



MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2012 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Gammon (Mayor), Ayres, Bowyer, Belchamber MBE, Britton, Caffyn, Emberson, Hulmes, Long, Neno, Northeast, Scrivener, Squires and Dr Walsh

2011/2012

44. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Chair and Clerk outlined the evacuation procedures.

45. 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.

46. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Weston.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

47.1 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.

47.2 Councillor Caffyn declared a personal and prejudicial interest regarding Shopmobility, should this be discussed, as she was employed by them.

47.3 Councillor Dr Walsh referred to the Masterplan and North Littlehampton and declared a personal interest, should they be discussed, as he was a Member for both WSCC and ADC.

47.4 All District Councillors declared a personal interest regarding the exempt item (Cllrs Gammon, Bowyer, Britton, Caffyn, Emberson, Neno, Northeast, Squires and Dr Walsh).

48. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2011 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor. Councillor Hulmes clarified his reasons for mentioning the Neighbourhood Forum meeting (minute 39) as it had been drawn to his attention that the 24 hour waiting restrictions were not being enforced outside normal working hours.

49. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and URGENT ITEMS

The Mayor reported that he had attended the Christmas lights switch on event in the High Street, which saw a large turnout and was very successful. He had also attended the Arun Youth Aqua AGM, visited Downing Street with the

Hospital petition and attended the Christmas Carnival Fun Day in the High Street, where it had been good to see so many Town Councillors supporting the event. He had also been to a number of Carol concerts, including the East Beach Residents' Christmas "Carols in the Square". He was pleased that the Wickmas event at Wick Hall had been a success for the organisers. On Christmas Day, he went to the Zachary Merton Hospital to visit local residents, which had been a special moment. He had enjoyed the Sports Financial Awards ceremony and was particularly pleased to view the long awaited Ferry and meet the partners involved. He was looking forward to the exciting launch event on 31 March and urged all to attend. Finally, he had attended the Littlehampton Musical Comedy Society performance of "Babes in the Wood" and the formal commencement of the building of the Community Centre at Southfields Recreation Ground.

50. PUBLIC FORUM

There were three members of the public present. Mr Graham Pauly, a local resident, asked if planning permission for a ramp at 57 Greenside had been considered by the Town Council as it was being constructed. It was confirmed that the application had been considered by the Planning and Transportation Committee.

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

There were none.

52. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – (NON-EXEMPT)

52.1 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 two recommendations.

52.1.1 Minute 92.1 Committee Start Time

Council had asked the Planning and Transportation Committee to consider the commencement time for its meetings. It was agreed previously to change the start time from 6.30pm to 7.00pm to avoid a clash of meetings for several Members of the Committee. The Committee agreed to revert to a 6.30pm start and this had been progressed through the Urgent Action procedure. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The reversion to a start time of 6.30pm for the Planning and Transportation Committee be endorsed.

52.1.2 Minute 92.2 Vice-Chair

Council had asked the Planning and Transportation Committee to recommend a Vice-Chair from amongst its Members. It was **RESOLVED**, in line with the recommendation of the Committee, that:

Councillor Bowyer be appointed as Vice Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee.

52.2 Committee Minutes (Non-Exempt)

52.2.1 Policy and Finance

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2011 (previously circulated) with no matters arising.

52.2.2 Community Resources

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011 (previously circulated).

Councillor Hulmes referred to the Jubilee Bandstand Working Party (minute 49.4) and asked for an update on progress and whether local residents would be consulted. Councillor Bowyer confirmed that an initial meeting had been held and the Group had agreed to investigate a performance space that could be used as a beachfront shelter for residents when not in use. A design brief would be tendered shortly and consultation would be carried out once a potential design was identified. Councillor Squires stated that it would be important for local bands to be included in the consultation. Councillor Dr Walsh reported that the Jubilee Bandstand would be subject to normal planning application conditions, whereby the public would be able to comment on the plans.

Councillor Ayres asked for additional Christmas lights at Wick to be considered by the Christmas Lights Working Party. It was confirmed that the previous three year contract had come to an end but was to be extended, with some minor changes, for a further 12 months.

52.2.3 Planning and Transportation

Council received the Minutes of the meetings held on 5 December, 20 December 2011 and 10 January 2012 (previously circulated).

Councillor Hulmes referred to the Morrisons planning application (minute 120.1). He stated that the application would be heard by the Arun District Council Development Control meeting on 1 February and asked if the Chair intended to present the objections from the Town Council at that meeting. Councillor Long confirmed that she planned to attend the meeting. The Town Council had made their views clear on two occasions to the District Council, so she had not intended to speak, but would if it were necessary.

52.2.4 Property and Personnel

Council received the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2011 (previously circulated). Councillor Squires had given his apologies for that meeting and the Minutes would be adjusted accordingly.

52.2.5 Performance and Publicity Overview

There had been no meetings of this Committee since the last Council meeting.

53. OFFICER'S REPORT

53.1 Committee Vacancies

Council was asked to consider filling the vacancies on the Community Resources and Performance and Publicity Overview Committees. It was **RESOLVED** that:

Councillor Scrivener be appointed to the Community Resources and Performance and Publicity Overview Committees.

53.2 Council and Committee Dates 2012/13

A draft calendar of dates had previously been circulated to the Council. There were two amendments to the dates of the March Council meetings, which were agreed. A request was made for a separate Committee to look at Localism, but it was agreed that this would be dealt with by the Policy and Finance Committee. It was **RESOLVED** that:

***The Council and Committee dates for 2012/2013
be approved as per the attached calendar.***

53.3 Full Council Budget 2012/13 and Church Street Offices

- 53.3.1** The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) outlining the Budget for 2012/2013. The Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee thanked all Members for their work in putting together the draft Budget. She reported that the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer had met the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Group Leaders, Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs prior to taking reports through all Committees. This had allowed a great deal of consensus to be achieved. As a result, she did not propose to go through the detail of the Budget as all Members had been involved and had reviewed the detailed papers and reports. She outlined the key themes, as follows:-
- 53.3.2** The growth of the precept was, once again, significantly below inflation. If Parish and Town Councils were in receipt of the Central Government funding incentive that the District and County Councils received, the Town Council would be recommending a reduction in the precept.
- 53.3.3** This was remarkable given the delivery of below inflation precept increases over many years; the loss of much income from interest as a result of almost negligible interest rates; the additional demands on the Budget as a result of the Localism/Big Society agenda; the pressures on the principal authorities and the desire of the Council and residents to continue to improve the Town.
- 53.3.4** The latter point was evidenced by the imminent arrival of the Ferry; the new Community Centre at Southfields; the proposed Bandstand; the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and aspirations for the Church Street offices, amongst other things.
- 53.3.5** The Town Council had maintained their commitment to the key services already delivered across the Town. These included support to the Retail Centre in a number of ways, such as the Car Park Disc Scheme and public conveniences, Tourism and Events, Allotments, Parks and Gardens and support to vital local community groups. The Town Council had always been at the forefront of localism and would continue to advance this cause. Budgetary provision had been made to achieve this.
- 53.3.6** To achieve the difficult balance of delivering high-quality services and excellent value for money, every budget head had been examined and reduced where possible and earmarked reserves had been used wherever they did not require further supplement at present.
- 53.3.7** It was important that reserves were maintained and the Budget took action to address potential concerns. With an active ongoing agenda the Council were starting to move to a position of risk regarding these levels. This had been addressed in the budget.
- 53.3.8** Looking ahead to future years, the finances of the Council remained robust and healthy and, without any horrible surprises, the budget projections were

excellent. The budget recommendations were commended, subject to the item that would be discussed under the exempt part of the agenda.

- 53.3.9** Councillor Northeast stated that he felt that cutting the Town Show budget by 30% to allow for a Jubilee event was unacceptable. The Town Show was about giving something back to the local people and cutting funds back would be a downgrading of the event. If it was a saving for austerity he might reconsider, but taking from this popular event was not right. He believed that £5,000 should be reallocated to the event. This could be met either from the funds allocated this year for the Freedom of the Town celebrations (if this did not proceed) and the funds for events at the bandstand in 2012 or from the funds for the bandstand itself which would not be built until 2013.
- 53.3.10** Councillor Northeast proposed an amendment to the recommendation that the Town Show budget be reinstated and funded as detailed above. This was seconded by Councillor Squires.
- 53.3.11** Councillor Belchamber MBE supported the amendment as the Town Show had gone from strength to strength. Councillor Britton referred to the previous discussions on this matter and the Chair of the Community Resources Committee explained that consideration had been given to dropping the Town Show for one year in favour of a Jubilee event. The efforts of Councillors and Officers in identifying savings meant that both the Town Show and the proposed Jubilee event could go ahead.
- 53.3.12** Councillor Dr Walsh felt that the Town Show would not be downgraded by the proposed changes, as community groups would be encouraged to use their own gazebos and a local band would be showcased instead of an expensive tribute band.
- 53.3.13** Councillor Squires felt that the Town Show supported Localism and the Big Society agenda and provided a valuable opportunity for networking and fundraising. The Town Mayor added that the cuts were therefore inappropriate on the Town Show's 10th Anniversary.
- 53.3.14** A recorded vote was requested on the amendment as follows:-

To reinstate £5,000 to the Town Show and Family Fun Day by either diverting £4,000 from the Freedom of the Town and £1,000 from the bandstand budget OR by using some of the funds (£5,000) set aside for the bandstand this year.

The recorded vote was:-

AGAINST

Cllrs: Bowyer
Britton
Emberson
Long

FOR

Cllrs: Hulmes
Caffyn
Ayres
Belchamber MBE
Northeast
Squires
Dr Walsh
Neno

ABSTAINED

Cllrs: Scrivener
Gammon

53.3.15 The amendment was therefore carried 8 to 4. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The two options detailed above would be referred back to the Policy and Finance Committee for a decision.

53.3.16 Councillor Bowyer gave thanks to the Responsible Financial Officer for her work in keeping the budget as low as it was.

53.3.17 Members went on to discuss the exempt items on the agenda (Church Street Offices), taking care to avoid reference to the District Valuer's valuation of the site. Councillor Bowyer outlined the reasons why negotiations were so important and why the additional funds were required in order to obtain the Church Street land. She felt that this was an opportunity not to be missed.

53.3.18 Whilst Members were not unhappy about increasing their offer, it was agreed that it was a long ambition of the Town Council to acquire the land and ensure that the eyesore building that was currently there was either greatly improved or demolished. It was felt that the District Council were fully aware of the aspirations of the Council and were holding the Town Council to ransom over this.

53.3.19 There was unanimous support for the measures outlined in the report to bring this prolonged negotiation to a head. It was also agreed to submit immediately an offer of £220,000 linked to the transfer of all the land at the rear of the building and an acceptable payment schedule.

53.3.20 Councillor Hulmes referred to the budget for Progress Newsletter and asked whether savings could be made. It was confirmed that "Progress" cost £4,000 per edition for editorial, design and distribution to every household in the Town. The Town Council had to produce four editions per annum to meet its Quality Council status. The Annual Report edition had been successful and the budget increased to allow distribution to every household. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The budget for 2012/2013, setting a Precept of £1,033,832, be approved, including an increase of £10,000 for the Church Street offices.**
- 2. The projected budgets for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 be noted.**
- 3. That an improved offer immediately be submitted to the District Council in the sum of £220,000 for the Church Street offices, including the land aspects set out in the report and proposing a payment schedule.**
- 4. A sum of £10,000 from current year underspends be earmarked to part fund the final offer of £220,000 to the District Council.**

54. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

54.1 Wick Information Centre

Councillor Caffyn reported that the Centre had taken advantage of the free market stall offered to local Charities by the Town Council and Market operator and had raised £111. Their Wickmas event had been a great

success raising a further £318. A Wick Trader meeting was to be held at the Hall and the All Saints Church had given them a donation. They were also very much looking forward to the Town Council's Pancake Olympics event.

54.2 Keystone Centre

Councillor Ayres reported that the Committee were meeting regularly. They were pleased to be working in partnership with the Town Council's Project 82 Youth Centre and a new Keystone Centre Manager had been appointed.

54.3 Littlehampton Shopmobility

Councillor Ayres reported that although the organisation was disappointed with the reduced Town Council support, they would be seeking further funding elsewhere.

54.4 Homelink

Councillor Ayres reported further on Homelink's move to new premises in the Arcade, which did not require planning permission for change of use.

54.5 Citizens Advice Bureau

Councillor Emberson reported that she had attended the joint meeting of the Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice Bureaux. She reported that they were commencing the first year of a three-year service agreement.

55. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

The Clerk gave a verbal update.

56. 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.

57. OFFICERS' REPORTS (CONFIDENTIAL)

57.1 Church Street Offices

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated to Members of the Council only). The budgetary issues had been considered earlier in the agenda and a further offer agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The previous revised provisional offer of £200k to the District Council for the purchase of the Church Street premises be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 7:39pm

MAYOR