

MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2012 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Neno (Mayor), Bowyer, Ayres, Belchamber MBE, Emberson, Long, Northeast, Squires, Dr Walsh and Weston

2012/2013

32. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The evacuation procedures were noted.

33. 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.

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Britton, Caffyn, Gammon and Hulmes.

35. 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. Councillors Neno, Bowyer, Northeast, Dr Walsh, Squires and Emberson all declared interests with regard to the Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy, the Electoral Review of Arun and the Stage by the Sea as Members of the District Council. Cllr Dr Walsh declared a personal interest on the Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy as a Governor of the Littlehampton Academy.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2012 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record with the exception of the amendment of a typographical error in the attendance list and signed by the Mayor.

37. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and URGENT ITEMS

37.1 The Mayor reported that Littlehampton had been awarded the South and South East in Bloom Gold award and three 'It's your Neighbourhood' Awards. She thanked the In Bloom Committee and all those around the town who contributed. The Mayoral engagement list had previously been circulated to Members setting out the extensive range of functions that had been attended since the last Council meeting. The Mayor also expressed her thanks for the support given to her charitable fundraising events.

37.2 Council received the Minutes of the Planning and Transportation meeting held on 25 June 2012 (circulated at the meeting), which had been omitted from the Council Agenda papers.

38. **PUBLIC FORUM**

More than 50 members of the public were present.

- Mr David Warne, East Beach Residents Association, thanked Littlehampton Town Council for the use of the New Millennium Chamber for their Public Meeting on 2nd October, regarding the Leisure & Culture Strategy.
- Mr Tyndall Jones, Traders' Association and resident, urged Arun District Council to find another option for the Windmill Theatre than those set out and thought it should be upgraded.
- Mrs Margaret Boulton, St Mary's Close, thanked all the members of Littlehampton in Bloom Committee for their hard work in achieving the Gold Award in South & South East in Bloom. She also commented that if Arun District Council lengthened Inspire Leisure's lease on the Windmill, Lottery Heritage Funds might be available. She also commented that the consultants on this matter were also developers.
- Mrs Norma Matthews, South Terrace, asked who asked for the Leisure review? The Swimming Centre was very well-managed; benefited the whole community and produced some fine swimmers. She thought that it would be madness to move to the Littlehampton Academy which could not provide such good access. The attendance was excellent at the Windmill and it was very well-used by the elderly. There were many discrepancies in the report e.g. Beach Hotel could not survive so why should a small hotel be any different. She thought that the climate was not conducive to 'al fresco dining'.
- Mr Nick Wiltshire, Kendal Close, sought assurance that the Town Council Members who were majority group Members at the District Council to consider what is best for Littlehampton rather than for Arun. The Town had a unique character and did not want to see it become like Worthing. It was too easy for the land to be sold off and to lose the asset for ever. These proposals were not good for Littlehampton.
- Mr Alan Butcher spoke regarding the Town Show, to encourage Councillors to support the recommendation from the Community Resources Committee not to split the Town Show.

39. **TOWN SHOW AND FAMILY FUN DAY**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), together with extensive Council and Community Resources Committee Minutes. Members thought that this matter had been discussed at length and no future debate was required. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Show and Family Fun Day stay together in one place with the marquee at Rosemead Open Space and the date of the event be Saturday 14th September 2013.

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

40.1 Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy

Council considered a report (previously circulated) and in developing a response debated the issue in detail. The key points that emerged were:-

Littlehampton Swimming Centre

- There was concern about the link between the consultant and developers.
- Reference was made to the campaign 40 years ago to get the swimming centre built.
- It was a fabulous swimming pool but it needed refurbishment.
- It catered for all age groups and had won awards for best training sessions.
- It had good access for the 'East of Arun'. The Academy would not be so accessible and also might be subject to 'dual use' agreements with limited time for use by the community.
- The Centre had good parking.
- More flats were not wanted. Retaining the unique feel of Littlehampton was essential.
- The site including Mewsbrook Park was a 'jewel in the crown' of Littlehampton. The message should be loud and clear from the Town Council opposing development and leaving the swimming centre where it was.
- There was concern about the Arun Youth Aqua Centre. The benefits to young people from this could not be underestimated.
- It was hoped that Arun District Council would listen to the views of the local people.
- The huge response of the public showed how important this issue was.
- Individual letters must be sent to the District Council. A petition only counted as one comment. Every bit of support was crucial.
- The consultants only stated the obvious. A report was not needed to tell us that the swimming pool needed refurbishment.
- It was a nonstarter to move the swimming centre. More facilities should be provided rather than fewer with a major refurbishment at the swimming centre and other types of facilities like sports pitches and halls at the Academy.
- The District should not be looking at relocating but instead adding and investing in areas such as North Littlehampton.

Waterfront

- A Councillor had undertaken a survey in Beach Ward which had elicited 400 responses. 98% said keep the swimming pool and 98% said keep the Windmill.
- The Windmill was a much loved and much used facility. It was multifunctional giving opportunities to drama and arts groups as well as a cinema.
- It was in a good location although not the best – the best would be in the town centre but it had good parking and ease of access from neighbouring parishes.

- Arun District Council had moved leisure services to Inspire Leisure but were steadily reducing the subsidy so that they were now close to shutting the Windmill.
- Arun District Council's annual budget was £23m. They had £31m in reserves only £7m of which was for earmarked purposes. They had built up these reserves because they had not invested in essential refurbishment.
- The Windmill would need digital format cinema to survive.
- The Windmill needed air conditioning. It would be a much cheaper option to refurbish and get digital equipment.
- One of the concerns from the amateur dramatic societies was that they had to pay so much to hire it, but this is because the subsidy had been so greatly reduced by Arun District Council.
- The Windmill brought a lot to Littlehampton – it was a community resource and should be kept.
- Arun District Council knew the price of everything and value of nothing. They were not interested in the community benefits.
- The Windmill does need refurbishment and a good maintenance programme.
- There were two distinct issues. Firstly it was important to keep live theatre and a cinema, but young people want a Multiplex and the Windmill site could not achieve that. It also could not survive without digital format as this is the future of cinema.
- A development in St. Martin's Car Park would bring people to the town at night. It would not be a huge development as the site would only have space for two or three screens. It was important to look to the future.
- Although there were a lot of public attending it was respectfully pointed out that there were no young people.
- It was pleasing to see the strength of feeling on this issue. Putting all the facilities on the Academy site was the wrong thing to do.
- The Windmill is very well used by local dance and drama groups and was a very well valued community asset.
- A replacement must be available before the existing facility is closed or demolished. Another community hospital situation must be avoided.

Other points

- It was commented that the Swimming Pool was next to a sewerage pumping station which might lead to some difficulty in selling luxury flats with this as a neighbour.
- Rustington Parish Council had made similar points including:
 - Was a hotel needed? There is not a great evidence of demand.
 - Does a 'quality skate park' really meet the needs of all the local community?

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, draft a response to Arun District Council taking on board the comments raised.

40.2 Mr Nigel Lynn – Chief Executive, Arun District Council

Mr Lynn explained the focus of his work over the past 12 months. Three key items had been reviewing the District Council's priorities; bringing in a new management structure and delivering significant savings as a result of grant reductions. He also commented on the need for the different strands of local government to work together.

In response to a question as to whether it was time to consider single combined council District and County or create a 'virtual' unitary authority where resources were shared Mr Lynn explained that central government were not proposing unitary authorities at this time. Arun District Council already shared services with other local authorities for saving and effectiveness.

(A fifteen minute adjournment was taken.)

40.3 Electoral Review of Arun: Draft Recommendations

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) that set out the draft recommendations from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The Town Clerk was seeking initial thoughts of Members and would take a draft proposed response to the Policy and Finance Committee and Full Council in November 2012. Comments included:-

- Setting up a working party to propose a way forward.
- The number of Councillors were not changing so why change the boundaries?
- The proposed Ward names were illogical.
- New housing had not been considered properly. It would be better to wait until these were built.
- It was stated that there were other models that have been explored by the Liberal Democrats and Labour at the District Council. This should also be considered.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk consult with the political groups on a response with a draft proposal prepared for the Policy and Finance Committee in November.

41. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (NON-EXEMPT)

41.1 Recommendations from Committees

41.1.1 Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) proposing revised Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The revised Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Schemes of Delegation to Committees as set out in Appendices 2–4 of the report be approved.

41.2 Committee Minutes (Non-Exempt)

41.2.1 Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2012 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

41.2.2 Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2012 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

41.2.3 Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 23 July, 20 August and 17 September 2012 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

41.2.4 Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

41.2.5 Performance and Publicity Overview

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

42. OFFICER'S REPORT

42.1 Press and Media Policy

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1. Approve and adopt the Press and Media Policy.**
- 2. Ask the Policy and Finance Committee to review this in twelve months.**

42.2 Stage By The Sea

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated). Cllr Bowyer had attended a positive meeting between Littlehampton Town Council representatives and Arun District Council officers. The timescale looked realistic for delivery by May 2013. A comment was made that was supportive of the design but expressed reservations regarding the siting of the structure particularly regarding the weather. However, it was commented that the site was made available by Arun District Council and complimented the seafront. It was also explained that it was not just a performing area but it would also double up as a seafront shelter. It was confirmed that there would be public consultation towards the end of October.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The first stage payments of £20,000 for the design and engineering works for the project be authorised.**
- 2. The 'Stage by the Sea' project proceeds to the next phase at a total cost of £85,000 (balance of £65,000) be agreed.**
- 3. Officers be authorised to progress planning permission and land transference and/or lease arrangements.**

4. Officers produce a leaflet explaining the project which could be circulated by Members during the consultation period.

42.3 Change of Council Date

It has been recommended that the meeting of Council approved for Thursday 22nd November 2012 be moved to Thursday 29th November 2012 to avoid a clash with an important meeting of the District Council regarding their Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy and therefore give the Town Council an opportunity, if necessary, to consider any outputs from that meeting. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The scheduled Council meeting to be held on 22nd November be moved to 29th November to avoid a clash with an important meeting of the District Council regarding their Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy.

42.4 Committee Vacancies

Following the resignation of Councillor Scrivener, three vacancies now existed on Committees. These were for a River Ward Councillor on the Planning and Transportation Committee and a Conservative Group Member on the Policy and Finance Committee and the Performance and Publicity Overview Committees. Councillor Belchamber MBE was proposed and seconded to represent River Ward on the Planning and Transportation Committee. Councillor Weston was proposed and seconded to join the Policy and Finance and Performance and Publicity Overview Committees. Council supported these proposals and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. Councillor Belchamber MBE represent the River Ward on the Planning and Transportation Committee.**
- 2. Councillor Weston become a Member of the Policy and Finance and Performance and Publicity Overview Committees.**

43. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Bowyer reported that the JEAAC Highways had instigated a policy to remove cars from lay-bys on highways. An App was available for reporting potholes etc.

44. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

There was nothing to report.

45. 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.

46. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (EXEMPT)

46.1 Recommendations from Committees

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated to Members of the Council only) with regard to the Dairy site and the Services Manager. It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Dairy site be declared surplus to requirements from 1 April 2013 and to instruct the Town Clerk to explore all options for its disposal.

2. Appropriate notices be served on Enable Me, Arun Co-ordinated Community Transport and the Children's Society PAR Project to end their tenancies as of 31 March 2013 (following consultation).

3. The Town Clerk be instructed to seek alternative premises for the Amenity Team and report back to the Property and Personnel Committee at its next meeting.

4. The staff structure set out in Appendix 2 of the report be adopted from 1 October 2012, delivering the financial savings as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

46.2 Committee Minutes (Exempt)

46.2.1 Property and Personnel

Council received the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 (circulated to Members of the Council only) with no matters arising.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

TOWN MAYOR