



# BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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

**HELD ON MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chair); Cllrs: S. Goodheart, Miss. C. Needs, P. Ralph, N. Smith, P. Wells and P. Woodall

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. J. Davis (Assistant Clerk)  
Ken Blamires (Chair of Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board) (part of meeting)  
1 Member seated in the public gallery  
1 member of the public

*The Meeting opened at 6.30pm*

### **49. WELCOME BY CHAIR**

The Chair 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.

### **50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND THEIR APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE AGREED CRITERIA**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. J. Barrett and Cllr. F. Oppler with the Clerk recommending that the reasons given were acceptable. These absences were **APPROVED** by Members.

### **51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

***Cllr. Goodheart declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda items 8, 12 and 13***

***Cllr. Ralph declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 12 as a customer of Barclays***

***Cllr. Smith declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 8***

***Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 8, and a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 9 stating that he would leave the Meeting when this item was discussed***

**52. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2023 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2023**

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and these were signed by the Chair.

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

***The Chair adjourned the Meeting at 6.32pm***

The Chair of the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board asked that Agenda item 8, relating to the future involvement of the Town Council with the Board, be deferred to allow time for a meeting to be held between the two parties to firstly discuss the matter.

In relation to Agenda item 13, a member of the public asked who could use the Correx boards for advertising, to which the Chair replied that this was a question for the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee and offered to raise this on the member of public's behalf, subject to the decision taken by the Policy and Resources Committee when the item was discussed later in the meeting. Mention was made by the member of the public about the absence on Facebook of a live recording following the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee Meeting held in September 2023. The Town Clerk explained that the decision had been taken to remove the recording owing to a problem with inappropriate auto-generated captions.

***The Chair reconvened the Meeting at 6.37pm***

**54. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**54.1 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 - Min 116.4 - NALC campaign for remote meetings**

The Committee were advised of the continuing campaign for councils in England to have the choice to meet remotely. A link was shared with Members on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 asking Members to consider signing the petition calling on the UK Government and Parliament to allow councils in England to have this choice. The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) had set up the petition which was also being supported by The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

At the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Members were asked to consider a call from The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) to pass a Motion in relation to the petition launched by the Association of Democratic Services (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) with regard to remote and hybrid meetings, and write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow council's the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures – Min. 142 refers. This Motion was unanimously supported by those Members present at the meeting and the letter was sent.

An update was received via the SLCC News Bulletin of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 advising of progress through the House of Lords of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, and most importantly a proposed amendment for the option of remote meetings. Whilst there was a vote to support the proposal (169 to 156 votes), the Bill still has to return to the House of Commons. The CEO of SLCC wrote to Lee Rowley, MP., Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) emphasising the importance of this amendment to the sector. The response from Lee Rowley MP was as follows: -

**Letter to the CEO of the Society of Local Councils Clerks from Lee Rowley MP., Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**

*"Thank you for your letter of 11 July on behalf of the Society of Local Council Clerks about the reintroduction of virtual meetings of local authorities.*

*I am grateful for you getting in touch and letting me know the strong view of your colleagues regarding virtual and remote meetings; I welcome the carefully considered arguments put forward by your organisation and others in the sector in recent months. There is obviously a delicate balance to be struck here between ensuring the ability for people to take part in local democracy in a way which is accessible and works, along with ensuring that citizens are able to attend council meetings in person to interact with their local representatives and to hold them to account. Physical attendance at meetings remains important in building strong working relationships between councillors and to deliver good governance and democratic accountability.*

*As I know you will know, the House of Lords voted to support the amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill tabled by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering. The Government will be setting out its position on this matter when the Bill returns to the House of Commons in the autumn.*

*I am grateful for you getting in touch and thank you for sharing your thoughts on this important matter which we have certainly noted and will consider as part of that response."*

**54.2 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 - Min. 168 - ADC Match-funding for Events supported by the Town Council's Grant Aid process - Bognor Regis Carnival Association**

At the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held in March 2023, Bognor Regis Carnival Association was identified as being potential recipients of a share of the £12.5K match-funding that had become available, subject to the agreed criteria being met. Following consideration of their application at the April meeting, Members unanimously agreed that £1,380 should be awarded to the Carnival Association for the provision of new elements to their existing event. As part of the ongoing monitoring of grants awarded by the Town Council, a breakdown of how the funding was allocated within their event has now been received and is available from the Clerk if required by any members of the Committee.

**54.3 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – Min. 6.1 - Bognor Regis Twinning Association Interpretive Signage Board for Place Saint-Maur**

Place St Maur was named as such as a result of the Town of Bognor Regis being twinned with Saint-Maur-des-Fossés in France. During the refurbishment of Place St Maur, the Twinning Association had met with Arun District Council to discuss ways in which this connection between the two Towns could be better promoted on this site of significance.

One of the ideas to come from the meeting was the installation of an interpretive signage board.

Back in November 2022, the Committee agreed to support the Bognor Regis Twinning Association towards the costs to install an interpretation board on the Place St Maur subject to ADC permissions. Following ADC confirming their agreement for the board to be installed on a concrete base to be located in the grassed border leading into this area from the seafront promenade, the Town Force team have now undertaken the installation with the cost being shared by ADC and BRTC.

The Bognor Regis Twinning Association had also requested that the bench previously gifted to the town by Saint-Maur-des-Fossés located in Belmont Street be relocated to the Boules piste area in Hotham Park and this action has now also been completed by the Town Force team with the agreement of ADC.

An email has also recently been received from the Vice-Chair of the Bognor Regis Twinning Association to say: -

*"I have just got back from holiday and since I have been away it seems a lot has gone on in Bognor! I haven't yet seen the newly located bench or the interpretation board except in pictures, but I should like to say thank you to everybody who has made this possible. We got there in the end!"*

*Thank you to Bognor Regis Town Council and the Bognor Regis Heritage Trust for financing different aspects of this project."*

#### **54.4 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 – Min. 30.2 New location for the Model Bathing Machine**

Members were updated at the last meeting that liaison with the Chair of the Museum had been undertaken and that following his initial discussions with the Royal Norfolk Hotel he had received a very positive response to the possibility for this to be located within their grounds. The Chair of the Museum has subsequently met with the Manager of the Hotel and an architect along with the Town Force Supervisor who had taken the Model Bathing Machine to the Hotel so that they could see the actual artwork and discuss this further. The Chair has since come back to say that the meeting was very successful, and they had agreed for it to be sited on a pole on the corner of their grounds as discussed, which they would confirm to him in writing.

Based on this the Chair of the Museum has instructed an architect to apply for planning permission, and once received, they will organise for the fabrication of a pole on which it will be sited and arrange its installation to be funded by the Society. The need to get some form of basic agreement drawn up which would ensure that access to the Royal Norfolk Hotel grounds would be granted to Bognor Regis Town Council staff to carry out any ongoing maintenance as required such as painting or repair to the model as this is to remain in the Town Council's ownership will also need

to be considered as well as clarification on the ongoing insurance liability. Members will be updated further as the project progresses.

**54.5 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 - Min. 35 - Arun District Association of Local Councils (ADALC)**

Members were advised at the last meeting of the forthcoming ADALC Conference to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and asked to consider the topics for discussion proposed by ADALC. Members are asked to note that West Sussex Association of Local Councils have advised that unfortunately the Conference has been postponed until a later date which will be confirmed in due course. The BRTC representatives have been advised accordingly.

**54.6 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – Annual Review of the Town Crier Role - Agenda Item 15**

Just by way of an update to the Civic & Office Manager's Report published as part of the agenda, which advises that 12 metres of fabric for the replacement of the original livery, which is now 6 years old had been purchased. The Town Crier has advised the Clerk of her plans to make a new waistcoat with matching britches at a cost of approximately £560.00 in the near future. This will be funded from the Town Crier's Earmarked Reserve which incorporates an allowance for such replacements.

**55. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT INCLUDING: -**

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

**55.1 Update on highway maintenance, following a meeting with WSCC on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023, and agree how to proceed - Min. 13 refers**

Concern was expressed in relation to highway maintenance, regarding feedback allegedly received by WSCC from members of the public, as referenced in the report, which indicated that the public preference was for uncut verges and preservation of wildlife. A Member commented that whilst they supported initiatives promoting wildlife such as bees, these should not be at the detriment of the appearance of a roadside verge, particularly when located at key gateways into the Town such as Shripney Road.

There were many comments from Members around how environmentally unfriendly it would be to remove the hedge on Shripney Road with the consensus being that more attention to its maintenance could result in an improved appearance of the hedge, which was currently patchy in places. The Clerk highlighted to Members that the hedge was the responsibility of the Town Council and increased maintenance to improve the appearance would result in more visits by Town Force, which could attract further incidents of verbal abuse when lanes need to be closed to carry out the work.

Members acknowledged the duty of care that the Council has towards staff but felt that alternative suggestions should be considered to address the

negative impact to all concerned when carrying out maintenance of the central reservation on Shripney Road.

Therefore, Members **DISAGREED** to the removal of the Shripney Road central reservation hedge, in an attempt to speed up maintenance visits and reduce staff exposure to verbal abuse and requested that the Town Clerk speak with Town Force to find ways in which the hedge's appearance can be improved and to identify the best time of day to carry out maintenance work at this location. It was suggested a report be brought back to the next meeting.

**55.2 To consider the repair or replacement of grass cutting trailer**

Members unanimously **AGREED** to purchase a new grass cutting trailer at a cost of no more than £4,300 excluding VAT.

**55.3** Comments were made about graffiti in the Town with the suggestion that national retailers worked with local authorities to reduce access to spray cans. It was felt that Town Force were having to spend too much time removing graffiti and that there should be more enforcement carried out by Sussex Police.

**56. BOGNOR REGIS HERITAGE & ARTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD (BRHAPB) INCLUDING: - TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS; TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL WITH THE BOARD**

The Assistant Clerk's report, and the Notes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023, was **NOTED**.

**56.1** Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the recommendation, from the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board, that £2,000 be utilised to cover costs associated with the Punch & Judy Festival being held in Bognor Regis.

**56.2** Having listened to the views of the Chair of the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board, during an earlier adjournment for public question time and statements, Members **AGREED** to **DEFER** consideration of the Town Council's future involvement, to allow time for Officers to meet with Board Members to discuss a way forward, with a report brought back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

**57. TO NOTE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE 2 HOUR FREE PARKING LIAISON WORKING PARTY AND TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM ADC'S ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 RELATING TO THE SCHEME (IF AVAILABLE) – MIN. 41 REFERS**

***Cllr. Wells redeclared his Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and left the Meeting***

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

It was also **NOTED** by Members that Councillors Goodheart, Nash (unless subsequently appointed as the ADC rep), Miss. Needs, Waterhouse and Woodall were appointed as the Town Council Representatives to the BRTC 2 Hour Free Parking Liaison Working Party.

*Cllr. Wells returned to the Meeting*

58. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE TOWN COUNCIL'S UKSPF BIKE REPAIR STATIONS PROJECT AND TO FURTHER CONSIDER AND AGREE ANY FINANCIAL COMMITMENT BY THE TOWN COUNCIL IN RELATION TO ITS UKSPF LIGHTING PROJECT – MIN. 14 REFERS**

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED** with the location of the lights, and their design, briefly touched upon.

Having previously agreed to support in principle the Sunken Gardens, Waterloo Square and Steyne Gardens Lighting Project, Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that provision of up to £2,500, with an additional budget of 30% for potential inflation, would be included in future budget setting for ongoing costs, such as power supply and maintenance, associated with the project.

*Cllr. Woodall requested that his abstention from the vote be noted*

59. **TO NOTE THE UTILISATION OF £400 FROM THE PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION BUDGET BY THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE, RATIFIED AT THEIR MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023, TOWARDS THE COSTS FOR THE LIVE BROADCAST OF THE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL AND TO RECEIVE A RECOMMENDATION THAT THE REMAINING EXPENDITURE OF £210 BE FUNDED FROM AN APPROPRIATE BUDGET – MIN. 39.1 REFERS**

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

Members unanimously **RATIFIED** expenditure of £610.00 towards the live broadcast of the FIFA Women's World Cup Final, with £400 funded from the Publicity and Promotions Budget, and **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the remaining £210 would be shown as an overspend of this budget at the end of the financial year.

60. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROVISION PROVIDED BY BARCLAYS BANK, FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF BOGNOR REGIS BRANCH, AND TO CONSIDER ASKING ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL, AS LANDLORD, TO WRITE TO THOSE BANKS CLOSING BRANCHES IN BOGNOR REGIS TOWN CENTRE ABOUT SETTING UP A BANKING HUB IN THE TOWN HALL – MIN. 30.1 REFERS**



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

Members unanimously **AGREED** to write to Arun District Council, as Landlord of Bognor Regis Town Hall, to request that they consider the provision of a community banking hub in the building.

**61. TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EVENTS, PROMOTION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE THAT THE LAMP POST BANNER MAINTENANCE EARMARKED RESERVES OF £3,000 FOR 2022/23 BE RETURNED TO GENERAL RESERVES AND REALLOCATED FOR THE UTILISATION OF CORREX BOARDS BY WAY OF PROMOTION – MIN. 42 REFERS**

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

After a short discussion about the pros and cons of lamp post banner advertising compared to the use of Correx boards, Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Lamp Post Banner Maintenance Earmarked Reserves of £3,000 for 2022/23 be returned to General Reserves and reallocated for the Events, Promotion and Leisure Committee to use the funding towards the utilisation of Correx boards by way of promotion in the Town.

**62. TO AGREE THE CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF MEMBER ABSENCE FROM MEETINGS**

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

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the following reasons for Member absence from Town Council meetings would be included in the criteria for approval: - Annual leave; Compassionate leave; Dependency needs; Educational commitments; Illness; Mayoral engagement; Medical appointments; Prior engagement; Shielding; Working.

If apologies for absence were received because a Councillor was attending another meeting, then Members also **AGREED** that this would be a reason to be approved, however, reserved the right to approve absence for this reason if it becomes persistent. For instance, where a dual-hatted Councillor frequently chooses to attend meetings of another council over carrying out their duties as an elected Town Councillor, then Members may review whether this absence should be approved.

Members unanimously **AGREED** that giving no apologies for absence would not be acceptable and therefore not be approved.

In answer to a question of whether apologies for absence given after a meeting would be acceptable the Clerk pointed out that it would not be possible to approve the absence as this could only be done during the meeting, not after the fact. Members were reminded that they have a duty to be at meetings of the Town Council, to which they have been summoned, and that they should advise the Town Clerk or Committee Clerk

of any absence prior to the meeting. These should not be given via another Councillor on their behalf.

A Member suggested that a caveat should be included demanding that apologies for absence be given by the Member in question, and not by a fellow Councillor on their behalf. Another Member felt that such a caveat could not be enforced, for example, in the case of a spouse having to report the absence of a Councillor as a result of an emergency.

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

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

The excellent work of the Town Crier and the publicity that the role brings was a view widely shared by those present. Questions around whether enough was being budgeted, for travel etc., were raised with it suggested that this be a consideration in the next budget setting process, in recognition of how the role has grown and of the tremendous amount that the Town Crier achieves.

**64. CONSIDERATION OF INPUT FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CONTENT OF THE 2024 TOWN NEWSLETTER**

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

Members unanimously **AGREED** to the production of the condensed A4, 4-page version, with QR code for the full edition, for the 2024 Town Newsletter. It was suggested that if recyclable paper were used to produce the Newsletter that this be highlighted by the inclusion of a logo stating that the publication could be disposed of in this way.

The inclusion of articles in the 2024 Town Newsletter, as suggested by Officers in the report, was **AGREED** and Members were invited to email the Town Clerk with any further article suggestions of their own by the end of the week.

**65. TO NOTE THAT THE 3-YEAR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH BOGNOR REGIS SEAFRONT LIGHTS IS COMING TO AN END AND TO CONSIDER ANY FUTURE FUNDING**

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

With budget setting yet to take place, some Members were wary of considering another funding agreement in partnership with Bognor Regis Seafront Lights until the Town Council had looked at it's budget as a whole.

Members **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would invite representatives from Bognor Regis Seafront Lights to give a presentation, to include their future plans, prior to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

**66. ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME INCLUDING: -**

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

**66.1 To ratify expenditure of £5,549 excluding VAT for a zero turn Ariens Apex 48R ride on mower**

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** expenditure of £5,549 excluding VAT for a zero turn Ariens Apex 48R ride on mower.

**66.2 To ratify expenditure of £1,138.07 excluding VAT for works to ensure the new Ford Transit van is highway compliant and fit for purpose**

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** expenditure of £1,138.07 excluding VAT for works to ensure the new Ford Transit van is highway compliant and fit for purpose.

**66.3 To ratify expenditure of £677.32 excluding VAT for a replacement BRTC branded gazebo and feather flag for use at Councillor Drop-In Surgeries and similar**

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** expenditure of £677.32 excluding VAT for a replacement BRTC branded gazebo and feather flag for use at Councillor Drop-In Surgeries and similar.

**67. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -**

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

**67.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of August 2023 - previously copied to Councillors**

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of August 2023.

**67.2 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 2023, undertaken by the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee in line with the Council's Financial Regulations**

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

**68. CORRESPONDENCE**

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

**69. 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 22 (contractual).

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

***Cllr. Wells declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as a sponsor of Town Council owned planters, although he was not on the current list of debtors previously circulated to the Committee***

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

***The Meeting closed at 8.02pm***