

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held in the New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton on Thursday 23 March 2023 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Long – Town Mayor
Councillor Blanchard-Cooper
Councillor Buckland
Councillor Butcher
Councillor Chace
Councillor Molloy
Councillor Northeast
Councillor Price
Councillor Rhodes
Councillor Tandy
Councillor Turner
Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ
Councillor Woodman

2022 to 2023

79. Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedures were noted.

80. Filming of Council Meetings Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

81. Apologies

There were none.

82. 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 no further declarations were made.

83. Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 January 2023, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

84. Town Mayor's Report and Urgent Items

84.1. Town Mayor's Report

The Mayor's engagements report, copy attached to the Minutes, had been circulated to Members before the meeting for information. On behalf of the Town Mayor, who had lost her voice, the Deputy Mayor expressed her gratitude to Members, especially those who were not standing in the forthcoming elections, the Town Clerk and his staff for their help during her Mayoral year.

85. Public Forum

There six members of the public present.

- 85.1.** Mr Farquhar addressed Council as Chairman of the Littlehampton Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association. Referring to the recent trespass incident at the Town Council's Worthing Road allotment site, Mr Farquhar asked the Council to review the boundary security at the site particularly in the southeast corner. He also thanked the Community Resources Officer for the support he had given allotment holders coordinating the reporting of theft and damage and linking with the police.

In response, the Town Clerk stated that the recent incident had been troubling and emphasised the importance of identifying issues that needed to be brought to the attention of the new council.

- 85.2.** Mr Chester acknowledged that this would be the Town Clerk's last meeting before he retired. He joined the Mayor in thanking him and wished him a happy retirement. Mr Chester then proceeded to address the Council on the impact of climate change on the West Bank. Speaking of the dilapidated groynes on the West Beach he stated that these had rendered the beach virtually non-existent. He also observed that the Environment Agency were currently carrying out their annual maintenance of the shingle bank on this side of the river. All of which in his view pointed to a deterioration of the flood defences that provided protection for the businesses and residents in the vicinity including access to Ferry Road which if lost would cut them off from the A259. Local opinion suggested that the defences might not last as long as the Environment Agency had predicted and he therefore wished to raise this serious issue with the Council and put on record that it needed to be addressed.

In response the Town Clerk stated that the Town Council had fought hard to get protection for this area against the threat of inundation including the need for the West Bank Development to deliver flood protection to all residents on that part of the river. To bring about the much needed change in thinking he therefore suggested that Council consider writing to the local MP and added that adopting a similar approach with the Environment Agency would provide an opportunity to seek clarity regarding mitigation. Observing the work that had been carried out to reinforce the flood

defences on the East Bank in recent years, Members considered finding solutions for the West Bank was now a priority, particularly as there now appeared to be little hope that development would come forward and deliver the necessary infrastructure. There was wide support for this course of action and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

A letter be sent to the local MP and the Environment Agency seeking action to address the deterioration of the flood defences on the West Bank of the River Arun.

- 85.3.** Mrs Evans, an allotment holder at Worthing Road addressed the Council on the matter of the recent trespass incident. Mrs Evans reported that she and other allotment holders had also experienced violence and aggression and she asked what the Town Council was going to do about it.

Acknowledging the frustration and concerns of plot holders, the Town Clerk stated that where plot holders felt threatened in this way they should dial 999 and report such incidents to the police immediately. He emphasised the importance of making sure that the police had this information as it enabled them and the agencies they worked with to build up a picture and put measures in place to tackle the problem. He added that Officers would be emphasising this in the next issue of the Town Council's Allotment Newsletter.

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

86.1. Traffic Congestion in and around Littlehampton

Council received and noted the exchange of correspondence with the County Council regarding traffic congestion, previously circulated.

87. Reports from Committees – Non-Exempt

87.1. 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 were four:

87.1.1. Policy and Finance Committee: 13 March 2023

Minute 49.2 – Annual Investment Strategy 2033 to 2024

It was **Resolved** that:

The Annual Investment Strategy 2023 to 2024 be approved.

87.1.2. Governance and Audit Committee: 7 February 2023

87.1.2.1. Minute 17.3.1. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Council **Resolved** that:

The proposed changes to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be approved.

87.1.2.2. Minute 17.4. Annual Review of Internal Controls

Council **Resolved** that:

Statements 2, 5, 6 and 7 of the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

87.1.2.3. Minute 17.5. Annual Review of Corporate Risk Register

It was **Resolved** that:

The Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy and Procedure be approved.

87.2. Committee Minutes – Non-Exempt

87.2.1. Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 30 January and 27 February 2023, previously circulated.

Regarding Minute 98.2. Arun District EV Charging Bay Proposals, it was noted that notwithstanding the objections, some of the charging bays had been installed while some of the existing EV charging points in St Martins Carpark were not being maintained. It was reported that the County Council was reviewing its procedure for rolling out the Charging Point Scheme and would be consulting with Councillors on the next phase. During the ensuing discussion ideas for future sites were put forward at the Lyminster School and in the parking area adjacent to the Wick roundabout / Arundel Road junction. Overall, there was concern that the Scheme had not been properly thought through, contained no long term plans to address future demand and did nothing to address the poor state of repair of the existing stock. These points were noted and would be reviewed by the Planning and Transportation Committee at its meeting the following Monday with a view to making further representations on the Scheme to both the District and County Councils.

Regarding Planning application LU/1/23/PD, it was reported that there had been a petition opposing the proposals. The Chair of the Committee explained that the Town Council had lacked the scope to object given the need to do so under accepted planning reasons and that the proposals were classified as permitted development.

87.2.2. Governance and Audit

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023, previously circulated, with no matters arising.

87.2.3. Property and Personnel

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023, previously circulated, with no matters arising.

87.2.4. Policy and Finance

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023, previously circulated, with no matters arising.

87.2.5. Community Centres Sub-Committee

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023, previously circulated.

87.2.6. Community Resources

Council received and noted the Minutes of the meetings held on 16 February and 16 March 2023, previously circulated.

88. Officer Reports

88.1. Littlehampton Traders Partnership

88.1.1. The Town Clerk updated Members on the outcome of the recent traders meeting. Following the dissolution of the Partnership at the beginning of the year, the Traders had met on 14 March 2023 to consider the way forward. Discussion had focussed on the future of the Partnership and concerns raised included the deficit on the Traders contribution to the Disk Parking Scheme; the absence of a Town Centre Manager; differences within the Partnership and the lack of PCSOs and Business Wardens. The Traders hoped to have funding for 2023 to 2024 parking, should the outstanding matter with the District Council be resolved. In light of this the Partnership had decided to dissolve itself.

88.1.2. The Town Clerk reported that he would urgently seek to form a Town Traders Forum to assume continuing communication between the Councils and all traders. That Forum would be allowed to nominate two people to the Town Centre Action Group which would then need to talk through the way forward. Members acknowledged the changing nature of trading conditions in the High Street which was a nationwide trend and considered this a positive move forward. Future options for the Disk Parking Scheme would be an urgent matter for the discussion by the new Council.

88.1.3. A vote of thanks was proposed for the Traders Partnership Management Committee and all those who had worked with them in recognition of their contribution over the years. This was unanimously supported by Council.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The update be noted and the work undertaken to date to support Traders be endorsed.

88.2. Town Centre Events

Council received a report, previously circulated, which set out a proposal for the delivery of a series of events and initiatives over a period of eight to nine months to celebrate the completion of the public realm improvement works. These had been drafted in consultation

with the Councillor Members of the Town Centre Action Group and were welcomed by Council, particularly the Christmas Market. Observing that the Christmas Lights contract was about to be re-tendered Members wished to ensure that theme and display was aligned to that adopted by the Christmas Market. The Town Clerk assured Members that this would be the case as both pieces of work were being managed by the same team of Officers.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. The proposal to run a series of summer events in the High Street at a cost of £10,500 as set out in paragraphs 3.3.1 to 3.3.3. of the report be approved.
2. The proposal to host a ribbon cutting event at a cost of £1,000 as set out in paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.3. of the report be approved.
3. Options for the delivery of an art trail be explored as set out in paragraphs 3.5.1. to 3.5.6. of the report be approved.
4. The proposal to run a shopping scheme at a cost of £1,700 as set out in paragraphs 3.6.1. to 3.6.4. of the report be approved.
5. Options for the delivery of a Christmas Market in the Town Centre be explored as set out in paragraphs 3.7.1. to 3.7.8. of the report be approved.
6. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

88.3. Town Council Priorities

Council received a report, previously circulated, updating progress on the remaining priorities that were identified by the current Administration. This would be presented to the New Council for assimilation into their thinking regarding future priorities. Acknowledging the range of achievements and the difficulties of the last four years, Members expressed their thanks to Officers for their work.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The progress and updates with the 2019 to 2023 priorities as set out in Appendix A attached to the report and the financial implications be noted.

88.4. Change to Committee Calendar 2023

Council was requested to approve changing the date of the Annual Council Meeting from 11 to 18 May 2023. This was considered prudent and would allow time for the successor Council to embed following the Coronation.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The Annual Council Meeting be held on Thursday 18 May 2023.

88.5. New Town Clerk

88.5.1. It was noted that the new Town Clerk, Ms Laura Chrysostomou would join the Town Council on Monday 24th April 2023. Recognising the many years of service that Mr Herbert had dedicated to the role of Town Clerk, Councillor Dr Walsh commended him for his service, professionalism, advice and guidance over the years. He also acknowledged Mr Herbert's engagement with Members, residents, and neighbouring authorities. On behalf of Councillors and the residents of Littlehampton he therefore thanked Mr Herbert for his steadfast support of the Town and his work on its behalf. Members showed their appreciation and gave Mr Herbert a round of applause.

88.5.2. In response, Mr Herbert thanked Members and said it had been an honour and privilege to work for the Town and the Town Council. He had been blessed to have worked with many exceptional staff and he hoped that Councillors would continue to appreciate how good they were and show them the respect they deserved.

89. Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies

There were none.

90. Statement by Councillor Turner

Confirming that she would not be standing in the forthcoming elections, Councillor Turner wished to place on record her thanks to Officers and her fellow Councillors, especially the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their support.

91. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7.29 pm.

Town Mayor

Mayoral Events attended between 20 January 2023 and 22 March 2023-Councillor Jill Long

#	Attendee	Date	Organisation	Event	Activities at event	Venue
111	M	20/01/2023	Littlehampton Musical Society	Puss in Boots Pantomime	Attend	The Windmill Theatre
112	M	21/01/2023	The Edwin James Festival Orchestra	New Year Orchestral Concert	Attend	The Littlehampton United Church
113	M	24/01/2023	Sussex Police	Community Engagement	Attend	High Street, Littlehampton
114	M	25/01/2023	West Sussex Association of Local Councils Ltd	Chairs Forum	Attend	Virtual Meeting
115	M	31/01/2023	Littlehampton & District Foodbank	Littlehampton & District Foodbank session	Attend	The Littlehampton United
116	M	15/02/2023	Littlehampton Town Council	K2 Spades in the ground photoshoot	Attend	K2 Site, Eldon Way, Wick
117	M	15/02/2023	Bersted Parish Council	Chairman's Network Meeting	Attend	On-line
118	M	20/02/2023	U3A Lifestyle Group	Talk for Arun East U3A	Attend	Guide Hall, Woodlands Centre

Mayoral Events attended between 20 January 2023 and 22 March 2023-Councillor Jill Long

#	Attendee	Date	Organisation	Event	Activities at event	Venue
119	M	25/02/2023	Littlehampton Town Council	Charity Pancake Olympics	Attend	Littlehampton High Street
120	M	02/03/2023	Arun District Association of Local Councils	ADALC Conference	Attend	Atherley Chamber, Arundel Town Hall, Maltravers Street,
121	M	04/03/2023	Joint Twinning Quiz	Joint Twinning Quiz	Attend	Angmering Village Hall
122	M	06/03/2023	Neighbourhood Policing Team	NPT Inspector & Parish & Town Monthly Meeting	Attend	On-line
123	M	08/03/2023	Chichester District Council	Chichester District Council Reception	Attend	Chichester College, Westgate Fields, Chichester
124	M	09/03/2023	Littlehampton Town Council	Annual Town Meeting	Attend	Southfields Jubilee Centre
125	M	22/03/2023	Littlehampton Rotary Club	Rotary Arun Youth Community Awards Event	Attend	The Windmill Theatre