

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held in The New Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17 5EW on Monday 21 August 2023 at 6.30 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Tandy – Chair  
Councillor Billy Blanchard-Cooper  
Councillor Alan Butcher  
Councillor Jeffrey Daws  
Councillor Sean Lee  
Councillor Jill Long  
Councillor Maralyn May  
Councillor Mike Northeast  
Councillor Christine Wiltshire  
Councillor Bob Woodman

**2023 to 2024**

**30. Evacuation Procedures**

The procedures were noted.

**31. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of social media and Mobile Phones**

The procedures were noted.

**32. Apologies**

There were apologies from Councillors Tilbrook, Richards, O'Neill, Walsh, Worne.

**33. 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.

### **34. Urgent Items**

There were none.

### **35. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

No representations were made.

### **36. Officers Reports – Non-Exempt**

#### **36.1. K2 Car Park**

36.1.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, and recommendation from the Community Centre Sub-Committee regarding the future operation and management of the car park at the new Centre. The Assistant Town Clerk explained that whilst parking provision was an objective of the Project, the method had not been defined. It was only very recently that the District Council had presented proposals which included the possibility of it becoming a public car park if they retained ownership. The other option was for the Town Council to take it on through a lease agreement. Following a thorough review of the options and robust discussion, the Sub-Committee was recommending that the District Council retain ownership of the car park.

36.1.2. Council proceeded to consider the recommendation and the ensuing debate saw some Members express surprise at the move and reservations about operating a Pay and Display system in the car park on the grounds that it was neither economically or socially supportable. A priority for Members was that hirers would be able to access parking bays for the duration of their booking. It was also noted that whilst taking ownership of the car park was desirable, the discussion at the Sub-Committee had highlighted that this option was not feasible at this time.

36.1.3. Councillor Butcher proposed an amendment to the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Northeast, opposing the introduction of a Pay and Display system in the car park. This was challenged because it was considered that it did not respond appropriately to the options. Members did however wish to make it clear that they did not believe that a Pay and Display system was a viable option for the site. It was therefore further proposed that the recommendation be amended to reflect this. This was carried. Members also held the view that if the District Council insisted on using this system, then a Pay and Display machine was preferable and more accessible than an app-based system.

**Council therefore resolved:**



1. Not to take a lease on the car park at the K2 site and that Arun District Council retain ownership of the land and the operational control and management of parking at the site.
2. To make clear its view that the car park at the K2 site was not viable as a Pay and Display facility but if the District Council wished to pursue this option, then its preference was that users of the K2 Centre were able to obtain the free parking period by entering their vehicle registration number plate on a machine.
3. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor as Chair of the Council and the Sub-Committee, and the Chair of the Property and Personal Committee to agree the operational arrangements taking into consideration the needs of the users of the Centre.

### **36.2. Consultation on proposals for Town Centre Parking Disc Scheme**

36.2.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, regarding the Town Centre Parking Disc Scheme. The Town Clerk explained that the District Council was seeking informal feedback from the Town Council on the proposals to replace the current two-hour free parking disc scheme in the town centre car parks. This scheme was due to expire at the end of the year and as part of the review process it was also proposed that a working group comprised of representatives from Bognor Regis and Littlehampton be formed to advise on the transition arrangements.

36.2.2. The District Council proposed the phased introduction of a virtual permit via an app-based system under a two-year agreement commencing 1 January 2024. This would still deliver two hours free parking and would require users to register via the MiPermit app. Council proceeded to review the proposal in more detail and were disappointed that number plate recognition technology had not been considered. This was viewed as a missed opportunity particularly when there was evidence that this system had been successfully introduced in neighbouring parishes and could deliver longer free parking periods. Acknowledging the changes in the High Street, particularly the move towards service-oriented businesses, Members also believed any changes should recognise that a longer free parking period would be beneficial, although it was appreciated this may impact on capacity, it should be considered.

36.2.3. Further points to be included in the feedback included ease of use, making sure that any future changes were well advertised to residents and visitors and supported the growth of the High Street economy. There was a concern that in introducing another parking payment system, it would deter visitors to

the detriment of the local economy. It was felt that one year was too short a period for the cross over between paper discs and an app-based system.

36.2.4. In discussing the working group proposal it was noted that there are significant differences between the two town centres but that benefits could come from sharing ideas. On this latter point, Members concluded that it would be prudent that the Town Council attend the first meeting in order to judge future involvement.

**It was resolved that:**

1. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee, to finalise the Town Council's response to the informal consultation as set out in Minute 36.2. above.
2. That the Mayor and Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee represent the Town Council at the first meeting of the Working Group and feedback be reported to the Policy and Finance Committee.

**36.3. Town Centre Update**

36.3.1. The Town Clerk reported that further discussions regarding the Christmas market had highlighted that it would not be practical to stage the German style Christmas Market this year. Although disappointing, it had become apparent that this would require a significant amount of planning and would need to meet licencing regulations which were hoped to be reviewed in the near future. This also came at a time when the Town Centre Action Group (TCAG) was looking to establish itself and formulate an action plan for future work, and the consultant using the funding secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would begin working with both the TCAG and local businesses. Options that maximise impact and benefit can then be developed and taken forward to the Policy and Finance Committee.

36.3.2. The Town Centre Action Group would hold its inaugural meeting 5 September 2023. Partners included both District and County Councils, Sussex Police and local business representatives. In the meantime, a ribbon cutting event would be held on 21 October to celebrate the completion of the public realm improvement works in the High Street, which would include launching the Love Local prize draw and street entertainment. In response to a question about cleaning the paving in the High Street, the Town Clerk advised that she would be meeting with the cleansing contractor to discuss future arrangements.

**It was resolved that:**

The update be noted.



### **37. 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.

This item was confidential for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

### **38. Officers Reports – Exempt**

#### **38.1. North Littlehampton Community Centre**

38.1.1. Council received an update from the Town Clerk regarding the proposed way forward to progress the plans for the community centre. Referencing the recommendation from the Sub-Committee she highlighted the need to move quickly and the importance of consultation to help develop the plans and engage with the growing community in Hampton Park.

38.1.2. In supporting the way forward, Members emphasised the importance of communication to reassure the public that the Town Council remained committed to delivering a community centre and importantly one that would support the needs of the growing population on the estate into the future. Recognising the growing population, it would also be important to ensure that all the planned community facilities were delivered concurrently. This was noted and would be raised at the next Advisory Group meeting.

#### **Council therefore resolved to:**

To note the update and endorse the action taken to date including that feasibility work would be undertaken by the Sub-Committee to inform the business case and the resources needed to deliver the Centre, incorporating any public borrowing, with a view to making recommendations on the way forward to Full Council on 23 November 2023.

The meeting closed at 7:36 pm.

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**Mayor**