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Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Thursday 4th June 2020 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Chace (Mayor)
Councillor Blanchard-Cooper
Councillor Buckland
Councillor Long
Councillor Molloy
Councillor Northeast
Councillor Price
Councillor Rhodes
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=r1gw2tY1dw0&t=2001s>

12. 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.

13. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Baker.

14. 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 declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 18.1, the Town Centre Public Realm, as the Leader of Arun District Council.

15. Public Forum

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 none.

16. Town Mayor's Report and Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

17. Officer's Reports

17.1. Town Centre Public Realm

Council had before it a report (previously circulated) which set out the recommendations of the Extraordinary meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee on proposals for improvements to the Town Centre Public Realm. Council was asked to consider two specific decisions relating to the Town Clock and the future of the outgoing street furniture and also agree any further comments that they wished the District Council to consider.

17.2. Arun District Council's Group Head of Economy, Denise Vine, had kindly agreed to reprise the presentation she had made to the Policy and Finance Committee. Ms Vine set out the longstanding history of the desire to improve the Town Centre. The scheme before the Council had evolved over a period of three years and would now be delivered with a combination of grant funding and additional financial support from both the Town and District Councils. It was emphasised that the grant funding could not be redirected.

17.3. In presenting the plans, Ms Vine explained that the concept sought to create a better sense of place by deploying a simple design highlighting some of the unique architecture in the Town whilst embracing new design concepts. This included new high-quality paving, modern lighting and contemporary seating which aimed to de-clutter the High Street. These elements, combined with junction improvements, traffic control and better linkage with the river and sea front would also improve the visitor experience.

17.4. Members proceeded to debate the proposals and recommendations in considerable detail. The discussion focussed on the retention of the clock tower in the precinct which was considered a landmark and an important part of the heritage of the Town. Members wished to see the Clock Tower retained in its current location. Concerns remained about the timing of the works, which they believed should commence after Christmas. Members expected the scheme to consider the needs of different users, including people with disabilities and to reflect the maritime heritage of the Town.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38pm due to technical issues and resumed at 7:51pm.

- 17.5.** Acknowledging the proposed use of natural materials within the scheme, Members highlighted the need for them to be robust, requiring minimal maintenance and upkeep to retain the high-quality finish. Regarding the existing Town Council-owned street furniture, there was some support for retaining this within the scheme. Following further discussion on the matter it was formally proposed and seconded that the Town Council ask the District Council to include this within the scheme. This was put to the vote and not carried. Members did comment that the new street furniture should be comfortable, robust, and not contain extreme measures to deter inappropriate use.
- 17.6.** Moving on to traffic related matters, Members wished to see the current short term parking arrangements in place around the Town Centre retained and to ensure that the Traffic Regulation Orders required to support the scheme took into consideration the need to reduce the speed of traffic in the Town Centre and particularly at the junctions.
- 17.7.** Overall, it was considered that the scheme came at an important time for the Town, given the tough retail conditions prior to the nationwide lockdown and the likelihood that these would deepen as a result of COVID-19. These proposals were seen as an opportunity to revive the Town Centre and support its long-term sustainability. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. The retention of the Town Clock as part of the Public Realm scheme be supported and that it be maintained and protected during works.**
- 2. Option two be supported as the style of preferred seating for consideration by the District Council.**
- 3. The existing street furniture be retained by the Town Council and used at other sites.**
- 4. The retention of residual funding for use to extend the scope of the Public Realm River Walkway be supported as a proposal for consideration by the District Council.**
- 5. Postponing the start of works until January 2021 be supported as a proposal for consideration by the District Council.**
- 6. The Council's Comments as set out in Minutes 17.4 and 17.5 be forwarded to the District Council.**

18. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 8:51pm.

TOWN MAYOR