



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **Monday 23 September 2024**

Present: Janice Henwood Town Mayor
Tofojjul Hussain Deputy Town Mayor

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

DRAFT

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

(19.00)

The Town Mayor started the meeting requesting that everyone join in a moment of silence in memory of former Councillor Kathleen Dumbovic, whom we had heard had recently passed away. The Council recognised with gratitude Councillor Dumbovic's former service and our condolences were sent to her family. Those present stood for a moment of reflection.

173. OPEN FORUM

There were 6 members of the public present. No members of the public addressed Council during Open Forum.

The Town Mayor welcomed our new Chief Executive Officer Julie Holden.

174. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Diane Black	personal commitment
Councillor Cedric de Souza	work commitment

Resolved

Council accepted the apologies for absence.

175. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Matthew Cornish declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14, Park Centre update, as he was a trustee.

Councillor Adam White declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14, Park Centre update, who had been nominated as a Park Centre CIO but not elected formally yet.

176. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A reminder to Councillors that the Town Council Vision Day would take place on 10 October 2024 from 10am to 4pm in the Council Chamber.
- Burgess Hill Academy were hosting an open evening 6pm on 10 October 2024.
- Our Neighbourhood Policing Inspector, Inspector Derrick, shared with the Council last week that the Police had identified a suspect for the 26 bicycle thefts that had taken place in Mid Sussex (16 were in Burgess Hill) over the summer. The Chairman was delighted to advise that he had updated over the weekend that the suspect had been arrested and the young person was in custody. Hopefully this would bring an end to this blight.

177. COUNCIL MINUTES

Resolved:

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 22 July 2024 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

178. UPDATE FROM WSCC

Councillor Stuart Condie provided a verbal update on two items:

1. WSCC had shared that the contractor at Woodlands Meeds College had gone into administration. There was no current update to a timeline of the outstanding work. He was planning on discussing this matter with the WSCC Financial Director.
2. The Council's budget faced challenges with a projected gap of £50 million per annum. He suggested that Council Tax would need to increase more than the mandated 1.99% plus 1% social care precept, even if this happened it would only reduce the deficit by half and this meant that Council current services may be reviewed.

179. UPDATE FROM MSDC

Councillor Robert Eggleston provided following update:

- (1) *Following the resignation of Cllr Alison Bennett from the Cabinet*
 - *Cllr Chris Hobbs has been appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council*
 - *Cllr Simon Hicks has been appointed to the Cabinet with portfolio responsibility for Revenues and benefits.*
- (2) *At the end of July, Cabinet considered the findings of the Independent Panel established to review community proposals for the future of Clair Hall. The conclusions were that that there was no viable community proposal*

In the light of that work Cabinet agreed that the Clair Hall site should be regenerated by way of a mixed-use development to provide a new cultural facility, funded through the land value. The next stage is that a procurement specification for both a cultural and development partner will be developed for comment by the Executive Steering Group and approval by Cabinet.

(3) *Swan Mead Community Centre in East Grinstead had been purchased by MSDC so that the land could be used for the development of temporary accommodation. We have now agreed to sell the land to a Housing Association for the development of long-term affordable housing. The receipt from the sale will be used to purchase housing on the open market in the area to be used for temporary accommodation. We have also agreed the procurement of building works to Annandale House, Cuckfield which was purchased by MSDC in September 2023, which will be use as temporary accommodation.*

(4) *We have deferred the introduction of evening and Sunday/BH parking charges to carry out further consultation and work on the*

proposals. This is to address an issue in EG which has CPZs, and the further work involves the creation of an evening/Sunday residents permit in the car parks. There is also further consultation on the Sunday/BH charge where it is being proposed that a flat £1.00 rate for the day should be applied across all 3 towns, previously £1.50 in EG and HH. It is also proposed that the Sunday/BH charge should only operate from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

At the same time, we have outlined the investment strategy which the additional parking revenue will support. This includes an increase in Parking Enforcement Officers (by 50%) to help tackle illegal and inconsiderate parking and capital investment in the parking estate.

(5) As indicated in my July update to this Council, sufficient work has now been completed for MSDC to consider recommendations on Wednesday, for it to enter into a JV with New River Retail for the redevelopment of the Martlets Shopping Centre. This meeting is part of the essential governance allowing the JV to go ahead. There are, however, other conditions that must be satisfied, before legal completion.

A Councillor asked if there were time scales to the Government review of Business Rates and the response was not able to confirm a specific time scale.

A member of public asked if there were more details to the Clair Hall proposal. The response provided by Councillor Eggleston was that it depended on the outcome of the procurement process.

A member of the public asked would the parking enforcement cost more money than generated and would that increase the deficit that has been spoken about?

The response was that the new tariff regime would deliver a contribution to help the balance but there was additional revenue that would help appoint 3 new enforcement officers so that the considerable amount of complaints from residents about illegal and off street parking could be addressed.

Another member of public asked if any of the three new enforcement officers will be based in Burgess Hill?

The Town Mayor answered that they are usually circulated around the District.

180. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chairman of the Planning Committee proposed the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 5 August, Tuesday 27 August and 16 September 2024 to the Council, as

circulated.

Resolved

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings 5th August 2024, 27th August 2024 and 16th September 2024 were received and the decisions within them **AGREED**.

181. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT KEY AREA GROUP –

Cllr Eggleston as Chairman of the KAG introduced the report and advised that the wording of the original recommendation regarding the Burial Ground Phase 2 needed some amendment as the PWLB would require a specific set of words. Comments were made by one Councillor that the loan should not be taken out as the Council had enough reserves and the other proposed projects may not come to fruition.

A recorded vote was requested and the votes were as below:

Janice Henwood – Support
Tofojjul Hussain – Support
Graham Allen – Support
Stuart Condie – Support
Matthew Cornish – Support
Robert Eggleston – Support
David Eggleton – Support
Anne Eves – Support
Bob Foster – Support
Jon Gardner – Support
Matthew Goldsmith – Support
Simon Hicks – Support
Mohammad Hossain – Support
John Orchard – Support
Andy Stowe – Do Not Support
Brenda Williams – Support
Peter Williams – Support
Adam White – Support

Resolved :

To Seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government to apply for a loan of £300,000, over the borrowing term of 25 years for the purpose of developing the phase two extension to the Burgess Hill Burial Ground. The annual loan repayments will come to £21,116 per annum. It is not intended to increase the Council Tax Precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

The remaining minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2024 were received and the remaining decisions therein **AGREED**.

182. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Council considered the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party with a remit to:

- (i) Examine the existing NP and identify policies that are no longer valid,
- (ii) Undertake a scoping exercise on non-strategic policies to be retained and amended or new non-strategic policy areas which may be considered for inclusion in a new NP,
- (iii) Consider the evidence base needed to complete any review of the NP,
- (iv) Provide recommendations on the scope of any review of the NP in line with paragraph 9 above including whether a review should be conducted at all and report these in the first instance to the Full Council meeting on 27th January 2025, and
- (v) If the recommendations are agreed, the Working Party would be limited to a maximum of 6 Members who can be volunteers from all parties. The working party would report to Strategic KAG but its membership need not come from this KAG.

Resolved:

A Working Party would be formed with the remit to look at points 1-5 noted above.

183. ADDITION TO BANK MANDATE

Julie Holden had been appointed as the new CEO replacing Steve Cridland who retired recently.

Currently, the only senior officer on the bank mandate was the Responsible Finance Officer. To ensure continuity during periods of absence, it was recommended the Town Council had at least two senior officers who were able to authorise dealings with the Town Council's financial institutions.

Resolved:

- a) To add Julie Holden onto the Bank Mandate for each bank with which the town council has an account, and
- b) To authorise Julie Holden to hold a business debit card (Government Procurement Card) to be able to transact online and in-person payments with a monthly payment limit set at £2,500.

184. MARKET WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Town Council's Market Working Group met on 9th August 2024 to review and discuss the way forward with the weekly market. The notes of the meeting were at Appendix 3.

The Town Mayor asked, from where the additional £5,000 budget, as referred to in the papers has come from.

Councillor Peter Williams answered that this was discussed by the Market Steering group, a request for an additional £5,000 to go towards the market being held this year to be taken to the Finance KAG for their approval, no decision on that for the moment.

Councillor Stowe, asked whether the temporary halting of the markets should be considered as a recommendation and not just noted.

It was clarified that this was a recommendation of the working group, the decision would be made by the appropriate KAG. Council are only being asked to note the meeting notes.

This was noted by Council

185. THE BURGESS HILL ACADEMY WORKING GROUP

The Town Mayor introduced the item and referred to the notes from the group, which explained that the group felt a change of name better reflected their purpose and the concern felt that the school would be used in part for the first intake of the Bedelands Academy before they could transfer to their new buildings.

Resolved that

1. The Burgess Hill Academy Working Group be renamed The Burgess Hill Academy Support Group,
2. Council note the Group's displeasure at the plan to requisition part of the Burgess Hill Academy building to house the first Bedelands Academy students.

Council noted the remainder of the notes of the meeting held on 20 August 2024

186. TRANSFER OF PARK CENTRE TO THE PARK CENTRE BURGESS HILL CIO

Cllr Peter Williams introduced this item stating that the reference to the Asset of Community *Interest* was slightly incorrect as the term was an Asset of Community *Value*.

The Park Centre CIO had requested the Town Council contact MSDC to withdraw the Town Council's request/support for the building to be an Asset of Community Value.

As Council originally proposed the Park Centre as an Asset of Community Interest to add a level of protection for the building should WSCC decide to sell it. This was no longer necessary and the registration was believed by the CIO to potentially cause problems for the transfer of the property to the CIO.

It was commented that we should approach MSDC, but the reversal of any registration might be problematic. Assets of Community Value registration is complex and governed by Localism act 2011.

Cllr Williams said it is cannot be rescinded, the worst case the charity will be paying £350 pus VAT for a solicitor to sort out the necessary registrations of interest.

Resolved

The Town Council to contact Mid Sussex District Council to withdraw its support for the Park Centre building to be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

187. DIARY DATES

Council received a schedule of forthcoming events as set out in Agenda Item 15 dated 23 September 2024.

The contents of the report were noted.

Meeting terminated at hours. 19:53

Chairmans signature

.....