



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN CLERK Glenna Frost, The Town Hall, Clarence Road,
Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1LD
Telephone: 01243 867744
E-mail: bognortc@bognorregis.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 5th JUNE 2023

PRESENT:

Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chairman); Cllrs: J. Barrett, 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)
Mr. D. Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd) (part of meeting)
Cllr. Mrs. Warr seated in the public gallery
1 member of the public

The Meeting opened at 6.30pm

1. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE AS AGREED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22nd MAY 2023

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

It was further **NOTED** that Cllr. B. Waterhouse was elected Chairman and Cllr. P. Wells was elected Vice-Chairman of this Committee at the Annual Town Council Meeting held on 22nd May 2023.

2. 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. S. Goodheart who had another meeting.

3. 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.

Cllr. Miss. Needs declared an Ordinary Interest as a Member of Arun District Council

Cllr. Oppler declared an Ordinary Interest as a Member of both Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council

Cllr. Ralph declared an Ordinary Interest as a Member of Bersted Parish Council

Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest in the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board, and the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th MARCH AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF 19th APRIL 2023

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th March and the Extraordinary Meeting of 19th April 2023 and these were signed by the Chairman.

5. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements from those seated in the gallery and the meeting was not, therefore, adjourned.

6. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 30th January 2023 - Min. 119.4 - Bognor Regis Twinning Association Interpretive Signage Board for Place St Maur

This Committee previously agreed to support the Bognor Regis Twinning Association by contributing up to £350 towards the costs to install an interpretation board on the Place St Maur subject to ADC permissions. ADC have now confirmed their agreement for the board to be installed and the artwork has also been completed. Arrangements will now be made for Town Force to install the sign when their workload allows.

6.2 30th January 2023 - Min. 136 - Correspondence request to Nick Gibb MP to support the signing of the Early Day Motion to address concerns regarding intimidation at community, parish and town councils

As previously reported to Members, Nick Gibb MP had forwarded the letter sent by the Town Council, in relation to concerns regarding intimidation at community, parish and town councils, to Lee Rowley MP at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. A response was received from Mr. Rowley in which he firstly expressed his gratitude for the work that the Town Clerk and her colleagues do as clerks. The letter goes on to say that he completely agrees with the sentiments that good behaviour should be encouraged and stated that the Government is committed to working with all tiers of local government and their representative organisations in reinforcing their reputations for ethical local standards. A Member requested that the response be circulated to the Committee.

6.3 27th March 2023 - Min. 154 - Improvement Works to Seafront Showers

At this meeting Members resolved to agree that the Maintenance Budget for the seafront showers should be increased to £500 with the Clerk being given Delegated Authority to carry out the necessary repair works for this season. Members are asked to note that having liaised with the Town Council's Accountant the additional £250 agreed to increase the Maintenance Budget is not provided for within the 2023-24 Budget and will therefore result in an overspend at the end of the financial year.

6.4 14th June 2022 - Min. 6.1 - Treasury Management Report

The Town Council's Treasury Management Policy was last amended in May 2019. This is reviewed on an annual basis by the RFO to establish if any amendments are required. Having liaised with the Town Council's Accountant regarding this Policy and the need for any changes, he has confirmed that no changes are required at the current time as this is working very effectively and therefore no further amendments are necessary.

7. APPOINTMENT OF ANY SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/ TASK & FINISH GROUPS ETC. INCLUDING: -

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

7.1 Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing)

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the appointments of Cllrs; J. Brooks, R. Nash, Miss. C. Needs, F. Oppler, B. Waterhouse, P. Wells, P. Woodall and the three senior Officers.

7.2 Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board

Members **NOTED** the appointments of Cllrs; J. Barrett, J. Brooks, S. Goodheart and N. Smith as Representatives, and Cllrs. B. Waterhouse and Mrs. G. Yeates as Reserve Representatives.

Cllr. Wells requested that he be appointed to fill one of the two vacancies as Reserve Representative to the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board. This was **AGREED** and will be ratified at the next Council Meeting.

8. TO NOTE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AS ADOPTED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD 22nd MAY 2023 INCLUDING: -

- **Policy and Resources Committee**
- **Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing)**
- **Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board**

The Town Clerk's report and relating appendices were **NOTED**.

Members **NOTED** the Terms of Reference for the Policy and Resources Committee, Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing), and Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board as detailed in the report.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT - TO CONSIDER THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022-2023 (FINAL)

The Town Clerk's report and Internal Audit Report 2022-2023 (Final) were **NOTED**, and Members acknowledged that once again, no significant issues had been raised.

10. TO WELCOME THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ACCOUNTANT, MR. D. KEMP, TO PRESENT THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2022/23

The Chairman welcomed Mr. D. Kemp from DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd, Accountant to the Town Council, and invited him to present the Annual Accounts for the year 2022/23.

Mr. Kemp thanked the Chair and spoke of how nice it was to see some familiar faces. In relation to the financial statements, which form the basis of the AGAR, he explained that council audit regulations only require the completion of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the AGAR).

However, this Statement does not tell members of the public what the Council have done with taxes, how much has been spent on services, nor what income has been generated. Therefore, Mr. Kemp advised Members that it was still good practice to produce financial statements. These statements are looked at by an Internal Auditor, but not approved as it is not necessary to subsequently submit the statements to an External Auditor. Mr. Kemp then went on to highlight various points within the financial statements for Members information, including that there was a surplus of nearly £82,000 at the end of the financial year.

- 10.1** In past years, surplus budgets have been transferred into the Rolling Capital Programme fund and, when asked, Mr. Kemp recommended that as General Reserves were above the comfortable minimum, £80,000 could be transferred, but the decision to do so was up to the Council. A Councillor spoke in support of this action and Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that £80,000 of the surplus remaining at the end of the 2022-23 financial year should be transferred to the Rolling Capital Programme fund.
- 10.2** A Member felt that it would be useful to have sight of the Bognor Pier Company Ltd. Accounts, to better understand the logistics of how it works. The Town Clerk reminded Members that this had been mentioned at the Annual Town Council Meeting, held on 22nd May 2023, and suggested that a Member's Briefing be arranged with Mr. Kemp in attendance. This was **AGREED** by Members, subject to Mr. Kemp's availability.

With no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr. Kemp for his attendance and input to the meeting.

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) FOR YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 INCLUDING: -

The Town Clerk's report and the relating appendices were **NOTED**.

11.1 To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control including to formally note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/2023 (Page 3 of the AGAR) and to recommend approval to Council

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to formally **NOTE** the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23 (Page 3 of the AGAR) prepared by the Town Council's Internal Auditor, Mr. S. Pollard from Auditing Solutions Ltd.

In addition, Members reviewed the system of internal control procedures as detailed in the Town Clerk's report and unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that the systems that the Council has in place are effective.

11.2 To consider and agree the Council's response to each Statement on the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 (Section 1 of the AGAR)

Having considered the Town Clerk's report, which detailed the accounting statements to be agreed, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** answering 'Yes' to statements 1-8, on the Annual Governance Statement, noting that statement 9 was not applicable to the Town Council.

11.3 To Recommend Approval to Council of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 (Section 1 of the AGAR) and that Section 1 be signed by the Chairman of the meeting of the Council approving the Annual Governance Statement and by the Town Clerk

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council **APPROVAL** of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/2023 and that Section 1 is signed by the Chairman of the Full Council Meeting approving the Annual Governance Statement, which follows on immediately from this meeting, and by the Town Clerk.

11.4 To consider and Recommend Approval to Council of the Financial Statements for year ended 31st March 2023 and agree that these be signed by the Chairman of the meeting of the Council approving the accounts and by the Town Clerk

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council **APPROVAL** of the Financial Statements for year ended 31st March 2023 and **RESOLVED** that these be signed by the Chairman of the Full Council Meeting approving the Financial Statements, which follows on immediately from this meeting, and by the Town Clerk.

11.5 To consider the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 (Section 2 of the AGAR)

Members considered the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 as detailed in Section 2 of the AGAR.

11.6 To Recommend Approval to Council of the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 (Section 2 of the AGAR) and that Section 2 be signed by the Chairman of the meeting of the Council approving the Accounting Statements and noting that these were previously signed by the RFO prior to presentation

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council **APPROVAL** of the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Section 2 is signed by the Chairman of the Full Council Meeting approving the Accounting Statements, which follows on immediately from this meeting.

Members further unanimously **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that the Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 were previously signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) prior to their presentation to this meeting.

12. GRANT AID INCLUDING: -

The Town Clerk's report, and related appendix, was **NOTED**.

12.1 To consider the timeline for the application process

Members unanimously **AGREED** that changes should be made to the Grant Aid timeline and that the Extraordinary Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, at which applications for Grant Aid 2024 will be decided upon, does not take place until after the 2024/2025 Budget has been adopted, and the Precept approved, by Council at the meeting to be held on 2nd January 2024.

12.2 To review current guidelines/criteria, application form and amend if required

Members **APPROVED** the guidelines/criteria and application form for Grant Aid 2024, without any amendments.

12.3 Consideration of date for an Extraordinary Policy and Resources Committee Meeting at which the applications will be considered

Members **AGREED** that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, at which Grant Aid 2024 applications will be considered, will be scheduled to take place on Monday 8th January 2024 at 6.30pm.

Mr. Kemp left the Meeting

13. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT

Cllr. Oppler left the Meeting

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

Comment was made by a Member about how much they appreciate the work that Town Force carry out. Another Member concurred, describing Town Force as doing a tremendous job and felt that they should not be on the receiving end of verbal abuse, as detailed in the report, when carrying out roadside maintenance.

Cllr. Oppler returned to the Meeting

A discussion was then had about the partnership agreement between the Town Council and WSCC, in relation to roadside maintenance including verges and roundabouts, and about concerns of road users with verges on approaches to roundabouts being allowed to become overgrown. Members were keen for there to be an opportunity for open dialogue with WSCC at which these matters could be addressed.

Cllr. Oppler, who is also a West Sussex County Councillor, informed the Committee that he was soon to meet with WSCC's Western Area Highway's Manager and offered to ask whether the issues identified within the Town Force report, and the subsequent discussions, could be considered at the meeting.

Members **AGREED** that the Town Clerk write to West Sussex County Council inviting them to engage in conversations about the work that Town Force carry out, on their behalf, in the hope of finding a solution that reduces the risk of Town Force being verbally abused when working on the roadside. A Councillor suggested that a copy of the letter also be copied to County Councillors who represent the Bognor Regis area.

14. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE ANY FINANCIAL COMMITMENT BY THE TOWN COUNCIL IN RELATION TO UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – MIN. 156 REFERS

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

14.1 Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** to making provision in future budgets for ongoing maintenance of the Public Bike Repair Stations in Bognor Regis.

14.2 Members unanimously **AGREED** to **SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE** the Sunken Gardens, Waterloo Square and Steyne Gardens Lighting Project and would, subject to costings being presented to the Committee in due course, consider making provision for ongoing costs, such as power supply and maintenance, in future budget setting.

15. TO CONSIDER HOLDING A TOWN CRIER COMPETITION IN 2024, AND BIENNIALY GOING FORWARD, FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THE TOWN CRIER 'GUILD CHAMPIONSHIP' IN 2022

The Civic & Office Manager's report was **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to the holding of a biennial Town Crier Competition in Bognor Regis, with the next being held in 2024.

Members further unanimously **AGREED** to allocate £2,000 for funding the competition, through the Town Crier Earmarked Reserves.

16. TO RECEIVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSALS FOR UTILISATION OF THE REMAINING PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION BUDGET – MIN. 157 REFERS

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

There were no recommendations from the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee, in relation to the Publicity and Promotion Budget, at this time.

17. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR FUNDING TOWARDS THE COST OF THE MAYOR'S CADET BADGES

The Assistant Clerk advised Members that the exact cost details were not yet known, to produce more badges for the Mayor's Cadet, and it was therefore **AGREED** to **DEFER** this item until a future meeting.

18. NOTICE OF MOTION (S.O.9.0) PROPOSED BY CLLR. P. WELLS AND REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL (MIN. 27 REFERS)

"To discuss the implication and impact on the town centre and community with the announcement of two major banks closing in the centre of Bognor Regis, to seek further information and the possibilities of Bognor Regis becoming a location for a hub if further banks decide to close."

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

Cllr. Wells spoke on his Motion, during which he acknowledged that online banking was the way forward, however he believed that customers still need face-to-face services provided by banks.

He reported that there was a national move towards central hubs to be made up where banks join together, through the Post Office, for instance. With two major banks and building societies still available in Bognor Regis Town Centre, Cllr. Wells did not believe that there was an imminent need to consider a banking hub but suggested that the Town Council write to the remaining banking providers in the Town to ask what their future plans were and to make clear the Council's position on banks closing their doors.

Discussion included the effect that the closing of banks would have on the viability and vibrance of high streets, and of the impact on those who had no online access or who were not confident in their IT skills, for example.

Cllr. Oppler declared an Ordinary Interest as a customer of Barclays

Comments were also made about the much-needed social interaction that daily visits to banks gave to some members of society.

Cllr. Ralph declared an Ordinary Interest as a customer of Barclays and HSBC

Members were disappointed that the banks scheduled for closure had not written to the Town Council and that there had been no apparent community consultation on the matter.

It was **AGREED** that a letter be written to Barclays and HSBC, followed up with a press release, to express Members dismay at news of their forthcoming branch closures in Bognor Regis Town Centre, their concern in relation to the possible effect that this action would have, and their disappointment at the lack of consultation prior to the announcements

being made. A letter will also be sent to the remaining banks in the Town Centre to ascertain their position in relation to future banking provision in the Town.

19. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM BOGNOR REGIS MUSEUM FOR NEW LOCATION OF THE MODEL BATHING MACHINE

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

Following a brief discussion about the potential for the model bathing machine to be vandalised, Members unanimously **AGREED** the request from Bognor Regis Museum for the model bathing machine to be relocated and publicly displayed. However, in an effort to protect the model, it was suggested that instead of being erected in Rock Gardens, the Royal Norfolk Hotel be approached and asked if the model could be placed in the southeast corner of their grounds.

Members **AGREED** that the Town Clerk be given Delegated Authority in relation to the final site for the model bathing machine to be on public display and further **AGREED** to the Town Council continuing with the ongoing maintenance and insurance of the model, subject to no significant increase in the insurance premium being applicable owing to the relocation.

20. TO NOTE EARMARKED RESERVES AS AT 31st MARCH 2023 AND CONSIDER RETURN TO GENERAL RESERVES OF THOSE IDENTIFIED AS NO LONGER REQUIRED FOR THE SPECIFIED PURPOSE

The Town Clerk's report, including the appended summary of the Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2023, was **NOTED**. Members unanimously **RESOLVED** that funds held in Earmarked Reserves as identified by the Town Clerk, which are no longer required for the specified purpose, be returned to General Reserves.

21. ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME – TO RATIFY EXPENDITURE OF £705 EXCLUDING VAT FOR A DELL LATITUDE 3000 SERIES LAPTOP FOR A NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**, and Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** expenditure of £705, excluding VAT, for a Dell Latitude 3000 series laptop for a new member of staff.

22. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -

22.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the months of March and April 2023 - previously copied to Councillors

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the months of March and April 2023.

- 22.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of March and April 2023, 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**.

23. CORRESPONDENCE

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

24. 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 item 25 (contractual).

25. TOWN FORCE: NOTE OF OUTSTANDING DEBTORS

Cllr. Wells declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as a sponsor of Town Council owned planters, in the event that he was noted on the list

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

The Meeting closed at 7.55pm