



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2025

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs. R. Vervecken (Civic & Office Manager)
First Cadet Harvey McGarhey (Mayor's Cadet) (part of meeting)

Prior to the Meeting, a one-minute silence was held in memory of former Town Councillor, William Toovey

The Meeting opened at 6.36pm

69. 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.

The Mayor took the opportunity of advising Members of her very informative visit to the Redhill base of Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance earlier in the day, particularly mentioning the 'Restart a Heart' Day taking place on 16th October 2025. As part of the programme, free live-streaming sessions on performing CPR and using a defibrillator would be taking place. This was **NOTED**.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Woodall, with the Clerk recommending that the reason given was acceptable. This absence was therefore **APPROVED** by Members.

71. 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.

Cllr. Batley declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 13 as a Veteran

Cllr. Nash declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda item 15 as the Chair of the ADC Economy Committee

Cllr. Wells declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 11 as a supplier

72. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7th JULY 2025

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7th July 2025 were unanimously **APPROVED** by the Council as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

73. REPORTS FROM WSCC COUNTY AND ADC DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (IF AVAILABLE)

The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllr. McDougall, an ADC Councillor. He had advised however that he had nothing to report.

Cllr. Nash addressed Members as an Arun District Councillor, to comment on the very negative report by the Regulator of Social Housing, who had found serious failings with Arun District Council's housing service. He cited the report as extremely disappointing, adding that with the large amount of social housing in Bognor Regis, this massively impacts the Town. However, a productive briefing has since been held to begin to rectify the unacceptable issues established, with improvements looking to be made, hopefully within the next few months.

74. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from Councillors.

75. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

There were no members of the public present at this point, therefore the meeting was not adjourned.

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

There were no written dispensation requests received from Town Councillors.

77. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORTS, MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (OTHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA)

78. Policy and Resources Committee Meeting of 28th July 2025

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr. Waterhouse reported.

78.1 Min. 52.1 refers – Adoption of the Terms of Reference for the Town Action Group, to include the additional members suggested by the Group

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Terms of Reference for the Town Action Group, to include the additional members suggested by the Group.

79. Planning and Licensing Committee Meetings of 22nd July, 12th August and 2nd September 2025

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

79.1 A Councillor raised serious concern with the level of the changing street scene within the Town Centre over recent years, which was increasing by the day. Demolitions, building works, illuminated signage and addition of shutters to shop windows were referenced, with the Councillor doubting whether many of these had applied for planning permission to carry out the various works. With the identity of the Town Centre being 'lost' through the ever-changing face of shop frontages, he called upon dual-hatted Councillors to ask serious questions of the Planning Officers at ADC, to ascertain where planning permission is and isn't being sought.

Other Members agreed, with Belmont Lodge given as a current example of extensive ongoing building work to the roof and upper area due to a 'leaking roof', which upon the Town Council's Planning and Licensing Committee Clerk contacting the ADC Planning Department, was established they were unaware of. Photos were taken by BRTC officers which have ascertained the roof has been changed beyond recognition, with a new floor almost certainly added. Comment from ADC is still awaited.

With the addition of shutters, illuminated signs and new shop frames discussed appearing in businesses in The Arcade, and around the Town Centre, comparisons were drawn to Chichester, who Members felt had a much clearer and more vigorously enforced identity with their shops and businesses.

Another Councillor expressed his frustration with the ADC Planning Department dating back over the past couple of decades, stating that they had 'let the people of Bognor Regis down' on a regular basis, which is only getting more profound. He emphasised the need for penalties for those not obtaining proper planning permissions before undergoing works to be far higher, to ensure people don't think they can get away with either not applying at all, or for applying for retrospective planning, which he felt ADC Planning Officers should stop awarding.

Conversation turned to Arun Councillors, who sat on the Planning Committee at the District Council, with many commenting that the large proportion were not from Bognor Regis and therefore perhaps not as concerned with Bognor Regis applications nor enforcement of anyone not obtaining the correct permissions.

It was **AGREED** that this would be added as an Agenda item on the next Planning and Licensing Committee Meeting, for discussion and decision on how to take these issues forward. Cllr. Nash, as Deputy Leader of ADC would also bring these concerns to his weekly meeting with the CEO of the District Council but suggested that the Town Council writes a letter to ADC Planning, copying in the CEO, raising these concerns.

80. Environmental and Leisure Committee Meeting of 14th July 2025

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

- 81. 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'.

- 82. TO NOTE THE LIST OF PAYMENTS AND TRANSFERS MADE IN JUNE AND JULY 2025 AND TO NOTE THE BALANCES, BANK RECONCILIATIONS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS (AUGUST NOT YET AVAILABLE) AND OUTTURN AND APPROVAL OF THE CONTENTS AND THEIR PUBLICATION**

Cllr. Wells redeclared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as a supplier

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

- 83. TO RECEIVE ANY FEEDBACK FROM THE COUNCILLOR DROP-IN SURGERY HELD ON 8th JULY 2025**

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

Further to the report, an update was provided on the tyre yard in Ockley Road, which was now up for sale. The Mayor also advised that further to a conversation on the use of electric scooters in the Town Centre, a PCSO who attended the Drop-In Surgery had advised that this ongoing problem will be looked at in greater depth with signage and education on the dangers the use of these scooters in populated centres can cause, required as soon as possible to begin addressing the issue.

The Mayor commented on the success of this latest community engagement and thanked those Councillors who attended.

- 84. TO FURTHER CONSIDER LIGHTING OF A 'LAMP LIGHT OF PEACE' AS PART OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ARMISTICE DAY SERVICE ANNUALLY, FROM 11th NOVEMBER 2026, DEFERRED FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING – MIN. 60 REFERS**

Cllr. Batley redeclared an Ordinary Interest as a Veteran

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

Following brief discussion, Members **AGREED** to take part in the commemorative lighting of a 'Lamp Light of Peace' as part of commemorations on Armistice Day (11th November) from 2026 onwards. Members further

AGREED to the purchasing of the Feuerhand hurricane lantern at a cost of £55.00 to be funded from the Civic Fund.

85. TO RATIFY THE DONATION OF £100 TO ST WILFRID'S HOSPICE IN MEMORY OF FORMER TOWN COUNCILLOR, MR. WILLIAM TOOVEY

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

Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the donation of £100 to St Wilfrid's Hospice in memory of former Town Councillor, Mr. William Toovey.

Comments were made on the friendly and warm nature of Mr. Toovey, who was a valued colleague during his time serving on the Town Council. The Town Clerk and Cllr. Nash attended his funeral to represent the Town Council.

86. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES ON REGENERATION IN THE TOWN INCLUDING REPORT FROM CLLR. NASH (IF AVAILABLE)

Cllr. Nash gave a verbal report to Members.

Referencing the Members Briefing from Doug Nicholls and Sarah Parker from the Blake's Cottage Trust, given to Members prior to the start of the meeting, Cllr. Nash commented on the 'exciting' plans afoot for 2027. The Premier Inn and Alexandra Theatre regenerations were moving at pace but, unfortunately, the same could not be said of the old Brewer's Fayre building, with a recent submission for funding by ADC to improve the frontage, unsuccessful. Plans are now being determined to look at 'temporary' uses for this building, to ensure it does not hold back the positive impact of the rest of the seafront development, which was a concern expressed by many of those present. Cllr. Nash assured Councillors that ADC are already looking at alternatives and recognise that money will need to be spent here to ensure the building is used in the short-term whilst a 'final plan' is devised.

Negotiations are underway for the land at Waterloo Square and permissions being sought for the Arcade regeneration. With the Fishermen's Project proposed visitor's centre and potential links to Waterloo Square, this area could look very different in a couple of years' time, which was an exciting prospect.

Comment was made regarding the currently vacant old Santander building, which, being in such a central location in the Town Centre, was currently having a negative impact on the aesthetics of the shopping precinct. The importance of negotiations and discussions with the landlords were highlighted, to better ensure progress is made in occupying the building again.

A Councillor, who also runs a business in the Town, lobbied for the Bognor Regis BID to deliver more for Town Centre businesses, with the organisation receiving a 1.5% levy on business rates over £11,000 each year, and in his opinion, doing very little to justify the earning of this sum.

The Pier was discussed, with very positive work having taken place by the current owners structurally and internally, with it noted that plans to work on access and the exterior were in the pipeline. Cllrs. Miss. Needs and White advised they would

contact the Operations Manager to discuss these plans and would also remind him of the promised invitations for Town Councillors to tour the building when appropriate.

87. NOTICE OF MOTION (S.O. 9.0) PROPOSED BY CLLR. S. GOODHEART

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

"Myself and four fellow Town Councillors, Barrett, Ralph, Mrs. Warr and Waterhouse, would like to deliver a presentation about the opportunities for Bognor Regis with inward investment, to support the development of tourism in the town. We would like to present this project before Full Council as we believe that Town Council Members should be given the chance to share their views on these matters. After the presentation a Q&A session would be held."

As the Mayor did not deem the issue as urgent, Members **RESOLVED** to instruct that this be placed on the Agenda for the next Environmental and Leisure Committee Meeting, in accordance with S.O. 9a, for consideration.

88. TO NOTE THAT THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (BUDGET) SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 8th DECEMBER 2025 HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY 15th DECEMBER 2025

The Town Clerk's report along with notification that the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting (Budget) has been rescheduled to take place on Monday 15th December 2025 were **NOTED**.

89. MAYOR'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

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

The Mayor spoke of the busy programme of Mayoral events over the summer months, all of which were highly enjoyable, including the most recently attended Bognorphenia Annual Weekend and Music in the Park.

90. TOWN CRIER'S REPORT AND DUTIES UNDERTAKEN

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

91. 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.

91.1 Cllr. Batley – Arun Supporting Families Locality Group.

Cllr. Batley advised that further to his report, the next meeting of the Arun Supporting Local Families Locality Group had been moved to November.

91.2 Cllr. Dawes – Chichester Chamber of Commerce.

- 91.3 Cllr. Mrs. Yeates** – Arun District Association of local Councils (ADALC); Bognor Community Meetings; Bognor Regis Concert Band; Bognor Regis Heritage and Arts Partnership Board (Reserve); Stonepillow (Christian Care Association).
- 92. 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**.

A Member expressed his frustration that despite having accommodation provided in another part of the country and the numerous problems caused by rough sleepers near the entrance to the Arcade, including abusive and threatening behaviour, ADC had made the decision to provide these individuals with social housing in Bognor Regis. Councillors discussed the problem with setting a precedence of affording those causing anti-social behaviour with housing, citing there are many families genuinely struggling, who have not been given the same treatment, which Members deemed as 'outrageous'.

Discussion turned to those selling stolen goods so brazenly in the Town Centre, with Members recalling many incidents where they have seen this happen firsthand. The response from Sussex Police continues to be the filling in of an online form, but it was agreed that a visit by an officer to the Town Centre during lunchtime, would provide sufficient evidence needed to take action.

Cllr. Oppler left the Meeting

The significant amount of time it had taken for police to attend several urgent Category 1A 999 calls over recent weeks, was also discussed, with two Councillors who worked in the Town Centre recalling having to step in to help Community Wardens, in violent situations, which warranted urgent police attendance. All agreed that this was not good enough and again emphasised the need for more police presence and authority to be seen on the streets, to ensure a feeling of community safety in Town. Mention was made again of the damning housing report received by ADC, which had sparked many local stakeholders to rightly challenge the District Council to improve. It was felt that with reports that Bognor Regis could be the 'most dangerous medium sized town in the UK', the same insistence needed to be made toward Sussex Police and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, urging them to improve the situation with crime in the area, which was getting worse.

Cllr. Oppler returned to the Meeting

Because of the need for the Town Council's Warden to spend so much time in the Town Centre, due to rising incidents, this has meant they have been unable to visit the rest of the Wards as often as was hoped and intended for the role. A Member raised the possibility of an electric bike to enable the Warden to travel around the five Wards quicker.

The Bognor Regis Town Action Group was deemed a very useful forum for discussing and trying to address these identified problems, with the appropriate

stakeholders present.

Whilst the issues discussed were of course having a negative impact on the Town, Members were reminded that there were many more law-abiding members of the community, and that Bognor Regis had plenty to offer.

Cllr. Wells, as the Town Councillor representative to these meetings, asked Councillors to let him know if they had any specific issues to be raised at the next meeting, scheduled to take place on 18th September 2025.

93. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE

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

94. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE INCLUDING: DIRECTOR'S REPORT, ANY URGENT ACTIONS TAKEN FOR RATIFICATION (IF AVAILABLE); TO NOTE RECEIPT OF £15,000 MANAGEMENT FEE FROM THE BOGNOR PIER COMPANY LTD. (FINAL PAYMENT FOR 2024)

94.1 Director's report, any urgent actions taken for ratification (if available)

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

94.2 To note receipt of £15,000 Management Fee from The Bognor Pier Company Ltd. (final payment for 2024)

Members **NOTED** receipt of the £15,000 Management Fee received from The Bognor Pier Company Ltd. (final payment for 2024).

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

Members **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).

96. PICTUREDROME SITE UPDATE INCLUDING: UPDATE ON CONCLUSION OF RENT REVIEW FOR ELEMENTS OF THE BUILDING – MIN. 116 OF 28th OCTOBER 2024 REFERS

The Director's verbal report was **NOTED**.

Members were pleased to hear that following review, the rent had now been agreed with the tenant, within the rental value range previously agreed by Members.

A total of £860 plus VAT had been paid by BPCL to PSB for their fees to conclude this matter, which was **RATIFIED**.

Due to the current climate which has seen a reduction in cinema attendance, together with a significant rise in operating costs, a decision has been made by the tenant to keep Screen 3 closed for the time being, which has been deemed as the most financially viable option, as the cinema looks to focus its efforts on reducing operational costs, as many across the sector are having to do. This decision will be reviewed regularly, and Members will be kept updated on the situation.

Fire safety work however, continues to be a priority, with the Fire Officer stating that good progress had been made, with the extensive work done during the refurbishment, including extra boarding and compartmentalization, the building was now considered to be the 'safest it's ever been'.

The Meeting closed at 8.08pm

