



# BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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## MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF BOGNOR REGIS HELD ON MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2014

### PRESENT (BRTC)

Cllr P Wells – Town Mayor (in the chair)  
Cllr Mrs E Anderson  
Cllr J Brooks  
Cllr A Cunard  
Cllr Mrs S Daniells  
Cllr P Dillon  
Cllr D Edwards  
Cllr T Gardiner  
Cllr S Kerrigan  
Cllr D Meagher  
Cllr R Nash  
Cllr W Toovey  
Cllr Mrs J Warr

(Note: Cllrs Brooks, Cunard, Mrs Daniells, Edwards, Nash, Mrs Warr and Wells are also Arun District Councillors)

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs G Frost (Town Clerk)  
Mrs S Holmes (Minutes Secretary)  
Mrs H Knight (Minutes Secretary)  
One representative of the press  
8 members of the public of which 7 were Electors

### COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting  
Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Audited Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013  
Proposed Expenditure for the year 2014/2015  
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. The Town Councillors in attendance introduced themselves.

### 2. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 were considered and agreed as a true record, and signed by the Town Mayor as presiding Chairman.

There were no Matters Arising.

**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 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2013 AND BUDGET FOR 2014-2015**

The Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr R Nash, reported on the Accounts of the Town Council to year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, which had been circulated.

A member of the public asked about the 6 and 12 month Deposits in Co-op Bank (page 16). They did not show in 2012 so where had these funds come from? He was advised that a written response would be sent to him on this question.

There was a question about the Grant paid to the Bognor Pier Company Ltd of £108,503 (page 22). Was this secure? In response, it was advised that this payment was part of the refurbishment programme.

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 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2013**

A question was asked about the valuation put on the Picturedrome of £650,000. This was the commercial valuation of what the building would be worth when all of the proposed work was completed.

There were no further questions.

The Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

**6. TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY FRIDAY 14<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2014**

The Clerk reported that no Resolutions had been received.

**7. UPDATE ON THE PICTUREDROME**

The Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr Nash, reported on the public consultation that had been conducted at the end of 2013. This had a record number of responses (18/19%) with a positive response of over 90% to go ahead with the proposed expansion. The results of the consultation had been broken down by Ward.

Following the consultation, the Council had taken the decision to move towards the expansion programme. An architect had been secured. All fees and costs were not to exceed £850,000. As part of the work a Bat Survey will need to be done. A very useful meeting had been held with the architects and consultants, who were advising the Council on a number of technical matters. It is hoped that a planning application can be made by June, or certainly September, this year.

Other consultants need to be appointed and also a quantity surveyor. Everything must be done in line with changes to a listed building. A pre-planning meeting will be held with Arun. There

are one or two issues that still need to be resolved regarding the community space. When these issues are resolved, then the project can go ahead. It is difficult to say when the work will be completed – hopefully by the end of 2015 or early 2016.

The current tenant is putting in a 3<sup>rd</sup> screen, into the Octagon Room, and this should open in the next few months.

The improvements to the Picturedrome are part of the regeneration of the town.

A spokesman for The Civic Society said how much the Town Council's positive stand on the Picturedrome was appreciated. The Council was widely supported by local people and they were making the building into a fantastic facility.

The Chamber of Commerce echoed this view. The Town Council had saved the iconic building, one of the last few in the town, and had they not done so then the town would have been without a cinema for the past 4 years and however much longer before the St Modwen development takes place.

It was noted that the positive responses had been high in Marine and also Pevensey Wards. Both of these have high deprivation. The current pricing policy of the cinema meant that the public could access the facility cheaply. Cinema prices in other places are very expensive and the Picturedrome is performing a social role in the town by keeping its prices down. The Town Council, in partnership with the tenant, wants to improve the building even further.

It was noted that the cinema was also widely used by those living in outlying parishes. As those parishes do not contribute to the building, perhaps it is time for the Town Council and Arun District Council to look again to supporting the Picturedrome in a wider context.

## **8. OTHER REGENERATION MATTERS**

The Mayor reported that the plans from St Modwen are still awaited. He felt that it was time to either deliver the project or go back to the market place. The Town was being held back. Things like the Morrison development and the Seafront Concessions, whose leases end this year, are on hold. It was time to work with Arun on going forward in a positive manner; we had waited long enough, now it was time to move on.

Key decision needs to be made over the next year. The proposals that St Modwen originally put in have changed and those being proposed are now very different.

A new Town Centre Manager has been appointed. The work is going on in the precinct and this will be extended now that additional funding has been achieved. There is a need to look at how to attract a greater variety of shops. The 2 hour free parking scheme is having an impact on footfall in the town. The expansion of the scheme, with the addition of Hothampton car park, is welcome and the Town Council and others are still looking to add the Regis Centre car park.

Other comments were received on the issue of regeneration and these include: What about the Water Sports centre that had been talked about – Arun need to let people know what is happening about this. Concern was expressed about the value of the St Modwen developments. When they were first put forward the value was £100 million but the figure is now £40 million or below. As what is being offered now is so different to what was originally planned, should it not have gone back out to the market place?

Free parking had finally been achieved after 15 years, following pressure from Civic, the Chamber of Commerce, TBI and the Federation of Small Business, with the work being undertaken by the Town Council.

Comment was made about the work being done in the Precinct and the additional funding of £1.65 million to extend throughout the town. It is a large amount of money to be spent and some groups questions whether it was being spent in the right way. However, the town should celebrate the fact that the funding bid had been successful and the Town Council, Arun, West Sussex, the Traders and Civic should work together to make the town better. Other towns have received a 'facelift' and it has made a difference to them. The additional funding had been granted in response to a bid which had specified the work to be done, therefore there was not the option to change the plans now.

In relation to the St Modwen development, could the Town Council urge Arun that when the St Modwen plans are received, can there be another consultation and also ask that Arun accept the democratic view expressed by local people.

**9. BOGNOR REGIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – REPORT BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Bognor Regis is one of the frontrunner Neighbourhood Plans, in what is a new process nationally. Only about 12 Plans have been passed so far. The Bognor Regis Plan is making steady progress and work is now underway to develop the plan by the Steering Group. Free support to assist with this has been awarded, funded by the Government. Workshops and open days have been held. A wish list has been drawn up and this is now being developed into a planning document. To do this, evidence has to be gathered. The area is very built up already so there is limited space to identify areas that could be used for additional housing. It is anticipated that the Plan will be ready to go to consultation around November time and it is hoped that feedback will be received from the public. There has been a certain amount of apathy so far. After the consultation it will go to Arun, then to an independent examiner for them to provide feedback. Once that has been done, the plan will go to referendum.

A member of the public asked that thanks be recorded to Cllr Mrs Daniells for the work she has done. It is incredibly complex to do a Neighbourhood Plan and thanks should go to the people who had led it.

The issue of the possible development of the golf course in Felpham was raised, but it was pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan could only deal with the 4 wards of the town. There is still a lot of dialogue to be had but care needs to be taken not to get side tracked.

**10. TO DEAL WITH ANY OTHER QUESTIONS**

**10.1** The Civic Society had two **Resolutions** it wished to put forward. The first one was:

*That the Town Council insists to Arun District Council that the further public consultation promised by them in connection with the St Modwen proposed developments should be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:*

- 1. There must be a professionally conducted impartial survey by a major market research firm prior to and separate from any planning application.*
- 2. The questions in the survey to be created in consultation with the Town Council and properly constituted Bognor Regis community groups with an annual elective process and a paid membership.*
- 3. Within the questions there must be one simple yes/no question which should read: "Since the building of the proposed new multi-screen cinema might endanger the continued existence of the Picturedrome cinema, should the proposed new cinema in St Modwen's plan be replaced by another leisure facility?"*
- 4. All taxpayer-funded publicity material in relation to the development proposals and the survey must contain balanced coverage of all viewpoints as agreed with the Town Council and community groups mentioned in 2 above.*
- 5. The consultation and the survey to be restricted to the greater Bognor Regis area and conducted wholly in public, allowing all viewpoints to be expressed.*

6. *The results of the survey to be binding on Arun District Council and St Modwen, and any subsequent planning application should accurately reflect those results.*

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

It was felt that the previous survey had been too wide – eg asking people in other parts of Arun – and the decision should be made by local people. Any decision should be precise, definable and irrefutable.

A vote was taken and the result was 6 in favour, 2 against and 4 abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was passed.

During debate on the proposal, those present discussed the possible implications for the Picturedrome cinema should the St Modwen development proceed. The proposed extension to the building should make it more viable.

**10.2** Following the debate, the following **Resolution** was put forward:

*The Picturedrome amenities are used by those who live outside of the 4 Wards of the Town, Eastergate and Chichester included. If that is the case, should Arun District Council not be approached to support the cost of the cinema, which currently falls on the poorer Wards. Should others not be asked to help with the costs?*

**Proposed** by D Meagher and **Seconded** by J Brooks

This was debated and although it was felt that the Town Council could not approach other parishes, it could write to Arun District Council seeking support for this vital resource for the Town.

A vote was taken and the result was 12 in favour, none against and no abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was passed.

It was noted that under the Public Realm work being proposed for the Station area, the existing matching paving in this conservation area was to be changed to match the public realm scheme. The issue of possible changes to create a Shared Surface junction had also been put forward.

**10.3** A further **Resolution** was put forward regarding the area around the Picturedrome:

*Would the Town Council seek to work with Arun District Council regarding the issue of the paving in the conservation area around the Picturedrome?*

**Proposed** by I Harding and **Seconded** by A Cunard

A vote was taken and the result was 12 in favour, none against and no abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was passed.

**10.4** A second **Resolution** was put forward by The Civic Society:

*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

Although not necessarily at great risk from flooding from the river or sea, the area around Bognor Regis was susceptible to ground and surface water flooding.

A vote was taken and the result was 8 in favour, one against and 3 abstentions. Accordingly the Resolution was passed.

**10.5** A **Resolution** was put forward:

*In 2015 District Council elections are being held, financed by the District Council. It was Proposed that the Polling Stations could be used for a poll on whether residents wished to break away from Arun District Council and become part of a Bognor Urban Council.*

**Proposed** by I Harding and **Seconded** by G Farina

A vote was taken and the result was 5 in favour, none against and 7 abstentions. Accordingly, the Resolution was passed.

*The Town Mayor thanked all present for attending wished them a safe journey home. The meeting was closed.*

*The Meeting closed at 8.43 pm*