



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on Monday **6 March 2023**

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)

402. OPEN FORUM

17 members of the public in attendance.

A member of the public questioned Item 12 on the agenda, and as to why the Town Council were paying for planters that should have been funded by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) after the removal of the trees in Church Walk.

Councillor Robert Eggleston responded by informing them that unfortunately many items on agenda were because of failures by WSSCC and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), that otherwise would not happen were it not for the Town Council taking action.

A member of the public asked why, as set out in agenda item 7, St John's Cricket Pavilion had been brought to the Council's attention again, when it had been voted down at the last meeting. He questioned where the funding was coming from to support the project, and questioned why there were so many costly projects being taken on, such as the Burial Ground and Beehive.

A resident of Cherry Tree Court raised concerns over the replanting of the London Plane trees along Queen Elizabeth Avenue and their proximity to many amenities. They informed the Council that they had been situated only six metres from the residents' balconies and six feet from the water mains. She stated there was plenty of evidence to show that these trees caused high levels of damage with their root systems and had evidence of this from 6 years ago when the trees were originally planted. She stated that they caused an increased allergic reaction for many people, as they released fine hair like fibres into the air, that caused respiratory symptoms, especially affecting asthmatics. The resident also stated that the area along Queen Elizabeth Avenue wasn't being maintained correctly and that many areas had been allowed to overgrow, blocking light into the residents' homes and that the area was full of brambles.

Questions were also raised by another member of the public about how the new trees were being planted, with large holes being dug for a single tree and expensive top soil then being used to fill the area.

Councillor Henwood informed the member of the public that the land, and maintenance thereof, fell under WSCC and that they should also be managing the placement of the trees. Councillor Foster added that this should have been subject to planning enforcement at the time they were originally planted.

It was requested that a member of the Council meet with the residents to discuss their concerns about the trees, Councillor Chapman agreed to do so. It was also requested by Councillor Miah and Councillor Henwood that a letter be drafted from the Town Council to WSCC on this matter.

A concerned resident asked the Council to explain why three current members of the Council lived outside of Burgess Hill.

The CEO explained that to stand for election you must live within Burgess Hill or 3 miles of, but that once elected there was no legal requirement to continue to live in the town, and that there were no legal powers to remove the Councillor from their post, should they move out of the area.

It was questioned, by a member of the public, which civil engineers had been approached for quotes to assess the Places and Connectivity scheme. It was also queried if WSCC could be called to a meeting with the residents to discuss the concerns over the project. They also mentioned the pot holes, all over the town, not being dealt with quickly or correctly.

The Town Council CEO informed the resident that the 13 local companies approached had declined the work. The Councillors stated they had been and would continue to raise concerns with WSCC but urged members of the public in attendance to use to proper reporting tools available to report the issues themselves. It was suggested they use the Places and Connectivity email address to report issues with the project and report pot holes via the WSCC reporting tool.

A member of Burgess Hill Shed, at The Kiln, questioned the Beehive project objectives. He was concerned that their work would be replicated at the Beehive by another organisation and that they would then be competitive. He stated that they planned to register Burgess Hill Shed as a CIC and wanted to ensure the support of the Town Council. He stated that originally, they had committed 3 years to the project in the former Argos building and that they were 2 and a half years into that agreement, he questioned whether there would be space in the Beehive for their work to continue.

The Councillors clarified that the Beehive was to be a performance centre, with Councillor Foster reinforcing that there would be no crossover with the focus on community arts. Councillor Eggleston stated that when demolition of the former Argos building began the Kiln would face the issue of needing a new location and that there may be space within Beehive for the work to continue.

A member of the 'Save our Town' group requested a Councillor from Burgess Hill Town Council to attend a debate they were planning for late March. They intended to invite a representative from WSCC, as well as MP Mims Davis.

CEO Cridland informed them that from 20 March, Councillors were subject to 'PURDAH', which meant they were unable to appear publicly in their role as a Councillor. Should the debate be held pre or post PURDAH a member of the Council would attend.

403. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anne Eves, Matthew Cornish and Sarah Lawrence.

404. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Robert Eggleston declared a personal interest in the Beehive as a Trustee.

405. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

CEO Steve Cridland thanked the Councillors for their hard work over the last 4 years, especially considering the pandemic and the

rise of criticism on social media platforms, as this was the last full Council meeting prior to the elections. He wished good luck to those standing again and wished those departing good fortune with their new endeavours.

406. COUNCIL MINUTES

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 30 January 2023 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

407. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 30 January and Monday 20 February 2023 were **AGREED**.

Councillor Janice Henwood reminded the Council and public in attendance that the Planning Committee are consultees only on applications and thanked the members of the Planning Committee for their commitment to the meetings.

408. SPECIAL MOTION: RESCISSION OF RESOLUTION

Cllr Eggleston submitted a Special Motion in terms of Section 14 of Standing Orders, as set out in Appendix 1, to rescind the St John's portion of resolution 393 taken at the Council meeting of 30 January 2023 and to replace it with the resolution included in the appendix.

Councillor Robert Duggan stated the funding of the St John's Cricket Pavilion had been previously voted down due to reservations many Councillors had over the amount of borrowing required to fund the project. He asked for an amendment to be made to the proposed recommendations, he suggested it be added that 'given the limited funds of the Council and the current increased cost of borrowing, no more than 50% of the funding for St John's Cricket Pavilion would be acquired in loans'

Councillor Eggleston quashed concerns from the public and Councillors over the funding of the Capital Program and stated that loans would come from the Public Loans Work Board, where rates are lower than bank loans. There would also be increased income coming to the Town Council, due to the successful boundary change.

Councillor Hicks added that the Capital Program is a program of intent as to what the Town Council would like to deliver to the town and as chairman of the Finance KAG supported the Capital Program. If all projects were to be completed at the same time, it would be strain on the Council, but the projects would not be delivered at the same time.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Council would reinstate St John's Cricket Pavilion into the Town Council Capital program with the amendment -given the limited funds of the Council and the current increased cost of borrowing, no more than 50% of the funding for St John's Cricket Pavilion would be acquired in loans.
2. The contribution made by the town council would be in the order of £400,000 and would be subject to the town council becoming a trustee.

409. MID SUSSEX CRIME & DISC PARTNERSHIP

CEO Steve Cridland informed the Council that the project would launch in Haywards Heath in March, then in Burgess Hill in April. He stated Liz Clark was the Town Council representative for this project. Councillor Henwood added that businesses have struggled in the past with information sharing and that the project would allow them allow them to do so.

RESOLVED that: The Council noted information from MSDC

410. St JOHN'S INSTITUTE: PARK CENTRE UPDATE

The project was progressing well with WSCC and Sussex Clubs for Young People (SCYP) was leading on this. It was stated that the building was not in good condition and the original building survey identified roughly half a million in repairs but this had later been scaled back to around £300,000. The building would need configuring for the best use of the charity and part of the long-term plan was to add a first-floor extension. Councillor Hicks requested that a detailed business plan be seen before further funding was offered to the charity. Councillor Henwood questioned the procedure for choosing the trustees and Councillor Foster informed the Council that it was the job of the charity to appoint the first trustee and then they would be required to follow a recruitment process, through which potential trustees would be assessed.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Council noted that 9 trustees were proposed for the CIO being set up to take over the St John's Institute Charity
2. That the Town Council would cover the legal costs of £5,500 to set up the constitution and register the CIO.
3. That Steven Cridland be appointed as Trustee until the new council reviewed this in May 2023.
4. That £30,000 be made available to assist with costs, as set out in appendix 5 to the report and that the CEO be given delegated

authority to release this to the charity/CIO as necessary until the CIO is set up.

411. MUSEUM

The Council discussed if there were any suitable locations for the housing of the items currently owned by Burgess Hill Heritage and History Society, as requested in appendices 3 and 4. It was suggested that one of the empty units in the Town Centre be used as an immediate remedy to the issue but it was dismissed as many of the units are not fit for purpose and the society's lack of budget would hamper any renovations. It was questioned whether it be housed within the Park Centre building, once refurbished, but it was decided this must be a decision made by the Park Centre charity as it may not fit their objectives and the space may not be suitable.

RESOLVED that: Officers of Burgess Hill Town Council and two Councillors meet with Burgess Hill Heritage and History Society to discuss the requirements the society would need from a museum space.

412. BEEHIVE: APPOINTMENT OF ARCHITECT

Councillor Robert Eggleston informed the Council that the architects had been asked to consider if the Beehive project could be moved to the site of the New River development, if required. New River Retail had also been approached with the idea and asked to consider the cost. Councillor Eggleston was currently awaiting a response. It was agreed The Beehive would be brought back to Council on Thursday 11 May, at the first meeting of the newly elected Councillors.

RESOLVED that:

1. That Architects Unknown Works be appointed to redesign the Beehive after the local government elections in May provided the new Council was in agreement and that their quote as follows be accepted;
Stage 1: £65,348
Stage 2: £52,700
Stage 3: £79,577
2. That Greenwoods be reappointed as Project Manager for the project and their quote as follows be accepted:

To RIBA stage 3 (planning): 0.4% (£19867)
To RIBA stage 5 (construction): 1.49% (£74605)
To RIBA stage 7 (end of defects): 0.1% (£4,857)

413. TIERED PLANTERS IN CHURCH WALK

CEO Cridland informed the Council that the original quote for the planters had been incorrect and it would be more financially viable, as well as an asset to the Council, if the planters were purchased directly.

RESOLVED that: The Council purchase and plant 2 tiered walkers in Church Walk at a cost of £1,200.

414. PLACE AND CONNECTIVITY

Following a question in Open Forum, the Town Council CEO informed residents that 13 local civil engineers that had been approached but had declined the work and to provide a quote. He informed the Council that he had acquired the free services of a traffic engineer who wished to remain anonymous, but who would write a report for consideration. It was noted that the engineer had been hampered by the lack of response to his FOI request for design information.

Gordon Parr, a member of the public in attendance, stated that no local firm would take on a project such as this due to possible reprisal from WSCC. He informed the Council that he had found 4 Civil engineers who were willing to assess the project and provide a quote for the work. They were all out of area but willing to travel. He stated there was a lack of traffic safety information and that the 2-way cycle path was counter purpose and there was a lack of cycle, mobility and accessibility audits available, which are all requirements of the work. He questioned if WSCC requested repair work by Landbuild, but they had gone out of business, who would be left with the bill, Burgess Hill Town Council?

It was countered that the Town Council has no legal standing as WSCC was the contract holder for the work. It was also raised that the WSCC meeting where Councillors had intended to raise issue, had been cancelled due to lack of large motions, despite the deadline for items not having passed at the time of cancellation. The Councillors would continue to raise concerns.

Councillor Eggleston stated a meeting was scheduled for 17 March 2023, with himself, the Town Council CEO, Cabinet member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Joy Dennis and the Project Management Team, where they hoped issues would be raised. Additionally, he stated it would be a closed meeting, and therefore it was not possible for someone with technical knowledge to attend and support.

It was questioned by the public, whether Councillors had agreed to the Place and Connectivity scheme during the consultation period and why the public was not consulted. Councillor Peter Chapman informed the public the project was not subject to a mandatory consultation and

therefore the consultation time was very short. The Town Council was not consulted on whether the project should go ahead and was only consulted on some design choices, but had no power to enforce if these decisions are changed.

RESOLVED that: The Council asked Gordon Parr to pass on the details of the four civil engineers that he had been in discussion with and who are prepared to submit proposals to assess the Place and Connectivity Scheme. The Council agreed that should one of these engineers fit the budget available then they would be appointed by the Council.

415. **CHANCTONBURY ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE: ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

The Council was informed that the report on alternative allotments sites from MSDC had yet to be received. A meeting had been requested by the Town Council to meet with MSDC and National Rail to discuss a new lease for the allotment tenants at Chanctonbury Road to give them better security. Councillor Eggleston also informed the Council there was a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 March to consider the regulation 18 responses to the updated District Plan. The Town Council has requested the allotment site be removed from the District Plan and should this not be addressed at this meeting; he would raise a motion to push for removal.

RESOLVED that: The Chanctonbury Allotment site be added to the Capital Programme with an Amber Flag.

416. **DIARY DATES**

RESOLVED that: Council noted the dates

417. Chairman Peter Chapman thanked all the Councillors for their hard work over the last 4 years.

Meeting terminated at 21.28.-