



BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE TOWN MEETING OF THE ELECTORS OF BOGNOR REGIS HELD ON MONDAY 19th MARCH 2018

PRESENT (BRTC)

Cllr. P. Woodall - Town Mayor (in the chair)
Cllr. K. Batley
Cllr. J. Brooks
Cllr. J. Cosgrove
Cllr. A. Cunard (part of meeting)
Cllr. D. Enticott
Cllr. T. Gardiner
Cllr. S. Goodheart
Cllr. S. Reynolds
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. M. Stanley
Cllr. Mrs. J. Warr
(Note: Cllrs. Brooks, Reynolds, Smith and Stanley are also Arun District Councillors)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs. G. Frost (Town Clerk)
Mrs. S. Norman (Assistant Clerk)
Mrs. J. Davis (Civic & Office Manager)
Mrs. K. Bourne (Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner) (part of meeting)
2 representatives of the press
Approximately 32 members of the public

COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE PUBLIC

Notice and Agenda for the Meeting
Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on 13th March 2017
Audited Accounts to 31st March 2017
Proposed Expenditure for the year 2018/2019
Bognor Pier Company Ltd Accounts to 31st December 2017
Schedule of Councillors' Attendance at Meetings

The Meeting opened at 7.04 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 Mayor introduced Councillors to those present. Apologies for absence were noted from Cllrs. Mrs. Daniells, Dillon and Lineham.

2. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON MONDAY 13th MARCH 2017 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 13th March 2017 were considered and agreed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor as presiding Chairman.

3. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Town Mayor gave his report (appended to Minutes as **Appendix 1**).

4. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2017 AND BUDGET FOR 2018-2019

The Town Council's Accounts to year ending 31st March 2017 were duly noted and accepted. The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, Cllr. Cunard gave his report on the budget (appended to Minutes as **Appendix 2**).

A Councillor requested that the Chairman of the Committee, the Town Council's Accountant and Officers be commended for their work on the budget and that even in these challenging times the Town Council was moving forward, for which the Town owes the Chairman thanks.

A member of the public referred to the PWLB loan, that was drawn down in 2017, on which £20k of interest was payable and asked where this sum will be made up. The Town Clerk advised that the matter would be looked in to and a response provided in writing in due course.

5. TO RECEIVE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE BOGNOR PIER COMPANY LTD YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2017

The Accounts were duly noted and accepted.

6. TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY FRIDAY 16th MARCH 2018

The following **Resolutions** had been received:

6.1

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Believes that local residents in the Bognor Urban Area must have a say in the final Regeneration outcomes for the Town including a choice between the unfunded Arun scheme and the funded Sir Richard Hotham scheme

Proposed Cllr. Cosgrove **Seconded** Cllr. Enticott

6.2

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Seeks clear action from the Town Council to pursue this objective not in terms of what the Council or Councillors may want/think or Arun or Civic etc, but to gauge public levels of support for options as widely as possible within the urban area

Proposed Cllr. Cosgrove **Seconded** Cllr. Enticott

6.3

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Believes that in the event of the Planning Appeal by SRH succeeding, Arun should work with SRH for the best value outcome for Bognor Regis, and that the Council must pursue that objective without division

Proposed Cllr. Cosgrove **Seconded** Cllr. Enticott

Cllr. Cosgrove spoke for the Motion and, based upon his personal opinion, expressed his concerns over the plans for the Regeneration of the Town and challenged that the proposals, set out by ADC for the Regis Centre site and Hothamton site, were redevelopment rather than regeneration. Furthermore, Cllr. Cosgrove was not of the opinion that a fair tendering process had been carried out by ADC allowing for competition of preferred developer status amongst developers tendering for proposed regeneration sites.

Discussion followed with questions raised concerning the statistical validity in the number of people that had responded to the public consultation carried out by ADC. Comment was made that ADC should present all bids for the site, not just ADC's and the SRH Project, at a public consultation at which residents from all six Wards of Bognor Regis, the Town Council, and surrounding parishes be involved.

Cllr. Goodheart declared an interest in the regeneration of Bognor Regis through his association with the group 4BR, and his association with the Rox Music and Arts charity

The Town Mayor confirmed that, following a resolution made by Members at the Council Meeting held on 12th March 2018, a letter had been sent to an appropriate Officer at ADC inviting them to attend a meeting of the Town Council in July to speak regarding the Linear Park plans and to hear comments from Members and the public regarding the proposals.

In light of the recent letter sent to ADC, and the discussions that had taken place, Cllr. Cosgrove proposed that with the agreement of Cllr. Enticott as seconder to the Motion, the Motion be amended. With the agreement of Cllrs. Cosgrove and Enticott, the Motion was amended as follows;

This Annual Meeting of Electors

Believes that local residents in the Bognor Urban Area must have a say in the final Regeneration outcomes for the Town.

Proposed Cllr. Cosgrove **Seconded** Cllr. Enticott

A vote of electors of the six Wards was taken and the result was 14 for, 0 against and 1 abstention. Accordingly, the resolution was passed and will be considered by the Town Council at the next appropriate meeting.

Following the vote, Cllr. Cosgrove called for a second vote from all attendees, elector and non-elect, to ask if the resolution was supported with 28 of those present voting.

6.4 The Mayor asked if there were any more questions. There were none.

7. TO WELCOME MRS KATY BOURNE, SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Town Mayor welcomed the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Mrs Katy Bourne, to the meeting.

Mrs Bourne thanked those present for taking the time to attend the meeting and explained that she would try to answer as many questions as possible. However, where the matter was an operational one, it may be necessary for her to direct the question on to the District Commander.

Most people present in the public gallery had attended the meeting due to their serious concerns regarding policing matters affecting the Town. An overwhelming sense of anger was evident amongst residents and traders, who had experienced first-hand the current levels of anti-social behaviour that they endured daily. Emotions were further heightened as there is a perceived lack of interest from the Police in being proactive in their

response when crimes are reported to them.

Q: Theft - Comment was made that shoplifting in the Town was rife; Sussex Police are not being reactive on incidents reported particularly where the theft of goods equates to less than £200. A member of the public reported that his daughter's bike had been stolen from outside her place of work. When reporting the matter to the Police the victim was told to contact the security staff at the store to locate CCTV footage of the crime being carried out. Having done so, and providing the Police with the evidence found, no response from the Police had been received and the victim now faces a two-mile walk to and from work, sometimes in the dark.

A: Mrs Bourne responded that she had put the question regarding the value of stolen goods to the Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Giles York, and asked whether he would be able to put more resources into low-level crime. The Chief Constable stated, as published in the Sussex Police Precept 2018/19 leaflet, that there is no financial threshold alone that means Sussex Police won't investigate. Their efforts are focused on those crimes that cause the greatest harm and impact most on vulnerable people. Every crime reported is investigated and professional judgement used to assess what level of further investigation is proportionate. Mrs Bourne asked that the member of the public affected by the theft of the bike provide her with their contact details so that Mrs Bourne may look into the matter.

Q: Vehicle Crime - Numerous reports of cars being broken into and/or vandalised were given. A member of the public reported having their car broken in to twice, whilst on their driveway, with a neighbour's car having been broken in to three times. The victim stated that having made five attempts to report the matter using the 101 number they had resorted to reporting the crime online. A response was received informing the victim that the Police would not be investigating the matter due to insufficient evidence.

A: Mrs Bourne admitted that without CCTV evidence it can sometimes be very difficult for the Police to follow up on. In response to the spate of vehicle crime that members of the public spoke of, Mrs Bourne encouraged victims to report all incidents and to include as much evidence as possible. Doing so would draw the attention of the Police to these spates enabling them to be targeting those areas.

Q: Community Resolution Orders - incidents of theft involving violence were brought to the attention of Mrs Bourne with reports of a Community Resolution Order being offered to the victim. Having declined the offer there had been no further contact made by the Police to the victim.

A: Mrs Bourne explained for the benefit of those present that Community Resolution Orders were offered to settle a matter out of court and required that the victim be agreeable to the Order, in addition to the offender admitting guilt. In the matter brought to her attention whereby the victim declined the offer of a Community Resolution Order, and having received

no further response from the Police, Mrs Bourne asked that the full details of the incident, including the contact Officer, be sent to her so that she may follow it through.

Q: The issue of calls being made to the 101 number, to report crime, and them not being responded to was highlighted.

A: Mrs Bourne sympathised with the frustration felt when a call to the 101 number went unanswered for a long period of time, if at all. She explained that any calls coming in to the control room on the emergency 999 number would always take precedence and can be the cause for 101 calls to go unanswered for long periods of time. Mrs Bourne reminded those present that crimes could also be reported online to Sussex Police at their website www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/report-online.

Q: Anti-Social Behaviour - the general consensus amongst those members of the public present at the meeting was that anti-social behaviour, particularly amongst a well-known local group of youths, was prolific and going unchallenged by the Police on a regular basis.

A: Mrs Bourne admitted that young people are a particular challenge when it comes to enforcing the law when they are considered under-age. However, where there is criminality they should be arrested nonetheless. Mrs Bourne stated that there needs to be a partnership approach from all sides involving services such as local authority Anti-Social Behaviour Teams and schools working with the Police. In her opinion anti-social behaviour is a real problem and Mrs Bourne intends to make this a real focus at her monthly Accountability Meeting with the Chief Constable taking place on Friday 23rd March 2018.

Q: Public safety - members of the public expressed feelings of vulnerability when in, and around, the Town and concerns for their personal safety with no presence of authority both day and night. One member of the public present had recently been threatened with a knife, for money, whilst working in Town early one morning. It was suggested that Mrs Bourne, and Town Councillors, should come into Town to see for themselves and to ask people on the street what it's like.

A: Mrs Bourne reported that Sussex remains in the lowest quartile of crime in the Country. The Chief Constable had assured Mrs Bourne that Sussex Police will put Officers and staff in the right locations to prevent crime. Working together with their partners Sussex Police make the best use of technology and share information across multi-agency teams to keep people safe. An attendee spoke of the need to pool resources and work together. Mrs Bourne confirmed that her role as Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner includes commissioning services, such as community safety partnerships, with funds available to pool resources. Mrs Bourne welcomed the opportunity to accompany local residents/business owners in walking around the Town and confirmed that this was an action she fully intended to arrange.

Q: Resources - comment was made about a perceived breakdown in communication with the Police, with there being no visual presence of Officers. It was claimed that confidence had been lost, with members of the public not feeling as though they have the support of the Police anymore. Mrs Bourne was asked how confidence could be restored.

A: Mrs Bourne responded by saying how frustrated she had been by the cuts to Government funding towards policing in recent years. However, she was pleased to report that the Government had allowed PCCs to increase the Police Precept for 2018/2019 by £12, on the average band D property. This increase, combined with the release of £17m of reserves, had allowed for the retention of 476 Officer and staff posts in Sussex, with an additional 200 Officers being recruited annually for the next few years. Mrs Bourne stated that with the uplift in the Precept she wants to see a focus on local policing, with an improvement in public contact, and an increase in the level of safety felt by members of the public. The Chief Constable is tasked with writing a plan to show how he is going to deliver this.

Q: Assurances were sought that the Police Station in Bognor Regis would not be closed down.

A: Mrs Bourne talked about the real need for Police presence in a thriving Town such as Bognor Regis. If an opportunity to improve a Police Station arose then this might be considered but that Stations would not be closed, with land sold off, and moved out of communities.

Q: When is the next election for the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner?

A: Mrs Bourne confirmed that elections would take place in 2020.

In closing, Mrs Bourne informed attendees that she met on a monthly basis with the Chief Constable and that their next meeting was scheduled for Friday 23rd March 2018. She invited those present who had been victims of crimes that had gone unresolved to contact the PCC office tomorrow and she will include these matters on the agenda for Friday. Contact details for the Sussex PCC office can be found at www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk. Mrs Bourne also stated that her Accountability Meeting with the Chief Constable, at 9am on Friday 23rd March 2018, would be available to view as a webcast on the PCC website in which members of the public will be able to witness her raising the issues highlighted at this evening's meeting with him and seeking answers from him.

There being no other questions for the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner, the Town Mayor thanked Mrs Bourne for attending. Mrs Bourne stated that feedback from these kinds of meetings was really important and invited anyone to contact her office where she would be happy to talk (if available). Mrs Bourne left the meeting

8. OPEN FORUM WITH QUESTIONS TO COUNCILLORS/ATTENDEES

The Town Mayor invited members of the public and Councillors to put any questions to the Council.

There were none.

The Town Mayor thanked all those present for attending.

The Meeting closed at 9.06pm

Annual Report of the Town Council

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Bognor Regis Town Council's Annual Town Meeting of Electors.

During this evening, you will hear what the Town Council has achieved over the past 12 months and get to air your views and opinions on what is going on in your Town.

I would like to start tonight by saying what an honour and privilege it has been serving as your Town Mayor for the last year. It has been an amazing opportunity to meet with and learn about so many of the wonderful organisations and charities we are lucky to have within Bognor Regis and has offered a real insight into the extraordinary work they do.

I was lucky enough to visit the new Stonepillow Hostel in Ellasdale Road earlier this year. As a Patron of Stonepillow, it is fantastic to see how they are expanding to meet the growing need for important and life changing places such as these. Their importance was highlighted in recent weeks, with the terrible cold snap hitting the County. Long may their good work continue. I was also present at the grand unveiling of the new anti-gravity treadmill for Age UK at the Laburnum Centre in February, which is one of only 150 machines throughout the country, most of which are in closed units, military bases or private hospitals, and not readily available to the wider community, as this one will be. The treadmill will be used for local people who suffer with cerebral palsy or neurological problems and will do wonders for recovery following knee and hip operations.

Other highlights of the year have included being the first on the ice (and the first to fall over) at the 'ice skating on the Prom' rink which was on the Place St Maur over the Christmas period. A huge success, of which we hope to welcome again in the future. I was also given the opportunity to promote this wonderful

seaside town of ours on various Radio stations, including Radio 2, UK Talk Radio and BBC Sussex.

I have been pleased to have been accompanied to many civic events by my Mayor's Cadets and would like to thank OC Jack Golding of the Sea Cadets and Dylan Collier of the Air Cadets for their dedication to the role.

My charities for this year have been Alzheimer's Society & Epilepsy Action, who I have been raising funds for through my Mayor's Charity Quiz night, fundraising stalls at various events and hope to add to my total at my Mayor's Civic Reception at the end of the month. I will also be holding my 'Scare the Mayor' week from Monday 7th May, during which I shall be challenging myself to step beyond my comfort zone to take on different activities including water walking and going on a zip wire. More information will be published in the local paper nearer the time if you would like to come along to show your support for me and my charities!

Now for a bit about what the Town Council has been doing over the past 12 months; our new Town Crier, Mrs Jane Smith has been receiving rave reviews for her appearances throughout the town and further afield, receiving the award for the 'best dressed Town Crier' at the Hastings Town Crier competition last year. Works have now begun on the fourth screen at the Picturedrome, which should be completed in time for the summer holidays.

The Staff at Bognor Regis Town Council work so hard to keep Bognor Regis in high standing. Thank you very much to them, including to the Town Force team who keep the Town looking beautiful and colourful with their wonderful flower displays.

To conclude, I would like to offer a positive insight into the regeneration happening in the Town right now. As you will have noticed, the Railway refurbishment is now complete, which I'm sure will make travelling to and from the Town a better experience for all. ADC are making improvements at the Arcade,

with empty units now starting to be filled, which is an exciting opportunity to welcome new businesses and promote retail growth in the Town centre. With plans for a new play park along the seafront and the linear park, the first stage of the regeneration concept for the Town, things are really starting to look bright for Sunniest Bognor Regis.

Thank you all for your time and for coming here tonight, we look forward to hearing from you through the evening.

POLICY AND RESOURCES BUDGET REPORT

I am delighted to present this year's Budget Report to the Annual Electors.

As we enter the last year of this administration we are going forward with a Council that is in good shape financially.

Our total precept for the forthcoming 2018 to 2019 year is set at £878,655, and this year we increased our portion of the council tax by just £3.54 per year on a Band D property. Of course, although no increases are ever welcome, by this comparatively small rise it has enabled us to continue with our various grants and projects, without making cuts. We have also replenished our reserves and are now self-sufficient with the abolition of the council tax support grant which was phased out by central government.

Our annual spend includes a generous Grant Allocation of £46,000 which enables us to continue to help support other important organisations in our town, such as Birdman, My Sisters House, Guides, Scouts, The Swimming Club, and numerous others. In awarding grants, we recognise the value of the work done by these organisations, and the benefit to the town as a whole. In addition, we have funding partnerships with Arun Arts Ltd and the Bognor Regis Seafront Lights to support these organisation's activities which enhance the town.

As well as assisting other organisations to put on events we also fund events ourselves so that the local people can enjoy free of charge the Funshine Days, Proms in the Park, a Drive Through Time, our popular Book Day in the Park for young children as well as the traditional Christmas festivities including the fantastic lighting display in the Town. Events for this coming year have been allocated £45,278 to continue not only our traditional events but to also fund a celebration of the Royal Wedding in May together with commemorations to remember the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One in November.

In addition to Events, Bognor Regis Town Council are proud to allocate funds to promoting the town as a whole to visitors, to help boost the local economy therefore helping our businesses.

You will notice the work Town Force do in terms of providing floral displays, clearing graffiti and generally helping keep our town tidy and attractive to visitors. A proportion of your council tax therefore goes towards Town Force and the service they provide, and they also bring in much needed income, working for other parishes and private customers requiring rubbish clearance etc.

We have also been able to fund a part time youth worker, to work directly with our young people to find out what they would need, and it is hoped

that this work will continue. Young people have also benefited from the play schemes we have funded in the school holidays.

Generally speaking our finances are in very good shape, we have healthy reserves and have built up our fund for economic projects should worthwhile opportunities arise, that the Council decides should be explored, to expand the Council's assets and to continue to improve the services and facilities on offer to our residents.

There are always challenges for councils financially, as with businesses, and Bognor Regis Town Council is no exception. Costs are generally rising, as they are for everyone, and new legislation such as the General Data Protections Regulations continue to put further pressures on the Town Council's resources. The Council will also have incurred substantial expenditure for the recent By-elections following one resignation and the sad passing of Dougal Maconachie.

However, on the whole, the picture is a good one with healthy balances and money put aside for a rainy day, so my hope is that we continue to maintain the finances in this healthy state for the forthcoming year whilst retaining the capacity to invest in a capital asset if that is the Council's will.