



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 27th JANUARY 2025

PRESENT: Cllr. B. Waterhouse (Chair); Cllrs: S. Goodheart, N. Smith, Mrs. J. Warr, P. Wells, P. Woodall and Mrs. G. Yeates

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Deputy Clerk)
1 Member seated in the public gallery
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 6.33pm

110. 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.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Miss. Needs and Oppler with the Clerk recommending that the reasons given were acceptable. These absences were **APPROVED** by Members.

112. 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. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest as a BID Levy payer

113. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th DECEMBER 2024 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13th JANUARY 2025

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December 2024 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 13th January 2025 and these were signed by the Chair.

114. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

The Chair adjourned the Meeting at 6.35pm

A member of the public expressed sadness at the passing of Town Councillor Jim Brooks who, they said, would be missed immensely. It was proposed that a plaque be erected, or a street named, in Jim's memory.

A Member seated in the public gallery asked if the Town Council would consider taking on the management of the current Town Centre Business Warden, when the contract with the Bognor Regis BID comes to an end.

The Chair reconvened the Meeting at 6.37pm

115. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

115.1 18th November 2024 - Min. 88 Town Force Hours for Outside Event Organisers

Members had previously discussed the additional Town Force hours received by some event organisers over and above those that the Committee had previously allocated. As a result of the debate, it had been agreed that on this occasion the charges would be held in abeyance, but the event organisers identified should be written to and advised that if they go beyond their allocated hours in the future, then they will be charged. The following responses had been received from two of the event organisers: -

Bognor Prom 10k Road Race

"I've received a letter from Glenna Frost, sent to my predecessor Mr Stevenson-Gill concerning an overrun of allocated manhours for the 2024 race.

I appreciate the comments and hopefully we will keep the time the TF guys spend with us under those allocated.

The 2025 Race is being held on the 18th May and due to moving the race village to the South of West Park we will be requiring more barriers. I think the delivery, positioning and retrieval of the barriers was the main reason for the overrun. Would it be possible to collect the barriers on Friday the 16th from your depot, position them ourselves and return them on the Monday 19th?

We appreciate your assistance with the race and your guys do a superb job."

Bognor Regis Armed Forces Day

"Thank you for your letter regarding Town Force Hours used for the Bognor Regis Armed Forces Day event this year which were exceeded by 10 Hours.

Please will you sincerely thank the Policy and Resources Committee on behalf of the Bognor Regis Armed Forces Day Committee for not charging us for these extra hours and that they can be rest assured we will take every step possible not to let this happen again in the future.

Our sincere thanks."

115.2 23rd September 2024 - Mins. 57.11 and 57.13 Update to Event Dates for 2025

Members were informed that Wednesday 29th October 2025 is the date that has been set by the Events Officer to hold a Halloween event during the

week of half term in Hotham Park. Further details regarding the content of the event will be reported to Members at a future meeting.

Saturday 6th December 2025 has provisionally been booked as the date for the Carols in the Park event. This follows on from the Switch-On event the previous Saturday and enables the Rotary Club to provide assistance, which would not be possible if the event were to be held any later in the month owing to their other commitments during December.

115.3 23rd September and 18th November 2024 - Mins. 61 and 77.2 High Street Bench Relocation

Members noted that the relocation of the High Street bench to York Road finally took place in the middle of January following the delay owing to the erection of scaffolding in the location of the bench towards the end of last year, which prohibited its removal at that time.

115.4 3rd June 2024 - Min. 7.3 UKSPF Bike Repair Stations Project

Members were previously advised that everything was in place in relation to the UKSPF Bike Repair Stations project except the legal documentation with regards to the leases to allow for these to be installed on ADC land. Leases for Hothamton Car Park, land adjacent to Rock Gardens and land adjacent to Gloucester Road had now finally been completed and signed off. The draft lease for Hotham Park Car Park has been approved as drafted with the final document awaited from the District Council's Legal Department. Once this is received it will be signed off by the Clerk and returned to ADC for countersigning and completion. Town Force can then proceed with the installation over the next couple of weeks and the project will be promoted to the public. In view of the length of time and work involved in reviewing the documentation, an interim invoice to cover the work undertaken thus far has been received from the Council's Solicitor, which has been paid.

115.5 25th March 2024 Min. 150 Councillors' Allowances

Following a review by the District Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in early 2024, it was recommended that the District Council's Basic Allowance be increased to £6,638 with effect from 1st April 2024. This was subsequently approved by ADC Full Council on 13th March 2024. The Parish Basic Allowance is linked to the District Basic Allowance and is also subject to being inflated in line with officer pay. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, therefore allows for all elected Town/Parish Councillors to receive a Basic Parish Allowance equating to 10% of the District Council's Basic Allowance.

At the March Policy and Resources Committee Meeting, Members approved an increase to the Councillors' Allowance to the limit of £663.80 per annum, equating to 10% of the District Council's Basic Allowance, in line

with the recommendation payable from 1st April 2024. This resulted in a budget overspend in 2024-25 with the budget amended to reflect this increase for the 2025-26 financial year.

Notification has now been received from ADC regarding the 2024 Staff Pay Award and following a number of meetings with various departments at ADC including the newly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel, it is confirmed that a percentage of 3.70% will be added to the Basic Allowance. This has resulted in the District Basic Allowance increasing from £6,638 to £6,884 per annum with effect from April 2024.

Members will now need to consider whether they wish to increase the Councillors' Allowance once again from the current annual figure of £663.80 to £688.40 (equivalent to an increase of £24.60 per annum) and whether this should be backdated. Therefore, an item will be placed on the next agenda for Members consideration.

115.6 8th January 2024 Min. 106.2 Southdowns Music Festival Partnership Funding

Following agreement by Members last year, to support the Southdowns Music Festival by entering into a three-year Funding Agreement, Members noted that a certified copy of their Financial Statement for the 2024 event as a condition of their Funding Agreement has been received.

115.7 NALC Sector Standards survey

On the 8th of January 2025, the Deputy Clerk emailed all Members informing them that the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government had recently issued a local government standards consultation. Views are being sought on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England, and measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime to ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension. A link to the consultation, and one being simultaneously run by NALC, was provided in the email, along with an explanation that whilst there was the option to respond as an elected Member, Council Officer or Corporate Body, some of the latter questions in both surveys were based on individual experiences. Therefore, Members were advised that should they wish to take part in either survey, then they should do so individually, by the deadline date of 26th February 2025.

116. CONSIDERATION OF ALLOCATION OF TOWN FORCE TIME FOR EXTERNAL TOWN EVENTS 2025 – REPORT BY EVENTS OFFICER

The Events Officer's report was **NOTED**.

Reference was made to those organisations who had exceeded the hours allocated to their 2024 events, for which the Committee had decided not to subsequently charge for. The question was asked as to why it was recommended in the report that those same organisations be awarded a greater number of hours in 2025 than those given in 2024. Other Members understood this to be as a result of lessons being learnt and felt that the Town Council should continue to support these external events. There was the risk that by under-allocating hours, the Town Force team could be asked to unexpectedly work longer than had been agreed and that increasing the hours allocated could avoid this from happening.

A Member noted that there was no recommendation for Town Force hours to be allocated to the Council's new Town Centre Officer, anticipated to be in place from April 2025. The Chair stated that if there were to be new events, requiring Town Force hours, then a budget would be needed.

Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommended Town Force hours for 2025 external town events.

117. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT

The Town Force Manager's report was **NOTED**, including reference to the Town Force Vehicle Maintenance Budget being overspent in the current financial year owing to unforeseen expenditure.

Following a query around whether alternative, larger accommodation for Town Force had been identified, the Town Clerk advised that, to date, no alternative had been found but that there was a watching brief being kept whilst the lease for the current accommodation ran its course.

118. REPORT ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING ANY REPORTS ON MEETINGS WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the Bognor Regis BID Team December Update attached, was **NOTED**.

A Member was of the understanding that the Bognor Regis BID was no longer operating. However, as explained by the Chair, this was not the case but the full-time role of the BID COO had been replaced by the part-time role of the BID Facilitator.

119. TO FURTHER CONSIDER POTENTIAL SITES IN BOGNOR REGIS FOR EVENT ORGANISERS TO USE FOR STORAGE, AND TO AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS – MIN. 84 REFERS

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

Having considered the responses received from both Arun District Council (ADC) and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) relating to any available

space they might have that could be used to store equipment for community groups, the suggestion of vacant land on which storage containers could be placed was proposed.

The potential consequences of the English Devolution White Paper on the future of both the district and county council were raised with concern about what might happen to the assets currently under the control of both authorities and the suggestion that the Town Council should express an interest in securing such assets.

There was a proposal that Officers should write again to ADC and WSCC to enquire about available land they might have on their estate portfolio, whilst also looking into the cost of storage containers to be placed on such land.

It was further proposed that whilst writing to ADC, both the Leader of the Council and Director of Growth be included and that the pathway for the Town Council to secure assets of the district council be explored ahead of any Devolution.

It was unanimously **AGREED** that, prior to letters being written to ADC and WSCC, Members email the Town Clerk identifying assets in Bognor Regis that should be the focus of any future correspondence.

120. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MONTHLY COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT FROM THE BOGNOR REGIS BID, INCLUDING BUSINESS CRIME REPORTING THROUGH DISC, FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2024

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the Community Warden report from the Bognor Regis BID for November and December 2024, was **NOTED**.

121. INTERNAL AUDIT INCLUDING: - TO REVIEW THE 2025/26 ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN AND TO CONSIDER ANY ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR INCLUSION

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

Members reviewed the key control tests detailed in the report, with no additional items for inclusion identified and unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of the Audit Plan for 2025/26 to the Town Council.

122. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL ASSESSMENT/REVIEW OF RISKS

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the Overall Summary and Action Plan attached, was **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Overall Summary and Action Plan of the Annual Assessment/Review of Risks for 2024/2025 be referred to the Town Council for approval. Once approved by Council, the Action Plan is to be signed by the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, and the Town Clerk.

123. TO CONSIDER THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING LOCATION, FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS SCHEDULED FOR 17th MARCH 2025

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the agenda for the Electors Meeting held in 2024 that was attached, was **NOTED**.

Given that there was no cost to the Council and based on the historic low number of attendees at the meeting, it was proposed that the Annual Town Meeting of Electors for 2025 be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall. There was some discussion about the seating arrangements, with a reminder that this was a meeting for electors, not a meeting of the council, and that seating should reflect this with elected Members seated amongst members of the public.

Members proposed that items on the agenda to stimulate the debate could include the level of crime in Bognor Regis and policing on the street, as well as Devolution. It was acknowledged that if both topics were discussed then there could be a tight timeframe. With 30 minutes allotted to the invited speakers for each topic proposed, it was suggested that those wishing to speak in the audience be allowed 2 minutes to do so and that this be communicated at the start of the meeting.

Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, and Chief Constable Jo Shiner, be invited to take questions around policing, and that the CEO of Arun District Council, Dawn Hudd, be invited to talk about Devolution. The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at Bognor Regis Town Hall on 17th March 2025, whereby doors will open at 6.30pm with the meeting commencing at 7pm.

124. TO NOTE THE NOTES OF THE ADC/BRTC LIAISON MEETING HELD ON 10th DECEMBER 2024 AND AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS – MIN. 90 REFERS

The Deputy Clerk's report, and the Notes of the ADC/BRTC Liaison Meeting held on 10th December 2024 previously circulated to Councillors, was **NOTED**.

As detailed in the report, the Town Council had been asked at the Liaison Meeting to provide an update to ADC on whether there is an intention to take forward the draft Vision that had been worked on previously. In light of ADC's current deliberations around the Bognor Regis Masterplan, it is important that the Town Council's Vision informs this piece of work.

In response, a Member wanted to know how progressed ADC's Masterplan for Bognor Regis was, whether there was a Working Group, whether this piece of work was delegated to ADC Officers or Councillors, and what impact the announcement for Devolution might have on progressing the Masterplan. Officers will seek answers to these questions at the next Liaison Meeting with ADC, and report back to the Committee at a future meeting. Another Member replied to say that in a recent newsletter circulated to all Town Councillors, the CEO of ADC had addressed the topic of Devolution and had stated that the business of the district council would continue as usual until further notice. It was therefore important, in their opinion, that the Town Council has a voice and should welcome the opportunity to feed into the Bognor Regis Masterplan.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Council's draft Vision be circulated to all Councillors, in its current form, asking that they ready themselves for considering the document at a future meeting whereby any new ideas could be put forward.

125. REGENERATION INCLUDING: - TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BOGNOR REGIS REGENERATION BOARD – COUNCIL MIN. 135 REFERS

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

It was proposed that the Town Council facilitates a meeting with ADC and WSCC where regeneration updates be given. Whilst the format would be different to that of the now dissolved Bognor Regis Regeneration Board, lines of communication would be kept open, where other groups could be invited including representatives from the University of Chichester Bognor Regis campus.

It was **AGREED** that ways in which the Town Council could facilitate Bognor Regis Regeneration Meetings would be investigated by the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

126. TO FURTHER CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY WARDEN COVER IN THE TOWN CENTRE FOR 2025-2026 – COUNCIL MIN. 129.1 REFERS

The Clerk suggested that, owing to the contractual nature around the provision, the item be moved to the end of the meeting and considered under Confidential Business.

127. It was **RESOLVED to vary the order of business and move Agenda item 17 to follow Agenda item 23 – S.O. 10(a)(vi).**

128. TO RATIFY THE ADDITIONAL COST OF COMMUNITY WARDEN PROVISION FOR SATURDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2024 – MIN. 91 REFERS

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

Members **RATIFIED** expenditure of £160.32 excluding VAT for the additional Warden cover provided in the Town Centre at the Switch-On event held on 30th November 2024, to be funded from General Reserves.

129. TO CONSIDER AND RATIFY THE LEVEL OF FUNDING TO BE AWARDED TO THOSE ORGANISATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR PARTNERSHIP FUNDING - MIN. 108 OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF 13th JANUARY 2025 REFERS

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

Cllr. Wells declared an Ordinary Interest as a member of the Bognor Pier Trust C.I.C. and confirmed that he would not take part in the discussion or vote

The Chair reconfirmed that his recommendations to the Extraordinary Meeting on 13th January 2025 had been to award the full amounts requested to the three organisations that had been identified for Partnership Funding in Year 1. Following further liaison with the Town Clerk, having identified the funds available for Years 2 and 3 in line with other Partnership Funding already committed and so as not to exceed the anticipated budgets available, it was being recommended that a reduction of £1,000 be applied per annum to the amounts awarded to each organisation in Years 2 and 3.

Members **RATIFIED** the level of funding to be awarded to those organisations identified for Partnership Funding, under a 3-year agreement commencing 1st April 2025, as follows: -

Bognor Pier Trust C.I.C. -	Year 1: £3,919.15
	Year 2: £2,919.15
	Year 3: £1,919.15
Bognor Regis Carnival Association -	Year 1: £4,500
	Year 2: £3,500
	Year 3: £2,500
Bognor Regis Seafront Lights (Illuminate event) -	Year 1: £5,000
	Year 2: £4,000
	Year 3: £3,000

130. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING UPDATES AND MINOR AMENDMENTS

The Deputy Clerk's report, and the draft Constitution with proposed updates and minor amendments attached, was **NOTED**.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council the **ADOPTION** of the Constitution, as proposed, without any further suggested changes.

131. FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -

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

131.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of December 2024 - previously copied to Councillors

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of December 2024.

131.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of November and December 2024, whilst noting that this is now undertaken by any authorised bank signatory other than the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee in line with the Council's Financial Regulations (F.R. 2.6 refers)

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

131.3 To ratify the use of two BACS payments to cover expenditure for the Christmas Switch-On event 2024

Members **RATIFIED** the use of two BACS payments as detailed.

132. CORRESPONDENCE

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

133. 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 17, 24 and 25 (contractual).

134. TO FURTHER CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY WARDEN COVER IN THE TOWN CENTRE FOR 2025-2026 – COUNCIL MIN. 129.1 REFERS (DEFERRED EARLIER IN THE MEETING – MIN. 126 REFERS)

The Deputy Clerk's report, and the BID's Community Warden report for December 2024 attached, was **NOTED**.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that it had been resolved that provision for a 7-day Warden service be included in the 2025/2026 Budget, to be offset against Revenue with the amount going into Reserves adjusted accordingly. It was further agreed that allowance would be made for the Policy and Resources Committee to settle the final details regarding the period of cover once the feedback from the trial of the additional Warden in December 2024 had been received (Min. 129.1 refers).

It had been hoped that the data for the additional Warden would have been recorded separately to the usual monthly Warden report, however this had not happened. Nonetheless, whilst interactions with businesses were lower than usual, more "direct interventions" with individuals were undertaken by the Wardens with the stock recovery level significantly higher in December than the previous months.

Members were reminded that the level of Warden cover agreed, and the contractual costs associated with this service, would determine the procurement process that the Town Council would need to adhere to. The Town Clerk detailed the estimated costs associated with the varying levels of cover proposed. In accordance with Financial Regulations, for contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts (F.R. 5.7). Alternatively, the procurement for an additional Warden could come under the Bognor Regis BID, as was the case for the current Warden contract.

The Town Clerk advised that she had spoken, as requested by Members, with Haywards Heath Town Council about their experience of providing Community Wardens. They had been making this provision for almost 10 years, for which they had full control, and explained that whilst their Wardens were centered around the Town Centre, they also did outreach work at the allotments and cemetery, for instance, for which they had access to a van.

Following comments around the decision being based on the needs of the Town, over the cost associated with the level of provision, and having fully understood the cost implications of what was being agreed, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that provision of a 7-day Warden service should be in place for 12-months for which the costs will be offset against Revenue and the amount going into Reserves adjusted accordingly.

It was further **AGREED** that the management arrangements for this provision would fall to the Town Council, and that Members would suggest to the Town Clerk what requirements of the role should be included in the specification to be used for the tendering process.

135. TOWN FORCE: NOTE OF OUTSTANDING DEBTORS INCLUDING RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL OF ANY ACTION IN RELATION TO IRRECOVERABLE SUMS IN LINE WITH FINANCIAL REGULATION 13.3

The Committee **NOTED** the list (confidential). The Town Clerk confirmed that no action, in relation to irrecoverable sums, was necessary at this time.

136. TO RATIFY ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE (STAFFING) MEETING HELD ON 13th JANUARY 2025

The Chair gave a verbal report on the recommendations from the Joint Consultative Sub-Committee (Staffing), and the Committee **NOTED** the Deputy Clerk's report (confidential).

The Committee unanimously **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the following recommendations: -

136.1 The recommendation that the updated Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) Employer's Discretion Policy be adopted and that it be referred to Council for noting.

136.2 In order to meet the business needs of the Town Council, there be a restructuring of staff with a new post, remunerated on SCP 5-11 (pro rata), effective 1st May 2025.

136.3 The job description for the new Town Market Officer role that is due to come into effect from 1st April 2025.

The Meeting closed at 8.19pm