

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2011 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Bowyer, (Town Mayor), Belchamber MBE, Buckland, Mrs Caffyn, Gammon, Mrs Mayer-Pezhanski, Mrs Neno, Northeast, O'Neill, Walsh and Wiltshire.

2010/2011

45. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Mayor outlined the evacuation procedures.

46. 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.

47. PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The Mayor and Chair of Performance and Publicity Overview Committee presented the winners of the photographic competition 2010 with certificates and prize cheques.

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Butler, Botting, Britton, and Mrs Richards.

49. 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 the Agenda.

49.1 Councillor Gammon declared a personal interest as he was involved with both ACCT and CAB whom are referred to under the item on service funding agreements. Councillor Dr Walsh declared a personal interest in the item on the Footbridge as a member of the Littlehampton Harbour Board, Member of Arun District Council and a Member of West Sussex County Council. Councillor Mrs Caffyn declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of staff at Shopmobility.

49.2 Councillors Wiltshire, Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Neno, Buckland, Northeast, Mrs Caffyn and Gammon would declare personal interests as members of Arun District Council if such matters arose.

50. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2010 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

51. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and URGENT ITEMS

The Mayor reported that she had been busy attending functions during the festive period, such as the fantastic Christmas lights switch on which was attended by some of the cast of the local Pantomime.

51.1 Request from CLOG (Courtwick Lane Opposition Group)

51.1.1 The outline planning application for Courtwick Lane was discussed by the Planning and Transportation Committee on 29th November 2010 and a letter outlining Members concerns and requesting further information on the development was sent to the Arun District Council Planning Department. The Town Council had previously met informally with representatives of the developers, so as to understand the application more fully.

5.1.1.2 The Town Council had received a request from Mr Derek Hulmes of 6 Kingfisher Drive as a representative of CLOG. Although aware that there was a public forum at each Council meeting, CLOG would welcome the opportunity of meeting in a less formal setting. Representatives of the group would like to meet with all the Members of the Town Council to fully discuss the proposed development at Courtwick Lane and their reasons for opposing the scheme. Councillors felt that an informal meeting would be possible but stressed that this would need to be with a small group of 5 to 6 representatives only. It was **RESOLVED** that:

An informal meeting be held between Councillors and representative of CLOG

51.2 Councillors further felt that a public meeting might also be appropriate to ensure that Members were aware of public opinion and not just that of the opposition group. The Town Meeting would be held on the 31st March and time could be set within this meeting specifically for this topic, however, Members were concerned that it would take over the meeting and requested a separate meeting. It was noted that public expectations should not be raised by this meeting as the Town Council was only a statutory consultee and the decision would be made by Arun District Council Development Control Committee in July. In order to answer questions on the detail of the application, the meeting would need to include the Planners and the developers. The venue would also need to be considered as the Chamber could not hold the 200 people who had attended the CLOG event. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Clerk explore the possibility of a public meeting to include members of CLOG, the developers, West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council

51.3 The Mayor reported that Arun District Council would be holding a meeting on how many new homes should be built in Arun on Monday at 6.30pm in the Millennium Chamber.

- 51.4 The Clerk circulated a copy of a letter from Arun District Council regarding the 2011 Elections and the way forward. The Election in May would cover both the District and Town Council elections, plus a Referendum. It was noted that if a Referendum went ahead, current guidance was that the poll cards would only detail the District Election and the Referendum. As a result, the Town Council might need separate poll cards to be sent out, duplicating the work. This was being investigated, but could cost approximately £600. There was also a slight difference in the electoral ward boundary for Brookfield Ward between Arun District and Littlehampton Town Council. Members felt that it was essential to issue Poll cards for the Town Council election to clarify both the boundary and the Election. It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The District Council be informed that the Town Council would want Poll cards to be issued.

2. A short article on the Election be included in Progress Newsletter.

52. PUBLIC FORUM

- 52.1 Mr Tony Squires raised three questions. Firstly, he was dismayed to note that the Council agenda consisted of 57 pages, containing 7 policies. He felt this was too much red tape with very little content on the Town. He also asked whether the Town Council had any plans for the Arun Housing Office, which was attached to the Manor House. Thirdly, he referred to the condition of the Tesco's Underpass, which was badly lit and prone to flooding. He understood that West Sussex County Council might be putting in new street lights under the cycle paths initiative and asked whether the Town Council was doing anything about the issue. He felt that the land on the other side from Lineside would lend itself to being taken over by the Council for clearing and planting up. Mr Squires thanked the Town Council for the Tree planting scheme and the trees that were being planted around the Town.
- 52.2 The Clerk responded that the Town Council did need to update and renew its Policies, which needed to be agreed by Council unless this was delegated back to a Committee. Most of the non-policy or strategy matters were delegated to Committees. The Clerk reported that discussions on the future usage of the Housing Office were currently on hold, as the focus was on Southfields Community Centre, where tenders had been received and plans were being progressed. The Town Council had considered a range of options for improving the Tesco's underpass, but the area could not have drainage ditches due to the underground cabling. The lighting-needs had been discussed with the County Council who were progressing this. The local primary school had produced Art Boards, which would be installed in the spring. The Environmental Crime Group had looked at the area and it could be improved, but the land ownership needed to be investigated. This issue would be brought back to Council. The tree planting formed the 2nd year of a five year scheme, planting mature trees with guards and posts.

52.3 Mrs Mary Lees referred to the proposal to allow cyclists along the promenade and raised concerns that this might cause a safety issue. She felt that the cyclists could use the green and that there was a need to keep the promenade safe for young people. The Clerk reported that this was a matter for Arun District Council and that the Town Council had not been consulted on the proposal, but understood that a decision had been made. The Clerk would investigate this further and refer the matter to the Planning and Transportation Committee.

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

There were none.

54. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (NON-EXEMPT)

54.1 Recommendations from Committees

54.1.1 Council considered a report (previously circulated) which set out the recommendations from the last cycle of Committee meetings that needed to be approved by Council.

54.1.2 There were five recommendations from the Property and Personnel Committee meeting held on 6 December 2010, namely; the draft Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy, the revised Grievance Procedures, the draft Lone Working Policy, the changes to the Council's Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy and the draft Whistle Blowing Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.

2. Approve the revised Grievance Procedures.

3. Approve the Lone Working Policy.

4. Approve the changes to the Council's Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy.

5. Approve the Whistle Blowing Policy.

54.2 Committee Minutes (Non-Exempt)

54.2.1 Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2010 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

54.2.2 Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2010 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

54.2.3 Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 29 November 2010 and 18 January 2011 (previously circulated). Councillor Buckland spoke with regard to the River Beach School planning application which had now been approved by West Sussex County Council. He reported that, to the dismay of residents in the area, the transport issues had not been satisfactorily addressed.

(Councillor Mrs Neno declared a personal interest as her children would attend the school in September. Councillor O'Neill also declared a personal interest as his grandchildren would also be attending the school).

Members felt that the concerns of parents and residents, in particular over transport, had not been addressed and furthermore that the school would also consist of temporary classrooms which were not appropriate for this age range. If this were the case, it made a mockery of Localism as people were not being listened to or treated with respect. It was noted that the Governors were trying to deal with the situation thrust upon them by West Sussex County Council.

Members further commented that the review of schools across the Town had not fully considered the Beach Ward, which did not have a school in its Ward, and pupils would need to cross the Horsham Road, which would be further cut off by the Fitzalan link road if it went ahead. A large part of the Town therefore had no provision and it would appear that an opportunity had been lost. It was **RESOLVED** that:

A letter would be sent to West Sussex County Council outlining the Town Council's dismay.

With regard to the Courtwick planning application, one of the issues raised by the Committee was over the number of empty dwellings in the Town and the need for business units. Members questioned whether this was based on fact or heresay. The Clerk reported that these were the areas of concern raised by the Planning and Transportation Committee, who would hopefully receive the formula for empty dwellings from Arun District Council in due course. Arun District Council had an empty homes officer who investigated these properties, which were believed to be between 400 to 500 properties. Members were also concerned how many homes in the Town were holiday homes.

54.2.4 Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2010 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

54.2.5 Performance and Publicity Overview

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2010 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

55. OFFICER'S REPORT

55.1 Auditor's Annual Audit letter 2009-10

Council considered a report (previously circulated) which was deemed to be an excellent report. The Finance and Resources Manager was congratulated. It was **RESOLVED** to:

Note the annual audit letter 2010.

55.2 Full Council Budget 2010/11

55.2.1 Council considered a report (previously circulated). The Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee., Cllr Alan Gammon, thanked Councillors for their involvement in drawing up the budget. He noted that it was pleasing that again all the political groups and service committees had shared a commitment to deliver for a second year a precept at the same level as last year. This reflected the desire across the Council to minimise the impact on residents in the current economic climate.

- 55.2.2 He stated last year that this was not sustainable, even in the medium term, whilst maintaining the current level of services. The District and County Councils were to receive a 2.5% supplement to their grants from central Government to enable them to bring in zero increases this year. Sadly, this was not available to the Town Council as they did not receive central funding.
- 55.2.3 Therefore, the Council was facing a significant real terms cut, given the current level of inflation. He added that it was therefore pleasing to report that the Council was not standing still. This was exemplified by the provision of resources in the budget for a new community centre at Southfields Recreation Ground. The costs of this would be met through a combination of partnership working with the District Council; the prudent use of reserves and by taking the opportunity to borrow whilst interest rates were very low. This exemplified the Council's desire to see genuine improvements in the Town and for its residents.
- 55.2.4 All key services had been retained, including the car park voucher scheme; public conveniences; a wide ranging events programme; tourism support; the Museum and allotments, to name just a few. The vitally important grant aid to local community groups had also been kept. This would be of even greater importance this year, given that many other funding providers had reduced their budgets. Important initiatives such as the Ferry had also retained their funding.
- 55.2.5 The Council was also in a good position to address, within limits, local needs that might arise as a result of other public sector cutbacks. This was perhaps best demonstrated by the way that the Council was awaiting the outcome of the Youth Service Review and consideration of their own proposals in this area of work before agreeing how to deliver youth work in Littlehampton. The Council had accordingly made savings on this budget whilst awaiting further discussions on how best to proceed. The main savings have been achieved by aggressively reviewing each and every budget head and trimming these back wherever possible.
- 55.2.6 Members congratulated the Chair and Officers for the work involved. It was noted that the Town Council was a healthy council, but that as others made cuts, gaps might need to be filled and action taken. It was commented that there was a need to keep an eye on inflation, especially around staff salaries as keeping to no inflation would in effect be a wage cut. It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1. Approve the budget for 2011/12 setting a precept of £997,980, with the Band D Council Tax remaining at £102.42.**
- 2. Note the projected budgets for 2012/13 and 2013/14.**

56. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2011/12

Council considered a draft timetable of meetings (previously circulated). One further change had been made since the December meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee. To avoid a clash of the Performance and Publicity Overview Committee with the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee; a new date (21st June 2011) had been proposed. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The calendar of meetings for 2011/12 be approved.

57. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- 57.1 Councillor Mrs Caffyn reported that the Wick Information Centre had attracted volunteers and was doing well.
- 57.2 Councillor Wiltshire reported that the Sportsfield continued to suffer with its financial restraints and that it remained an important facility for the Town. He further added that they had planted 30 new trees around the ground to replace old ones.

58. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

The Clerk reported that a planning application for the development in the North of the Town was due imminently.

59. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:55pm

MAYOR