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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Thursday 19th November 2020 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Chace (Mayor)
Councillor Baker
Councillor Blanchard-Cooper
Councillor Buckland
*Councillor Long
Councillor Molloy
Councillor Northeast
Councillor Price
Councillor Seex
*Councillor Tandy
Councillor Turner
Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ

2020/2021

This meeting is available to view using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Tszhekpvcg>

51. Virtual Meeting Protocol and Use of Mobile Devices

The Mayor welcomed Members, the press, officers, and members of the public to the meeting and explained how the meeting would be conducted.

52. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Rhodes, and it was noted that Councillor Tandy was delayed and would be joining the meeting shortly.

53. 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, and Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ amended his standing declaration to state that he was Leader of Arun District Council.

54. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2020 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and it was noted that arrangements would be made for these to be signed at a later date.

55. Town Mayor's Report and Urgent Items

55.1. Town Mayor's Report

Council received the Town Mayor's report (copy attached to the Minutes). The Mayor reminded Members of the Virtual Christmas Lights Switch On which was being held on Friday 20th November. This was the Council's first digital switch on and would include an evening of online activities. The programme could be found on the Town Council's Facebook pages and the festivities would start online at 5.30pm, with the countdown to the switch on itself starting at 6pm. He also reported that it had been a busy month since the last meeting and that he found supporting groups and local residents both satisfying and enjoyable.

55.2. Internal Strategy Review by West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC)

The Council received notification relating to the internal strategy review being carried out by WSALC. Members recalled the Urgent Action agreed by the Council delegating authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, to serve notice of the Town Council's intention to leave WSALC/SSALC/NALC on 31st March 2021 due to the potentially far reaching implications of this unprompted review. This review would be debated at the WSALC AGM on 2nd December. The Town Council was entitled to send two representatives to attend and vote at the forthcoming AGM. It was therefore recommended that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be appointed as the Town Council's representatives with a mandate to vote and deliver the actions recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee and endorsed by Full Council at the meeting on 15th October 2020. This was supported and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor be appointed as the Town Council's representatives for the WSALC AGM on 2nd December 2020 with a mandate to vote and deliver the actions recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee and endorsed by Full Council at the meeting on 15th October 2020.

56. Public Forum

- 56.1. In accordance with the Remote Meetings Protocol introduced by the Town Council, members of the public who wished to address the Council or any of its Committees during a remote meeting should have emailed their representations one clear working day before the meeting. There were four questions and two representations which the Mayor and Town Clerk proceeded to read out.
- 56.2. Ms Wiltshire asked:
Following the installation of the 3D artwork in the High Street. I would like the Council to confirm the exact cost of this project, design, production and installation, and what budget or initiative this funding has been taken from?
- 56.3. Response:
The Town Clerk thanked Ms Wiltshire for her question. The cost of the artwork project was £14,190, which included design, printing, production, and installation, together with an earlier site visit. The cost was met from the Town Centre Events Match Funding budget, which had been jointly created with the District Council.
- 56.4. Mr Butcher asked:
Which Councillors were involved in authorising the expenditure involved in the production and installation of the 3D artwork in the High Street, and where is this authority granted in the minutes of the appropriate Committee of the Council?
- 56.5. Response:
The Town Clerk thanked Mr Butcher for his question. The Policy and Finance Committee agreed at their meeting on 15th June 2020 to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to progress phases 1 and 2 of the Town Centre Events initiative. Because of the Chair also being a District Councillor and to avoid any concerns about him being double-hatted, the Town Clerk also involved the Vice-Chair of the Committee. Reports on this particular element of the initiative were taken to the September and October Policy and Finance Committee meetings.
- 56.6. Mrs May asked:
With regards to the 3D artwork recently installed in the town centre , please could I ask the council how many invitations for quotations were sourced for the production and its Installation of the artwork in accordance with the town council's financial regulation paragraph 13.6.

56.7. Response:

The Town Clerk thanked Mrs May for her question. Three quotes were obtained, in line with para.13.6 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations that were in place at the time, para.15.6 of the current Regulations.(The Town Council's Financial Regulations were updated and approved at Full Council on 15th October 2020).

56.8. Mr May asked:

With regards to the 3D artwork recently installed in the town centre , please could I ask the council how many invitations for quotations were sourced for the production and its Installation of the artwork in accordance with the town council's financial regulation paragraph 13.6.

56.9. Response:

The Town Clerk thanked Mr May for his question. As previously stated, three quotes were obtained, in line with para.13.6 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations that were in place at the time, para.15.6 of the current Regulations. (The Town Council's Financial Regulations were updated and approved at Full Council on 15th October 2020).

56.10. Representations from the Co-Chairs of the Littlehampton Traders Partnership regarding Agenda item 12.1m, Town Centre Regeneration Management:

Mrs. Thomson-Hitchcock wrote:

I am writing in support of the Littlehampton Towns' Regeneration Officer role within our community.

As a founder advocate for the initial implementation of the role within the town 8+ years ago, I personally, support the role whole heartedly as I believe that the connection and vital link between Traders, Town and District Councils is crucial, especially in these uncertain times.

There will be significant changes within our Trading areas and having a coordinator in place, providing a link between traders, Councils, and other important stakeholders, to help oversee and develop initiatives is vital.

Extending present role for a further year would enable the expertise and knowledge accumulated over many years to be used in a positive way.

Important initiatives such as events, marketing and recently the introduction of Digital Shopwatch Radios for Traders and the Police would have been lost without this role which is vital if we are to continue helping new and established local businesses stay strong and flourish together, safely.

Mr Vickers wrote:

I am writing to you as co -chair of The Littlehampton Traders Partnership in relation to the extension of the Town Centre Regeneration officer post.

In the period that this post has been active we have seen immeasurable benefits to our town centre, if this post did not exist the traders would have very little input into matters relating to the town. We as a group I believe, have a good relationship both with Town and District councils and this has in no small way been facilitated by this position. I could list the projects and initiatives that have been achieved but I know you are well aware of the work done both in front and behind the scenes.

I feel that the importance of this post cannot be underestimated in these trying times and if this post were not to continue, I would view this as a huge step backwards both for the traders and the town.

I understand that the discussions are initially with a view to a 1-year extension, I would like to urge the Town and District councils to view this as at least a 3-year post. This year has been disastrous for the retail and hospitality side of the town and the ongoing work of the regeneration officer should I feel be viewed long term and not just for 1 year.

It was noted that these representations related to a confidential report which had been circulated to members of the council only and would be considered during the Exempt part of the meeting. The representations did not contain any confidential information and were heard during the Public Forum. It was noted that a non-confidential record of the discussion relating to this item would be published in the minutes of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.48pm due to technical issues and resumed at 6.51pm.

57. Correspondence or Issues in Respect of the District or County Council

There were none.

58. Reports of Committees- (Non-Exempt)

58.1. 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. There was one recommendation from the Planning and Transportation Committee:

58.1.1. Rampion 2- Community Liaison Group

Council was asked to approve the recommendation of the Planning and Transportation Committee that Councillor Buckland be appointed as the Town Council's representative on the Rampion 2 Community Liaison Group. This was supported and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

**Councillor Buckland be appointed as the Town
Council's representative on the Rampion 2
Community Liaison Group.**

*Councillor Tandy joined the meeting at 6:53pm.

58.2. Committee Minutes (Non-Exempt)

58.2.1 Policy and Finance

58.2.1.1 Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2020 (previously circulated). Regarding Minute 26.2, Town Centre Events, Members raised a number of questions regarding the integrity of the design, the awarding of the contract, and the package of initiatives that were currently being progressed as part of the overall initiative.

58.2.1.2 Discussion initially focussed on the 3D pavement artwork. The concept was not what some Members had envisaged and had attracted a lot of negative publicity. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction and concerns were expressed about whether it was robust enough for the environment and fit for purpose especially on the paved surface of the High Street. Whilst it was accepted that art was subjective, the consensus was that the debate it had invoked had not benefitted the Town. Overall, the negative publicity and the effect of the second nationwide lockdown on footfall caused some Members to question whether the installations were value for money particularly as they had also been damaged.

58.2.1.3 Reflecting further on the uncertainty around the restrictions on daily life and the other projects that were being investigated as part of this initiative, it was suggested that the current work on the initiative be paused. It was noted that wall murals were being investigated, and there was a strong view that if deployed, they would be more effectively used on blank wall space in the High Street.

58.2.1.4 It was however noted that this initiative was focussed on supporting the High Street and that the artwork was intended to be temporary until work on the Public Realm improvements could begin. Both designs had recently been repaired and were protected by barriers. The Town Clerk undertook to check the position with a view to removing the barriers and to report to Members the following day. He also confirmed that the Councils' procurement procedures had been followed and the installations thoroughly researched. Although no formal mechanism was in place to measure the impact on footfall, this would be investigated. Acknowledging that this initiative was still in its early stages and that there were lessons to be learnt

from this experience, it was agreed that the Town Clerk would report back regarding the work that had been done with the contractor on the installation of the designs on paved surfaces. Members would then consider what they would like to see progressed in the next phases of the initiative and the financial implications during the December meeting cycle. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

Council's views be noted and taken forward by the Policy and Finance Committee as part of the budget discussions that would take place in December.

*Councillor Long left the meeting at 7:39pm.

58.2.2 Community Resources

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

58.2.3 Planning and Transportation

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meetings held 12th October 2020 and 9th November 2020 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

59. Officer's Reports

59.1. Community Facilities Update

59.1.1 Council received a report (previously circulated) which set out progress with the project to build a new Youth Centre in Wick and preliminary discussions with the developer regarding the new community centre facilities in the North Littlehampton development. It was proposed that a formal Sub-Committee of Council be formed to support these projects, advise officers and make recommendations to the appropriate standing committees or Council as required.

59.1.2 Council proceeded to consider the draft terms of reference and proposed composition of the Sub-Committee. Members were supportive of this proposal and in order to more accurately reflect the political balance of the Council it was proposed that membership of the sub-committee be widened to four being the Chairs of the Property and Personnel and Community Resources Committees and the Vice Chairs of the Policy and Finance and Community Resources Committees. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. A Sub Committee of Council be formed to support and inform the work to create new

youth and community facilities in Wick and North Littlehampton.

- 2. The Sub-Committee be comprised of the Chairs of the Property and Personnel and Community Resources Committees and the Vice Chairs of the Community Resources and Policy and Finance Committees.**
- 3. Subject to an amendment to reflect the change in the composition of the Sub-Committee, the terms of reference as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 of the report be approved.**

60. Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies

60.1. Littlehampton Sportsfield Committee

As the Town Council's representative on the Littlehampton Sportsfield Committee, Councillor Blanchard-Cooper informed Members that he would circulate a report of the last meeting to Members.

60.2. Littlehampton Bonfire Society

As the Town Council's representative on the Littlehampton Bonfire Society Management Committee, Councillor Blanchard-Cooper informed Members that the Society was grateful to the Town Council for their ongoing support and were planning next year's event. They were also undergoing a number of changes but wished to report that whilst next year's event would be different from previous years, a bonfire, fireworks and parade were still planned.

60.3. Littlehampton Shopmobility

As the Town Council's representative on the Littlehampton Shopmobility Committee, Councillor Turner informed Members that they were continuing as best as they could during the current climate. Following the recent departure of their Treasurer they were looking for a replacement.

61. Exempt Business

It was Resolved that:

The public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded from the Meeting under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

The following items were confidential for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Town Centre Regeneration Management) and Paragraph 4, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees of, or office holders under, the authority (Apprenticeships).

62. Officers Exempt Reports

62.1. Town Centre Regeneration Management

62.1.1 Council had before it a report (circulated to Members of the Council only) which set out the background to the partnership with the District Council to maintain the post of the Littlehampton Town Centre Regeneration Manager (LTCRO). The Town Clerk explained that having exhausted the Section 106 monies that had originally funded the post, the Town and District Council had entered into a partnership funding agreement to continue to provide a Town Centre Management service. This had been extended and was due to expire on 31st March 2021. Prior to the budget cycle, Council was asked to consider whether it wished to retain the LTCRO post for a further year to allow fuller consideration of how this work should be delivered longer term. Early consideration of this matter was required because should the role be discontinued; sufficient time would be needed to complete the statutory redundancy process.

62.1.2 A lengthy discussion ensued regarding how the role currently functioned, the extent to which the Town Council was already committed to support the regeneration of the Town Centre, and future expectations. Members had several concerns regarding how the role functioned and, in the absence of information about the job description and role, reservations were expressed about retaining the post.

62.1.3 The significant investment that the Town Council had committed to contribute towards the Public Realm improvements also raised the question of whether the continuation of the LTCRO role represented value for money. In the past a

Town Centre Action Group had existed to carry out this work and whilst it was noted that this had been supported with external funding, it was also highlighted that this had coordinated activities to promote the Town Centre. It was considered that this was lacking in the current arrangement and before approving an extension to the current post, Members wished to have a better understanding of the objective and targets of the role. Acknowledging the representations from the co-chairs of the Town Traders Partnership supporting the continuation of the role, Members also considered that more frequent and formal reporting would need to be instigated so that the impact of the role could be better measured.

62.1.4 During the discussion it also became apparent that currently the role was expected to fulfill both promotion and regeneration project functions. Members highlighted the need for a Town Centre Plan, work on which had very recently commenced. Overall, it was considered that if the capability to provide support for the Town Centre was to be retained, a clear action plan and understanding of the job description was required. The Town Clerk was asked to progress this with the District Council and liaise with Group leaders, then informally with all Councillors prior to a final decision being made at an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 21st December. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. The Town Council support in principle, the expenditure of £20,000 from Earmarked Reserves to fund the Town Council's contribution to the one-year extension of the Littlehampton Town Centre Regeneration Officer post in 2021/22, subject to**
- 2. The outcome of urgent discussions with the District Council as to how future Town Centre work will be coordinated and delivered including approval of the job description and action plan at an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council to be held on Monday 21st December 2020 at 5.30pm.**

62.2. Apprenticeships

Council received a report (circulated to Members of the Council only) which proposed temporarily suspending the Town Council's Apprenticeship Scheme and placing the three apprentices on six-month fixed term contracts.

Ordinarily, the Town Council would look to recruit new apprentices when the current apprenticeships finished however, in view of the recruiting difficulties during the pandemic and the support that these posts initially require, this would prove challenging. Acknowledging the additional work COVID-19 brought and the rising level of unemployment, Members unanimously

supported this proposal and wished the three apprentices well in their forthcoming examinations. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The three apprentices be placed on to six-month fixed term contracts from January 2021 to June 2021.

The meeting closed at 10:15pm

TOWN MAYOR

Mayoral Events attended between to 16th October to 25th November 2020

	Date	Organisation	Activities at Event	Venue
24	16 Oct 2020	Arun Church	Interview being filmed	Durmersheim Gardens
25	23 Oct 2020	Mayoral Charities	Tombola Morrison's	Morrison's outside
26	23 Oct 2020	LTC	High Street Artwork Unveiling	High Street
28	24 Oct 2020	LTC	Attend celebration of 100 th birthday of a local resident	Norfolk Gardens
29	3 Nov 2020	LTC/ADC	LOVE LOCAL	NMC
30	4 Nov 2020	Tribes/River School	Poppy display for Remembrance Sunday in window	Tribes
31	8 Nov 2020	LTC	Remembrance Sunday	War Memorial
32	8 Nov 2020	Littlehampton's Veteran's Breakfast Club	Remembrance Sunday	War Memorial
33	12 Nov 2020	Tribes/River School	Poppy display additions for Remembrance Sunday in window	Tribes
34	12 Nov 2020	Sou-pers	Interview being filmed for ITV News	Wick
35	13 Nov 2020	LTC	Virtual Switch on being filmed	Mayor Parlour
36	25 Nov 2020	LTC	Judging the xmas card competition	NMC

** Deputy Mayor Attended Event

***** Mayor & Deputy Mayor Attended Event