



# 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](mailto:bognortc@bognorregis.gov.uk)

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

**HELD ON MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

### **PRESENT:**

Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chair); Cllrs: J. Barrett, S. Goodheart, Miss. C. Needs, F. Oppler (during Min. 91), P. Ralph, N. Smith and P. Wells

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. J. Davis (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr. D. Kemp - DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd  
Cllrs. J. Brooks, D. Dawes, R. Nash Mrs. J. Warr and Mrs. G. Yeates in the public gallery

***The Meeting opened at 6.33pm***

### **90. 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.

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

***Cllr. Oppler arrived at the Meeting***

No apologies had been received from Cllr. Woodall and could not therefore be approved.

### **92. 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 item 6***

***Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest as a BID Levy payer***

**93. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and these were signed by the Chair.

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

There were no members of the public seated in the public gallery, therefore, the meeting was not adjourned.

**95. TO CONSIDER A GRANT REQUEST FROM BOGNOR REGIS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS**

The Vice-Chair, as the Town Council appointed Representative to the Youth and Community Centre advised Members that the issues had now been resolved and invited Cllr. Goodheart, who is a Trustee for the Centre, to elaborate.

Cllr. Goodheart explained that the situation had been crucial hence the request for grant funding being added to the Agenda. However, having overcome the hurdle themselves, Bognor Regis Youth and Community Centre no longer needed a grant for emergency repairs, but thanks was given to the Town Council for having included the matter for consideration.

**96. 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 8 and 9 (contractual).

**97. ADJOURNMENT FOR TOWN COUNCILLORS NOT APPOINTED TO THIS COMMITTEE TO MAKE COMMENT AND ASK QUESTIONS ON THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/2025**

***The Chair adjourned the Meeting at 6.38pm***

Having given a brief summary as to how the 2024/2025 Budget had been drafted, with the level of Precept and savings borne in mind, the Chair invited non-Committee Members, seated in the public gallery, to make comment and ask questions. He reminded those present that the Policy and Resources Committee would recommend a Budget for 2024/2025 to the Full Council Meeting in January, which would provide an opportunity for all Members in attendance at that meeting to make further comment.

Overall, a Member stated that they felt reasonably comfortable with the Budget proposed, agreeing that there should be a limited increase in the Precept whilst living in difficult times, and speaking favorably of Warden provision in the Town Centre.

A query was raised about the level of funding apportioned to Floral Displays with the Accountant explaining that the figure included Town Force time.

In relation to the provision of a Warden, a Member shared their experience of running a business in the Town, and urged fellow Councillors to meet with the current Warden to understand the challenges faced every day. Whilst supportive of continuing to fund Warden provision, the Member wished to see a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place, to better understand what the Council could expect for their money.

***The Chair reconvened the Meeting at 7.07pm***

**98. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/2025 INCLUDING ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

The Town Clerk's report, including the statement regarding restrictions on voting under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, was **NOTED**.

It was also **NOTED** that all Members of the Council had received a hard copy of the draft Budget proposals, prior to the meeting, which had also included a Budget Summary, together with breakdowns of Income and Expenditure for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

These had been prepared in liaison with the Town Council's Accountant and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and based on the recommendations from the various Committee Meetings. In addition to the Committee recommendations, provision had been made within the draft Budget proposals for various savings for consideration. A list of these proposals was provided to Members under separate cover. An updated Budget Summary following receipt of the Tax Base from ADC for 2024-25 was subsequently provided to all Members at the meeting.

The Chair presented the Budget proposal highlights for 2024/2025, some of which required a decision whilst others were to be noted having been agreed at a previous meeting.

- 98.1** In discussing the Town Crier, Members remarked upon what an excellent ambassador Jane was for Bognor Regis, going above and beyond the expectations of the role, and putting the Town on the map time after time.
- 98.2** When considering budgets for Partnership Funding and Grant Aid the importance of supporting local groups was balanced against a desire to see groups moving towards becoming more self-sufficient, sourcing funding from elsewhere, rather than continuing to rely on the Town Council's limited resources. Having debated the level of funding for these budget headings, there was an agreed amendment to the figures originally highlighted in the confidential proposal in relation to the Grant Aid Budget.
- 98.3** ***Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest in the Bognor Regis Heritage & Arts Partnership Board***
- 98.4** Having received a formal request from the Bognor Regis BID for the Council to contribute towards Business Warden provision in the Town, which had previously been circulated, Members were advised of an amendment to the figures in the confidential proposals to reflect this. It was suggested that Warden provision be allocated as hours rather than days, to capitalise on the times when the Warden's presence is most needed in the Town Centre, in addition to the previously mentioned SLA being put in place.
- 98.5** Simultaneous to the request from the BID, the Town Council had also been approached by Arun District Council (ADC) about becoming a funding partner with the proposal for an Arun-wide Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) initiative, details of which had been circulated to all Members.

***Cllr. Wells redeclared an Ordinary Interest as a BID Levy payer and confirmed that he would not take part in the vote on this item***

Historic work to formalise a Disc system in the Town, for reporting low-level crime and antisocial behaviour which is then shared online with ADC, Sussex Police and local businesses, was discussed. Some Members personally involved with the Disc system spoke of a perceived apathy amongst business users in the Town who feel that no action comes from

reporting. The need for a Warden who knows the names and faces of regular offenders, possessing the required local knowledge, was stressed. Following further discussion, it was felt that it was not for the Town Council to support this proposal.

Members **DISAGREED** and **RESOLVED** not to support the request from ADC for the Town Council to financially contribute towards a BCRP initiative and did not, therefore, include any provision for this within the 2024/2025 Budget proposals.

- 98.6** In coming to consider a proposal in relation to Boom Community Bank (BCB), the Chair advised Members that a meeting had taken place earlier in the day with representatives from BRTC and BCB. The Town Council's Accountant, Mr. Kemp, was also present at the meeting and was invited by the Chair to explain the options available should Members be receptive to the proposal.

Mr. Kemp outlined a variety of lending options, detailing the associated banking regulations that would apply and the lending parameters that could be set. The level of risk to the Town Council was discussed as was the benefit of this type of loan scheme to the community and the local economy. He went on to explain how any investment from the Town Council would be shown on the balance sheet and would not be classified as expenditure coming from the 2024/2025 Budget. Members noted that this would be funded from the Council's Economic Development Fund.

With Adur & Worthing Councils already involved with BCB, it was suggested that contact be made with them to seek their feedback on the loan scheme.

- 98.7** The proposals considered by the Committee as detailed in the confidential appendix, reflect the items discussed to be incorporated in the draft Budget for recommending to Council. This also included a recommendation to Council in support of Boom Community Bank which is subject to due diligence. It is also proposed that any savings identified as part of the efficiency review and as part of the decisions taken at this meeting will be allocated to the Economic Development Fund.

The Clerk reminded Members that these proposals should all be treated as confidential at this time, as a final draft will need to be presented to Council for approval in the New Year.

- 99.** Following the discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to **COUNCIL** the draft Budget, as amended and set a Precept for 2024/2025 of £999,504, a reduction from 2023-24 of £10,315 or 1.02% in the Precept, in order to leave the Band D Tax Charge unchanged at £135.95 per Band D Equivalent.
- 100.** Members further **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to **COUNCIL** that the various budget savings identified (a net saving of £81,000 from the original

computation) be placed in the Economic Development Fund, for such use as may be determined.

- 101. Cllr. Miss. Needs declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the proposal to increase the Civic Activities Travel Expenses budget in the next financial year**

***The Meeting closed at 8.32pm***