



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 11 July 2022**

Present: Peter Chapman Town Mayor
 Janice Henwood Deputy Town Mayor

Graham Allen*
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Roger Cartwright
Matthew Cornish
Robert Duggan
Robert Eggleston
Anne Eves
Lee Gibbs*
Simon Hicks
Tofojjul Hussain
Joseph Foster
Sarah Lawrence
Mustak Miah
Sylvia Neumann
Max Nielsen
Kathleen Willis*

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

330. OPEN FORUM

A member of the public spoke about the green space in Alexandria Road which has been unlawfully obstructed. He described it as a much-needed green amenity. He had previously reported the matter to the Town Council in February but the problem continues. Highways do not seem to be interested in addressing the matter despite 2 enforcement notices having been served. Private gatherings still continue despite Highways having advised that this was illegal and he called upon the Town Council to object to the stopping up of this land to free up the green space. The process has been prejudged and undermined. He suspects that misinformation is being spread but is not privy to that information. ~~Residents are being intimidated and threatened with legal action.~~ A public enquiry will/would allow those

with objections to share them and be heard. He feels that rules are being broken with no consequences. What is it going to take for the law to be enforced? Every time a body has been asked to hold the land users to account, they have backed away with a few exceptions including the town council which has recommended refusal at its planning meeting. He asked the town council to once again protect the people and the green space

Cllr Henwood suggested that the matter be fully discussed at the next Planning Committee to be held on 18 July.

Another member of the public suggested that businesses be encouraged to allow their premises to be used by hot and vulnerable people to cool down. Make air-conditioned buildings available. The CEO was asked to see how this suggestion could be carried out.

A third member of the public objected to the item regarding mayoral regalia as he felt it was too expensive at a time when people were feeling the economic crunch. The CEO replied that he was withdrawing the item but stated that there is never a suitable time for this type of expenditure. The regalia used was that of the previous Urban District Council which had ceased in 1974. He felt that the mayor and deputies should look the part and represent the town properly.

331. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Graham Allen
Lee Gibbs
Kathleen Willis

332. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Robert Eggleston and Andrew Barrett-Miles declared interests in the Beehive as they were trustees.
Peter Chapman declared that he was a volunteer at the Escape Youth Club.

333. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The mayor stated that the Community Engagement team had been very busy this year and thanked them for some outstanding events in particular the Jubilee events, the Town Fayre and the Teddy Bears picnic. A soiree had been held before the last community engagement meeting to thank the various organisations in town for their contribution and some positive suggestions were made for the future.

334. COUNCIL MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on Monday 17 May (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

335. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Cllr Duggan proposed that it be noted that work had started on the Station Road elements of the Place and Connectivity project, but that to date there had been little or no feedback on the comments from the Planning Committee that were submitted to Place and Connectivity project teams, having been endorsed by the town council on 17 June 2020. This council has not been given adequate assurance that all the potential safety issues identified by the council have been addressed. He asked that the project teams be asked to give this assurance.

He asked for an update on the inclusivity project following its first meeting in May. That meeting, which included invited members of the public, identified issues with the placement of dropped kerbs, the availability of changing places toilets and parking for people with limited mobility. He asked that the Place and Connectivity teams explore these issues as a matter of urgency with people who live in and visit Burgess Hill.

Cllr Henwood expressed her thanks to the Help Point team for setting up FAQs on this project which was of great assistance to the public.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Monday 6 June and Monday 27 June (copies previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

336. STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP: NOTES

Cllr Barrett-Miles felt that the recommendations on community buildings reflected a pragmatic approach. It would be important to see what options are available and what the costs might be. In addition, it would be important to have an idea of what the running costs would be for an upgraded Park Centre and what would the cost be to the town? Would the town council have to shore the Park centre up?

Cllr Cornish asked whether the proposals were in any order of priority. If all three projects were viable what would take precedence?

Cllr Miah observed that full council will make all the final decisions and that it would be wise to look at all costs.

Cllr Eves mentioned that Marle Place may be on the horizon as Aspire had not renewed its lease.

Cllr Hicks noted that there were many opportunities. The pavilion in the centre of the park would benefit from a proper café and community facilities. The Park centre would benefit youth in particular and also provide community facilities. A business plan for each facility should be drawn up and considered. The Beehive could perhaps form part of a five-year strategy.

Cllr Eggleston responded to the comments and questions. A pro bono meeting had been held with the architect and project manager of the Beehive. Aedas had agreed to revise the plans and to come up with a suggestion that may be affordable by the end of July. The Cultural Quarter committee would be reconvened. The building design would be retained and the project would be looked at in the context of using both the Beehive site and the Cyprus Hall site. There may be savings if excavations previously suggested were removed from the plans.

The ideas for the Park Centre adds approximately 2000 square feet of space. There would be a lift, extension and a changing places toilet which would provide a good youth and community facility.

He and the CEO had met with the architect of the St Johns Pavilion and made some suggestions. It would increase the provision of community space and would include a changing places toilet. The current clubhouse and changing rooms would be increased to be improved and enlarged to provide a modern community facility. It would provide an extra 3725 square feet of community space. The café space would be increased.

SCYP Centre had indicated that they would need a £30k operating subsidy in year 1 followed by £20k in year 2 and £15k in year 3. The town council will look at how it might support the centre once WSCC has agreed to dispose of the centre.

There is no order of priority at this stage and these will emerge as we go on. The Cyprus Hall lease expires in 2026 and may dictate that priority. St Johns Pavilion redevelopment will be managed by the architect for the Cricket Club and the Park Centre may require a professional to manage that upgrade. Our involvement in either would be conditional on becoming a trustee.

As far as Marle Place is concerned, it is owned by WSCC and is a valuable brownfield site. It is early days at this stage and we will wait and see what unfolds.

The pot of money put aside for the Beehive is now the community buildings reserve. It would be imprudent at this stage to consider what might be needed in the future or what effect it may have on the residents. The Finance KAG will consider this at its next meeting when it starts considering the next budget.

The future of St Johns Pavilion is a decision for the trustees to make and not MSDC. The trustees have to consider what is in the best interests for the charity rather than the interests of MSDC.

The proposals listed were proposed by Robert Eggleston, seconded by Tofojjul Hussein. All were in favour.

The Notes of the Strategic and Development KAG held on 28 February 2022 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

337. FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP: NOTES OF MEETING

The Notes of the Finance KAG held on 24 June 2022 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

338. CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP: NOTES

The Notes of the Customer Services KAG held on 4 July 2022 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

339. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP – NOTES OF MEETING

The meeting had been attended by representatives from various community organisations. It was felt that the festival should have an overarching theme. Funds should be ringfenced to be awarded to organisations putting forward proposals for events.

The Martlets demolition site has seen the removal of some hoardings. There is some loose gravel which is not ideal as it needs to be a safe environment. Planning permission may be needed for the ideas of MSDC. It is unknown as to who would control the site and be in charge of bookings. ITV will be returning at some stage but it is unknown as to when or for how long. The urban park is unlikely to be in place this year.

The Notes of the Community Engagement KAG held on 7 July 2022 (copy previously circulated) were **AGREED**.

340. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The second consultation was currently taking place with a view to initially reducing the number of wards to 17 and then increasing them to 19 in 2027.

Cllr Eggleston felt that the number of councillors should be increased to 20 in 2027. If one compares the ratio of councillors to electors in Haywards heath and East Grinstead it becomes clear that this is viable. Haywards Heath ratio is 1:1514 while East Grinstead is similar. The ratio for Burgess Hill is 1: 1612.

He suggested that as Norman Ward is to be merged with Victoria Ward it could be renamed Victoria with Norman.

The Northern Arc wards could be renamed Brookleigh East and Brookleigh West.

The MSDC scrutiny committee had initially scuppered the idea that the Northern Arc should form part of Burgess Hill but this had been overcome following the submission of a well-supported petition.

Cllr Barrett-Miles welcomed the elimination of the small bits and pieces and the amalgamation of them into Victoria ward. He felt that we already have too many councillors and that a figure around 15 would be more appropriate.

Cllr Henwood agreed saying that quality rather than quantity was important.

Cllr Eves was supportive of an additional member for Victoria ward.

Cllr Hicks did not like the suggested name and proposed that the wards should be locally identifiable. He suggested Bedelands and St Pauls as suitable names. The suggestion was put to the vote:

Cllr Hicks proposed, Cllr Barrett-Miles seconded. 12 were in favour, 2 were against and one abstained.

The suggestion was made that councillors should make their own submissions in this regard.

It was agreed that Victoria Ward remain Victoria Ward.

RESOLVED that:

In response to the Community Governance Review consultation the Council resolved that 20 Councillors should represent Burgess Hill in the future increasing the number of Town Councillors representing Victoria ward from 2 to 3, and leaving the rest as proposed by MSDC

12 in favour 3 against

341. **MAYORAL REGALIA**

Item withdrawn

342. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Cllr Barrett-Miles said that a similar position had been in place introduced at MSDC but that it had been scrapped. He asked how we would know if the position was useful or not. The CEO explained the need for the position citing the demise of the current market, the opportunity to develop a market on Fridays and the opportunities to support local businesses. Cllr Foster suggested that suitable KPIs be put in place. The centre managers could be involved with assessing the benefit of the position. It is a new skill set for the council and performance would have to be monitored. It would also resolve the issue around officers in unsuitable accommodation.

Cllr Cornish supported the concept. It was clear that considerable work had been put into getting the market up and running and effort would be needed to re-establish it. He hoped the resource would be permanent and dedicated.

Cllr Henwood felt that the town already did very well with its events. She felt that people did not have money as a result of the cost of living and felt that the Bridge the Gap funds should be used to generate more events. Once people came to town they spend. She asked how we would assess the success of this person.

Cllr Eves pointed out that the market had been the victim of fuel, weather and covid. In Worthing this position had worked well. She agreed it should be measured.

Cllr Eggleston felt that the position was different to what Community Engagement does. It addresses a different aspect of town life. The incumbent would engage with centre managers, trade associations and traders.

The Friday market was growing organically whereas the Saturday market was going backwards. There is currently no resource to grow it.

A vote was taken: 11 were in favour, 3 were against and there was one abstention.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The agreement between current market operator and Burgess Hill Town Council be terminated after the July market and the operational management of the Burgess Hill Market be brought back in-house;
- b) The weekly Friday market offering be developed by attracting new stall holders and increasing footfall into the town centre;
- c) To appoint an Economic Development & Projects Officer to co-ordinate the Burgess Hill Market and other economic development projects and initiatives to support Burgess Hill shops and businesses, and to support the Head of Projects where required;
- d) To expand the Customers Services department to include Economic Development thereby creating one team
- e) That the current position of Head of Customer Services become Head of Customer Services & Economic Development;
- f) To repurpose the Help Point Surgery and back office to create new office spaces as per the report; and,
- g) To allocate the Bridge the Gap Fund to cover the costs of the new Economic Development & Projects Officer position, repurpose office spaces, and for new economic development projects and initiatives.

343.DIARY DATES

It was mentioned that the councillor surgery in August would be unlikely to go ahead,

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the dates.

Meeting ended at 20:28