



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF BOGNOR REGIS HELD ON MONDAY 16th MARCH 2015

PRESENT (BRTC)

Cllr T Gardiner - Town Mayor (in the chair)
Cllr J Brooks
Cllr Mrs S Daniells
Cllr P Dillon
Cllr D Edwards
Cllr D Meagher
Cllr R Nash (part of meeting)
Cllr Mrs J Warr
Cllr P Wells (part of meeting)
(Note: Cllrs Brooks, Mrs Daniells, Edwards, Nash, Mrs Warr and Wells are also Arun District Councillors)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs G Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs H Knight (Minutes Secretary)
Mrs R Hambleton (Minutes Secretary)
Mr T Rahman (Town Centre Manager)
One representative of the press
Approximately 32 members of the public of which 10 were Electors

COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting
Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on 17th March 2014
Audited Accounts to 31st March 2014
Proposed Expenditure for the year 2015/2016
Bognor Pier Company Ltd Accounts to 31st December 2014
Schedule of Councillors' Attendance at Meetings

The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm

1. WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR AND INTRODUCTION OF COUNCILLORS PRESENT

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and attention was drawn to the evacuation procedure in the event of fire. The Town Councillors in attendance introduced themselves.

2. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON MONDAY 17th MARCH 2014 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 17th March 2014 were considered and agreed as a true record, and signed by the Town Mayor as presiding Chairman.

2.1 Min. 10 - To deal with any other questions

The Chairman of the Civic Society asked about the progress of the five Resolutions made at the last Annual Electors Meeting in 2014, in particular item 10.4 :-

That the Town Council actively and consistently lobbies central government and other local government tiers to immediately put a temporary suspension on all significant housing development in the West Sussex coastal plain area west of Worthing. This suspension to continue until the current and possible future flooding problems have been resolved to the satisfaction of the insurance companies as demonstrated by normal non-loaded premiums, normal excesses and no flooding clause exclusion to properties in all previously affected localities.

Proposed by L Barnes and **Seconded** by G Farina

He also asked that it be recorded that the Civic Society now has a policy that they wish to see the Coastal Plain of Bognor Regis included as part of the Southdowns National Park, as it would be of benefit to the environment and local residents.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee explained that all the resolutions had been discussed by Full Council and referred to the most appropriate Committee for consideration. The Town Council had resolved that they did not wish to lobby central government and other government tiers to put a suspension on all significant housing development in the West Sussex coastal plain area west of Worthing. In addition the second part of the resolution was ongoing and the Environment and Leisure Committee were actively looking to work with the Environment Agency on flooding matters.

3. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Town Mayor gave his report - copy attached to Minutes.

4. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2014 AND BUDGET FOR 2015-2016

The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr R Nash, reported on the Accounts of the Town Council to year ending 31st March 2014, which had been circulated.

Bognor Regis Town Council had agreed a precept increase of 2% (£2.11 per annum for a band D property). Difficult decisions had been made due to the cut in Council Tax Support Grant. Cuts had been made to Grant Aid Funding, public toilet contribution and to CCTV. Changes were also being made to staffing. The Town Council had recently agreed the addition of a fourth screen at the Picturedrome and it was hoped that once planning permission was granted work would begin in mid-September 2015.

There were no further questions.

The Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

5. **TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE BOGNOR PIER COMPANY LTD YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2014**

The Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

6. **TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY FRIDAY 13th MARCH 2015**

6.1 The following **Resolution** had been received:

This Meeting

1. *Supports the creation of a single parish, Bognor Regis Urban Town, to replace the current six parishes covering the urban area comprising Aldwick, Bersted, Felpham, Middleton and Pagham and the current Bognor Town comprising Hotham, Marine, Orchard and Pevensy Wards, and that a Bognor Regis Urban Town Council be formed in place of the existing 6 parish-level councils.*
2. *Supports the abolition of Arun District Council and the remission of its responsibilities to a single-tier unitary principal council based on the current County Council area or other suitable area, and that this council could delegate many functions to the Urban Town Council.*
3. *We call on residents in the other 5 parishes to support this initiative in their areas so that a single voice can speak for our Town of 63,000 people.*
4. *We call on the current Town Council to establish appropriate machinery to take this forward on behalf of the Town electors and in the best interests of local governance in the urban area of which the Town is part.*

Proposed Jan Cosgrove **Seconded** Liz Allen

The proposer felt that similar resolutions had been passed at previous Electors meetings and the Town Council had apparently not acted on them. Funds had been put aside by BRTC for a poll on the matter. Having been asked to contact the other Parish Councils to find out their feelings about

the proposal, Mr Cosgrove had not received any positive responses and the Town Council had not progressed the poll.

A vote was taken and the majority were in favour. Accordingly the Resolution was **passed**.

The proposer then proposed that voting now take place to support a poll. A vote was taken and the result was only 4 in favour. Therefore the proposal was **lost**.

It was clarified that the Resolution passed would be referred to the first full Council meeting in July for consideration. Members of the public were encouraged to attend to put their views across or to write to the Council.

7. **PRESENTATION FROM TOWN CENTRE MANAGER, TOYUBUR RAHMAN**

The Town Centre Manager gave a presentation on the remit of his role, work to date and answered questions from members of the public.

8. **UPDATE ON THE PICTUREDROME EXPANSION PROPOSALS**

The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr Nash, reported that a third screen was currently being installed at the Picturedrome, paid for by the Tenant, which will seat 45. Following the public consultation for which there were 1,800 responses the results showed that 93% were in support of the building of a fourth screen. The Town Council had recently agreed a preferred contractor for the expansion of a fourth screen at a maximum cost of £850,000 to protect this iconic building for the town.

9. **OTHER REGENERATION MATTERS**

There were none raised.

10. **BOGNOR REIGS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE – REPORT BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee Chairman, Cllr Mrs. Daniells reported on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan for Bognor Regis, which had taken longer than anticipated due to the size and range of complex issues in Bognor Regis. A good deal of support, mostly free, had been secured from Government agencies such as Locality. Good progress was being made now, with the draft submission plan shortly going to ADC followed by public consultation. Unfortunately due to the upcoming elections the Referendum would not now take place until October and she asked the public to vote.

11. PRESENTATION BY THE BOGNOR PIER TRUST ON THEIR BID TO THE HERITAGE ENTERPRISE - REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF BOGNOR PIER TRUST

Paul Wells, Chairman of the Bognor Pier Trust gave a presentation on the work/objectives of the Pier Trust. He explained that the Pier Trust had been set up to prevent any further loss or damage to the pier's structure, and eventually restore it to what it once was, a thriving and bustling attraction in the heart of our town and to work with the current owner to bring the pier back into community ownership.

He reported that Membership to the Trust was increasing and funding was being sought from a number of sources. The Pier would be 150 this year and celebrations would be taking place to mark the occasion.

12. NEW TOWN WIFI/WEBSITE - REPORT FROM CLLR BROOKS

Cllr. Brooks presented the new Town Council website to those present. In addition a presentation was given on a new privately owned website, www.bognor.today which displayed all manner of events in Bognor Regis and could be accessed by any organisation.

13. TO DEAL WITH ANY OTHER QUESTIONS

13.1 The Civic Society put forward an addition to the **Resolution** passed in 2014, the original resolution being:

That the Town Council actively and consistently lobbies central government and other local government tiers to immediately put a temporary suspension on all significant housing development in the West Sussex coastal plain area west of Worthing. This suspension to continue until the current and possible future flooding problems have been resolved to the satisfaction of the insurance companies as demonstrated by normal non-loaded premiums, normal excesses and no flooding clause exclusion to properties in all previously affected localities.

13.2 The following addition was proposed by the Civic Society:

In view of the unique persistent high water table, with its further flooding implications due to changing weather patterns, that results in no hose pipe bans in this area of the South East, together with the attractive environmental amenities found in the coastal plain, it is proposed that the South Downs National Park be extended to include the coastal plain area west of Worthing. This does not preclude essential building of starter homes for locals in already identified brown field sites.

Proposed by L Barnes and **Seconded** by A Clark

A debate took place regarding the addition to the resolution. Concern was expressed over the planning restrictions and loss of control under the South Downs National Park. It was noted that all the flooding groups in the

area have shown their support for the addition to the Resolution.

A vote was taken and the result was 3 in favour and 3 against. The casting vote was with the Mayor who voted in favour. Accordingly the Resolution was **passed**.

The Town Mayor thanked all present for attending.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Annual Report of the Council (by Town Mayor)
Agenda item 3

I'll give an overview of some of the things that have happened or been high priority or topical during the past year, some of which are Town Council projects, some are other authorities or organisations and some are partnerships:

The demise of Arun District Council's partnership with St Modwen to develop the two strategic sites of The Regis Centre and Hothamton has allowed a re-look at regeneration of Bognor Regis. The Picturedrome Cinema is increasing to 3 screens this year by the operator/tenant and the Council starting the work on the 4th screen later in the year (more details about that later). We have set up the Bognor Regis Heritage Partnership which is co-ordinating various projects to stimulate pride in and respect for the town's heritage. Bognor Pier Trust has continued to work hard on its aim of improvements and renovation of the pier (again more about that later).

The public realm work in the London Road should encourage more national companies so hopefully bringing some new names into the town which in turn should attract more people – they will be able to take advantage of our 2 hour free parking scheme which is now into its 3rd year and has been a great success. With more public realm work being carried out this year around the station, the whole area should look brighter. After that there will be further phases to link Station Square to the new precinct and ultimately continuation to the seafront. There's even a new 'Beach on the Beach' sand play area opening at Easter, providing more for families. The Town Council has continued its provision of keeping the launch/jetski ramp open.

The area between West St and the sea is being looked at by an independent group who hope to have that area looking like The Lanes in Brighton. The town now benefits from the new WiFi scheme (a report on this later) and these projects too will help to improve business and provide more for visitors. I await to see what flag status we will receive for our beach and sea water standard.

The Town Council continues to provide many events for residents and visitors, in addition to those organised by separate groups, and this year there is a new independent organisation arranging a new look Town Carnival. Despite some problems along the way, there are now new streetlights throughout the area and the new lights along the promenade

will encourage people to use it for evening walks, perhaps some of the shops or concessions near the sea will stay open longer. We are closer to having a Bognor Regis Neighbourhood Plan at last (more on that later from Cllr Sandra Daniells).

Addressing continuing problems with street community issues has been a priority and will be ongoing for the new council, as are the conditions of public toilets. These have both been points of contention raised by visitors to the town as well as being a problem for residents.

The University plans to add a science and technology building to the Bognor Campus will bring more students into the town, increasing the spending power. In the wider area, the arrival of companies such as Rolls Royce, Marks & Spencer and Next and the progression of the Enterprise Zone will all help to improve economic growth locally.

I was recently shown around Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital and was able to see the very high service provided. Another visit I made representing the town was to one of our German twin towns, Weil am Rhein, and whilst there I was invited to visit the French border town of Huningue, where I attended a Je Suis Charlie commemoration event.

So going back to things happening for Bognor Regis, there is lots being done to finally get regeneration going, including the appointment of new Town Centre Manager, Toyubur Rehman, who will be talking to everyone shortly. We as a Town Council must continue to work with stakeholders to put Bognor Regis back on the 'tourist trail'.

I'll move on now to the next item, Agenda item 4 and will hand over to the Chairman of our Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr Roger Nash...

(Cllr Tony Gardiner, Town Mayor 2014-2015)