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28 April 2021

To: **MEMBERS OF BURGESS HILL TOWN COUNCIL**

The **ANNUAL MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** will be held on Zoom on **TUESDAY 4 MAY 2021** at **19.00 hours**, when your attendance is required.

Steve Cridland  
Chief Executive Officer

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THE MEETING\*\***

FILMING, RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

**Following government advice on social distancing, essential Council Meetings will be held virtually during the Covid-19 period. All papers will be published on our website as usual. Members of the public can attend the meeting by using the Zoom link that will be placed on the town council's website and social media shortly before the meeting takes place.**

The use of social media is permitted but members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting

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## A G E N D A

1. **ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR** for the ensuing year.

2. **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE**

To receive the Town Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.

3. **OPEN FORUM**

Members of the public are invited to put questions or to draw relevant matters to the Council's attention. Each member of the public is allowed to speak once only in respect

of a business item on the agenda (during the Open Forum) and shall not speak for more than three minutes at the discretion of the Chairman.

If it appears that the number of speakers is likely to unreasonably delay the disposal of business items on the agenda the Chairman may direct that a member of the public submits a question or comment in writing which shall be answered in due course.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** in respect of any item on the Agenda.

7. **ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR** for the ensuing year.

8. **ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL** for the ensuing year.

9. **ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL** for the ensuing year.

10. **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE** for the ensuing year.

11. **APPOINTMENT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Consideration of the appointment of Councillors of the Planning Committee, which will consist of the Chairman of the Committee plus six other Councillors. It is proposed that for Planning Committee purposes the wards are as follows:

St Andrew's  
Franklands  
Leylands  
Meeds, St John's and Norman  
Dunstall and Gatehouse  
Victoria and Hammonds

12. **APPOINTMENT OF THE KEY AREA GROUPS**

12.1 Consideration of the appointment of Members of the Key Area Groups.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP**

**7 Members.**

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP for the ensuing year.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP**

**6 Members.**

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP for the ensuing year.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP**

**6 Members and the Responsible Finance Officer in a non-voting capacity.**

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP for the ensuing year.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE STAFF AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP**

**5 Members.**

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STAFF AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP for the ensuing year.

**APPOINTMENT OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP**

**6 Members.**

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP for the ensuing year.

13. **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE , KEY AREA GROUPS AND GRANTS PANEL for the ensuing year.**

Council previously agreed that all Councillors who were not members of the Planning Committee or Key Area Groups respectively may attend all Key Area Group Meetings in a substitute capacity, providing that they are a member from the relevant political party. If a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting then 24 hours' notice was required.

14. **APPOINTMENT OF PARTNERSHIP GROUPS**

14.1 Nominations are required for the following organisations.

**BURGESS HILL BUSINESS PARKS ASSOCIATION**

**2 Representatives** (meets quarterly at 16.00 hours).

**Chief Executive Officer or his representative and the Chairman of the Strategic Development Key Area Group**

**TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP**

**7 Representatives** comprising the Chairman of the Bus Forum, 2 councillors and 4 members of the public.

**BUS FORUM**

**3 Representatives** comprising Chairman of the Customer Services Key Area Group and 2 Councillors, the Operations Services Manager plus West Sussex County Council Public Transport Manager and representatives of the Bus Companies (meeting 3 times a year during the day).

**CULTURAL QUARTER STEERING GROUP 6 Councillor Representatives and 5 Community Representatives.**

**MID SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF TOWN COUNCILS**

**4 Representatives (Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Majority Group Leader and Minority Group Leader - Substitutes will be allowed) and the Chief Executive Officer (meeting quarterly during the evening).**

**PUBWATCH**

**1 Representative and the Operations Section Head**

**SHOPWATCH**

**1 Representative and the Operations Section Head (meets monthly during the day)**

14.2 **RECOMMENDATION**

Nominations are sought.

15. **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

15.1 Nominations are required for the following organisations and members are reminded to produce a report for Council when they have attended a meeting of their organisation.

**BURGESS HILL BONFIRE SOCIETY**

**1 Representative**

**BURGESS HILL YOUTH**

**1 Representative (meets quarterly during the evening).**

**CYPRUS HALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**2 Representatives (meeting bi-monthly on Tuesday afternoons).**

**ESCAPE YOUTH CLUB**

**1 representative (meets quarterly)**

**FAIRTRADE TOWN GROUP**

**1 Representative**

**BURGESS HILL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

**1 Representative (meeting bi-monthly in the evening).**

**GREEN CIRCLE STEERING GROUP**

**1 Representative (meeting twice yearly in the evening).**

**SIDNEY WEST CENTRE CHARITY TRUSTEES**

**1 Trustee (Charity Trustees stand down on a rolling 3 year basis.) (meets quarterly, early evening).**

**SIGNPOSTS**

**1 Representative (meets quarterly during the afternoon)**

**SUMMERHAVEN**

**1 Representative**

**THE FRIENDS OF BURGESS HILL GREEN CIRCLE NETWORK**

**1 Representative (meeting quarterly in the evening).**

**TOWN TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

**1 Representative** (meeting monthly in the evening).

**SUSSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

**2 Representatives and the Chief Executive Officer**

**15.2 RECOMMENDATION**

Nominations are sought.

**16. COUNCIL MINUTES**

To consider the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 8 March 2021 (copy herewith).

**17. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

To consider the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 15 March, Tuesday 6 April, and Monday 26 April (copies already circulated and on website).

89 applications for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 have been considered. Decisions and recommendations within the terms of reference of the committee are set out in the Minutes.

Chairman of the Planning Committee

**18. RISK REGISTER**

18.1 The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on a range of risks faced by the Council. The Summary Risk Register (attached at Appendix 1) covers risks encountered by the Town Council which have been considered through the Council's Key Area Groups and do not fall within normal operational policies and procedures. The register includes only current open and/or items that were open when Council previously reviewed the register (May 2019). The full detail of any risk item reported on the summary can be reviewed through the respective Key Area Group/Council agendas and meeting notes.

**18.2 RECOMMENDATION**

Council is recommended to note the contents of the report.

**19. BURGESS HILL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY – DIRECTORS AND CEO**

19.1 Council is asked to reaffirm or change the Directors, Secretary and CEO to the Burgess Hill Community Partnership Community Interest Company (CIC). At present the Directors are Robert Duggan, Simon Hicks, Andrew Barrett-Miles, Janice Henwood, Robert Eggleston. Steve Cridland is the CEO. It is suggested that 4 members from the community be appointed at some stage.

19.2 The CIC was established on 28 February 2012 and its objects were, “to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to deliver, and assist in the delivery of, community benefits and associated infrastructure arising from the Burgess Hill Town Wide Strategy and related planning documents, in the interests of the Town of Burgess Hill (and the surrounding locality) and its inhabitants.”

19.3 The CIC has recently established the Trading Places Centre which is home to 3 independent traders and the Food Pantry.

#### 19.4 **RECOMMENDATION**

Council are recommended to:

A) Affirm Councillor Directors to the CIC,

B) Confirm the CEO, Steve Cridland, as the CEO of the CIC; and,

C) Confirm the CEO (Town Clerk) Steve Cridland as the Secretary of the CIC.

#### 20 **REQUEST FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE: YELLOW LINES: VICTORIA BUSINESS PARK**

The following letter has been received from the CEO of the Burgess Hill Business Parks Association:

“As you are aware, the roads on the Victoria Business Park in Burgess Hill suffer from being too narrow in places, and where people routinely park their cars inconsiderately we have significant problems with thoroughfare, access on to sites and personal safety for both road users and pedestrians.

We have been working with WSCC Highways to try and implement a number of new stretches of double yellow lines that will be ‘processed’ as a batch for which there is a price ticket of circa £10k. Unfortunately our request does not work its way sufficiently up the priority list to enjoy full funding from the Highways budget. So we have turned to local businesses on the estate who will be affected and have so far secured pledges for circa £5k.

The reason for writing to you is to ask if BHTC would be willing to contribute to this effort and help us reach the amount required. Please let me know if we could expect to receive any financial support for this cause from the Town Council?”

It is questionable whether the Town Council should be subsidising the County Council, however if funds are not raised this irritation will continue. Should Council agree to assist with the funding of this project, funds could be allocated from Street Scene activities/Minor works fund contributions and budget code 7031. It is suggested that a maximum of £2000 be considered.

Risk Analysis: There is no risk to Council provided no unforeseen expenditure occurs during the following 11 months.

## 21. **RESPONSE TO WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S REDESIGN PROPOSALS FOR THE EARLY HELP SERVICE**

21.1 At the Council meeting on Monday 8 March 2021 it was resolved that a Working Party be formed to consider the proposals (Minute 208 refers). The report is as follows:

21.2 Burgess Hill Town Council recognises that West Sussex County Council is striving to improve its services to families and children. However, we are strongly opposed to the proposal to close the two existing Children and Family Centres and the Find It Out Centre in Burgess Hill. We have the following comments on WSCC's proposals.

### **Managing buildings**

One of the justifications for closing the centres is the time spent by WSCC staff on managing buildings. In Burgess Hill, the Sidney West C&FC is managed and run by Burgess Hill Town Council, so WSCC staff do not need to spend time running the building.

### **Proposed closure of Children & Family Centres**

The proposal to close 32 of the current 43 centres, leaving Mid Sussex with just one centre in Haywards Heath, would lead to closure of The Gattons and Sidney West Children and Family Centres in Burgess Hill.

This is being justified in part by declining footfall at the centres. However, opening hours of the centres have been steadily reduced in recent years so this is something of a self-fulfilling prophesy. It is the limited opening hours that has reduced the footfall, not a reduction in need.

Closing all the centres in Burgess Hill is a short-sighted decision. The planned construction of 3,500 houses in the Northern Arc development will lead to a significant increase in the population of Burgess Hill and at least some of the families will need the support of Early Help services.

How is it envisaged this one remaining centre in Haywards Heath will provide for all families in Mid Sussex? Some parents who need support, particularly those from low-income families, would find it difficult to travel to the remaining Children and Family Centre in Mid Sussex, in Haywards Heath.

Many young mothers, particularly those who have left work to look after their babies, suffer from isolation and mental health issues, and need support. There is a risk that problems with mental health and stress within families will grow worse if the early support offered by the Children and Family Centres is withdrawn. This is likely to require higher level intervention from Early Help if these issues are left unaddressed.

In addition, there has been increasing demand for the Health Visitor services and many of their contacts have been taking place at the Sidney West C&FC. It is a busy and valuable service so there are concerns about the impact of the closure of this centre.

## **Voluntary sector capacity**

It is proposed that Early Help will continue to facilitate local partnerships, through partnership boards, one in each district. The assumption is that the voluntary and community sector will fill the gap left by closure of the Centres and the universal service. Is this assumption based on any discussion with and knowledge of the local voluntary sector? We have doubts whether local partners, especially in the voluntary sector, will have the capacity to take on extra work.

In Burgess Hill, the work of church groups for parents and toddlers depends on being able to attract and keep volunteers. However, recruiting sufficient volunteers is an issue. Recently, the King's Church closed a group in Haywards Heath due to lack of volunteers. The NTC group in Burgess Hill also closed its services due to lack of volunteers.

What training and support will be provided to help groups recruit, train and maintain sufficient volunteers?

It seems the expectation of what the voluntary sector can provide is based on hope rather than any real knowledge of its capacity.

## **Equality of opportunity**

All the parent and toddler groups in Burgess Hill are run by different churches. Dependence on church-run groups raises questions about inclusiveness and equality of opportunity, as families of different faiths and those of none are more likely to be reluctant to attend church-run groups which involve elements of the Christian faith.

There is no other substitute for the neutral support provided by the Children & Family Centres.

## **Find It Out centres**

WSCC has stated its intention to 'Protect a full-time drop-in service for young people in each district and borough by merging the 12 Find It Out Centres with 11 Children and Family Centres.'

This would lead to the loss of the Find It Out Centre in Park Centre in Burgess Hill. As the nearest Find It Out Centre would then be in Haywards Heath, with nothing available in Burgess Hill, the difficulty of getting to Haywards Heath is likely to prevent Burgess Hill young people accessing the service.

Furthermore, we doubt whether Children and Family Centres would provide a suitable environment for services to young people. Teenagers are likely to be reluctant to attend centres where activities involve mothers with young children, and prefer to mix with their own age group in an age-appropriate environment.

## **Staff reductions**

The report presented to the meeting of the Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 7 January 2021 showed that the redesign of Early Year services is

expected to deliver savings of nearly £.2 million between the current year 2020/21 and 2022/23.

Moreover, it is expected that 'Overall, there will be a reduction in the size of the current workforce. 25 fte have already been deleted through vacant posts and the current modelling indicates a further reduction in the order of 40 to 50 fte posts which brings a potential risk of staff redundancies.'

We find it difficult to see how WSCC can achieve improvements in Early Year services at the same time as making these reductions in costs and staff numbers. The proposals seem to be designed primarily to enable WSCC to make savings in both staff costs and the maintenance of buildings. The continued path to an improved service could be impeded by staff cuts. We do not believe that children's development should be sacrificed to save money.

### **Local feedback**

In addition to submitting the views of the Town Council, we have also sought the views of local residents. See Appendix 1 for the responses.

The results show that Children and Family Centres are needed and greatly valued by a range of families, not simply those deemed to be the most vulnerable

### **21.3 RECOMMENDATION**

The views of the Council are sought.

## **22. REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL'S GRANTS SCHEME**

22.1 At the March 2021 Council Meeting it was proposed the Town Council's Grants Scheme be reviewed with the aim of reducing the amount of officer time involved.

It was resolved that:

1. A Grants Panel be formed to review and agree grant applications rather than have them go through Community Engagement KAG.
2. Officers review the process for grant reviews in order to streamline the process and produce efficiencies.

### **22.2 Grants Panel**

Currently, grants applications are considered twice a year by the 7 members of the Community Engagement Key Area Group as part of their Key Area Group meetings. The meetings are also usually attended by other Councillors who are not members of that Key Area Group, who also have the right to speak during the discussion.

It is proposed that to speed up the decision-making process a Grants Panel be formed of 4 Councillors plus a Chair, which would meet 3 times per year, dates to be arranged. The Panel would be delegated full decision-making authority regarding grants to be awarded. The meetings would be open for attendance by members of the public and other Councillors if they wished to attend although they would not be permitted to speak. Grants summaries would be circulated to all Councillors at least one calendar week before the meeting. Any queries or comments from non-Panel Members to officers and/or the Panel Chair would need to be made at least 2 working days before the Panel meeting.

One Panel member would be delegated the task of writing up the decisions made and submitting this to the CEO for approval at the subsequent Council meeting. Eliminating the need for an officer to attend the Panel meetings would reduce some time spent.

### **22.3 Officer time**

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) has a duty to protect public money so cannot be removed from the process. He reviews the applications from a financial perspective only, with the purpose of establishing whether public money would be at risk should the Town Council support an application or whether the applicant has sufficient funds for their project without requiring a grant from the Town Council. He has been consulted and in his view the amount of time he spends is not unduly onerous and could not be reduced without compromising his financial oversight.

Currently, Community Development staff review and check the grants applications as they are submitted, ensuring all the required information is provided and producing a summary of each application for Councillors to consider. The need for the summaries could be eliminated if all the applications and supporting information were emailed directly to Councillors although this would considerably increase the documentation they would be required to read.

It is recommended the RFO and Community Development staff continue to provide Grants Panel members with summaries of the applications.

### **22.4 Administrative process**

It is proposed the application process moves from a paper-based system to an online system. This was trialled for the COVID grants with mixed success, although this was because some applications were submitted online and some by hard copy. If all applications and documentation were submitted online this would modernise the process and would have a beneficial environmental impact by reducing paper, and could save some officer time if information could be copied and pasted into the summaries. If some smaller groups are unable to apply online they can be assisted by Community Development staff as part of their capacity-building role.

It is recommended the Town Council's Grants Scheme moves to an online system.

### **22.5 Funding priorities**

The Town Council's grants system is currently open to community and voluntary organisations of all sizes. Applications are received from small community groups with a turnover of a few hundred pounds to multi-million pound charities such as the local hospices, although the same criteria of providing benefit to Burgess Hill residents equally applies. The RFO assesses whether sufficient funds are available and, if so, it is for Councillors to decide whether they wish to support the application on the basis of the information before them.

Members are requested to consider whether to leave this as it is or whether to set a limit on the financial size of organisations that can apply.

## 22.6 CIOs and CICs

In recent years, and since the Town Council's grants scheme was last reviewed, two new types of organisation have been created – Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) and Community Interest Companies (CICs).

CIOs are registered with the Charity Commission and were created to save charities from also needing to register with Companies House as a company with charitable objects. Previously, many charities registered as both in order to gain the benefits of being a registered charity as well as the protection of being a limited company.

CICs are registered with Companies House and are a type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. They do not have charitable status. They have an 'asset lock' - a legal promise stating that the company's assets will only be used for its social objectives, and setting limits to the money it can pay to shareholders.

This review of the Town Council's Grants Scheme provides an opportunity for Members to formally decide whether these types of organisations should be funded. Other funders including Mid Sussex District Council, the National Lottery and Sussex Community Foundation do all fund CIOs and CICs with appropriate conditions in place. It is recommended the Town Council includes CIOs and CICs in its eligibility criteria, with its Conditions of Funding amended to require demonstrable public benefit and clear protection against private benefit.

## 22.7 RECOMMENDATION:

- A) a Grants Panel be formed of 4 Councillors plus a Chair, as outlined above;
- B) the RFO and Community Development staff continue to provide Grants Panel members with summaries of the applications;
- C) the Town Council's Grants Scheme moves to an online application system;
- D) Members are requested to consider whether to set a limit on the financial size of organisations that can apply; and
- E) CIOs and CICs be included in the eligibility criteria, with the Conditions of Funding amended to require demonstrable public benefit and clear protection against private benefit.

## 23. DIARY DATES

<b>MAY 2021</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Annual Meeting of Council	Tuesday 4 May	19.00 hours
Planning Committee	Monday 17 May	19.00 hours
Annual Town Meeting – Cyprus Hall	Tuesday 25 May	19.30 hours
<b>JUNE</b>		
Planning Committee	Monday 7 June	19.00 hours

Planning Committee	Monday 28 June	19.00 hours
<b>JULY</b>		
Council	Monday 12 July	19.00 hours
Planning Committee	Monday 19 July	19.00 hours

24. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

25. **NOTES OF STAFF AND MEMBER KAG: CONFIDENTIAL**