



MINUTES of the ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL held virtually via Zoom on Monday 23 November 2020

Present: Roger Cartwright Town Mayor
Anne Eves Deputy Town Mayor

Graham Allen
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Emma Coe-Gunnell White*
Matthew Cornish
Peter Chapman
Robert Duggan
Robert Eggleston
Lee Gibbs
Janice Henwood
Simon Hicks
Tofojjul Hussain
Joseph Foster
Sarah Lawrence
Sylvia Neumann
Max Nielsen
Kathleen Willis*

* Denotes non-attendance.

(19.00)

156. **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public spoke at the Open Forum.

157. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kathleen Willis.

158. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Robert Eggleston declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12 relating to the Beehive project as he was a trustee of the Beehive CIO. He clarified that had no disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial interest.

Councillor Andrew Barrett-Miles declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12 relating to the Beehive project as he was a member of the Beehive CIO.

Councillors Joseph Foster, Lee Gibbs, Sarah Lawrence and Simon Hicks declared an interest in Item 15 as they were trustees of the Burgess Hill Pantry CIO.

159. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor's Christmas Appeal had been launched, benefiting three local charities offering a befriending service to Burgess Hill residents - Age UK, Neighbourly Care and St Peter and St James Hospice. This was linked on the Town Council website and Councillors were encouraged to share this.

160. **UPDATE ON SPORTS ACADEMY AT BURGESS HILL ACADEMY**

A presentation was shared with the attendees of the meeting on the proposed Multi User Sports Facility at Burgess Hill Academy by Stuart Condie, representing the Steering Group. This would be a multi user facility, consisting of an athletics track with hockey pitch within, situated within the grounds of Burgess Hill Academy. The new sports facility would make use of facilities existing at Burgess Hill Academy. The facility would be walkable from Burgess Hill Girls School, one of the partners, and from Burgess Hill Station. A diagram was shown to demonstrate the location of the proposed facility, and images were shown of a similar existing facility. Burgess Hill Academy owned the land and the existing sports facilities, Burgess Hill Girls School were potential investors, the Athletics Clubs, running clubs and hockey clubs may also be interested in investing. The difference would have to be made up with public funds. So far, an architect had been appointed, a Steering Group had been set up, a meeting had been held with Burgess Hill Girls governors, and planning had been discussed with MSDC. The costings of the planning phase would be approximately £30k. Phase 1 would be just the track and pitch, there was a potential for a Phase 2 of the project which would include a Pavilion. It was noted that, regarding funding, school finances were currently in an uncertain position due to Covid, so it could be a while before Burgess Hill Girls were confident in investing money into a project.

A Community Interest Group would need to be set up in order to proceed with the project. In the meantime the head teacher of Burgess Hill Academy would be setting up legal permissions and anything else required for him as the landowner to proceed.

The Town Council had participated in the Steering Group, it would be essential that Burgess Hill Town Council and Haywards Heath Town Council could be involved in the new Community Interest Group. The Town Council could support the project with any funding towards the planning permission, anything towards a green route from the station to the facility, and promotion of the project.

Questions were then invited from the Councillors.

It was noted that the Town Council ran a grants programme, and once there was a CIC up and running they could make an application for a grant.

It was commented that the Place and Connectivity Project was working on connectivity within the town, and a modal shift towards cyclists and pedestrians, and this could help access to Burgess Hill Academy from the station. It was suggested that the Steering Group look at the website www.burgesshill.net which documented the Place and Connectivity Project.

It was noted that the Place and Connectivity Project included a cycle route from the station into town, however this may not be going ahead as planned.

It was commented that it was positive that the facility was accessible by foot or by bicycle from the station.

A question was asked on whether there could be an issue with floodlighting causing issues for the nearby residents. It was answered that most facilities had a 'Lights Out' policy after 9pm for this reason.

It was commented that trees could help with filtering light pollution caused by floodlights.

The Town Council were supportive of the project, and felt that it would contribute to the sports ethos of the town, which included other existing clubs and facilities, and therefore would be important to the town.

161. **COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 21 September 2020 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

162. **PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Councillor Janice Henwood, Chair of the Planning Committee presented the minutes of the meetings. She noted that on 19 October the Planning Committee resolved to approach Town Council officers to write a press release on the Town Council's response to the Planning for the Future consultation. This had been released. The second resolution was to ask the CEO to explore membership of the Town and County Planning Association. The CEO was looking into this.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 28 September, Monday 19 October and Monday 9 November 2020 were **AGREED**.

163. **PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Councillor Sarah Lawrence had resigned from the Planning Committee leaving a vacancy for a member.

Councillor Peter Chapman was proposed by Robert Eggleston, this was seconded by Councillor Janice Henwood. This was voted on and agreed.

RESOLVED that:

Councillor Peter Chapman would replace Councillor Sarah Lawrence on the Planning Committee.

164. **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING**

Councillor Roger Cartwright, Chair of the KAG, presented the notes to the Council.

The Notes of the meeting of the Strategic Development Key Area Group held on 29 October 2020 were **AGREED**.

Councillor Matthew Cornish made a suggestion that an update on the Sustainability Working Group be shared through the Strategic KAG. The group had been looking at photovoltaic panels for the Town Council building. They had also been looking at how HHTC were monitoring their pollution and had been in touch with them regarding this. The group were looking at how the Town Council monitored their sustainability and how they could promote environmental initiatives.

Councillor Janice Henwood added that the budget for photovoltaic panels was advised at £10k. There had also been discussion at the Working Group of not having sweets given out at events going forward

and healthy substitutes to be used.

It was noted that as the Sustainability Working Group had been set up through the Strategic Development KAG then it was appropriate that it be reported through this.

165. **CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING**

Councillor Robert Duggan, Chair of the KAG presented the notes of the meeting.

The Notes of the meeting of the Customer Services Key Area Group held on 5 November 2020 were **AGREED**.

166. **FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETING**

Councillor Simon Hicks, Chair of the Finance KAG presented the notes of the meeting.

The Notes of the meeting of the Finance Key Area Group held on 12 November 2020 were **AGREED**.

167. **NOTES OF THE CULTURAL QUARTER MEETING**

A Cultural Quarter Meeting was held on 16 November 2020, and four recommendations were put forward to the Council.

Councillor Joe Foster, Chair of the Cultural Quarter Meeting, presented the notes of the meeting. He noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had an effect on the Arts in the town and on the Beehive. The group were still working on the Beehive project, looking at requests from residents, and working with the architects to make improvements to the scheme to allow for deliverability and longer term use. A three phase plan was discussed by the group.

Councillor Robert Eggleston added that since the meeting of the group, he and two of the other trustees of the CIO had a meeting with the trustees of the Cyprus Hall Association. Phase 3 would impact on them and they wanted to ensure Cyprus Hall Association was involved in the project. One of their members would join the Working Group, and they would be directly consulted with by the architects to reach the best design for all parties. Councillor Robert Eggleston and CEO Steve Cridland had additionally met with Nick Dodds who produced the original business plan, and had another meeting coming up to revise the business plan. Councillor Simon Hicks was building a ten year financing model for the Town Council, which would go through Graham Fairbairn for input, so that at budget time, and prior to consulting with the community, the CIO would have a robust business plan, and the

Town Council would have a robust financial model to develop the project. Councillor Robert Eggleston was confident that the financial model would provide excellent value for money and would give the ability to commence work on the construction in 2021.

A point of clarification was raised on point 4 of the recommendations, and it was confirmed that the date for the consultation would not be agreed at this point. It was noted that the Council still wanted to consult with the public, and this would need to be done in a way that as many people as possible were able to engage. If the recommendations were agreed, the Working Group would proceed with planning this consultation process, and this would be brought back to the Council for approval.

It was asked that, considering prior engagement from the Cyprus Hall Association, were the group confident that there would be cooperation?

It was answered that they had found some common ground. The Council were asking a long established and respected organisation in the Town to accept some change, so it was understandable that there are some sensitivities, but it had been made clear that they wanted to work collaboratively. The agreement for their representative joining the working group had been made on the basis that in principle they did not object to the merger of the two buildings.

It was commented that there was still anger among the public about what had happened with the Town Centre and the Martlets Hall. It was asked what were the chances that people would warm to the scheme this time, when previously they had objected to the financing of it, feeling that MSDC and NewRiver REIT should be funding this.

It was answered that residents would continue to be frustrated by this, and the Council had little control over this, however they would be coming up with a clear communication plan to explain the project to the residents. It was reasonable to ask the other local councils to contribute towards the funding for the project.

It was commented that it was important to remember that only 2286 people participated previously, the key message was transparency and more open communication with people.

It was commented that there were lessons to be learned from what had happened previously, and the Town Council had learned those lessons, and now needed to move on.

It was commented that as a town it needed to be recognised that there was a shortage of good quality community space, and the demand was there. It was important to communicate that this was not just about the

performing arts, but also about providing modern facilities for a vast range of commercial, voluntary, and charitable groups across the town who struggle to get what they need. If all three phases could be delivered, then this would be a real change to the facilities in Burgess Hill. If the public agreed to the plans, the project could start to be delivered in 2021. It was commented that people may be surprised at how the project could be delivered in a financially successful way.

Steve Cridland, CEO, had been sent images of the architect's model shortly before the meeting, which he shared.

It was commented that it was worth remembering that the Council hadn't forgotten about the town as a whole, and were not putting all their eggs in one basket with the Beehive, however it would show a commitment to getting on with Council business, and moving forward with a project that had been going on for a long time, and was an investment in the town.

RESOLVED that:

The recommendations were voted on and agreed.

1. That the plans and phases as set out by the architect be accepted and endorsed;
2. That the Business Plan be amended by independent financial consultants to suit the changes in design and circumstances;
3. That the Finance Committee draw up a budget to fund the project;
4. That the 10 week public consultation period be reaffirmed and started on a date to be agreed by the Council to be followed thereafter by a residents' vote on The Beehive plan.

168. **MEMBERSHIP OF SSALC**

The Town Council was a member of Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC), which was affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), details of this membership were set out in Agenda Item 13 dated 23 November 2020.

Steve Cridland, CEO of the Town Council, advised that he had concerns over the benefits the Town Council received for their membership of SSALC in return for the high cost of membership. When he had sought assistance from SSALC in the past, he had been referred to a consultant, for which the Town Council still had to pay a reduced fee. Training Councillors had attended in the past had also been paid for in addition to the membership fee.

It was noted that there were other routes for Councillors to access training, for example through their own political parties or through the Local Government Association. Several Councillors had attended

SSALC training courses, some had found them useful and others had not. Other options should be looked at for Councillor training.

A question was asked on staff appointments, and how vacancies would be filled without the SSALC's advice. It was answered that they had usually not advised on staff appointments.

Clarification was sought on the difference between SSALC and SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks). It was answered that the SLCC was for Clerks rather than for members. Steve Cridland, CEO, noted that the information and advice he had received from the SLCC was superior to that from SSALC.

It was asked whether the Council would still be a member of NALC if they were not a member of SSALC. It was answered that no, leaving SSALC would mean the Council was no longer a member of NALC.

It was noted that the current membership would lapse in March, and suggested that the Councillors defer the decision until the next Council meeting in January.

It was suggested that a meeting could be organised with SSALC for Councillors to discuss the membership.

RESOLVED that:

The decision would be deferred until the next full Council Meeting in January. In the meantime, a virtual meeting would be set up with SSALC to discuss and research membership.

169. **TRADING SPACES UPDATE**

Councillor Robert Eggleston presented a report on the Trading Spaces project, as set out in Agenda Item 14 dated 23 November 2020.

Since the first Lockdown, 5 of the Martlets units had been brought back into use. The expectation is that these could be there until the redevelopment began, and there would be a pathway to take them somewhere on a permanent basis after the development.

A conversation would need to be had with MSDC for the space that would be left after the demolition of the former library. There were ideas being discussed for this which would improve the aesthetics of the town.

The Council thanked the Maintenance Team and the other officers involved in bringing the Trading Spaces project to life.

The Leader of the Council was commended for his work on this

project.

A question was raised regarding NewRiver REIT agreeing to absorb some costs – what would they be contributing? It was answered that this information was commercially confidential and could not be shared during the public section of the meeting.

A question was raised about the use of the former Pulse nightclub and Iceland units – was there any financial commitment from the Town Council on these? It was answered that there was no liability from the Town Council from these units; the agreement was with the tenants.

A question was raised on what may happen if the government reinstated business rates in April, as there may be large costs to tenants.

It was answered that it was not known at this stage, but it should be assumed that business rates would be reinstated. There had already been contact from MSDC regarding the rating for former William Hill. The Pantry would have 80% relief as a charity. There were two potential approaches – each unit could be rated separately, or the site as a whole could be rated and the cost could be split proportionately between the units. Steve Cridland, CEO, had been asked to challenge the rating of the former William Hill unit, as the property and trading state of the area was not what it once was.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the update.

170. **BURGESS HILL PANTRY**

Councillor Joseph Foster gave an update on the Burgess Hill Pantry, as set out in Agenda Item 15 dated 23 November 2020. Excellent progress was being made with the project, and the Maintenance Team were thanked for their work on this. Financial support had been received from the Budding Foundation, Clarion Housing, and some individual donors, who were all thanked for their support. NewRiver REIT had donated surplus office furniture, and the Burgess Hill Community Foodbank had donated surplus shelving, they were both thanked. The Burgess Hill District Lions Club would be paying for the flooring, and they were thanked for this.

Applications were being received for the voluntary positions available, and plans were being made for hiring a part time member of staff. making plans for hiring part time member of staff. It was hoped that the Pantry could open at the end of January.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the update.

171. **DIARY DATES**

The Council received a schedule of forthcoming events as set out in Agenda Item 16 dated 23 November 2020.

RESOLVED that:

The contents of the report were noted.

172. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was proposed that, in the public interest, the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were requested to withdraw from the meeting.

173. **Meeting terminated at 20.37 hours.**