



**MINUTES** of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held virtually on **15 March 2020**

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**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.*

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(19.00)

**212. OPEN FORUM**

Three members of the resident's group objecting to SA15 were present and spoke on Item 5 of the Agenda. They were in the early stages of forming an action group, and said that locally there were a number of people keen to have the SA15 site removed from the Site Allocation. A member of the group commented that the site was designated as a 'Green Lung', and therefore was important and of interest to the whole town, not just residents in the immediate vicinity. They had done a significant amount of research on the site and put together a paper. Additionally, they had raised further questions, which had been sent to Councillor Peter Chapman, the ward Councillor for the area.

Councillor Chapman commented that the SA15 group had not been kept in the loop on the progress with the site, either by MSDC or the Planning Inspector. Several Councillors would meet with a delegation of the group to see how they could work together going forwards.

**213. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**214. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Anne Eves declared an interest in Item 5 of the Agenda as she was a member of the District Council Planning Committee and would not predetermine herself.

Councillor Robert Eggleston declared an interest in Item 5 of the Agenda as he was a member of the District Council Planning Committee. He had already made it clear that he opposed sites SA12 and SA13, so he had predetermined himself.

**215. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Robert Eggleston provided an update on the Orion Cinema. Last week notification had been received from MSDC that the Town Council's application to register the Orion as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) had been rejected. The decision was extremely disappointing, and was not in line with decisions MSDC had made previously, for example designating village pubs as ACVs. He felt that the basis on which the decision had been made contained errors of fact and possibly law. The CEO of the Town Council had written a letter to the MSDC officer responsible for this case challenging the decision. Additionally the decision could be called in by 5 members of the District Council. Councillors would be aware how valued the Orion was in the community – they provided services to support parent and baby groups, Silver Screenings, and the venue was available to hire by private groups. They also screened National Theatre performances, which otherwise would require travel to London. It was a cultural asset for Burgess Hill. The Town Council would do its best to have the Orion listed as an ACV.

**216. SITE ALLOCATIONS REPRESENTATION**

Council considered this matter under item 9 at its meeting on 8 March 2021 and resolved to work in conjunction with SOFLAG to appoint a legal team to represent the interests of the town. Council agreed to oppose the inclusion of sites SA12 and SA13 in the Mid Sussex District

Plan Development Plan Documents (DPD). Full details are available on <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/>. It had always been the policy of BHTC to oppose development south of Folders Lane and the Town Council had previously made representations objecting to SA12, SA13 and SA15.

A debate was held in the confidential section of the meeting on 8 March and it was agreed that the sum of money to be allocated to this be approved in an open forum.

The item was discussed.

Clarification was provided on recommendation 3 by the CEO – it was important the Town Council were the instigator rather than SOFLAG. This meant that the Town Council would not need to pay VAT on the funds. The legal team had been appointed, and SOFLAG had been told that the fund was a maximum amount and could not be increased.

In the confidential section of the meeting held on 8 March, it had been agreed to set up a fighting fund of 25k, with 20k allocated to SOFLAG to oppose SA12 and SA13. The leftover could be used to oppose SA15 through a residents group if needed. This decision had mainly been made based on the housing numbers for each of the sites.

It was commented that SOFLAG had issued an email appealing for donations from the public, and it was asked whether the numbers were different to what had previously been discussed.

It was responded that the Town Council had costings from SOFLAG, and that the total cost, including VAT, would be 46k, and the current estimate of money raise, including the Town Council's contribution, was 48k. It was noted that some of this was pledges from members of the public, so this had not been paid across yet and was not guaranteed.

It was commented that it may be best if the invoice could be divided, although the Town Council was organising the full payment, as it may take some time for all of SOFLAG's funding to come through.

It was requested that, regarding recommendation 4, Councillor Peter Chapman could be included in the delegated group, as he was the ward Councillor for SA15.

The recommendations were then voted on, and agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Council agree the sum of money to be allocated to opposing the inclusion of SA12 and SA13 in the Mid Sussex District Plan Development Plan Documents be a maximum of 20,000 pounds;

2. That a fixed quote be obtained from the legal team for each item of work;

3. That SOFLAG either deposit the funds they have collected with the council prior to Council appointing the legal team or alternatively the legal team is instructed to provide advice and documents to the council for an agreed amount of the fixed quote with Soflag being liable for all other costs which the Council is not agreeing to pay;

4. That SA15 be opposed and that the chairman of the Planning Committee, the Leader of the Council, and a Ward Councillor, be delegated authority to take a decision on funding professional representation at the enquiry should this be required. A maximum of 5,000 pounds for this action was agreed.

217. **Meeting terminated at 19.00 hours.**