BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 27th JULY 2026

PRESENT:	Cllr. P. Wells (Chair), Cllrs: J. Barrett, P. Botterill, D. Dawes, S. Goodheart, P. Ralph, N. Smith, Mrs. J. Warr, M. White and Mrs. G. Yeates
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs. J. Davis (Town Clerk) Mr. M. Hirst (Deputy Clerk) Mr. D. Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd.) (part of meeting) 1 Member sat in the public gallery 1 member of the public

The Meeting opened at 6.30pm

46. 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.

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

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

48. 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.

Cllrs. Wells and Dawes declared an Ordinary Interest as a BID Levy payer

49. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1st JUNE 2026, AND THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 29th JUNE 2026

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st June 2026, and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 29th June 2026, and these were signed by the Chair.

50. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND STATEMENTS

Neither the member of the public, nor the Member, seated in the public gallery wished to ask any questions, or make any statements. The meeting, therefore, was not adjourned.

51. CLERK'S REPORT FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Clerk had nothing to report from the previous Minutes.

52. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MONTHLY COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT, FROM THE BOGNOR REGIS BID, INCLUDING BUSINESS CRIME REPORTING THROUGH DISC, FOR MAY AND JUNE 2026

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

It was **FURTHER NOTED** that, unfortunately, the Bognor Regis BID had been unable to provide the monthly BID Community Warden reports for May nor June 2026 in time for the meeting. Members therefore unanimously **AGREED** to **DEFER** the noting of these reports to the next meeting.

Members raised concerns regarding the continued irregular absences of the BID Community Warden within the town centre, noting the valuable role the position had previously played in providing a visible presence, supporting businesses, reporting issues, and acting as a link between traders and partner agencies. Members considered that the lack of this resource had been noticed by businesses and had contributed to concerns about the overall management and safety of the town centre.

Members also expressed concern over a perceived reduction in visible police presence within Bognor Regis. It was felt that the lack of regular patrols was having a detrimental impact on public confidence, particularly in the town centre, and that greater engagement between Sussex Police, the Town Council and local businesses was needed to address ongoing issues.

Cllr. Mrs. Warr briefly left the Meeting before returning

Members unanimously **AGREED** to write to Sussex Police expressing the Council's concerns regarding police visibility and engagement within the town, and to invite a representative to attend a future meeting of Full Council to discuss these matters.

53. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MONTHLY REPORT FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY WARDEN FOR MAY AND JUNE 2026

The Deputy Clerk's report, including the monthly report for the Town Council's Community Warden providing a summary of the Community Warden's daily interactions throughout June 2026, was **NOTED**.

It was **NOTED** that no Community Warden report had been provided for May 2026, as the Community Warden had only been operational for one week during the month owing to issues surrounding the tendering of the Community Warden service (Min. 8 refers).

54. REPORT ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES INCLUDING: - ANY REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE BID MANAGEMENT BOARD; UPDATE IN RELATION TO LETTER SENT TO DEPUTY CEO OF ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL IN RELATION TO ROUGH SLEEPING IN LONDON ROAD PRECINCT – MIN. 25 REFERS

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

Members considered the response received from Arun District Council regarding concerns over rough sleeping in London Road, particularly in the vicinity of the Halifax branch. Whilst noting the information provided, Members remained concerned about the ongoing impact on the town centre, including the effect on nearby businesses, residents and visitors.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **AGREED** that the Town Council write to Halifax to raise its concerns regarding the ongoing issues of rough sleeping outside the premises and to encourage the bank to engage with the relevant agencies to help address the situation.

55. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE BOGNOR REGIS TOWN CENTRE ACTION GROUP MEETING HELD ON 28th MAY 2026

The Deputy Clerk's report, along with the Notes of the Action Group Meeting held on 28th May 2026, was **NOTED**.

56. TO NOTE THE NOTES OF THE ADC/BRTC LIAISON MEETING HELD ON 23rd JUNE 2026 AND AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS

The Deputy Clerk's report, along with the Notes of the ADC/BRTC Liaison Meeting held on 23rd June that had previously been circulated to Councillors, was **NOTED**.

57. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN FORCE REPORT

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

Members wished to record their thanks to the Town Force team for their continued hard work, particularly in relation to the recent installation of bunting in the town centre.

58. TO NOTE THAT BOGNOR REGIS WAS NOT AMONGST THOSE SHORTLISTED, BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT, FOR UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028 – MIN. 17 REFERS

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

Members noted with disappointment that Bognor Regis had not been shortlisted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for UK Town of Culture 2028.

Members wished to place on record their sincere thanks to Officers, in particular the Town Clerk, and all partner organisations involved in preparing and submitting the bid, recognising the considerable time, effort and collaboration that had gone into the application.

59. TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEISURE COMMITTEE THAT THE REMAINING BALANCE OF £1,463.57 IN THE 2025/2026 PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION BUDGET BE EARMARKED FOR SIMILAR USE IN THE 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR (MIN. 12 OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18th MAY 2026 REFERS)

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

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the remaining balance of £1,463.57 in the 2025/2026 Publicity and Promotion Budget be earmarked for similar use in the 2026/2027 financial year.

60. FINAL UPDATE AND RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE ON EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR 2025, DEFERRED FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 1st JUNE 2026 (MIN. 28 REFERS)

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

Members unanimously **NOTED** the finances for the Town Council events of 2025, and **RATIFIED** the overspend of £18.89.

61. TO CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF AN E-BIKE FOR THE COMMUNITY WARDEN (MIN. 78 REFERS)

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

Members considered the proposal for the provision of an e-bike for use by the Community Warden. It was noted that an e-bike could enable the Warden to travel more quickly between wards while still allowing them to easily dismount and engage with members of the public or respond to incidents as required.

During discussion, Members acknowledged the wider issues surrounding the misuse of e-bikes. However, other Members emphasised the distinction between legal, pedal-assisted e-bikes and illegal modified vehicles, noting that these should not be conflated.

The Town Clerk provided further clarification on the report and advised Members of the Community Warden's views regarding the potential operational drawbacks of an e-bike, including a restricted ability to engage the public on foot and difficulty in efficiently securing the bike when responding to incidents.

Whilst Members **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE** to the provision of an e-bike for the Community Warden it was **AGREED** to **DEFER** consideration of the proposal pending further operational feedback from the Community Warden. Officers were requested to bring the matter back as part of the wider review of the Community Warden contract and tender arrangements due to be considered in November, at which point Members would determine whether an e-bike should be included within the new specification.

Cllrs. Mrs. Warr and Smith voted **AGAINST** the proposal to defer and asked that this be noted.

62. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARKETS IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND AGREE ANY NEXT STEPS (MIN. 41 REFERS)

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

Following a further verbal update from the Deputy Clerk, together with recommendations from Officers, Members reviewed the current position regarding future market provision.

After discussion, Members unanimously **AGREED** that Officers continue discussions with Company B regarding the delivery of market provision for 2027, whilst also progressing discussions with Company C in relation to establishing a more frequent farmers' market.

In addition, Members requested that Officers continue efforts to secure a provider for a 2026 Christmas Market, including reopening discussions with Company A. Should this not prove possible, Officers were asked to investigate the feasibility of the Town Council delivering the event in-house.

63. <u>TO FURTHER CONSIDER UPDATES TO THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND WORKING FROM HOME POLICY, DEFERRED FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (MIN. 29 REFERS) AND TO CONSIDER THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY</u>

The Deputy Clerk’s report, including the relevant appendices, was **NOTED**.

Members were reminded that the Social Media Policy, Training and Development Policy and Working from Home Policy had been deferred from the previous meeting pending updates (Min. 29 refers).

Members highlighted the usefulness of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy in today’s society and considered that the policy would need reviewing annually to keep abreast of technological advances.

Members also requested that the provision of social media training for Councillors be explored. It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would email all Councillors to ascertain the level of interest before any further arrangements were considered.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council the adoption of the Social Media Policy, Training and Development Policy, Working From Home Policy and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy as attached and without amendment.

64. <u>ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME INCLUDING: -</u>

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

64.1 To ratify expenditure of £2,940 excluding VAT for 3 x Dell Pro 16 Laptops

Members unanimously **RATIFIED** expenditure of £2,940 excluding VAT for 3 x Dell Pro 16 Laptops.

64.2 To ratify expenditure of £877.49 excluding VAT for a PVC Marquee Tent

Members unanimously **RATIFIED** expenditure of £877.49 excluding VAT for a PVC Marquee Tent.

65. <u>FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING: -</u>

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

65.1 To note Committee I&E Reports for the month of June 2026 - previously copied to Councillors

Members **NOTED** receipt of the financial reports for the month of June 2026.

65.2 To note verification of bank reconciliations with the Town Council's Current account and Mayor's Charity account for the months of May and June 2026, 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**.

66. <u>CORRESPONDENCE</u>

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

67. <u>TO RESOLVE TO MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS (S.O. 3d) – (CONTRACTUAL)</u>

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 23 and 24 (contractual).

68. <u>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</u>

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

69. <u>TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOGNOR REGIS TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY AND TO AGREE FURTHER ACTIONS</u>

Cllrs. Goodheart, Mrs. Warr and Mrs. Yeates declared an Ordinary Interest as Arun District Council Members and declared that they would not participate in discussion nor vote, and would leave the room

Members received the recommendations of the Bognor Regis Town Hall Working Party. There followed a discussion, during which guidance was sought from the Town Council's Accountant, Mr. Kemp.

Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Business Plan and formal offer proposed by the Working Party and **RECOMMEND** them to Council.

Members **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that Delegated Authority be given to the Town Clerk to send the proposed letter, to which minor amendments had been discussed and agreed, to the Chief Executive of Arun District Council, detailing the formal offer alongside the Business Plan.

Membership of the Town Council's negotiating party, should discussions progress with the District Council, was **RECOMMENDED** to Council.

Cllr. White **ABSTAINED** from all proposals and asked that this be noted.

The Meeting closed at 8.28pm