



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on Monday **26 September 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.*

(19.00)

344. OPEN FORUM

Two members of the public were present.

345. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Barrett-Miles and Robert Duggan.

346. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Robert Eggleston declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Beehive CIO, and Director of the Burgess Hill CIC.

Councillors Joseph Foster, Lee Gibbs and Kathleen Willis declared a personal interest as trustees of the Burgess Hill CIC.

Councillor Janice Henwood declared a personal interest as a Director of the Burgess Hill CIC.

347. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Councillor Chapman congratulated Burgess Hill Bonfire Society on their annual bonfire parade. He stated that the group worked very hard to fundraise over the year, and he felt the event put Burgess Hill on the map every time that it was held.
2. Councillor Chapman thanked the officers at Burgess Hill Town Council for their hard work regarding Operation London Bridge. He felt that the events of the past few weeks had been marked well in Burgess Hill and was proud of the Council's contribution.
3. The Mayor's Tea Party was announced and Councillor Chapman asked other Councillors to spread information about the event to their constituents. He informed the Council that the event would be held on Friday 14 October at Kings Weald Community Centre, and that bus times would be promoted.
4. He informed the Councillors of the Mayor's Christmas Card Competition, the winners of which would help the Mayor to turn on the lights at the Christmas Event on Saturday 19 November. The Mayor had already spoken at an assembly at Sheddingdean Community Primary School to promote the competition and would be attending London Meed Community Primary School the next day.
5. Councillor Chapman informed the Council that the next Community Engagement KAG would be held on Thursday 6 October.
6. Councillor Chapman informed the Council that he had been notified by Councillor Eves that Derek Birch, a former Councillor, had passed away, and that he would like to extend the condolences of the entire Town Council to Mr Birch's family.

348. COUNCIL MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Monday 11 July 2022 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

349. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor Henwood thanked all Councillors that attended Planning Committee meetings and gave an update on the Stopping Up process at 3 Alexandra Road. The process was not yet resolved and Councillor Henwood would inform the Committee of any future information.

Additionally, Councillor Henwood informed Council that in the last Planning Committee meeting, the Committee had looked at the application for Mid Sussex District Council's Urban Garden. She said that the Committee agreed in principle, but put forward some considerations on designs.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 18 July, Monday 8 August, Monday 30 August and Tuesday 20 September 2022 were **AGREED**.

350. BEEHIVE PROJECT: UPDATE

Councillor Eggleston informed the Council that an asbestos survey had been carried out before the demolition began, but that during the process of demolition, more had been discovered. This meant that work had to immediately cease whilst the asbestos was investigated. Work had since restarted – Councillor Eggleston stressed that the pause in work would have happened regardless of an asbestos survey, as some areas could not be seen before demolition started. He went on to say that the recent fiscal announcement from the Government meant that interest rates were increasing – this meant that in the short term it was important to be prudent when borrowing, and therefore, the design of the Beehive needed to be looked at to ensure that the project was affordable.

Councillor Cornish asked whether the risk implications listed needed to be wider – as they were more than solely soil contamination. He also questioned whether soil contamination would be larger than anticipated following the demolition. Councillor Eggleston informed him that in the 2022 cost report, there was a line item for soil contamination, and that it wasn't a huge price. He stated that the Council was not currently looking at finances, and instead dealing with the demolition, ground levelling and smartening of the site.

Councillor Hicks said that in terms of soil contamination, costs would not be known until the building had been demolished. He said he

believed that the unknown factor was rightly highlighted as a risk factor.

Councillor Eves asked why it was that VAT was listed as a risk. Councillor Eggleston stated that the issue was that, as a local authority, the Town Council was listed for VAT and that the risk was as to whether the costs could be recovered.

RESOLVED that:

1. That additional costs in the amount of £37,716 incurred during the demolition of the RBL building for asbestos, guano removal, insurance, clearance of site rubbish and an extension to the MSDC licence be noted and approved;
2. That it be noted that Aedas architects have closed their London office and are no longer able to continue with this project;
3. Prior to the appointment of the architects, a meeting of the Cultural Quarter Steering Group be convened in early October to appraise them of the current situation and to seek their input on the development and delivery of The Beehive.
4. That an interview committee comprising three Councillors and one Non-Councillor from the Cultural Quarter Committee be appointed to interview and recommend a new architect to take the project forward.

Risk Implications: Additional costs may be incurred should soil contamination be present though a provisional sum is included in the contract.

All in Favour.

351. MID SUSSEX MARATHON

The change in contribution to the Mid Sussex Marathon had been previously considered by Councillors at the Community Engagement KAG.

Councillor Foster questioned which organisation owns and runs the marathon, saying that he could not find any active accounts on Companies House for 'Active House Solutions'. He asked if anything had been received from them in terms of accounts, stating that, in principle, he agreed to increase the contribution, but wanted to hear from the organisers before the Council committed.

Councillor Neumann questioned the publicization of the marathon, stating that some residents of Burgess Hill had never heard of the

event. Councillor Chapman agreed that it was not well advertised and agreed with Councillor Foster's suggestion, saying that if the organisers came in to speak to Councillors, they could inform the Council of their aims.

Councillor Eggleston stated that if there was uncertainty over promotion of the event, and the corporate organisation, then this should be part of the conditions of the Town Council increasing their contribution. He stated that the marathon was a good event, and that he wanted to encourage it, and see it grow.

Councillors decided to take the decision to the Community Engagement KAG.

RESOLVED that:

1. To approach the organisers of the Mid Sussex Marathon and request a marketing plan and overview of their corporate structure.
2. To invite the organisers of the Mid Sussex Marathon to speak with the Community Engagement KAG.
3. To make a contribution of £1000.00 providing Haywards Heath Town Council and East Grinstead Town Council make a contribution of the same amount otherwise the contribution will remain at £500.00.

Risk Implications: It is an unknown as to whether increased marketing will generate increased participation in the event.

All in Favour.

352. [ST JOHN'S INSTITUTE \(PARK CENTRE\) UPDATE](#)

Councillor Eggleston spoke to the Council, informing them that a structural engineer would be investigating the building and that once the report was received, Council would be able to see how plans for the building could move forward.

He stated that it was troubling that there appeared to be no provision in the charity accounts for maintenance. He said that at the present time, there were a limited number of options and that following the report from the structural engineer, the Town Council would work alongside Sussex Clubs for Young People (SCYP), and others to make a decision as to whether it can be afforded.

Councillor Hicks expressed concern over the level of disrepair, citing the window frames, and cracks in the brickwork. He said that it was clear the building had been neglected. In terms of a cost-benefit analysis, he said that it would be prudent to consider making the building energy efficient from the start.

Councillor Eggleston agreed, saying that solar panels and triple glazing were something that was wanted in order to drive down energy costs and ensure the building was energy efficient.

Councillor Hussain asked that as West Sussex County Council (WSSC) was a current trustee, would they be able to contribute to the costs?

Councillor Eggleston replied that following the report given to WSSC, they had denied any neglect of the building. He stated that when taking over a building, you would usually expect a contribution towards dilapidation, but it was too early to say where discussions would lead.

Councillor Eves asked who the other interested parties in the bid were. Councillor Eggleston informed her that it was Clarion Futures, and the Escape Youth Club.

Councillor Foster sought to remind members that the building was owned by a charity, and that the Town Council was seeking to become a trustee alongside SCYP and possibly others. He stated that it was possible that WSSC could not comment at this stage as they were a trustee and that there was a possible conflict of interest, should they enter into discussions.

Councillor Miah raised concerns over the possibility of the building having subsidence. He asked whether there was a possibility that the Town Council would be taking over as a trustee for a building that was not fit for purpose and would cost a considerable amount. He agreed with Councillor Hussain that it would be best to speak to WSSC regarding some contribution towards costs. He suggested that the building may not be fit for purpose for what the Town Council was trying to achieve.

Councillor Chapman suggested that as SCYP would be becoming the first trustee, that they may be better placed to have these conversations.

Councillor Eggleston responded that the Town Council would only consider taking on a financial liability once the building was surveyed, the report received and the way forward assessed. He stated that it would not be a small cost but that the Town Council should not be afraid of capital investment. He agreed that some aspects of the report were worrying but that the situation would be dealt with via an evidence-based approach.

Councillor Eggleston went on to say that there was a risk that should the Town Council approach the project with the incorrect attitude, that WSSC could change their mind as to who was their preferred bidder for the project.

Councillor Cornish asked if an explanation could be given as to what the trusteeship may look like. Councillor Eggleston said that it was an old-style charitable trust with one corporate trustee. He said that once

WSCC resigned, SCYP would step in as a trustee and set up a CIO. This would be a more modern form of charitable structure. The Town Council, and possibly other groups would then come on board as trustees, each with one vote.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the contents of the report.

Risk Implications: By commissioning an initial surveyor's report and now a structural engineer's report an accurate assessment of the state of the building can be made. The report from the structural engineer will put Council into a position to determine whether or not to proceed with this project.

353. ST JOHN'S PAVILION

Councillor Eggleston informed the Council that he had attended a constructive meeting with the Leader and Deputy Leader of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), MSDC officers and representatives of the Cricket Club, regarding St John's Pavilion.

He stated that the project was not seen as solely a cricket pavilion, instead it was viewed as being a community asset. At the meeting it had been agreed that MSDC officers would work with the Cricket Club towards an operating plan for the pavilion. Councillor Eggleston stated that MSDC was reluctant to relinquish their trusteeship of the building. He had made it clear that the Town Council would not provide financial contributions to the project unconditionally, and would want to help manage the building.

Councillor Eggleston explained that he had suggested to move the Pavilion out of the current charitable structure and into a CIO, so that MSDC, BHTC and community representatives could be trustees of the charity. He said that this proposal was still on the table, and that MSDC as the current trustee would need to get the building valued for ground rent, in the hopes to lease the building out – most likely to the Town Council. He reiterated that no decisions had been made, but that it was a constructive meeting.

Councillor Eves asked what was meant in the letter written to Councillor Eggleston by Jonathan Ash-Edwards, in which he referred to the Town Council being able to make a significant financial contribution to the project. This point was also raised by Councillor Henwood.

Councillor Eggleston explained that this was a 'bit of politics', as the Beehive project had also been referred to in the letter. Councillor Eves then asked how all three projects (St John's Pavilion, Park Centre and The Beehive) would be able to be run, once they had

come to fruition; whether the Burgess Hill Sports Council would be involved; and also raised the question of fairness – had other cricket pavilions been refurbished without Town Council help?

Councillor Eggleston responded that: not all the projects would be happening simultaneously, and that the Town Council would not be project managing them all; he stated that the status of the Burgess Hill Sports Council was unknown, and that in terms of fairness, the Town Council would not be contributing to a cricket club, but instead to St John's Park charity. He went on to state that if the pavilion was only used as a cricket club, then it would be a failure of the project, as the aim was to create a community asset.

Councillor Neumann asked after the charity that owned the area of the park in question, and their aims. She asked if their aims were compatible with increasing the use of the pavilion. Councillor Foster responded that the aims of the St John's Park charity were for the park to be for the enjoyment of users in Burgess Hill.

Councillor Miah said that he had seen the cricket pavilion in use for many years, and was aware that it was not in the best state. He asked how the Town Council would benefit from contributing to the project, and whether they would see a return from the money spent.

Councillor Eggleston said that he wanted to make it clear that the project was not an investment in the cricket club, and the aim of the project was to modernise and expand the building in order to increase its scope of use throughout the year. He stated that the project was not a commercial transaction, and that the investment would be towards an asset with benefit to the town. He likened the project to Park Centre, as something to meet the needs of the town. He said that the project could not be looked at on the basis of a commercial return, but rather a community return.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the contents of the report.

Risk Implications: It is not possible to pre-empt the outcome of the discussions to be held and a further report will be submitted for consideration to determine the Town Council's level of commitment to this project.

354. [CIC REPORT](#)

Councillor Henwood complimented the organisation of introducing a payment plan to allow tenants to pay back over time – especially as many of the tenants were starter businesses.

Councillor Eves expressed a vote of thanks to Julie Smyth, former manager of the Pantry.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the contents of the report.

Risk Implications: The future of the lease may have implications for the project and the repayment of the loan made to the CIC to set the project up.

355. COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY FUNDING

Councillor Hicks proposed that the Government had introduced some measures during the cost-of-living crisis, but that people were still struggling. He stated that the Town Council could still do their bit to help the residents of Burgess Hill; and that with the increased demand for food services, anything that could be done in terms of energy costs and supporting organisations that were providing residents with 'warm hubs', should be done.

Councillor Hicks introduced the concept of a Fuel Bank and its necessity. He explained that those on pre-payment meters were struggling to pay their bills and sometimes having to disconnect their meter. It was proposed that the Town Council investigate Fuel Banks and potentially link up with the national Fuel Bank Foundation. He proposed an amendment to condemn the Government's 'mini-budget'.

Councillor Willis agreed with Councillor Hicks' recommended amendments. She explained that through her work with Citizens Advice, she had a first-hand knowledge of the problems facing residents. She stated that there was little in the way of available resources in the Burgess Hill area, and that the only support was for food services. Councillor Willis also stated that the demand would only get worse, and that something needed to be done to help organisations with the growing demand.

Councillor Henwood raised the question of who would set parameters for the expenditure of the fund, but agreed that the Fuel Bank was a reasonable idea.

Councillor Chapman asked if a working group would be needed to investigate the viability of a Fuel Bank. It was suggested that it could be looked into and a report created in time for the upcoming Community Engagement KAG.

Councillor Foster spoke of his own experience as a trustee of the Pantry, explaining that the Pantry had experienced its busiest ever session a couple of weeks before, with fifty-six members attending in a two-hour period. He stated that he understood others were seeing

considerable demand, with a drop in donations. He said that there were two strong food projects in the town (The Pantry and the FoodBank), and suggested that money was put towards them. He went on to say that he felt the Council had an opportunity with an evergreen funding source and the opportunity to make a direct and tangible impact with a clear statement of intent to support local residents.

Councillor Eggleston supported the recommendation, with support for food charities and establishing 'warm hubs'. He explained that conversations were ongoing with outside organisations who were interested in creating warm spaces for those in need. Councillor Eggleston also suggested that officers look into the Fuel Bank Foundation to see how the project could be taken forward. He recommended that the CEO and Head of Community Engagement work to create guidelines and have these discussed at the upcoming Community KAG.

Councillor Eves suggested that the Community Engagement KAG decide on the spending parameters for the fund.

RESOLVED that:

1. That an amount of £25,000 be set aside from the General Reserve for a Cost-of-Living Emergency Fund and that the Community Engagement KAG set out the parameters of spending.
2. That the Cost-of-Living Emergency Fund include provision to set up a Fuel Bank in Burgess Hill and that the Town Council look to partner with another agency or provide the service itself in partnership with the national Fuel Bank Foundation.
3. That the Town Council condemns the obscenity of a Conservative government pushing through tax cuts for millionaires whilst ordinary people are suffering the biggest squeeze on incomes for many decades, with government policies actively increasing inflation and interest rates to levels that will be unaffordable to many.

Risk Implications: None

All in Favour.

356. CIVILITY AND RESPECT

RESOLVED that:

That the Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge:

To treat other Councillors, clerks, all employees, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.

Risk Implications: None

All in Favour.

357. CLEAR CHANNEL: DEED OF VARIANCE

Councillor Neumann raised concerns over the level of light produced by bus stop advertisements, and the use of electricity. She suggested that it was not environmentally friendly. She asked for Clear Channel to keep in mind the issues of excess lighting and electricity.

RESOLVED that:

That the contract with Clear Channel for the provision of certain bus shelters around town be extended to 2028 and include a deed of variance as set out in Appendix 9.

Risk Implications: The Town Council has enjoyed a good relationship with Clear Channel over the years and no risk can be seen should the contract be extended.

All in Favour.

358. CODE OF CONDUCT

It is a requirement to review the Code of Conduct from time to time. Council is asked to consider the Code attached as Appendix 10.

RESOLVED that:

The Council endorsed the Code of Conduct.

Risk Implications: A query on the audit report could be expected if this is not done.

359. STREET TREES

Councillor Eves explained that the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England had been approached by Trees for Cities. She informed the Council that a request had been made by a corporate sponsor for trees to be planted on verges. These would be planted in London, Brighton and Burgess Hill. The trees would be planted next Winter, and it was suggested that Councillors consider verges in their wards which could be part of the campaign. It was explained that the project would involve working closely with all three levels of Council – especially with Highways.

RESOLVED that:

That the project for 'Street Trees' be taken to the Customer Services KAG, and that Councillors identify verges within their ward area which could benefit.

Risk Implications: A further report would need to be submitted depending on what the offer entails.

All in Favour.

360. DIARY DATES

Council was asked to note the following public meeting dates:

OCTOBER		
Planning Committee	Monday 10 October	19.00 hours
Grants Awards Panel	Thursday 20 October	19.00 hours
NOVEMBER		
Planning Committee	Monday 7 November	19.00 hours
Finance Key Area Group	Thursday 10 November	18.30 hours
Council	Monday 21 November	19.00 hours

Council was reminded of the Remembrance Services to be held on Friday 11 November and Sunday 13 November, and the Christmas event to be held on Saturday 19 November.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the dates.

Meeting closed at 20:49.