



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on Monday **27 November 2023**

Present: Janice Henwood Town Mayor
Tofojjul Hussain Deputy Town Mayor

Graham Allen *
Diane Black
Christine Cherry
Richard Cherry
Stuart Condie
Matthew Cornish
Cedric de Souza
Robert Eggleston
David Eggleton
Anne Eves
Bob Foster
Matthew Goldsmith *
Simon Hicks
Mohammad Hossain
John Orchard
Brenda Williams
Peter Williams
Adam White

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

(19.00)

65. OPEN FORUM

There were nine members of the public present.

A member of the public spoke about the Council's Standing Orders and questioned whether the complaints procedure was being followed, such as complaints being shared with all Councillors. Steve Cridland stated there was a complaints procedure in place but complaints must be received in writing. The member of the public went on to say their complaint had been by email and they had received a reply but were unhappy. Steve Cridland stated he would investigate the original complaint further.

A member of the public questioned the capacity in which Cllr Richard Cherry attended the Burgess Hill CIC meeting on 10 July 2023. He also went on to ask why the Scrapless unit had not been advertised to the wider community before being awarded to Zero Hub. He stated in June 2020 it was discussed that the Council formalise the way the units were allocated. Cllr Richard Cherry responded stating he had attended the meeting as an observer and Cllr Eggleston responded on the matter of advertisement, stating that the matter had already been raised at the previous Council meeting and dealt with.

The third member of the public questioned what Cllr Richard Cherry had meant when he had stated at the Finance Key Area Group (KAG) that 'the opportunity to save the allotments had been lost'. The member of the public stated that the land was still owned by Network Rail and as an Asset of Community Value the opportunity to purchase the land was still there. Cllr Richard Cherry responded that it was an issue that the land was still listed in the District Plan. Cllr Henwood added that another site had been allocated for the allotments and although the land was less easily accessible, the area was larger.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Matthew Goldsmith and Graham Allen.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr White declared a personal interest in Agenda item 11 as a member of Mid Sussex Radio.

Cllrs Richard Cherry, de Souza, Cornish and Orchard all declared a personal interest in Agenda item 12, as trustees of Park Centre.

69. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Janice Henwood thanked the Community Team for their work on the Light Switch on event, and the Cllrs who attended and assisted. She stated it was a delightful event.

Cllr Brenda Williams provided an update on the school council project and stated that she had met with Burgess Hill Academy who were keen to join the project. All junior schools, St Paul's and Downlands had been approached, although it was still unknown who would take part. The plan was to set up a mock Burgess Hill Town Council (BHTC) to see what it was like to be a Councillor and that the students would then take the ideas back to school. It was added the project was in its early days and was still subject to agreement by Full Council and the Finance KAG.

70. **COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Minutes of the of Meeting of Council held on Monday 25 September 2023 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 23 October 2023 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

71. **UPDATE FROM WSCC**

Cllr Richard Cherry provided an update stating that the budget was an overwhelming pressure for West Sussex County Council (WSCC), due to a number of reasons including reduced central government funding, a tight labour market and higher than anticipated inflation rates. By February 2023, WSCC had a funding gap of £112m for the following three years, and of £171m for all financial years until 2029, but by increasing Council Tax to the maximum, this had reduced to £90m. WSCC would need to look for future cost-efficiency savings but it was not sure where these savings would be made yet.

He stated the Woodlands Meed building works had been further delayed, and they would miss the latest Christmas deadline, with no agreed handover date as yet. He also stated that the Bedelands Academy was being retendered and the results would not be known until spring 2024.

It was added that WSCC was currently subject to an Ofsted inspection on SEND services and it was reported that currently they were failing to meet the statutory time to complete EHCP applications, with only 1.1% being completed in the 20-week deadline. WSCC was receiving 105 applications a month and of those, only 75 were being processed due to a lack of specialist staff and Education Psychologists. Transportation costs had also increased a great deal and they were looking to make savings.

Cllr Richard Cherry then stated that Park Centre had been handed over to the CIO by WSCC.

72. **UPDATE FROM MSDC**

Cllr Eggleston informed the Council that Cabinet had approved the purchase of a further twelve homes to be used for temporary accommodation, at a cost of £5.38m, of which £3.8m was from reserves. This was to reduce the use of paid accommodation across the district. It was stated that homelessness had increased by 11% year on year.

He provided an update on the contract for green spaces management, stating that the contract was being draw up, with some changes to the contract parameters but that it was expected to be live in January

2024. He stated that the Scrutiny Committee had approved the green spaces vision for the next ten years which sets out the strategic investment for the four-hundred green space and one-hundred and thirty play areas across the district. Included in the vision for Burgess Hill was the BMX track, for which the work had been completed, the refurbishment of the Marle Place open space and St John's master plan, as well as a number of smaller play grounds across the town.

Cllr Eggleston stated that the food waste pilot to three-thousand homes had been successful and had reduced household waste by 39%. It had been announced by central government that weekly food waste collection would be mandatory by March 2026 and so Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) was working on extending the pilot scheme.

In terms of the Place and Connectivity scheme, he stated that the next phase included the roll out of Real Travel Passenger Information (RTPI) and a crossing on Leylands Road near Lidl.). BHTC would manage the scheme with funding from WSCC and MSDC

He then stated that the Scrutiny Committee in November had approved the Draft Regulation 19 District Plan, which would go to Full Council on 13 December and if agreed would be subject to a 6-week consultation period in January 2024, on behalf of the Planning Inspectorate.

He commented on the Martlets Shopping Centre redevelopment, stating that the government had decided not to invite competitive bids for the Phase 3 Levelling Up Fund, and instead opened the fund to the top fifty-five runner ups from phase 2, of which MSDC was not one.

With regards to the budget for MSDC, Cllr Eggleston stated that for the Medium-Term Financial Plan it was estimated there would be a gap of £6.7m over 4 years, but that MSDC was looking at how to reduce it. A member of the public then questioned how the gap would be closed, asking if there would be an increase in council tax. Cllr Eggleston replied stating that district and boroughs were capped at an increase of 3% on council tax, and would need to hold a referendum to go over the cap. He carried on to say that there was little room in savings on statutory services such as housing and planning and the majority of discretionary services were outsourced, such as the leisure centres. So MSDC was constrained by savings that could be made but through procurement and remodelling, fees and charges, reserves and high levels of treasury management income, had managed to reduced the gap somewhat.

73. [PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES](#)

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 10 October, Monday 30 October and Monday 20 November 2023 were **AGREED**.

74. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY AREA GROUP – NOTES OF MEETING**

The Notes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Key Area Group KAG held on 16 October 2023 were **AGREED**.

75. **FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP - NOTES OF MEETING**

The Notes of the meeting of the Finance KAG held on 15 November 2023 were **AGREED**.

A member of the public asked if the land on Cyprus Road could be used for a depot. It was stated by Council that this would not be possible as space was needed for transport and equipment, and that the need for a depot looked to the future of the growing town. It was added the funds would not come from reserves as it was an ongoing cost, and that the current storage space had been offered by WSCC free of charge for a number of years.

RESOLVED that:

The Cllrs noted the contents of the reports provided and agreed with the recommendations of the Finance KAG. The resolution of Agenda item 10a, the allocation of additional funds to the Grants Fund, is set out in minute number 76 (below).

76. **GRANTS AWARDS PANEL – NOTES OF MEETING**

The Notes of the meeting of the Grants Awards Panel held on 12 October 2023 were **AGREED**

The Council was asked to allocate an additional amount of £3,724 towards the Grants Fund, to cover the shortfall as per agenda item 11 dated 27 November.

RESOLVED that:

The Council agreed to allocate an additional £3,724 to the Grants Fund.

77. **PARK CENTRE UPDATE**

Cllr De Souza provided an update stating that WSCC had approved the asset transfer and that the CIO was looking to proceed the structural survey as soon as possible with the building works hopefully to commence in January 2024. However, he added that the CIO was not likely to commence operations until September 2024 due to the legalities with WSCC and the Charity Commission. He also stated the Board of Trustees was now full with twelve members from varying backgrounds. Cllr Hicks added that the Finance KAG had agreed to allocate £20k towards the project to cover preliminary costs.

78. **ST JOHN'S PARK WORKING GROUP**

It was stated a small working group of Councillors, to consider improvements to St John's Park, had been created.

RESOLVED that:

The Council noted the information provided at Appendix 2.

79. **CLOSURE OF OFFICES**

The Council was asked to consider the closure of the Town Council offices for the 3 weekdays between Boxing Day and New Year, for 2023 and future years.

RESOLVED that:

The closure of the offices between Christmas and New Year was agreed.

80. **STAFF COSTS**

A member of the public asked for Agenda item 15 to be removed, as the author of the email, had not shared the email with all Councillors, but had sent it to one Councillor.

It was discussed the item would not be removed as it was now on record in the public domain. However, an apology was issued as the agenda did not make it clear that the author had only sent to one Councillor, who then shared it.

RESOLVED that:

The Cllrs noted the information provided and issued an apology to the author of the email.

81. **STREET AND PLACE NAMING POLICY**

The Council was asked to consider using the names of the fallen as listed on the War Memorial, when approached for names for new streets and parks etc.

RESOLVED that:

1. That the names of the fallen appearing on the war memorial be used to name streets and places in Burgess Hill.
2. That the names be selected randomly when requests for names are received.
3. That MSDC be informed of this policy and be asked to adopt it for future naming of streets and places in Burgess Hill.

82. **DIARY DATES**

DECEMBER		
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Planning Committee	Monday 11 December	19.00 hours
JANUARY 2024		
Planning Committee	Monday 8 January	19.00 hours
Strategic and Development KAG	Thursday 11 January	19.00 hours
Finance KAG	Monday 22 January	19.00 hours
Council	Monday 29 January	19.00 hours
Planning Committee	Tuesday 30 January	19.00 hours

Council received a schedule of forthcoming events as set out in Agenda Item 17 dated 27 November 2023 and noted the meetings listed above, which were adjusted after the agenda had been circulated.

RESOLVED that:
The diary dates were noted.

Meeting terminated at 19.53.