

**Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Town Council held in The New
Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17
5EW on 29 January 2024 at 6.30 pm**

Present:

Councillor Tandy – Chair
Councillor Butcher
Councillor Daws
Councillor Lee
Councillor Long
Councillor May
Councillor Northeast
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Richards
Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ
Councillor Wiltshire
Councillor Woodman

2023 to 2024

65. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

67. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillors Blanchard-Cooper, Tilbrook and Worne.

68. 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 at this point.

69. Non-Exempt Minutes

The Non-Exempt Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 23 November 2023, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

70. Town Mayor Report and Urgent Items

The Mayor informed Members that his report of activities since the last meeting would be circulated after the meeting. He had also been pleased to attend a successful exhibition at Pier Road Coffee and Art, where he had judged various artworks and selected three favourite pieces.

71. Public Forum

There were two members of the public present and one representation.

- 71.1.** The representation came from a local resident who referred to the recent serious and tragic event in Littlehampton. He also reported a further alleged incident which had occurred earlier in the day at a park in Littlehampton. In his view, there were areas of the Parish where local residents no longer felt it was safe to venture into. He therefore demanded to know when might residents expect to see the often promised visible police presence that these incidents clearly demonstrated was now much needed.

Acknowledging the representation, the Mayor spoke of his sadness upon hearing of these incidents and on behalf of the Council expressed sympathy for those effected. He assured residents that Members understood the seriousness of the situation, the impact on the community and urged residents to report incidents.

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ declared an interest as a representative on the Sussex Police and Crime Panel

- 71.2.** Members also shared their frustration that despite the Town Council's efforts to raise awareness of the issues faced by residents, the visible police presence that was clearly needed had not materialised. There was also a strong view that the burden of community policing had fallen unfairly onto local Councils in recent years.

Whilst encouraging residents to take precautions and continue to report issues, Members felt that this situation should not be allowed to continue and were united in calling for a more tangible response from the Police.

It was therefore resolved that:



The Mayor seek an urgent business meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Area Policing Team to discuss local policing in Littlehampton.

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

There were none.

73. Reports from Committees – Non-Exempt

73.1. Recommendations from Committees

There were none, other than the budget papers which were the subject of separate reports on the agenda.

73.2. Committee Minutes – Non-Exempt

73.2.1. Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the Planning and Transportation Committee meetings held on 4 December 2023 and 9 January 2024, with no matters arising.

73.2.2. Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the Community Resources Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023, with no matters arising.

73.2.3. Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the Property and Personnel Committee meeting held on 12 December 2023, with no matters arising.

73.2.4. Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 18 December 2023, with no matters arising.

73.2.5. Community Centres Sub-Committee

Council received the Non-Exempt Minutes of the Community Centres Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 November 2023, with no matters arising.

74. Officer's Reports

75. Finance

75.1. Capital Programme Draft Funding 2024 to 2025



The Town Clerk presented a report, previously circulated, which set out the funding of the Capital Programme including the financial implications of the Town Council's Business Plan priorities for 2024 to 2025.

- 75.1.1.** Regarding the North Littlehampton Community Centre, concern was expressed regarding the impact of passing time on the value of the Section 106 developer funding and the lack of a timeframe for delivery. Acknowledging these concerns, the Town Clerk assured Members that Officers were working hard with the developer to bring forward a viable scheme.

Council unanimously resolved that:

The Capital Funding Programme for 2024 to 2025 be approved.

75.2. Full Council Budget Proposals 2024 to 2025, 2025 to 2026 and 2026 to 2027.

Council had before it a report, previously circulated, which set out the proposed Full Council budget for 2024 to 2025 and projected budgets for 2025 to 2026 and 2026 to 2027. The Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee was pleased to present the proposed Council Budget for 2024 to 2025 which had been put together following a thorough review by each Committee during the December meeting cycle.

- 75.2.1.** Members proceeded to consider the proposals in more detail. Regarding the general reserves, the Responsible Financial Officer explained that current regulatory guidance suggested that the Council's General Reserves, whilst low, were adequate given the current level of Earmarked Reserves. It was agreed that for clarification, the guidance would be added to future reporting.

- 75.2.2.** Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ proposed a Service Funding Agreement (SFA) for the Littlehampton Bonfire Society. He stated that the cancellation of the 2023 event had delivered a significant blow to the Society's finances which put their future and that of the traditional annual event at risk, with remaining resources only being enough to cover one last event. The annual event was regarded by many as hugely beneficial and he urged Members to support the proposal of the Town Council sponsoring the cost of fireworks through a three-year SFA, £5,000 in 2024 to be met from the General Reserve, £4,000 in 2025 and £3,000 in 2026. The Society was making huge progress in reviewing how the annual event was run and other authorities also supported the Society through help with the organisation and road closures. The Society were also considering reducing the size of the event through changes to the bonfire and procession which could see the resources needed reduce in coming years. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Long who echoed Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ's sentiments.

- 75.2.3.** Members proceeded to consider this proposal and it was noted that this would need to be considered by the Community Resources Committee. It was also highlighted that Service Funding Agreements would not typically be considered until 2026, although the Littlehampton Bonfire Society was able to apply for this year's Grant Aid. It was explained that financing a new Service

Funding Agreement from the General Reserves would be subject to a Supplementary Estimate and that Council would require supporting information to inform such a decision. It was noted that the 2024 to 2025 Budget had to be agreed at this meeting. It was also noted that the Town Clerk and the Community Resources Officer had recently met with the Chairman of the Society and various options had been put forward for the Society to explore. Acknowledging the steps that the Society were taking to review the event, it was suggested that the Society look to improve promotion and sponsorship. These were noted for discussion with the Society.

It was therefore resolved that:

Officers continue discussions with the Littlehampton Bonfire Society and report progress to the Community Resources Committee

75.2.4. Returning to the main budget and precept for 2024 to 2025, the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee stated that the proposals aimed to enable the Council to deliver its Business Plan and support growth. He thanked all members of the Council and staff for their work in taking this difficult Budget through its many stages and commended it to Council. Members were supportive of the proposals which based on need and the wish to support growth, were considered responsible.

It was therefore resolved that:

- 1) The budget for 2024 to 2025 and a Precept of £1,510,181 be approved.
- 2) The projected budgets for 2025 to 2026 and 2026 to 2027 be noted.
- 3) The level of the General Reserves (3.11) be approved.
- 4) The existing procedure, as per Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, of authorising of Council Expenditure (4.1) be approved.
- 5) The current list of Direct Debits, attached as Appendix 3, as per Financial Regulations (4.2) be approved.
- 6) The existing procedure, as per Financial Regulations, of authorising expenditure to a value not exceeding £200 on the Imprest Account (4.3) be approved.
- 7) Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to spend Earmarked Reserves (EMR) up to the amounts included in the approved EMR, subject to the requirements of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation (4.4).
- 8) Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to spend external Grant monies as outlined in the grant application (4.5).

76. Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies

There were none.

77. 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.

78. Exempt Minutes

78.1. Town Council

The Exempt Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 23 November 2023, previously circulated to Members only, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

78.2. Community Centres Sub Committee

Council received the Exempt Minutes of the Community Centres Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 November 2023, previously circulated to Members only, with no matters arising.

The meeting closed at 7:22pm.

Mayor

November 2023 to January 2024 Engagements

#	Attendee	Date	Organisation	Event	Activities at event	Venue
1	DM	22/11/2023	Carers Support West Sussex	Carers Marketplace	To meet and engage with the members of the public and the ten different health & wellbeing support organisations attending	Wick Hall; 76 Wick Street, Wick; Littlehampton. BN17 7JS
2	DM	23/11/2023	Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice	AGM	Attend	Teams call
3	DM	25/11/2023	Wick High Street	Wick Christmas Light Switch On	Turn on lights and meet and greet	Wick High Street
4	DM	01/12/2023	1087 (Arun Valley) Squadron Air Cadets -	Award event	Present awards and mingle	Manor House, Church Street
5	M	01/12/2023	RNLI	Carol Service	Attend	Littlehampton Baptist Church (Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5NY)
6	M	02/12/2023	Pier Road Art Gallery	Mayor's pick	Choose top 3 artwork for December	Pier Road Art Gallery
7	M	03/12/2023	Bognor Regis Town Council -	Civic Carol Service 2023	Attend and watch	St Mary Magdalene Church, South Bersted.
8	M	07/12/2023	HMP Ford	Carol Service	Attend and watch	HMP Ford; Ford Road; Arundel. BN18 0BX

9	M	19/12/2023	LTC Events Team	Love Locals Scheme prize draws	Pick the winner and have photo taken	Manor House, Church Street
10	M	19/12/2023	LTC Events Team	Christmas Bauble Trail	Pick the winner and have photo taken	Manor House, Church Street
11	M	13/01/2024	Volunteer Fair	VAAC	Open event and meet & greet	Rustington Methodist Church, Claigmar Road, Rustington, BN16 2NL.
12	M	17/01/2024	Littlehampton Wave Life Saving Club	Presentation Evening	Present awards and give speech at the end of the awards	Reception Area St Andrews United Reformed Church; Holmes Lane; Rustington. BN16 2PY
13	M	20/01/2024	Pier Road Art Gallery -	January Blues Competition	Judge Littlehampton category	Barclays Local (71 High Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5AE)
14	M	23/01/2024	WSALC	Chairs Forum	Attend	Online