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19th March 2025

To: **MEMBERS OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP.**

A **MEETING** of the **CUSTOMER SERVICES KEY AREA GROUP** will be held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 24th March 2025 at 19:00** hours, when your attendance is required.

Copied to all members of the Council for information

Julie Holden
Chief Executive Officer

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

Filming, recording of Council meetings and use of social media: there is a notice displayed in the Council Chamber setting out the Councils protocol for filming at meetings.

AGENDA

1. **OPEN FORUM**
Members of the Public are permitted to speak in accordance with [standing order 3.8.](#)
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
3. **SUBSTITUTES**
4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
5. **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

To consider the Notes of the Meeting of the Customer Services Key Area Group held on 15th January 2025 (previously distributed).

6. [TOURISM - RAILWAY 200 UPDATE](#)

- 6.1 **Purpose of the item: to update members on the planned Railway 200 trail which links in to the towns history and promotes walking and cycling in 2025.**
- 6.2 As discussed at the January KAG - in 2025, we celebrate 200 years of the Railway with the national campaign "Railway 200," which we have proudly joined. Nationwide celebrations are planned and details can be found at Railway 200. This platform provides information on all planned events and activities, and allows anyone involved to register their events.
- 6.3 A work in progress document of the proposed Railway 200 Burgess Hill walking/cycling trail has been created which can be seen in Appendix 1. The plan is that each stop will have a sign with a QR code which connects to a page on BHTC website with information / images pertaining to that stop. Lemonade Print have been asked to design and quote for the signs.
- 6.4 The proposed trail has been devised with the help of Burgess Hill History and Heritage Association, who continue to be involved in providing the content for the stops. Officers will be meeting with the Youth Council at their meeting of 02 April to ask them to be involved in creating/designing posters to promote the trail. Councillor Eggleton has also been consulted as per his request at Council and suggestions from the public gallery taken on board.
- 6.5 There are ongoing discussions with the Bluebell Railway as to whether the trail could be supported on their digital visitor app. Officers would still need to create and provide the content hosted on the app. Trail participants would need to download the Bluebell Railway app to view the trail. The Bluebell Railway have a number of events planned between June and September to celebrate Railway 200 and the Help Point will be promoting these where possible. Whether we can use the Bluebell Railway App or connect to information on our own website a route map will still need to be created. This map could be printed in house.
- 6.6 The proposed launch date for the Burgess Hill Railway 200 trail is July 2025 to tie in with school holidays and maximise on users.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members approve the proposed trail, and launch date.

Risks:

Environmental implications: Encourages people to walk/ cycle around the town

Financial implications: Costs are currently unknown but will include correx signs and printed leaflets and could be met from the existing Help Point Budget, but this will use a significant part of the allocated budget which could affect the possibility of other projects and initiatives such as the new guide and map.

Community Safety implications: A full risk assessment for the self-guided trail will be undertaken.

7. [MAINTENANCE TEAM REPORT](#)

- 7.1 **Purpose of report: This report is to update members on the work carried**

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Members of the KAG; Diane Black, Robert Eggleston, Anne Eves, Matthew Goldsmith, Tofojjul Hussain, Simon Hicks, Adam White (Chair)

out by the Maintenance Team since the last meeting held in January 2025 and planned works. See Appendix 2.

This report is for noting.

Risks:

Environmental implications: There are none.

Financial implications: There are none.

Community Safety implications: There are none.

8. **IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC REALM**

- 8.1 **Purpose of report: To receive a report on proposals to enhance Church Walk as part of the overall attention to the public realm.**
- 8.2 Officers propose to place barrier planters on the tops of the walls in the Stone Garden and fill these with trailing and flowering plants to make the area more attractive.
- 8.3 The cost for a barrier planter is approx. £160 + VAT per planter, to include fixings. There will be an additional cost for compost and plants. The estimate is that 12 planters will be needed.
- 8.4 The Maintenance Supervisor has made contact with 2 nurseries and they will be visiting site to give suggestions and quote accordingly.
- 8.5 If there are sufficient funds remaining from the budget, it is recommended that additional tiered planters be purchased. Cllr Black has made various suggestions around attractive planters that she has observed elsewhere and this will be part of the ongoing discussions as the budget becomes available.

RECOMMENDATION

The KAG are recommended to approve the above improvements to the Stone Garden from the 2025/26 budget, being the first project to enhance the overall public realm in Church Walk.

Risks:

Environmental implications: positive: more plants in the town centre add beautification and can increase cleaner air.

Financial implications: none, budget has been approved.

Community Safety implications: All features will be appropriately risk assessed and secured.

9. **BRIDGE AT BATCHELORS FARM**

- 9.1 **Purpose of report: To advise as to the current maintenance position of the bridge and determine what maintenance will be afforded to it.**
- 9.2 During a routine site inspection it was identified that remedial repairs were required to the southern bridge in Batchelors Farm. The Monday Group attended and carried out the required work but then identified that the underside of the bridge is starting to fail and will need significant work in the future, and this work would be a much larger job than The Monday Group could undertake.
- 9.3 The Maintenance Supervisor has been in contact with Edburton Contractors, who have carried out work at Batchelors Farm in the past, and asked for a site visit to assess the situation and give an idea of cost for repairing/replacing the bridge.
- 9.4 MSDC will be contacted to see if there are any S106 funds available. As this is

repair and not enhancement, it is unclear at this time whether funding may be available.

- 9.5 Subject to the KAG wishing for the bridge to be repaired, officers will bring this item back when costs to repair the bridge are established. There are no identified reserves or budget and the costs would fall to the Repairs and Renewal Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

KAG are asked to give an indication to officers as to their wishes regarding repairing the bridge.

Risks:

Environmental implications: there are none

Financial implications: As per the report, the cost to repair will fall on existing budgets, therefore reducing capacity for other projects in 2025/26.

Community Safety implications: If the bridge is not repaired nor closed off, there could be implications as the bridge becomes weaker. Committee will need to make a decision by the next committee (or sooner if the bridge deteriorates) as to whether the bridge is to be repaired or closed off.

10. **BURIAL GROUND**

10.1 **Purpose of report: to consider the practice of using vehicles in the burial ground.**

- 10.2 A concern was raised by a resident who when visiting a family members grave at the Burial Ground before Christmas found that various items placed on the grave were no longer present and that a tyre track was visible on the edge of the grave plot. Following the correspondence, we agreed to raise this with the appropriate KAG.

- 10.3 This was investigated by the Responsible Finance Officer who could give no comfort regarding the missing items which may have been removed purposely or may have been blown away by the weather. We were able to confirm the only items ever removed from graves by BHTC staff, without contact to the family, are wilted flowers, therefore it was not our staff that removed them. We have advised that as the Burial Ground is an open space and there is not CCTV (nor would this be practical) in place, we cannot advise as to what happened to the grave items, but of course we sympathised with the upset that the family member had experienced.

- 10.4 The Maintenance Team use a ride on mower to cut the grass in the Burial Ground, along with strimming where necessary. The member of public felt this was disrespectful as the mower will traverse over graves and he felt this practice should be changed to strimming or push along mowers across the Burial Ground.

- 10.5 The Town Council have used ride on mowers for some time. The current model is a SCAG ride on mower, as shown in the below picture. The Burial Ground is a large space and without this equipment the time to maintain the Burial Ground would significantly increase, potentially requiring the Council to employ one-two more staff members or extend the external contract to carry out this task. While additional resources have been added to the Maintenance Team for 2025/26 this was not in anticipation of extra work required from existing tasks and would therefore need additional resourcing. In addition, the extension to the Burial Ground, currently being progressed will make this task even longer.

- 10.6 Strimming as an activity cannot be carried out for hours on end due to the health and safety risks due to the use of the vibrating equipment. Push along mowers can be used but are much slower. Moving to wholly manual methods of maintenance in the Burial Ground will result in periods of being unable to do so when we experience prolonged poor weather. Another item to consider is that the Muslim area of the Burial Ground must be attended by the ride on mower as their graves, due to their religious beliefs, are not allowed to be walked over. We would therefore have to retain the mowers, so there would be no opportunity to sell these.
- 10.7 It is usual for a burial ground to have automated equipment in use, as a working cemetery we have a three-ton digger in there to dig graves and backfill (along with parts of this job being done by hand). When the weather has been wet it is possible that tracks may be left over existing graves. This is unfortunate and the Maintenance Team and contractor are instructed to be careful. We do not leave big ruts on graves and even if this did occur we would make good as soon as possible as we are mindful that this can be distressing for families visiting graves.
- 10.8 We have spoken with neighbouring councils who have burial grounds and cemeteries, they have confirmed that many use ride along mowers for expediency and machinery for the opening and closing on graves which does from time to time affect the neighbouring graves or the path to the new gravesite. A working burial ground will leave signs of their presence at times.
- 10.9 The RFO has been instructed to include information as to the working side of the Burial Ground in the literature that goes to families before they purchase a plot, so that they are clear as to vehicles moving around the grounds and that there may from time to time be tracks, but our assurance that we always use our best endeavours to be respectful.
- 10.10 In conclusion, we have apologised for the upset caused by the tyre track, however we do not believe that there is a reasonable alternative to consider that would not significantly increase unbudgeted costs. Literature has been updated and all staff reminded as to care to be taken in the Burial Ground. If KAG were minded to make a change an appropriate recommendation to the Finance KAG to agree to overspend in this year's budget and or increase the budget for maintenance would be necessary.



RECOMMENDATION: To confirm that the current practices are to be continued and to note the steps taken to ensure that the public are aware of the machinery in use at the Burial Ground.

Risks:

Environmental impacts: none, if the council stepped away from using the ride

on mower while this would reduce the petrol used would potentially use more petrol in the trimmers.

Financial impacts: none, however if the Council decided not to use the ride on mower staff costings / contract time would increase.

Community safety: none, the vehicles are always used with a full risk assessment as the Burial Ground is constantly in use.

11 TOWN HALL ROOF /EXTERNAL DECORATING

11.1 **Purpose of report: To advise as to the current maintenance position of the roof and determine what maintenance will be afforded to it and whether to combine with the external decoration of the building.**

11.2 The external decoration of the building has previously been discussed at Finance KAG (65/13.11.24), while the year-end surplus was anticipated to allow an allocation of £3,000 for external decoration, no final quote has been received by FKAG to approve the expenditure.

11.3 It will be returned to them for further discussion, however since that consideration, an inspection of the inside of the Town hall roof has shown alarming deterioration of the felt and fabric of the roof.

Left unattended, this poses a serious risk to the integrity of the building, however due to the presence of the solar panels, any roof work is now more costly. This work being unplanned has not been budgeted and being "repair" will not be eligible for any S106 application.

11.4 As the decoration works were pending and a significant cost on any external works to the building will be the scaffolding, it makes sense to combine the works to be carried out simultaneously and incur only the one set of scaffolding fees.

11.5 2 different sets of quotes have been sourced, one for the roofing works (3 quotes have been received: £16,200, £21,450 and £29,790.55) and one for the decorating (2 quotes £5,250+ £5280 for scaffolding and £6,300) the latter quote includes scaffolding and is expected to be cheaper once the scaffolding cost is removed.

11.6 There is no allocation in the repairs and renewals fund for the roof as this has only recently been identified. KAG have the option of referring the matter to Council to request that reserves be used for the works to be completed in the 2025/26 financial year, or whether to recommend to the Finance KAG for an allocation in the 2026/27 budget.

11.7 If KAG are minded to proceed with the works in 2025/26, KAG are asked whether to recommend to the Finance KAG that the two items of works are combined in order to get better value from the scaffolding.

RECOMMENDATION: KAG are asked whether the two areas of work should be combined and what timetable they feel should be applied to the works.

Risks:

Environmental impacts: There is none, the solar panels will be professionally removed and reinstalled so as not to damage them and their effectiveness.

Financial impacts: As per the report, the cost to repair has not been allocated in the budget and therefore reserves would need to be used, or the work

deferred and funds be allocated from the 2026/27 budget.
Community safety: There is none.

12 WEDDING/ CIVIL PARTNERSHIP LICENCE FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

12.1 **Purpose of report: To consider licensing the Council Chamber for weddings.**

12.2 A resident attended a councillor surgery and asked whether the Town Council could be a wedding/ civil partnership registration venue, as they were aware of a 9 month waiting list for the basic ceremony which is only held in Crawley. The Couple simply wanted to legalise their partnership but found that the existing venues in the area were very expensive, they did not wish to marry in a church.

12.3 The basic cost is legislative in that the County Council are required to offer one venue which is available at the centrally set price (currently £56) with an additional cost of £12.50 for the copy of the licence. Effectively the Registrar's time is not charged for this offering. The Registrar (judge or licenced person) is usually charged at a rate starting at £500 per ceremony. This cost rises at weekend and bank holidays. A couple would normally book a venue and then book the Registrar separately making the overall cost very high.

12.4 The Town Council can register with the WSCC as a registered wedding venue (we have to apply and the cost is £2398 for a licence which lasts for 3 years). If we were to do so, we would need to make a charge for the Council Chamber to cover the staff costs in facilitating the ceremony and a proportion of the licence. While wishing to offer this at the least expensive rate to make it an option for couples. The Council could offer a small venue for a maximum of 20 guests at the rate of £100 (plus registrar fees). If we had 12 ceremonies a year we would cover the cost of the licence and room hire. Weekday weddings would not incur additional charges but at a weekend we may have to charge £150 to cover the cost of a staff member being present. Registrar fees are also higher.

12.5 When this was considered previously, there were concerns as to the number of people in the building and our facilities (WCs). Keeping the numbers to no more than 20 means a much smaller degree of disturbance to the offices during the working week and facilities are ample. The rooms (the small meeting room would be needed also as the Registrar have to meet with the couple separately before the ceremony) would be hired for an hour, for the ceremony and legalities to be completed.

12.6 The resident who asked about this, has been advised of the approximate costs and asked for his view as to whether this would be attractive, paying approximately £600 rather than waiting for 9 months and paying £68.50). He indicated that he thought this would be something to be considered, if there was availability of a venue at this cost, it could be attractive.

12.7 The officers are sympathetic to the request, although we cannot waive the WSCC Registrar fees, but if there is a demand we would be able to offer a room, for a small charge, to facilitate local ceremonies. It is interesting to note that the only registered venues in the immediate area (besides religious buildings) are the Hickstead Hotel, Birch Hotel, Ockenden Manor or Haywards Heath Town Council, none of which are offering a small room at a less expensive charge. The least expensive being Haywards Heath Town Council who charge £425 for their upstairs rooms. Besides the one request by the member of the public, it is not known what the appetite would be and this would be a risk that very few coupled may wish to legalise their partnership at the Town Council.

12.8 There are no funds set aside for this, there is an inclusivity reserve of £4,250

that members could determine is accessible as it would provide an option for marriage and partnerships locally at a more affordable price. Otherwise KAG would need to recommend to Finance KAG that it be approved for next years budget and if it were to be progressed this year, to recommend to Council that General reserves be used.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are asked whether to proceed with offering the Town Council as a low-cost marriage/ partnership venue and if so to agree how this is to be financed.

Risks

Environmental Impact: there is none, indeed it would reduce the need for travel out of the town for civil marriages and partnerships

Financial Impact: the cost of the licence if not recouped through ceremonies. This is not a budgeted item and if this were successful would need budgeting for on a three yearly basis.

Community Safety Impact: There is none.

13.0 **BURIAL GROUND (PHASE 2) UPDATE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update Members in regard to the progress of the development of the Burial Ground (Phase 2) project.

13.1 **Background**

The burial ground, located on Jane Murray Way, was opened in June 2004. It was designed to be sympathetic within its rural setting to include a commemorative woodland, a children's area and to be a non-denominational burial ground open to all residents no matter their religious or cultural beliefs and backgrounds.

In 2017, an area within the burial ground was dedicated to Muslim burials as the town council had been approached by the Burgess Hill Muslim community highlighting the difficulty they had as, due to religious reasons, they were unable to bury their deceased within a "mixed" area.

It is estimated the current phase 1 (see below) of the burial ground will reach capacity in around 2 years.

13.2 **Planning**

Full planning permission was obtained for the whole site (phase 1 and 2) in 2003, with the opening of the first phase in June 2004.

An additional planning application has been submitted to extend the current car park and to create a hard-stand area for vehicles and equipment. This application is currently progressing through the planning system with a decision expected on 14 April 2025.



Jane Murray Way

13.3 Funding (phase 2)

Council approved the application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a loan of up to £300k to be repayable over 25 years. This was granted by MHCLG on the 18 December 2024 and lasts for one year.

Loan repayments have been factored into the town council's base budget for 2025/26, however, to-date, no money has been drawn down as we are at the early stages of the development and interest rates are somewhat high.

13.4 Work To-Date

- Provisional designs/layout have been drawn and are available for Members to view.
- A specialist cemetery project manager has been appointed.
- White Horse Contractors Ltd with extensive experience in landscaping projects has been appointed as the construction company.
- Public awareness: the town council has promoted the phase 2 scheme through the Annual Town Report, About Town magazine (3 editions), the 2024 Annual Town Meeting (with a dedicated display board) and the council's website.
- Since the opening of the burial ground, a number of residents from the traveller community have been interred and officers have met with representatives from the Traveller community to better understand their needs.

13.5 Work to-do

- Officers to liaise with Muslim representatives (Councillors) to better understand the needs of the Muslim community.
- Final designs to be drawn.
- Construction to begin April/May 2025. Project to last 6-9 months.

RECOMMENDATION

To note the contents of the report

RISKS

Environmental: None

Financial: there is reasonable contingency within the budget to cope with cost over-runs.

Community Safety: None

Planning: Although failure to obtain planning approval for the extension of the carpark and hardstand would not necessarily prevent the project from progressing, it would

give rise to operational difficulties.

Reputational: Any significant delay in the construction time-scale runs the risk of the council reaching capacity within the current burial area prior to the completion of phase 2.

14 [AECOM/ Homes England Consultation on proposed traffic regulation order \(TRO\)](#)

14.1 **Purpose of The Report: To consider a response regarding informal consultation for changes to TROs due to the Brookleigh development**

14.2 The Council became aware, just before the last planning meeting, of an informal consultation with residents by AECOM, regarding mobility corridors between the new Brookleigh Estate and the Town Centre/ Wivelsfield Station. The informal consultation closes on 26th March therefore not leaving time to progress to the Planning Committee, however as matters as to safety of residents and business development can fall to Customer Service KAG it has been agreed to transfer this item to this agenda.

14.3 The proposals include removing the two short stay parking bays in front of the Londis shop on London Road and preventing parking in front of 89/91 London Road. The notice received by residents is attached at appendix 3. It is usual that the Town Council would be made aware of proposals before they are consulted on, yet this has not occurred in this instance. The Ward Councillor for Leylands Cllr Hicks, became aware of the informal consultation and advised the Officers. It is possible that the Council will be consulted when this moves to a formal consultation, however input at early stages can often help to hone schemes or raise matters of concern at an early stage and help shape the proposals in to the right solution for Burgess Hill.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Council having become aware of an informal consultation with residents by AECOM regarding mobility corridors between the new Brookleigh Estate and the Town Centre/ Wivelsfield Station, wishes to raise its concern that the proposals have not been sent to the Town Council for comment, at the same time as informally canvassing views from residents.

Specifically the Council would wish to raise concerns regarding the proposals as follows :

1. The omission from the recent planning application for Freeks Lane to be upgraded to an all weather footpath and cycle way of the northern section from Maple Drive to Eastbridge Avenue leaving residents of Brookleigh using a muddy and overgrown footpath as their most convenient route for local services.
2. The proposals to eliminate parking spaces on London Road outside Londis which would threaten the shops viability and end options for local residents to park on this section of London Road.
3. The proposals to remove parking spaces in the vicinity of St Johns Park leading to a loss of resident amenity for those who do not have off-street parking for their cars and a reduction in footfall for local businesses.

We would urge AECOM/ Homes England to take these comments on board and reconsider the scheme before submission for formal consultation, the Town Council would also wish a briefing on the wider strategy of the Mobility corridors

and also progress on plans regarding a safe crossing on Leylands Road near the Mill Road junction.

Risks:

Environmental implications : None

Financial implications : None

Community Safety implications: the removal of safe car parking at convenience stores or town centre may result in higher possibility of road accidents.

15 CYPRUS HALL LEASE

15.1 Purpose of Report: KAG will be asked to determine the terms that they would wish to see entered in to for a new lease. Due to the commercial aspect of this discussion it will be held in closed session.

15.2 The lease is due for renewal in February 2026. The Cyprus Hall Association have issued a notice requesting renewal of the lease on the same terms as currently.

15.3 The Council have aspiration as to renovation to the Hall within the proposed term of a new lease, to link in with the proposed Beehive site on the adjoining land.

15.4 A further report with current advice and options will be circulated under separate cover as a confidential report due to the commercial sensitivity of negotiations at this stage.

RECOMMENDATION: To advise officers as to the desired terms of the new lease to allow negotiation with the Cyprus Hall Association

Risks

Environmental Implications: There are none

Financial Implications: there are none, the cost of professional advice can be accommodated from existing budgets

Community Safety Implications: There are none.