



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING OF BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 8th JUNE 2020

PRESENT:

Town Mayor: Cllr. P. Woodall; Cllrs: J. Barrett, K. Batley, J. Brooks, A. Cunard, Mrs. S. Daniells, Mrs. I. Erskine, J. Erskine, S. Goodheart, H. Jones, Miss. C. Needs, Ms. A. Sharples, W. Smith, Mrs. Staniforth, M. Stanley and Mrs. J. Warr

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. S. Norman (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Civic & Office Manager)
3 members of the public (part of meeting)

The Meeting opened at 5pm

218. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the Online Meeting being held in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 and reminded Members that the Meeting was being recorded by Bognor Regis Town Council and may also be recorded or filmed by any member of the public.

The Mayor advised that in the event of any loss of internet coverage or power cuts, steps would be taken to recover the connection. However, if connection could not be re-established the meeting would stand adjourned at the point of loss of connection, to be reconvened and continued at a publicised time in the future.

Finally, members were reminded of the protocol for the online meeting, details of which had been circulated to all the previous week.

As all Members were present, there were no apologies for absence.

219. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Ordinary Interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

Members and Officers should declare an Interest by stating: -

- a) the item they have an Interest in
- b) whether it is a Disclosable Pecuniary or Ordinary Interest
- c) the nature of the Interest
- d) if it is an Ordinary Interest whether they intend to leave the room for the discussion and vote
- e) if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary 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.

In accordance with good practice, individual forms were available to those Councillors present in order that they could personally record their Interest - both Disclosable Pecuniary and Ordinary. These forms should be returned to the Committee Clerk at the end of the meeting to enable all declarations of Interest to be accurately recorded in the Minutes. Members were reminded that it is their responsibility to notify the Monitoring Officer of all Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, not already recorded on their Register of Interests Form, within 28 days.

The Chairman reminded Members to declare their Interests as any arise or again at the relative point in the meeting if they have already.

Cllr. Brooks declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda items 10 and 11 as a Director of International Bognor Birdman

Cllr. Cunard declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda items 13 and 15, as the tenant of the Picturedrome Cinema, and stated that he would leave the Meeting when these Agenda items were discussed. Cllr. Cunard also declared a potential Ordinary Interest in Agenda items 10 and 11 but would redeclare if the discussions required it

Cllr. Mrs. Daniells declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda items 13 and 15, as an employee of the Picturedrome Cinema, and stated that she would leave the Meeting when these Agenda items were discussed. Cllr. Mrs. Daniells also declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda items 10 and 11 due to her membership of the Twinning Association and Arun Arts

Cllr. Goodheart declared an Ordinary Interest in Agenda items 10 and 11 as a Trustee of Rox

220. TO AUTHORISE THE TOWN CLERK TO MAKE ANY TEMPORARY CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS, AS DEEMED NECESSARY, TO REFLECT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION ON REMOTE MEETINGS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

The Town Clerk's report, including details of the required changes to the Town Council's Standing Orders, was **NOTED**.

Discussion took place regarding the future scheduling of meetings. The importance of seeking agreement with Committee Chairman as well as Mayor and Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee regarding meeting schedules was stressed. It was noted that the next Annual Town Council Meeting has to be held by May 2021.

Following the debate, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to make changes to the Standing Orders as deemed necessary to reflect The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020.

221. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th MARCH 2020

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 9th March 2020 were **APPROVED** by the Council as a correct record and were signed by the Town Mayor.

222. ADJOURNMENT FOR THE MAYOR TO READ PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS

Members **NOTED** that there were no questions or statements from the public.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5.21pm

Questions had been received from Cllrs. Brooks and Cunard and the Chairman therefore adjourned the meeting to read these to Members and responses were received from Cllr. Stanley and the Town Clerk.

The Meeting reconvened at 5.34pm

223. TO RATIFY DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE TOWN CLERK IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DELEGATED AUTHORITY AND PROCESS

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

Members discussed the possibility of holding more meetings including an element of public forum/engagement. It was noted that Planning and Licensing is now held every three weeks on a Tuesday, as before, and that in accordance with NALC guidance, other meetings including those of

the Full Council, would be held when required to discuss issues that are urgent.

A Member asked if there was a timescale for the issue of the postponed Newsletter. The Town Clerk reported that this will be looked at in liaison with the appropriate Chairmen and the Town Mayor.

On conclusion of the discussion, the following decisions taken by the Town Clerk in liaison with the Mayor, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee and Chairman of any other related Committee, in line with the Delegated Authority process were unanimously **RATIFIED**:

- Cancellation of all scheduled Meetings from 12th March 2020 up to and including the end of June 2020
- Online Planning and Licensing Committee Meetings to be held on 6th and 26th May and a Council Meeting on 8th June 2020, additional to the published scheduled
- Cancellation of Mayor's Civic Reception scheduled for 25th March 2020 together with all Mayoral engagements
- Postponement of Annual Town Meeting of Electors scheduled for 16th March 2020 and subsequent cancellation of revised date of 1st June 2020 Closure of Town Council offices with effect from 20th March 2020 with all office staff working from home and Town Force team pulled in from 27th March 2020
- Postponement of 2020 Newsletter
- Cancellation of all Town Council events except the Christmas Switch-On, a decision about which will be taken later in the year
- Flexible Community Fund Grant to Grandads Front Room for £500 to assist with food distributions (following liaison with Members of Community Engagement and Environment Committee)

224. MAKING THEATRE GAINING SKILLS REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**. A further update was given that whilst a response to the questions raised had been provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), the Town Council's Accountant still felt that further clarity was required on certain points including the need for confirmation that there was no financial risk to the Town Council.

Members spoke to offer their support for the proposal and the work being undertaken by the organisation, but the need to confirm that there was no financial risk to the Council was noted.

Following further debate it was **RESOLVED** to support the Making Theatre Gaining Skills request for the Town Council to act as the Lead Accountable Body for their DWP funding bid subject to confirmation that there was no financial risk to the Town Council.

225. TO NOTE THE LIST OF PAYMENTS AND TRANSFERS MADE IN FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL 2020 AND TO NOTE THE BALANCES, BANK RECONCILIATIONS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS (MAY NOT YET AVAILABLE)

The Council **RESOLVED** 'to note the payments and transfers made in February, March and April 2020 and to note the balances, bank reconciliations and financial reports'.

226. TO AGREE THE CANCELLATION OF THE 2020 ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, AND RESULTING POSTPONEMENT OF ALL APPOINTMENTS USUALLY UNDERTAKEN AT THAT MEETING, UNTIL MAY 2021, AS PERMITTED UNDER THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2020

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

Members noted the Mayor's suggestion to take all four points from the report "en bloc" when voting but during the debate, it was **AGREED** that the first three points would be voted for "en bloc" but the final point regarding the 2021 calendar of meetings would be voted on separately.

Following the votes, Members **RESOLVED** that: -

- The next Annual Town Council Meeting be held in May 2021;
- All 2019/20 municipal year appointments including Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Committees, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, representatives to "outside bodies" and bank signatories should continue for the 2020/21 municipal year;
- The nomination of Cllr. Barrett as Deputy Mayor be reaffirmed at the March 2021 Council Meeting; and
- The 2021 Calendar of Meetings considered and agreed later in the year.

227. GRANT AID 2020 INCLUDING : TO NOTE THE RETURN OF 2020 GRANTS DUE TO THE CANCELLATION OF EVENTS; AGREE IF THESE AMOUNTS MAY BE EARMARKED FOR PAYMENT IN 2021 ; AND CONSIDER WHETHER RECIPIENTS WITH GRANTS EARMARKED FOR PAYMENT IN 2021 STILL NEED TO SUBMIT ANY PAPERWORK TO THE GRANT AID 2021 PROCESS

The Town Clerk's report, including details of those recipients of Grant Aid 2020 that had returned or not been issued with their award due to the cancellation of events, was **NOTED**.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **AGREED** that Bognor Regis Carnival Association, Armed Forces Day Committee, International Bognor Birdman, Bognor Regis Twinning Association, Pride Bognor Regis and Southdown Folk Festival, should have their funding Earmarked for release

in April 2021. Furthermore, it was **RESOLVED** that these organisations would not have to resubmit a full application to facilitate the release of the funds but would instead be subject to receipt of written confirmation that the event would be going ahead in 2021, together with confirmation of the procedures to be adopted in line with any COVID-19 related Government guidelines in place at that time.

The issue of applicants who had their 2020 allocation Earmarked, for release in April 2021, being able to apply for the 2021 allocation as well, and therefore having a second bite at the cherry, was raised but it was felt that this issue should be discussed further under Agenda item 11 - Grant Aid 2021.

It was also noted that any organisation which, having cancelled their event at the current time, found that they were able to reschedule before April 2021 would be able to access their funding upon request to the Town Clerk.

Cllr. Mrs. Warr declared an Ordinary interest in Bognor Regis Seafront Lights and stated that she would abstain from any vote

With regard to the request from Bognor Regis Seafront Lights, Members **RESOLVED** that the organisers could retain their award of £2,500 and would only be required to return this if the 2021 Illuminations Gala should not go ahead.

228. GRANT AID 2021 INCLUDING: TO REVIEW CURRENT GUIDELINES /CRITERIA, APPLICATION FORM AND AMEND IF REQUIRED: CONSIDERATION OF DATE FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING AT WHICH THE APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED; AND REVIEW OF THE GUIDELINES FOR THE FLEXIBLE COMMUNITY FUND

The Civic & Office Manager's report was **NOTED**.

Discussion returned to the points raised under the previous item, regarding those that had had the 2020 Grant Aid award Earmarked, and whether they should be permitted to apply for the 2021 allocation, thereby having a second bite at the cherry. It was suggested that an additional grant may be awarded from the 2021 allocation if the applicant could demonstrate how these additional funds would be used to materially enhance the event, over and above the intended purpose of the Earmarked 2020 Grant Aid award. Members noted that this would require submission of a new, complete application for the 2021 awards.

It was noted that the Town Council does not have a set process for following up on the use of Grant Aid or the Flexible Community Fund (FCF) and that this may be advisable:

- i) to ensure that funds are being used for their intended purpose;

- ii) to gauge the success of the use of the award; and
- iii) to use in publicity to promote how the Town Council assists local organisations.

Members also debated the possibility of seeking feedback on the sustainability of their event or project and it was noted that the Grant Aid Guidelines/Criteria do refer to the Corporate Strategy which includes a priority for the Council "Manage and reduce the environmental impact of Bognor Regis". It was subsequently suggested that rather than add additional burden to the application process at the current time, those that are successful in their bids should be approached and asked for more details about how they intend to make their event/project sustainable and meet the Town Council's Corporate Strategy objectives.

Following discussion, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- Applications for Grant Aid 2021 may be by email.
- The Grant Aid forms as circulated be approved subject to their amendment to include:
 - Additional questions asking about success criteria and timescale of completion of project/event to enable the Town Council to seek feedback on the successful use of the funding.
 - If the application is from an organisation that already has their 2020 Grant Aid award Earmarked, an explanation should be provided to stress the material difference that warrants the additional funds.
- A sustainability enquiry should be issued for both Grant Aid and FCF awards, not as part of the application process but as a follow-up to those that are successful in their bid for funding.
- An Extraordinary Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee be held on the afternoon of the 16th November 2020 to consider the Grant Aid applications.
- Applications for Flexible Community Fund (FCF) may be by email for 2021.
- The FCF forms as circulated be approved subject to their amendment to include:
 - Additional questions asking about success criteria and timescale of completion of project/event to enable the Town Council to seek feedback on the successful use of the funding.

229. CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee **NOTED** receipt of correspondence as detailed in the lists including the following item highlighted by the Town Clerk:

Item no. 161 from list dated 30th April 2020 (previously circulated to Members) - response to the Town Council's enquiry about the relocation package paid to the now departed Chief Executive of WSCC (Min. 199.1 of Council Meeting 9th March 2020 refers).

Cllrs. Cunard and Mrs. Daniells redeclared their Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and left the Meeting

230. Due to the time elapsed of almost 2 hours, and in accordance with S.O.3aa, Members **AGREED** to defer Agenda items 13 and 15 for inclusion on a future Agenda.

The Meeting closed at 6.59pm