favour of signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge as it supports Officers and shows the Town Council to be committed to its employees.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

**67. TO UNDERTAKE THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN CRIER ROLE**

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

Comment was made by Members on what a huge success the Bognor Regis Town Crier had been, with good publicity and a pinnacle role played in both the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and following the passing of Her Majesty.

Members **AGREED** to make no changes to the Town Crier role.

**68. CONSIDERATION OF INPUT FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CONTENT OF THE 2023 TOWN NEWSLETTER**

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

In order to monitor uptake of the full edition of the Town Newsletter on the Town Council's website, a Member suggested that the condensed hard copy of the Newsletter could be used as a teaser to encourage readers to sign up to the Town Council's E-Bulletin in order to access a link to download the full edition. Another Member highlighted that not everyone uses the internet, so the condensed hard copy needed to have some meaningful content.

***Owing to the Officer suggestion that an article about the Picturedrome Cinema be included in the 2023 Town Newsletter, Cllr. Cunard declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as the Tenant of the Cinema***

Members **AGREED** to the production of a condensed A4, 4-page version for the 2023 Town Newsletter with a full version available for download on the Town Council's website. It was further **AGREED** that Members would bring any further suggestions for the final content of the 2023 Town Newsletter to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee. The item will, therefore, be included on the next Agenda.

**69. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -**

**69.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of August 2022 - previously copied to Councillors**

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of August 2022.

**69.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of July and August 2022, 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**.

**70. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

**71. 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 (S.O. 3d) - Agenda items 21 and 22 (contractual and staffing).

**72. TOWN FORCE: NOTE OF OUTSTANDING DEBTORS**

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

**73. TO RATIFY ANY DECISION FROM THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE (STAFFING) MEETING HELD 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report from the Meeting which was **NOTED**.

Members **AGREED** to **RATIFY** that the vacancy for a 'Committee and Event Support Officer' be advertised with immediate effect.

***The Meeting closed at 8.17pm***