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Town Clerk – Laura Chrysostomou

## Minutes of a meeting of the Community Resources Committee held in The New Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17 5EW on Thursday 7 December 2023 at 6.30pm

### Present:

Councillor Lee – Chair  
Councillor Blanchard-Cooper  
Councillor Daws  
Councillor Long  
Councillor May  
Councillor O'Neill  
Councillor Wiltshire

### In attendance:

Laura Chrysostomou - Town Clerk  
Juliet Harris - Assistant Town Clerk  
Kieran Gibbins - Events and Town Centre Strategy Manager  
Felix Gillett – Community Resources Officer

### 2023 to 2024

#### 33. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

#### 34. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

#### 35. Apologies

There were no apologies.

#### 36. 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 the following additional declarations were recorded.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Annual Service Funding Agreement Review as he had close family ties with the Bonfire Society and confirmed that he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion on this item. He also declared a personal interest in the Museum Periodic Report, as he had donated the brass plaques proposed for acquisition.

### **37. Minutes**

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

### **38. Chair's Report and Urgent Items**

Councillor Lee wished to pay his respects to the British poet, the late Benjamin Zephaniah who had passed away the same day. The Committee paused for a moments reflection and a poem was read out.

### **39. Public Forum**

There were seven members of the public present.

39.1. There were two written representations. The Assistant Town Clerk read out the submissions which related to the Grant Aid Review.

39.1.1. The first was from a resident who asked:

“Having read the papers for this meeting with regards to Grant Aid Review, I object wholeheartedly to this evening's proposal.

It is not clear what the system would be, in fact it is no clearer than a glass of cloudy lemonade. I do not understand the process or the tiers. It seems very long winded and certainly needs further explanation and clarification. It should go back to the working party to simplify it and make it much more understandable. Thursday's meeting of CRC should return the issue to the working party for their next meeting. This seems to be rushed to get this done at this meeting instead of working through it properly and then presented to the full CRC. There should then be a recorded vote by the members of the committee. Approval should not take place at Thursdays meeting. It has not been thought through properly.”

#### **In response:**

The resident was thanked for their comments which were noted and would be considered by the Committee when it came to discuss the matter later in the meeting. The report setting out the proposals for the operation of the new system included an overarching policy, details of the process and application

forms for the Committee to consider. It was noted that if a proposal for a recorded vote on the matter was made and seconded it would be recorded in the minutes.

39.1.2. The second written representation was by a Trustee of the Littlehampton Miniature Railway who asked.

“I see that there is a meeting to discuss the procedure for applying for a grant. Why on earth would have to pre-register for a grant? What’s wrong with the current procedure which funny enough works so why try and fix something that is not broken? The process at present is you apply for a grant putting in the relevant information and you may be successful or successful but not for the full amount or you get rejected. I do not support your proposal to change unless you can give me good reasons for the change.”

**In response:**

The representative was thanked for their comments which were noted and would be considered by the Committee when it came to discuss the matter later in the meeting. The Town Council's main Grant Scheme was always oversubscribed, and the new Council identified the review of the current criteria as a priority. The aim was to find a better and more simplified way to develop community initiatives which were more aligned to the new Council's objectives. If agreed, the new scheme would see the application process split into two parts, pre-registration followed by an application. The intention was that once registered, only updates on a groups' status would be needed to qualify for a grant in the future. This would allow a relationship between the Town Council and community groups to develop where the objectives of both were aligned. The Council would be supporting local community groups to navigate the new system, should the scheme be approved.

39.2. Turning to the public gallery, the Chair invited members of the public to address the Committee.

39.2.1. The Committee heard from the Secretary of the Littlehampton Bonfire Society who also passed on apologies from the Chairman of the Society who had been unable to attend the Committee meeting. Thanking the Town Council for its support in the past, she stated that the last-minute cancellation of this year's event, had been unavoidable and that consequently they had returned this year's grant in full. Whilst the Society had honoured the Service Funding Agreement, this had left their resources depleted as they had also been liable for costs incurred in setting up the event of at least £10,000. This severely impacted the Society's ability to stage the annual event in the future and they really needed help going forward. Highlighting the importance of the Society as both part of the Town's heritage and as a visitor attraction, she hoped that the tradition could continue and that the Town Council would maintain its support.

For the record, Councillor Blanchard-Cooper redeclared his personal and prejudicial interest in the Littlehampton Bonfire Society Service Funding Agreement Review but remained in the room as there was no further discussion on the matter.

The Chair thanked the Society for their representation which was noted and would be taken into consideration when the Committee came to review the Service Funding Agreement later in the meeting.

#### **40. Sports Forum**

The Committee received the notes of the meeting, previously circulated, held on 13 November 2023. Regarding the facilities at the Academy, it was noted that it was the cost of hiring their facilities that was placing them out of the reach of local clubs.

##### **It was resolved that:**

The notes of the Sports Forum meeting held on 13 November 2023 be noted.

#### **41. Officers Reports**

##### **41.1. Arun Youth Projects Annual Report and Presentation**

41.1.1 Members received a report, previously circulated, and presentation from Arun Youth Projects regarding the delivery of Youth Services in Littlehampton under the contract with the Town Council. The Chair welcomed the Service Manager Matt Pollard and a Youth Leader to the meeting, and they proceeded to update Members on the Service throughout the year.

41.1.2 Matt introduced himself and explained that he had recently taken over the role of Youth Service Manager from Emma Biffi. He outlined his experience and explained that he had been employed in different roles all focussed on supporting young people for several years and was also a volunteer at Arun Church. He shared his excitement for the completion of the K2 Centre and looked forward to seeing how this new centre could further the important work that Arun Youth Projects (AYP) were doing in the area.

41.2.3. He proceeded to explain in more detail how AYP operate in the area and outlined the targeted work they do in Littlehampton and the neighbouring parishes. This included regular youth group sessions as well as detached youth work to reach young people who did not attend organised sessions with the aim of offering support outside of the formal youth session environment. The Service was always looking at ways of adapting and with successful lottery funding, was hoping to set up a hub in the High Street where they could connect with more young people, especially those who only engaged with the Service through detached work. They were also hoping to start utilising VR

(Virtual Reality) technology in youth sessions to educate young people about the dangers and consequences of knife crime.

41.1.3 .The Committee then heard from a Youth Leader who shared their experience of the Service and how it had helped them. They highlighted how important it was for young people to have a space of their own, where they could be heard and understood. They explained that they had attended sessions since they were eleven years old and had progressed into Youth Leadership with Arun Youth Projects, whilst attending college and working.

Members thanked the Youth Leader for sharing their experience and remarked on how beneficial it was to have a first-hand account of the positive and important work that is being done in the area.

41.1.4.Matt took questions on various aspects of the Service. Commenting on the pandemic and impact of the prolonged lock downs on young people, this had been difficult and most noticeable in terms of changes in behaviour. He explained that the Service had changed by undertaking more targeted detached work and supporting their workforce as it adapted to the changing patterns of behaviour. More recently in 2022 there had been a drop in attendance at the Southfields session which was due to anti-social behaviour. Having implemented some of the techniques learnt during the pandemic and targeted intervention, attendance at this session was returning to a healthy number. The Service monitored this with the aim of keeping young people on track. The Service also aimed to attract young people of all abilities by ensuring that sessions were held in accessible venues, providing social interaction and being inclusive.

41.1.5. Matt continued his report by talking about the detached youth work the Service provided. Youth workers were always looking at different ways to engage with young people and this was a great way of achieving it. He explained that whilst the Service focussed its work on the areas of the parish identified as high need predominantly River, Wick, Courtwick. and Brookfield, detached work helped the Service connect with groups of young people that would not typically attend the regular sessions. Highlighting that the detached work was not limited to known areas of high activity, this could include areas where there was currently no interaction, for example Beach Ward. The Service also had a presence in the neighbouring parishes which accounted for the out of town attendance figures in the statistics.

41.1.5. The Chair thanked Matt and the Young Leader for attending the meeting. The Committee also wished to put on record their thanks to Emma Biffi and acknowledge her contribution to the development of the Service.

**It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The Mayor send a letter of thanks to Emma Biffi.
2. The Annual Report and update be noted.

## **41.2. Events Periodic Report and Town Council Events Programme 2024 to 2025**

41.2.1. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, which contained an update on the plans for 2024 to 2025 events programme and feedback following the Remembrance Sunday event. Members proceeded to consider the update on the plans for Town Council led events for 2024 to 2025. Regarding the Easter Out and About sessions it was noted that following a site visit, Officers would be liaising with Freedom Leisure to design an activity session at the K2 Community Centre. Should this not be possible it was considered prudent that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to finalise the programme for this aspect of the 2024 Easter Out and About Events. It was also noted that the Town Centre could provide an Easter event as part of the Town Centre Event Programme.

41.2.2. Discussion turned to the Armed Forces Day event, the format of which the Committee wished to review to see if it could be rationalised and delivered within the current budget of £13,500. The Committee proceeded to consider the current programme and associated costs. The Events Manager provided clarification on several points including the timetable for the Ministry of Defence grant and the air display requirements. It was observed that the latter were becoming increasingly prone to mechanical failures and weather dependant. It was noted there were very few venues where aerial displays could now be safely held, and that this aspect of the programme was a prominent feature of the event. It was proposed that reserves could be used to support the 2024 event, but most of the Committee were not comfortable with the Town Council's reserves being used in this way and instead favoured condensing the programme.

### **It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The aerial display be removed from the Armed Forces Day Event in 2024 and the programme for the event be condensed to bring the costs within the current budget of £13,500.
2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to finalise the programme for the 2024 Easter Out and About Event including alternative arrangements if it is not feasible to use K2.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper redeclared his personal and prejudicial interest in the following matter as he had close family ties with the Bonfire Society and left the meeting at 7.32pm.

### **41.3. Service Funding Agreements Annual Review**

41.3.1. The Committee considered a report, previously circulated, which summarised all the Town Council's current Service Funding Agreements and gave an update on how each group was delivering their services. Having noted the updates, the Committee proceeded to formally consider a request from the Bonfire Society to retain the Service Funding Agreement and return this year's funding. This included a breakdown of their current financial position, which was shared with Members of the Committee only for information. Having assessed the information received from the Society it was evident that although the annual event was popular, the lateness of the cancellation was questionable. It was also considered that the funding was disproportionately high compared to the other Service Funding Agreements and could be better used to meet the wider needs of the community.

41.3.2. The annual parade, bonfire and fireworks were clearly very dependent on the weather, and it was acknowledged the Society had incurred some unavoidable costs. It was however also noted that the Council had limited resources, and the budget was under significant pressure. It was therefore proposed that half of this year's funding be returned to the Society and that the remaining £3,750 be added to the Town Council's Main Grant Aid budget enabling more local groups to benefit from the Scheme. It was noted that in not renewing the Service Funding Agreement, the Society would also be eligible to apply to this scheme. The proposals having been made and seconded, the Committee proceeded to a vote.

#### **It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The Littlehampton Bonfire Society receive a payment of £3,750 towards the costs of the cancelled 2023 annual event and that the current Service Funding Agreement is not renewed.
2. The remaining £3,750 from the Littlehampton Bonfire Society Service Funding Agreement for 2023 to 2024 be added to the Main Grant Aid Scheme budget for 2024 to 2025.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper rejoined the meeting at 7.58pm.

### **41.4. Grant Aid Review**

41.4.1. The Committee had before it a report, previously circulated, which contained a proposal to introduce a new system for the Town Council's Annual Grant Aid Scheme. The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the proposal was based on a system of tiers of applicants and underpinned by a new Policy setting out the Town Council's objectives and how the new system would work including the initial support that would be provided to help guide applicants through the new process, if approved. Speaking in support of the proposed new system, the Chair explained how he saw the new system evolving and how it aimed to more widely share the Town Council's grant funding throughout the community, bring more groups on board and enabling them to build a relationship with the Council. Whilst there would be more work

initially in terms of establishing and publicising the new system it was thought this would lessen as time went on.

41.4.2. Councillor Blanchard-Cooper expressed his disappointment that the new scheme was coming forward now. He explained that as he had understood from the Task and Finish Group meeting that only the pre-application process would be coming forward at this time and that he did not believe the minutes to be a true record of what was agreed at the meeting. He did however feel that the scheme could work well in the longer term but considered that there were still unanswered questions and that he had expected the Task and Finish Group to reconvene and continue its work. Under the circumstances he requested a recorded vote on whether to approve the new policy.

41.4.3. It was noted that an analysis of last year's grant application had also taken place and informed the development of the Policy. In bringing the new scheme forward it was expected that it may still need some refining and that it would be important to consider feedback on how it performed. A timetable outlining the process also showed that the Committee would receive regular reports on the how the Policy was being implemented. It was suggested rather than using named staff emails addresses, that a generic "Grants" email address be introduced as part of the application process and that it reference staff by title. This was noted and would be taken forward as part of the implementation of the Policy by officers.

41.4.3.1 The Committee proceeded to a recorded vote on whether the Policy be introduced for awarding the Town Council's Annual Grant Aid from 2024.

For:

Councillor Daws  
Councillor Lee  
Councillor May  
Councillor O'Neill  
Councillor Wiltshire

Against:

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper  
Councillor Long

**It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The system of tiers be introduced for awarding the Town Council's Annual Grant Aid from 2024.
2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to finalise the Grant Policy for implementation from 2024 onwards.
3. The minutes of the Grant Aid Task and Finish Group held on 8 November 2023, be noted. Councillor Blanchard-Cooper requested that it be noted in the minutes that he abstained from this decision.

**41.5. Museum Periodic Report**

Members received a report, previously circulated, which contained an update on the Museum, including engagement figures. In addition, the Committee was also asked to approve the acquisition of several artifacts relating to the social history of Littlehampton. It was observed that an event was planned on Friday 15 December to thank the Museum volunteers for their support and agreed that Members be invited to attend.



**It was resolved that:**

1. The acquisition of items detailed in Appendix A, attached to the report, be approved.
2. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

**41.6. Hire Terms and Conditions Review and Fee Charge Proposals 2024-2025**

41.6.1. The Committee considered a report previously circulated setting out proposals for room hire charges for the forthcoming financial year. In addition, a review of the Town Council venue hire terms and conditions had also been undertaken by Officers and the Committee was asked to approve the revisions. Regarding the latter, the Town Clerk explained that the last review was in 2019 and the main changes related to Performing Rights Society (PRS) and Phonographic Rights Licencing (PRL). As many regular hirers held these licences it was proposed that acquiring the licence became the responsibility of all hirers going forward.

41.6.2. Turning to the fees, it was noted that officers have undertaken a review and comparison of fees with neighbouring authorities and venues. This had shown that the proposed five per cent increase was comparable.

**It was resolved that:**

1. The revised Terms and Conditions for Venue Hire including the changes to the administration of the PRS and PRL Licences for all venues be approved.
2. The level of room hire charges be increased by five percent for 2024 to 2025.
3. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to apply a discount to long hours and or multiple bookings.

**42. Finance**

**42.1. Committee Budget Monitor**

Members considered a report, previously circulated, highlighting significant variances from the budget in Income and Expenditure relating to the Community Resources Committee budget for 2023 to 2024. Regarding the allotments it was noted that the level of fee increases would be 10 percent in 2024 and 2025 and that the draft budget included a proposal to create earmarked reserves for future planned maintenance. In response to questions regarding recharges, the Town Clerk explained that these were reviewed annually and aimed to reflect the actual cost of housing and resourcing the services provided by the Town Council. Members wished to have a better understanding of how this worked, and it was agreed that an informal session with Members be arranged to do this.

**It was resolved that:**

The report be noted.

Councillors Daws and O'Neill left the meeting at 8.45pm

## **42.2. Committee Budget Proposals 2024 to 2025 and Projections for 2025 to 2026 and 2026 to 2027**

42.2.1. The Committee considered a report, previously circulated, setting out proposals for this Committee's Budget for the next three years. The Town Clerk explained the budget for the Committee had been drafted based on estimated increases in costs for the coming year and projected forward to 2027. Overall, the current level of increase in the precept was higher than in previous years and this had not been helped by the slight drop in the number of households in the parish paying council tax.

42.2.2 The Committee proceeded to consider the budget proposals in more detail and taking into consideration the earlier discussions, the following were therefore noted:

- Armed Forces Day – the 2024 to 2025 budget for the event remained unchanged as the aerial display would be removed to keep the event within the proposed £13,500 budget.
- The Bonfire Society Service Funding Agreement (SFA) – giving the Society half, £3,750, of the 2023 to 2024 SFA was cost neutral as it had been returned to reserves. To minimise the impact on the precept, it was agreed that it would be prudent that the remaining £3,750 from the returned payment be earmarked and added to the 2024 to 2025 general grant budget. This would increase the total Grant Aid budget for 2024 to 2025 from £21,000 to £24,750.
- It was also agreed that it would be prudent to use the General Grant EMR of £3,680 in 2025 to 2026 to offset the increase of the Grant Aid budget to £24,750 and to provisionally set the 2026 to 2027 General Grant budget at £24,750.

42.2.3. It was also noted that the 2023 to 2024 budget included £20,000 to be earmarked at year end for the North Littlehampton Community Centre. A further £20,000 per annum was proposed to be earmarked for the project each year between 2024 to 2027. Turning to other aspects of the budget and following a brief discussion regarding options for a Christmas tree inside Manor House, the Committee concluded that it had minimal impact and that the £200 budget should be removed altogether.

### **It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The draft Committee budget for 2024 to 2025 and the projected budgets for 2025 to 2026 and 2026 to 2027 be updated to reflect the changes set out in Minutes 42.2.2. and 42.2.3. above and that the revised Community Resources Committee Budget be recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee.
2. The Committee's Earmarked Reserve Position be noted.

**43. Exempt Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm.

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**Chair**