



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 MEETING OF BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 10th MARCH 2025

PRESENT:

Mayor: Cllr. Miss. C. Needs; Cllrs: J. Barrett, K. Batley, D. Dawes, R. Nash, F. Oppler, P. Ralph, N. Smith, Mrs. J. Warr, B. Waterhouse, P. Wells and Mrs. G. Yeates

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs. R. Vervecken (Civic & Office Manager)
1 member of the public

Prior to the Meeting, a one-minute silence was held in memory of Town Councillor and former Mayor, Jim Brooks

The Meeting opened at 6.35pm

142. WELCOME BY MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed all those present. The Council's opening statement was read, and particular attention was drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of the fire alarm sounding and the Council's Standing Orders relating to public question time.

143. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND THEIR APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE AGREED CRITERIA

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Goodheart and Woodall, with the Clerk recommending that the reasons given were acceptable. These absences were therefore **APPROVED** by Members.

No apologies were received from Cllr. Stanley, whose absence, therefore, was not approved.

144. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registrable and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda and are reminded that they should

redeclare their Interest before consideration of the item or as soon as the Interest becomes apparent and if not previously included on their Register of Interests to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

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 leave the meeting for the discussion and vote
- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Registrable 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.

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.

Cllrs. Batley, Nash, Miss. Needs, Oppler, Mrs. Warr and Mrs. Yeates all declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 19 as Arun District Councillors

145. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (PRECEPT) HELD ON 6th JANUARY 2025

The Minutes of the Council Meeting (Precept) held on 6th January 2025 were unanimously **APPROVED** by the Council as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

146. REPORTS FROM WSCC COUNTY AND ADC DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (IF AVAILABLE) (EXCLUDING ANY UPDATES ON REGENERATION WHICH WILL BE COVERED UNDER A LATER AGENDA ITEM)

The Town Clerk had received apologies from Cllr. McDougall, an Arun District Councillor, who was unable to attend the meeting, but had no updates to report. He hoped that other Town Councillors, who were also District Councillors, could report any significant updates, if relevant.

147. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from Councillors.

148. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements from those seated in the public gallery and the Chair did not, therefore, adjourn the meeting.

149. TO CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN DISPENSATION REQUESTS RECEIVED FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

There were no written dispensation requests received from Town Councillors.

150. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORTS, MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (OTHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA)**151. Policy and Resources Extraordinary Committee Meeting of 13th January and the Meeting of 27th January 2025**

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Waterhouse, reported.

151.1 Min. 121 refers - Recommendation to approve the 2025/26 Annual Audit Plan

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the 2025/26 Annual Audit Plan.

151.2 Min. 122 refers - Recommendation to approve the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2024/2025

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2024/2025. The Action Plan will be signed by the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, and by the Town Clerk.

151.3 Min. 130 refers - Recommendation to adopt the Constitution, as proposed, without any further suggested changes

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the adoption of the Constitution, as proposed, without any further suggested changes.

151.4 Min. 136.1 refers - To note the adoption of the updated Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) Employer's Discretion Policy

Members unanimously **NOTED** the adoption of the updated Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) Employer's Discretion Policy.

Cllr. Waterhouse took the opportunity to thank Officers for their work in reviewing and updating these documents.

152. Planning and Licensing Committee Meetings of 14th January, 4th and 25th February 2025

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Mrs. Warr, reported. There were no recommendations to Council.

A Councillor spoke of their concern at the recently submitted London Road planning applications to install telephone kiosks here, as considered by Members of the Planning and Licensing Committee at their meeting of 25th February, to which they had raised no objection. He reminded Members that the intention had been to declutter London Road, to allow ample space for events and markets. Some considerable work had gone into clearing this pedestrianised area, and the Councillor was disappointed that these planning applications had been submitted, which would seemingly undo some of this work.

Whilst others agreed with the sentiments expressed, the importance of having the defibrillators, that were provided with each kiosk, installed around the Town, alongside promotional advertising boards, was also highlighted.

153. Environmental and Leisure Committee Meeting of 3rd February 2025

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Batley, reported. There were no recommendations to Council.

154. TO FORMALLY RECEIVE THE MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEES, AND REFER ANY SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS DECIDED UPON DURING THE MEETING BACK TO THE RELEVANT COMMITTEE, AND RATIFY ANY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AS MAY BE NECESSARY

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to 'formally receive the reports, Minutes and recommendations of the Committee, and refer any suggested amendments decided upon at this meeting back to the relevant Committee'.

155. TO NOTE THE LIST OF PAYMENTS AND TRANSFERS MADE IN DECEMBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025 AND TO NOTE THE BALANCES, BANK RECONCILIATIONS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS (FEBRUARY NOT YET AVAILABLE) AND OUTTURN AND APPROVAL OF THE CONTENTS AND THEIR PUBLICATION

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** 'to note the payments and transfers made in December 2024 and January 2025 and to note the balances, bank reconciliations and financial reports (February not yet available) and outturn and approval of the contents and their publication'.

156. TO NOTE THE DEATH OF SERVING TOWN COUNCILLOR, JIM BROOKS, AND TO RATIFY A DONATION OF £100 TO ST WILFRID'S HOSPICE IN HIS MEMORY

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

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the donation of £100 to St Wilfrid's Hospice in memory of Town Councillor and former Mayor, Jim Brooks.

Members took the opportunity to express their sadness as this loss, as well as to share their fond memories of Jim as a colleague and a friend, recalling the huge advocate he was for Bognor Regis and how dearly the Town and those around him would miss him.

The Town Clerk had received notification that a by-election has been called for Marine ward, to take place on Thursday 24th April. Once a timetable has been established, this will be shared with Town Councillors.

157. TO NOTE A RETRACTION OF THE POINT RAISED IN THE ASSOCIATED CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATE AND REPORT YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2024 ACCOUNTS – MIN. 100 REFERS

The Town Clerk's report advising that the original letter received from the External Auditor's, providing their report and concluding the Town Council's review incorrectly stated that "insufficient information was provided with the intermediate testing supporting data submitted for review with regards to minutes evidencing the discussion points raised on the external audit report. The parish council should in future ensure that all necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission" was **NOTED**.

Following clarification by the Clerk, the External Auditor had now confirmed that the information contained in the above paragraph had been factually incorrect and therefore was retracted. This was unanimously **NOTED**.

158. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

The Town Clerk's report, including the Statement of the Town Council's Internal Controls appended, was **NOTED**. Following a review, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council's internal control procedure and practices are adequate and operating effectively.

159. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR DEPUTY MAYOR 2025/26 AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO THE ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 2025

Cllr. Wells was nominated by Cllr. Oppler and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Warr.

With there being no other nominations, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Annual Town Council Meeting, that Cllr. Wells be elected to the office of Deputy Mayor for 2025/26.

160. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES ON REGENERATION IN THE TOWN (IF AVAILABLE)

A dual-hatted Councillor was pleased with the regeneration projects underway in the Town, including the wayfinding project signage which is

coming to fruition, and the Alexandra Theatre improvements, currently running to schedule. He spoke highly of a presentation given recently regarding plans for The Arcade which are due to be completed in two years' time and cited the appointment of a Town Market Officer, by the Town Council, as a positive step. Improvements at Waterloo Square will be discussed at the upcoming ADC Economy Committee Meeting on 1st April and any updates will be provided following this.

161. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE ARUN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS MEETING HELD ON 28th JANUARY 2025

The Town Clerk's report, and the Notes of the ADALC Meeting held on 28th January 2025, was **NOTED**.

162. TO NOTE THAT A MEMBERS BRIEFING WILL BE HELD ON 12th MARCH AT 6PM TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING: - ANY RESPONSE BY THE TOWN COUNCIL TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY FOR SUSSEX AND BRIGHTON; THE TOWN COUNCIL'S VISION; ADC SERVICES AND ASSETS FOR WHICH THE TOWN COUNCIL MAY WISH TO SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AS PART OF FUTURE CONSULTATIONS AROUND DEVOLUTION

The Town Clerk's report including notification of the Members Briefing was unanimously **NOTED**.

163. NOTICE OF MOTION (S.O. 9.0) PROPOSED BY CLLR. S. GOODHEART, SECONDED BY CLLR. D. DAWES (DEFERRED FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – MIN. 133 REFERS) – FUTURE OF BOGNOR REGIS TOWN HALL

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

"Bognor Regis Town Hall - Cllr. Dawes and I are presenting this Motion to the Council because we believe that at some date in the future, BRTC will have the opportunity to acquire the Town Hall when ADC decides to relinquish its responsibilities and put it on the market. This Motion is to make sure the Town Council is ready for this scenario and is in a good position to engage with ADC and negotiate a favourable deal, as the building is Listed and is a community asset which should be gifted to BRTC. Hopefully, you will support this Motion, in principle, and we can all participate in the discussion that will follow. In preparation for this, I believe we should explore the many different opportunities for which we could use the building both now, and in the future. Setting up a Members/Officers Working Party might be the best vehicle to build up a programme of ideas and uses for the building.

- ***A small budget will be needed to cover the cost of pulling a team together***
- ***Working Party to work out the items to be on the agenda and to create a working schedule***
- ***Engage a professional grant finder/writer to apply for lottery***

funding etc.

- ***Engage a structural engineer to enable us to understand what the building needs, to make it fit for purpose – cost implications***
- ***Engage an architect/designer***
- ***There are many trusts that can be approached which support Listed buildings***
- ***Consider incorporating new works to transform the building into a multi-functioning building***
- ***Need to be able to earn an income from the building***

This Motion will give every Member the chance to show support for BRTC to acquire an incredible asset for the Town's future – The Town Hall."

Members briefly discussed the timing of this Motion, given the current local government reorganisation. A dual-hatted Councillor conceded that the significant overhaul meant that much of the District Council's time was currently being 'swallowed up', including the consideration of their assets.

Another Councillor, whilst appreciating the current situation, expressed concern that with the speed that devolution is moving forward, this may be the Town Council's 'last chance' to gain ownership of the Town Hall. With this matter having been raised with ADC over a year ago, he felt that ownership of the listed building should be treated differently to ADC's other assets, and made a 'top priority', stating that he would be writing a letter to the CEO of ADC emphasising this.

The Town Clerk confirmed that ADC had adopted their Community Asset Transfer Policy, giving them the mechanism to transfer assets, but explained there was still a process to follow. With the Members Briefing to discuss, amongst other things, ADC services and assets for which the Town Council may wish to submit an Expression of Interest taking place on Wednesday 12th March (Min. 162 refers), the Town Clerk advised the issue of the Town Hall may be appropriately included within these discussions. She reminded Councillors about the Monitoring Officers' advice to those who sit on both the Town and District Councils, which they should be mindful of following.

Whilst it was agreed by those present that the timing of discussing finer details including the formation of a Working Party at this meeting may not be right, in part, due to the absence of the proposer of the Motion, Cllr. Goodheart, the need to make some progress was clear.

A Councillor suggested and it was **AGREED** by those present, that the formation of a Working Party to discuss and move forward this Motion relating to the Town Hall, be **DEFERRED** to the next Policy and Resources Committee Meeting.

164. TO RECEIVE AN INVITATION FROM ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL TO THE ARUN FLOOD FORUM MEETING IN APRIL, AND TO AGREE THE TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

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

Members were pleased to hear that an invitation to this Forum was being extended to parishes in areas affected by flooding, including Bognor Regis Town Council, which had been requested some 14 months ago. Noting that this was on a rotational basis, Cllr. Wells expressed an interest in becoming the representative, should there be no other nominations. Cllr. Mrs. Yeates explained that she sits on the Forum as a District Councillor and sometimes in her capacity as a Bersted Parish Councillor, whilst always trying to also represent areas affected in Bognor Regis.

Another Councillor queried whether the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be the representatives attending, as stated in the accompanying report. The Town Clerk confirmed that as the Deputy Mayor in her role as a District Councillor already has a seat on the Forum, another representative may be chosen, in case the Mayor is unable to attend to represent BRTC.

Those present concurred that every opportunity for engagement and inclusion in discussions on this important subject should be taken, and after discussion it was **AGREED** that Cllr. Miss. Needs as Mayor should be the Town Council's representative, with Cllr. Wells appointed as 'reserve representative', should the Mayor be unable to attend the meeting.

165. TO RECEIVE ANY FEEDBACK FROM THE ONLINE COMMUNITY OPEN FORUM HELD ON 30th JANUARY 2025 AND CONSIDERATION OF DATES FOR FUTURE ONLINE COMMUNITY OPEN FORUMS AND COUNCILLOR DROP-IN SURGERIES

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

A Member who had been present at the Online Community Open Forum advised that despite trying to 'kick start' discussions with relevant talking points prevalent to the Town, no questions or engagement from the public were forthcoming, making it challenging to continue to live stream for the full hour, as had been agreed at the previous meeting (Min. 134 refers).

Many spoke of various interactions with members of the public, who had stated a preference for face-to-face communication with their Town Councillors, through the Councillor Drop-In Surgeries.

A Councillor, who also works in the Town Centre, suggested contacting local businesses, including cafes, who may be interested in hosting these Surgeries, possibly providing a more informal and relaxed setting for members of the public to speak to Councillors. He further suggested the use of feather flags to advertise these events and draw public interest.

In the meantime, Members unanimously **AGREED** that community engagement events be organised as follows: -

Thursday 10th April 2025 (11am)
(Easter Holidays)

London Road Precinct
(northern end)

Tuesday 8th July 2025 (1.30pm)

London Road Precinct
(southern end)

Friday 3rd October 2025 (midday)

Bognor Regis Railway Station

166. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM OFFICERS FOLLOWING ANY ATTENDANCE AT THE MONTHLY ARUN PARISH MEETING WITH THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

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

167. MAYOR'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

The report on the Mayor's activities was **NOTED**.

The Mayor expressed her enjoyment of all the events she had attended and further reported that preparations for the Town Council's Civic Reception to be held on Thursday 27th March 2025, were well underway.

168. TOWN CRIER'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

The report on the Town Crier's activities was **NOTED**.

169. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Members **NOTED** that reports had been received from the following representatives to other organisations and had been emailed to all Councillors.

169.1 Cllr. Miss. Needs – Bognor Community Meetings; Bognor Regis Concert Band (President); Stonepillow (Patron).

169.2 Cllr. Mrs. Yeates - Arun District Association of local Councils (ADALC); Bognor Community Meetings; Bognor Regis Heritage and Arts Partnership Board.

170. TO NOTE THE WRITTEN REPORT FROM THE BLAKE COTTAGE TRUST (CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS) AND TO CONSIDER INVITING A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE TRUST TO GIVE A PRESENTATION TO MEMBERS, PRIOR TO THE START OF A FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING

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

A Councillor spoke briefly on some recently received good news for the Trust, who those present agreed were undertaking positive work for the area, in the restoration of the cottage.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to invite a representative from the Trust to give a presentation to Members, and further **AGREED** both the 7th July and 8th September Council Meetings be offered as opportunities for this. Officers will advise Councillors, in due course, on which date the presentation shall take place.

171. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE

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

172. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE INCLUDING: DIRECTOR'S REPORT, ANY URGENT ACTIONS TAKEN FOR RATIFICATION, AGM OF THE BOGNOR PIER COMPANY LTD. – TO ADOPT THE ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2024 AND TO NOTE THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**172.1 Director's report, any urgent actions taken for ratification**

The previously circulated Director's report was **NOTED**, with any actions taken, and expenditure **RATIFIED**.

172.2 AGM of the Bognor Pier Company Ltd. – to adopt the accounts Year Ended 31st December 2024 and to note the Director's report

Members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2024 and **NOTED** the Director's report.

173. TO RESOLVE TO MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS (S.O. 3d) – (CONTRACTUAL)

The Committee unanimously **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 30 (contractual).

174. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE – CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Members **NOTED** the Town Clerk's confidential report previously circulated to Members.

Members **NOTED** the proposed monthly budget for 2025 for The Bognor Pier Company Ltd. which has been based on the estimated rental income for the year.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on her most recent communication with the tenant, regarding the renovations, which included photos of screen three for Members' information.

Members spoke positively about the renovations, including the much improved outside area of the building, which Town Force had been working hard on in recent months, and would continue to do as the weather gets drier. They expressed hope that despite the delays experienced, improvements would be completed very soon.

The Meeting closed at 7.31pm