

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 25th JANUARY 2018 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs B Blanchard-Cooper (Mayor), Ayres, C Blanchard-Cooper Buckland, Calvert, Gammon, Northeast, Purchase, Squires, Tandy, Dr Walsh KStJ and Warren QVRM

2017/2018

57. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**
The Mayor outlined the evacuation procedures.
58. **FILMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE PHONES**
The procedures were noted.
59. **APOLOGIES**
There were apologies from Councillors Baker, Chester and Rickeard.
60. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. The standing declarations were noted.
61. **MINUTES**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2017 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.
62. **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and URGENT ITEMS**
- 62.1 **Christmas Light Switch On**
The Mayor reported that he had received many compliments regarding the wonderful Christmas lights display. He praised all the staff that were involved in supporting the display and switch on event which he considered had been the best to date.

62.2 The Pancake Olympics

The Mayor reminded everyone that this year's event would be held on Saturday 10th February and he encouraged all Councillors to come along to the High Street and support the event.

62.3 Town Merit Awards

The Mayor invited Councillors to make nominations of groups and individuals for this year's Town Merit Awards. This was an opportunity to recognise those, who in the opinion of the Council, had made a significant contribution to the Town. It was noted the deadline for returning nomination forms was 28th February 2018.

62.4 Mayoral List

The Mayoral list was circulated to Member's (copy attached to the minutes) and set out the range of functions that the Mayor had attended since the last Full Council meeting. The Mayor was pleased to report that fundraising for his chosen charities was progressing well and he thanked the local community for the support given to the Friends of Mewsbrook Park which had helped them through a difficult period.

62.5 Local NHS Services

The Mayor reported that he had received correspondence from Nick Gibb MP in reply to the letter about local NHS services (copy attached to the minutes). A copy was circulated to Members at the meeting and as this response had only just been received, the Mayor proposed that Members take this information away with them and let the Town Clerk have their comments as soon as possible. It was proposed that these be collated and used to inform a response which would be prepared in consultation with himself and the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee on behalf of the Town Council. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The correspondence be noted and that Members send their comments to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

63. PUBLIC FORUM

There were 2 members of the public present.

63.1 Regarding the public conveniences in Norfolk Road, Mr Terry Ellis commented that the alternative arrangements were not clear. He also reported that additional signage containing directions to the facilities had been requested from the District Council.

63.2 Mr Ellis reported that Freedom Leisure would be undertaking repairs to the advertising panels at the Windmill theatre so that they could be used for the promotion of events held there.

63.3 Having briefly examined the correspondence from the Department of Health regarding local NHS services, Mr Ellis commented that there did not appear to be any gain for the Town. The Mayor thanked Mr Ellis for his comments which were noted.

64. CORRESPONDENCE OR ISSUES IN RESPECT OF THE DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCIL

There were none.

65. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (NON-EXEMPT)

65.1 Recommendations from Committees

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which drew together the recommendations from the last cycle of Committee meetings that needed to be approved by Council, of which there was one from the Property and Personnel Committee.

65.1.1 Property and Personnel Committee: 4th December 2017

Minute 35.2.2 Foundation Living Wage

The Committee recommended that the Town Council becomes a Foundation Living Wage Employer. It was noted that the financing of this initiative was covered in the Budget papers that would be considered by Council later in the meeting. Acknowledging that in becoming a Foundation Living Wage Employer, protection would be provided for those on the lowest wages in the Council, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Council becomes a Foundation Living Wage Employer and that, consequently, adjustments be made to the increments of some staff on the lower scales, so that all staff earn at least the equivalent to the Foundation Living Wage from April 1st, 2018.

65.2 Committee Minutes (Non-Exempt)

65.2.1 Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2017 (previously circulated). Regarding Minute 44.3, the report from the Town Centre Manager, concern was expressed regarding the increasing number of empty shops and vandalism that had occurred in the High Street over the Christmas period. It was observed that these were problems for many Town Centres in the Country and that the retail vacancy level in Littlehampton High Street was half that of neighbouring seaside Towns. The issue of vandalism had been raised with the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) during a recent meeting of the District Council's Overview Select Committee earlier that week. It was noted that Members who were also District Councillors and were present at that meeting had also taken this matter up with the PCC afterwards seeking better police coverage for the Town.

65.2.2 It was also reported that the owners of the former Waitrose car park, in Avon Road were planning to close the site to parking at the end of the month. This was a valuable resource for visitors and those with children at the River Beach Primary School and concern was expressed at the loss of this facility. The Town Clerk reported that the Town Centre Manager and the District Council were pressing the sites' owners to keep the car park open and it was understood that the District Council had offered to assume responsibility for operating it as

a car park. It was noted that the Town Council would continue to work with the District Council and the Town Centre Manager to bring about a resolution to this problem.

65.2.3 Regarding Minute 45.2, the Town Council's Website, the Town Clerk explained that work to upgrade and replace the existing platform had become a priority as the existing hosting arrangement with the District Council would be coming to an end this Summer. Research into alternative arrangements had shown that the original budget for this was insufficient and a Supplementary Estimate had been approved. It was noted that the tender had been let and that the new platform would be in place in the Spring. This was expected to deliver a much more advanced and user-friendly platform which would be easier to maintain. It was also noted that work to improve IT facilities for the Amenity Team at the Lineside depot was progressing.

65.2.4 Regarding Minute 45.3, the public conveniences at Norfolk Gardens, the Town Clerk explained that the District Council would be reviewing the position regarding the temporary closure of these facilities with its contractor. It was noted that the Town Council remained engaged in discussions with the aim of securing the permanent provision of public conveniences in this part of the Town in the future.

65.2.5 Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 (previously circulated). Regarding Minute, 48.2 the renaming of the Community Gallery, Members were pleased that the late Mr Butterworth's contribution to the Town had been recognised in this way. It was also noted that the late Mr Butterworth's family had donated a scooter to Littlehampton Shopmobility in his memory.

65.2.6 Regarding Minute 48.3.1, the Christmas Lights, Council congratulated staff on the quality of the last year's display. It was noted that not all the lampposts in Franciscan Way were fitted with the equipment required to facilitate Christmas Light displays. The Town Clerk agreed to supply further information on this after the meeting.

65.2.7 Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2017 and 8 January 2018 (previously circulated). Regarding Minute 88.2, Littlehampton Bus Services, Members received an update on the progress with the discussions with Rustington Parish Council to develop local bus services. It was reported that Rustington Parish Council had recently confirmed their commitment to continue these discussions. Consequently, Council was asked to endorse the work undertaken to date and confirm its support for the continuation of these discussions. It was noted that the Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee as appointed by Members later in the meeting would continue to be the Town Council's representative at these meetings. Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

**To endorse the work undertaken to date
and that discussions with Rustington**

**Parish Council and West Sussex County
Council to explore opportunities to
develop local bus services continue.**

65.2.8 Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

65.2.9 Governance and Audit

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 6th February 2018.

66. OFFICER'S REPORTS

66.1 Appointment of Committees and Representatives to Outside Bodies 2017-2018 Review

The Town Clerk explained that following Councillor Chester's decision to stand down from his roles on the Committees and as the Town Council's representative on several outside bodies. Changes were therefore proposed to the current arrangements with Councillor Chris Blanchard-Cooper becoming Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee and also a member of the Policy and Finance Committee. In addition, Councillor Billy Blanchard-Cooper would replace Councillor Chester on the Following outside bodies; the North Littlehampton Steering Group, the Littlehampton Health Advisory Group and the Joint Eastern Arun Area Main Committee. These proposals were duly seconded, and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) **The resignation of Councillor Chester from Committees and as a representative on outside bodies be noted.**
- 2) **Councillor Chris Blanchard-Cooper be appointed Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee and a member of the Policy and Finance Committee.**
- 3) **Councillor Billy Blanchard-Cooper be appointed as the Town Council's nominated representative on the North Littlehampton Steering Group, the Littlehampton Health Advisory Group and the Joint Eastern Arun Area Main Committee**
- 4) **The outstanding appointments remain open should Members wish to put their names forward.**

66.2 Council and Committee Dates 2018/19

Council received and considered a draft calendar of dates (previously circulated) for the 2018/19 meeting cycle. Whilst every effort had been made to avoid clashes with District and County Council meeting dates,

Members were encouraged to let the Town Clerk know if this was not the case. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

The Draft Council and Committee dates for 2018/19 be approved.

67. TOWN COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 67.1** The Council had before it a revised set of priorities (previously circulated) which identified a number of key objectives in addition to the Council's core functions for the 2015/19 Administration. These had been reviewed by each of the Standing Committees during the December meeting cycle and Council was asked to endorse the revised list as the basis of the work of the Town Council going forward.
- 67.2** Members proceeded to consider the objectives in more detail and a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the future of the community facilities in Wick. The need to adopt a holistic approach to the redevelopment of community facilities in the area that also took into consideration the growth of development in the north of the Town was emphasised. A number of points were noted from the debate which would be incorporated in the report on the options and way forward that would be brought to the March cycle of Committee meetings.
- 67.3** Members also commented on the projects to deliver Wi-Fi along the seafront, upgrading the skate ramps and events to commemorate the end of World War One (WW1). Regarding the Wi-Fi project, it was noted that a budgetary provision had been included in the proposed budget and a final decision on the project would be made following further consultation with potential partners. Members welcomed the proposed joint working with the District Council to deliver improvements to the skate park on the sea front and emphasised the importance of engaging with young people as plans were developed. Observing the importance of 2018, it was also suggested that the Council explore a permanent memorial in the Town to commemorate the end of WW1. This was noted for consideration by the Community Resources Committee. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The progress to date regarding the existing and additional priorities (Appendix 1 attached to the report) be noted.**
- 2. The Priorities for 2018 – 2019 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved and that the relevant Standing Committees be instructed to take these forward.**

68. FINANCE REPORTS

68.1 Full Council Budget 2018/19

The Council had before it a report (previously circulated) which set out the proposed Council Budget for 2018/19 and Projected Budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 (previously circulated). The Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee was pleased to present the proposed Council

Budget for 2018/19 which aimed to deliver an ambitious programme of work for the forthcoming year. Referring to the previously agreed Priorities, he explained that the proposed Budget aimed to deliver long-term investment in the Town's infrastructure, improvements to the Town Council's events programme and services and increased funding for general grants to support community initiatives. The level of precept proposed for 2018/19 represented a 1.9% increase (£2.19 per annum) for Band D Council Tax payers, which he observed was the lowest of all the increases proposed by the local authorities in the area. Whilst these plans were ambitious, he was confident that with the careful use of earmarked reserves and controlled expenditure across the board, the Priorities could be achieved and see the Town Council become a Foundation Living Wage Employer.

68.4 In conclusion, he thanked the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for their assistance and fellow Councillors for their support throughout the process and commended the draft Full Council Budget for 2018/19 and Projected Budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 to Members for approval. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

1. *The budget for 2018/19, setting a Precept of £1,132,449, be approved.*
2. *The projected budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be noted.*
3. *The existing procedure, as per the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, of authorising of Council expenditure be approved.*

69. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

69.1 Littlehampton Shopmobility

As Chairman of Littlehampton Shopmobility, Councillor Gammon reported that after having introduced an in-house scooter registration scheme, the system had rapidly become established nationwide. It was also noted that Shopmobility remained in the top four shops nationally for the third year running and that this recognition had helped the organisation gain support.

69.2 Arun Business Awards

The Mayor congratulated all of the Littlehampton businesses that had been nominated and had won awards at the Arun Business Partnership Awards 2017.

70. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

There was nothing further to report.

71. EXEMPT BUSINESS

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Members of the public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded under Section 100 Local Government Act

**1972 due to the confidential nature of the
business to be conducted.**

The meeting closed at 8:02pm.

TOWN MAYOR