

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2011 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Gammon (Mayor), Ayres, Bowyer, Britton, Caffyn, Charles, Emberson, Hulmes, Long, Neno, Northeast, Dr Walsh and Weston

2011/2012

1. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Mayor outlined the evacuation procedures.

2. MOBILE PHONES

Members and the public were reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) was prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Belchamber MBE and Squires.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on this Agenda. Councillors Bowyer, Britton, Caffyn, Charles, Emberson, Gammon, Neno, Northeast and Dr Walsh declared a personal interest as Members of the District Council with regard to the item on Southfields Community Centre. Councillor Dr Walsh declared a personal interest on Minute 9.5 of the Policy and Finance Committee minutes relating to East Arun Community Hospital as he was a Member of the West Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He also declared a personal interest with regard to the Ferry (Minute 9.7 of the Community Resources Committee minutes) and the Masterplan – North Littlehampton item as a Member of Littlehampton Harbour Board, West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council. Councillors Bowyer and Northeast both declared personal interests with regard to any discussions on North Littlehampton as Members of the District Council's Development Control Committee. Councillor Britton declared a personal interest regarding any discussions on the Ferry as a Member of the District and County Council. Councillors Gammon and Caffyn declared personal interests with regard to the item on Sexual Entertainment Venue Licensing Policy, under the Policy and Finance Minutes, as Members of the District Council's Licensing and Enforcement Committee.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 19 May 2011 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and URGENT ITEMS

The Town Mayor briefly summarised some of his recent engagements including a 100th Birthday celebration at Regency Court. He had attended the Party at the Pond as part the Folk and Roots Festival and wished to record his

thanks to all those involved in delivering such a wonderful event. Armed Forces Day had been fantastic and he again gave thanks to all those involved. He had attended the launch of a new Time Bank and the re-launch of the Miniature Railway. He had also been to the East Preston Carnival and Founders Day. The Sports Awards had again been a tremendous success and he thanked Mr Bob Champion for attending and presenting the awards. On the previous evening, he had attended the enrolment of new cadets at St John's Ambulance at Linden Road. He congratulated Councillor Northeast for his work in securing new play equipment in Wick and lastly highlighted the new Mayoral Chain.

7. PUBLIC FORUM

- 7.1 Mr Ian Buckland referred to the item that was to be discussed under Exempt Business regarding Southfields Community Centre. He explained that he hoped that this would proceed and that the nursery currently located at the Scout Hall would be able to relocate. It was important that facilities such as that nursery were available, particularly bearing in mind the likely increase in population in the town. In clarification, the Clerk explained that no decision had yet been taken as to how or to whom the Community Centre facilities would be let.
- 7.2 Mr Nick Wiltshire explained that he had lived on the Beaumont Estate for many many years and wished to urge Councillors to support the proposed new Community Centre on Southfields Recreation Ground. He believed this was an essential community facility.

8. CORRESPONDENCE OR ISSUES IN RESPECT OF THE DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCIL

There were none.

9. OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1 Prayers at Council Meetings

The Mayor reported that the item had been withdrawn.

9.2 Statement of Accounts - Annual Return 2010/11

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which had as an attachment, for consideration and approval, the 2010/11 Annual Return, which was the Statutory Statement of Accounts for the Council as at 31st March 2011. In approving the Return, Members commented that it was good to see that the cost of audit would fall. The Clerk also confirmed that there had been no revaluation of the Town Council's properties this year but that this had been undertaken recently. It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Annual Return - Statement of Accounts be approved and that the Chair be authorised to sign these accordingly.

2. The Annual Governance Statement be approved and that the Chair and the Town Clerk be authorised to sign it accordingly.

3. The Internal Auditors Report be noted.

9.3 Statement of Accounts - Unaudited

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which had as an attachment the detailed Statements of Accounts for the Council's consideration and approval. The Clerk confirmed that these Accounts were no longer subject to audit and that they summarised the Council's transactions for the 2010/11 financial year. It was **RESOLVED**:

That the unaudited Statement of Accounts be approved and that the Chair and RFO be authorised to sign the Balance Sheet accordingly.

9.4 Neighbourhood Planning

9.4.1 Council considered a report (previously circulated) which sought Council's approval to develop a Neighbourhood Plan in line with the Government's Localism Bill and in doing so to delegate this to the Planning and Transportation Committee, with appropriate funding and resources. The Clerk explained the background to the proposal and that the staff structure at the Council had been temporarily amended to facilitate this work. There was broad support for the proposal, although there was a need to fully educate organisations and the public about this. The Plan would not be a wish list but a way of guiding development in the town over many years. The items within it needed to be deliverable.

9.4.2 Although Neighbourhood Development Orders were proposed in the Localism Bill, the Clerk did not think that the Council would be proceeding with this at this stage. However, this would rest with the Planning and Transportation Committee. The Clerk had attended a symposium earlier in the day, where it had been suggested that the cost of the referendum could fall upon the District Council. The Clerk also explained that he had reported to that meeting that one of the biggest hurdles to this important local initiative was thought to be the referendum. It was understood that changes might be forthcoming in the detail of this area, which might reduce this potential problem. However, the Clerk did emphasise that it was vitally important that thorough consultation was both undertaken and evidenced and that the consultation had been incorporated within the Plan. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. A Neighbourhood Plan be developed as a matter of urgency.**
- 2. The progress of this be delegated to the Planning and Transportation Committee.**
- 3. The best estimate of the budget as set out in paragraph 4 of the report be approved.**
- 4. That the completion of the Plan be sought, subject to a referendum, by 30 June 2012.**

9.5 The Power of Well-Being

The Clerk reported that following the training of new Members, the criteria for the Town Council to reassume its Power of Well-Being was now met. The details were set out in the report and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. It be confirmed that Littlehampton Town Council meets all of the prescribed conditions to enable it to exercise the Power of Well-Being.
2. The National Association of Local Councils and the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils be informed that the resolution has been passed.
3. The Statement of Intent for Community Engagement be reconfirmed.

9.6 **Anti-Bribery Policy**

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that on the 1st July 2011, the Bribery Act 2010 would come into force. Members considered a draft Anti-Bribery Policy and it was **RESOLVED** that:

The Council's Anti-Bribery Policy be approved.

9.7 **Retirement Policy**

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that on 6th April 2011, the Default Retirement Age was withdrawn. The Council's Retirement Policy needed to be amended to reflect this and it was **RESOLVED** that:

The changes to the Retirement Policy as incorporated in the appendix to the report be approved.

9.8 **Performance and Publicity Overview Committee and Progress Editorial Board**

9.8.1 The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), which comprised two parts. The first related to the need to amend the Membership criteria for the Performance and Publicity Overview Committee as set out in the Scheme of Delegation. The Clerk explained that this currently included reference to Chairs of other Committees, but that that this was now inappropriate and could be met through Council nominations. Members supported this proposal and then moved on discuss the Editorial Board for the Progress Newsletter.

9.8.2 Several Members spoke with regard to the need to have a wider spread of membership across the political groups. It was important that the Board was not seen to be a party political creation and reference was made to the Code of Recommended Practise that had been considered by the by Performance and Publicity Overview Committee. A reference was also made to the arrangements at the County Council and District Council where their Editorial Boards comprised Members of each of the three political Groups. On being put to a vote, it was agreed that Recommendations 2 and 3 of the report should be referred back to the Performance and Publicity Overview Committee for further consideration with a view to a recommendation being brought to the next meeting of Council and that in the meantime the status quo for appointing to the Board should remain. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

1. The membership of the Performance and Publicity Overview Committee as set out in the Scheme of Delegation to Committees be amended to read "Council Nominations".
2. The matters delegated to the Editorial Board, as set out in the Scheme of Delegation, be endorsed.
3. Recommendations 2 and 3 of the report be referred back to the Performance and Publicity Overview Committee for further consideration with a view to having a wider political membership.

9.9 Representatives on Outside Bodies

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) explaining that at the last meeting of Council some positions as Representatives on Outside Bodies were not filled. It was agreed at that time that these would be considered at this meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The following appointments be made:-

- Arun Community Cohesion Group and Arun Housing and Homeless Forum – no appointments made at this stage, with the Community Resources Officer continuing to monitor paperwork.
- Keystone Centre – no further appointment was sought by the Keystone Centre Management Committee.
- Littlehampton 20:20 Committee – Councillor Dr Walsh.
- Littlehampton Sportsfield Management Committee – Councillor Bowyer.
- West Sussex Sustainability Forum – Councillor Hulmes.

10. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (NON-EXEMPT)**

10.1 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 recommendations.

10.1.1 The first related to the start time for Planning and Transportation Committees and it was agreed that a later start time of 7pm for that Committee be approved. Council did not wish to move the date of the September Council, but approved amendments to the guidelines for flying flags.

10.1.2 Council was strongly supportive of the proposals to become financially involved with the proposals to enhance the East Beach Tidal Wall proposals. It was also agreed that this met the criteria for Power of Well-Being expenditure.

10.1.3 It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The start time for Planning and Transportation Committees be changed to 7pm.**
- 2. The recommendation to change the date of the September Council meeting not be approved.**
- 3. The guidelines for flying flags be amended as set out in the report.**
- 4. A sum of £50,000 be agreed to be loaned to the District Council to assist with the enhancement of the East Bank Tidal Wall, subject to the inclusion of the Town Council on the design and rollout of the scheme and the repayment of the sum by 31 March 2018.**
- 5. The expenditure set out in resolution 4 above be agreed as meeting the criteria for Power of Well-Being expenditure in that it is likely to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Town.**

10.2 Committee Minutes

10.2.1 Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2011 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

10.2.2 Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2011 (previously circulated), with one matter arising.

Minute 9.7 Freedom of the Town

The need to commence these arrangements shortly was highlighted.

10.2.3 Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 31 May and 20 June 2011 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

10.2.4 Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2011 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

10.2.5 Performance and Publicity Overview

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2011 (previously circulated), with one matters arising.

Minute 10: Masterplan – North Littlehampton

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that Mr Nick Gibb MP had also stated at his meeting with the North Littlehampton Steering Group that he opposed large developments.

11. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

11.1 Councillor Caffyn reported that the Wick Information Centre had received a £300 cheque from the 50 Up Club and that their Summer Fayre was to be held this Saturday at 10am. Councillor Hulmes added that in his discussions with people in the locality there was a keenness to retain the Wick area as a village.

11.2 Councillor Bowyer reported that at the meeting of the Joint Eastern Arun Area Highways Committee the issue of parked cars for sale in lay-bys had been raised and she believed that action would soon be able to be taken. Should

this not be successful, she referred to the possibility of introducing a byelaw to enforce this matter.

12. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

The Town Clerk reported that he had nothing further to report to that that he had previously inputted to the Council's Committees. In response to a question he clarified that the comments of the Town Council with regard to the proposed North Littlehampton development would sit on the District Council's planning file but that he was confident that both the Members of the North Littlehampton Steering Group and himself would pursue these points with the developers. Members also referred to a recent meeting with the Courtwick transport consultant with regard to buses, where positive steps forward had been taken to look at the issue of public transport holistically. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The current position be noted.

13. EXEMPT BUSINESS

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Members of the public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

14. Southfields Recreation Ground: Community Centre and Changing Rooms

Council considered a report (previously circulated to Members of the Council only) which explained that the broad design and build contract details for a new Community Centre and Changing Rooms at Southfields Recreation Ground had largely been agreed, with some minor details still to be confirmed. Members viewed a brief presentation which showed how the Centre might fit into the existing community. In response to a question, the Clerk explained that whilst the Centre would not resolve all car parking problems in that locality, it could assist significantly for much of the time. The Clerk also explained that solar panels had been considered, but the risk of vandalism meant that this was not practical. Members wished to record their thanks to Rosie Parfitt for her tremendous work in seeing this difficult piece of work through and it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The proposals for the Southfields Community Centre and changing rooms, at a maximum cost of £700,000, be approved.

2. The Clerk be instructed to seek borrowing approval from DCLG, through SALC, for the sum of £300,000.

3. The Town Council and Responsible Financial Officer be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Town Mayor and the Chair

of the Policy & Finance Committee, to agree the details of the terms of the loan, unless there was a requirement for Full Council to agree this. In this circumstance an Extraordinary meeting will be called. (In agreeing this, Members indicated a clear preference to seek a loan of c. 10 years so as to reduce the overall cost to the tax payers of the Town.)

4. The Property & Personnel Committee be given delegated authority to agree any structural and planning issues emanating from the work.

5. The Community Resources Committee be given delegated authority to agree all elements of detailed design and the equipping of the Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm

TOWN MAYOR