



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **MONDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2018**.

Present: Chris Cherry Town Mayor
Colin Holden Deputy Town Mayor

Wendy Agate
Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Cherry Catharine*
Richard Cherry
Claire Fussell
Steve Hansford
Diane Heckels
Janice Henwood
Anne Jones MBE
Jacqui Landriani
John Merrill
Pru Moore
Kirsty Page
Chris Thomas-Atkin
Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Julian Thorpe

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

(19.00)

332. OPEN FORUM

A resident asked how much the Council was hoping to save by no longer maintaining the churchyards at St Edwards and St Andrews, and how this could be justified in light of the annual repayments recently committed to for the new performance venue. Residents were told that the new venue would be paid for out of reserves and that it would not have any impact on local services.

Pru Moore told the resident that the maintenance of St Andrews & St Edwards churchyards had come about because in the 1990s they were looking untidy and the Council decided to take over. St John's became

a closed churchyard and so responsibility was put onto the Town Council, which was then paid by the District Council to carry out the work. St Edwards was going to be closed but remained open following the late opening of the Burial Ground. St Andrews had been asked to formally close the churchyard so that the Town Council could formalise a procedure that should have been done a long time ago.

A resident was concerned that the elections were approaching and there was a blur of the edges regarding online publicity. It was not clear which initiatives were by the Town Council and which initiatives were by the Conservative Party. The latest concern was regarding the donation made to the Christmas lights that were stolen from St John's Church. Within hours this was publicised on the Conservative Party webpage but it did not appear on the Town Council webpage until some days later, after a reminder was posted. The resident asked the Council to be clearer on this in the future.

Pru Moore explained that all of the churches and the mosque do great work for the community and it was important to support them. Father Kevin was crowdfunding to get money fast and the donation was a good start to the campaign. It was publicised immediately on the Conservative webpage so that the project could be spread to residents from all angles. It could have been publicised on the Town Council page quicker.

A resident explained that Haywards Heath recently held their Christmas Lights Switch-on which had involved the shopping centre and created a big event. Burgess Hill seemed to be scaled back this year; the shopping centres did not get involved. The Town Centre Partnership was set up to help traders and a lot of money was put into it to create large events. There were no banners along Queen Elizabeth Avenue and the website had been taken down. The website was paid for with tax-payers money and had recently been updated to become mobile-friendly but this had disappeared. There were no events in the town centre during the summer. The resident requested an update and clarification as to what was happening to the Town Centre Partnership.

Pru Moore explained that the Town had been very busy; this was proved from the recent car park figures. There were many events that had taken place this year. The Town Centre Partnership was on hold due to the redevelopment of the Martlets and would be revisited next year. Any money left in that partnership was in a holding account. It was agreed that if the town should suffer dramatically from the development then the money would be used to increase footfall if necessary but this was not needed. Market Place Shopping Centre was a hub of activity and trades very well.

333. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

334. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Wendy Agate declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as her parents were buried in one of the churchyards.

Anne Jones declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as she was a member of St Andrews Church.

Mandy Thomas-Atkin declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as she was a Church Warden at St John's Church.

Janice Henwood and Chris Thomas-Atkin declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as they were members of St John's Church.

335. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor congratulated Ridgeview Wine Estate as they had been awarded International Winemaker of the Year. This was wonderful for their business and for Burgess Hill. A letter of congratulations had been sent.

The Town Mayor was pleased to present a cheque to both Woodlands Mead School and Help for Heroes, following a successful Mayor's Ball. The event raised £1045 and so £522.50 was given to each charity.

336. INSPECTOR PETER DOMMETT: WEST SUSSEX POLICE

Inspector Dommatt thanked the Council for allowing him to attend and give an update. Information sheets were distributed to the Council. He explained that Sussex Police had gone through a period of austerity and had shrunk. The policing structure was split into four categories. The front-end responding officers were backed up by the Investigation and Prevention Teams. Modern crime required more investigation and specialist units dealing with things like cyber-crime or counter terrorism.

Burgess Hill remained a low-crime area; it was one of the safest places to live. In Mid Sussex, burglary was down 13% overall however theft had increased. Reported fraud had reduced. Domestic violence had increased by 20%. A lot of services were going into supporting domestic abuse victims. There was an average of 16 reported knife crimes per year.

There had been a significant rise in anti-social behaviour and resources were being put into the town. There would be two officers on the streets every Friday and Saturday night and the amount of police

officers was due to increase by 25% next year. The increase should allow Burgess Hill to have a dedicated team. There would also be an investment in training, particularly more training in anti-social behaviour. The Police were engaging with local Councils and Neighbourhood Watch groups.

It was recommended that everyone should try to report crime online, as there were a lot of things that could be reported in this way. This would save waiting on the phone to the non-emergency number. Sometimes these crimes are posted on social media instead of to the Police and this was distorting the truth. If a crime was taking place and someone was in danger or fear then the 999 number should always be called.

Richard Cherry asked if the CCTV cameras were able to be monitored at all times to ensure a quick response rate to crimes. Inspector Dommatt explained that the Police cannot monitor every single camera at all times, however should an incident occur then this would be monitored and the response would be the same as if a 999 call came in.

John Merrill explained that he witnessed a drug deal outside his home and reported this through the non-emergency number however he did not receive any communication afterwards. Drugs were an ongoing problem in Burgess Hill and there was concern about the issue of County Lines. Inspector Dommatt explained that the Police relied on drug crime being reported and that they were focused on stopping the supply. County Lines affected all communities. The Police were working with the British Transport Police as well and this issue would not be ignored.

Anne Jones asked whether support was being given to the victims of domestic violence and abuse and asked for reassurance that they would be protected. Inspector Dommatt explained that Police dealt with enforcement and victim support, but referred people on to charities that could help. A charity was recently given funding from the District Council and there was more funding to come from the Home Office.

Janice Henwood asked whether manpower would be reduced despite the increase in officers next year, and also whether there would be a dedicated team for Burgess Hill. Inspector Dommatt explained that there would not be a reduction and that there would be more support for Burgess Hill because of the increase in resources.

Pru Moore thanked Inspector Dommatt for his presentation. It had been a difficult time for Burgess Hill and some residents were extremely distressed at the rise in anti-social behaviour. Multi-agency working was going well and the Police were now on top of things. It was important to reassure our residents that this would be sorted out and that they were being listened to.

337. **COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on Monday 17 September 2018 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

338. **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 1 October 2018, Monday 22 October 2018 and Monday 12 November 2018 were **AGREED**.

339. **FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP: NOTES OF MEETING**

The Notes of the meeting of the Finance Development KAG meeting held on Tuesday 20 November 2018 were **NOTED**.

Janice Henwood expressed concern that the notes did not reflect the fact that the Town Council would experience a significant loss of £59,000 in 2019 due to a reduction in funding from the County Council and the District Council.

Pru Moore explained that all Councillors were aware of the budget. The loss was foreknown and taken into account, so would not cause any problems. There was a five year programme and everybody was aware of these reductions. The Council were taking on commitments but these had been factored in and this was the reason it was important to review spending on things like churchyard maintenance in order to make things more efficient.

340. **COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE**

A structural engineer had been appointed and a survey of the site had been undertaken. Soil tests had also been undertaken. Council was asked to approve the costs of these which amounted to £6190 and £7110 respectively. A VAT specialist had been appointed to provide advice on the most advantageous options to pay VAT and get the most out of any fundraising exercise. Council was asked to approve the initial amount of £3000 for this advice and to be aware that a possible further amount may be needed to create a charity to take care of fundraising and possibly a charity to manage the facility. Pru Moore explained that all associated costs would come to Council.

Janice Henwood reminded Councillors that some residents attended a Council meeting over two years ago to request that a Changing Places facility be installed in the town centre. This would now be included in the plans for the new Community Centre but there was no timescale on when the facility would be available. Pru Moore explained that the Changing Places toilet would open when the new venue was complete. These facilities are expensive to install and maintain. It was noted that

there would be a Changing Places toilet included in Worlds End improvements. It was still hoped that plans would be submitted in early 2019 and Steering Group would decide if the plans should go to a public consultation before or after the plans had been submitted.

RESOLVED that:

- A. That the expenditure of £6190, £7110 and £3000 be approved for work completed by consultants to survey the site, carry out geotechnical tests and provide advice on VAT.
- B. That the CEO be authorised to pay consultant costs as they come up provided either the Steering Group or the Project Manager has recommended the payment.

341. APPROVAL OF LICENCE: NOTICEBOARD

The Worlds End Residents Association asked that the noticeboard which had previously been removed be replaced. Mid Sussex District Council had agreed to replace the board using section 106 funding and it was part of the Worlds End improvements. Approval was sought to enter into a licence for the noticeboard.

RESOLVED that:

That the licence issued by MSDC for a noticeboard at Worlds End be approved and the CEO authorised to sign and seal it.

342. MAINTENANCE OF CHURCHYARDS

The Council currently maintained St Johns, St Edwards and St Andrews churchyards. St John's was a closed churchyard and Mid Sussex District Council gave the Town Council a grant to maintain it. The other two churchyards were not closed. In the 1990s the Council was concerned about the poor standard of maintenance carried out by the churches and stepped in to assist. St Edwards were now in the process of applying for a faculty from the diocese to close the churchyard.

As the Town Council was facing further cuts from WSCC and MSDC it was necessary to look at whether it could continue to maintain the St Andrews and St Edwards Churchyards while still providing other services. In order to save financially and to provide relief to the maintenance team which had been cut, it was suggested that both churches be notified that the Council would no longer maintain the churchyards with effect 1 March 2019.

Janice Henwood asked whether the Town Council was paying anything towards the maintenance or if costs were covered by MSDC. Pru Moore explained that the Town Council were not paid to maintain

St Andrews and St Edwards churchyards, it was done as a goodwill gesture. It was important to go back to the diocese to formalise the agreement and respectfully ask MSDC to take back the responsibility. It was noted that the maintenance for each churchyard cost the Town Council approximately £7000 per year and it was putting strain on the Maintenance Team.

RESOLVED that:

- A. That Notice be given to St Edwards and St Andrews Churches that the Council will no longer maintain their churchyards with effect 1 March 2019 as they are not closed churchyards.
- B. That if notice is received that either or both of the churchyards have been closed the Council decide whether or not to take over the maintenance or pass it over to the District Council.

343. **DIARY DATES**

Council received a schedule of forthcoming events as set out in Agenda Item 12 dated 26 November 2018.

RESOLVED that:

the contents of the report be noted.

344. Meeting terminated at 20.18 hours.