



BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of a Meeting of BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 6th February 2023 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: N. Taylor - Chair (Deputy Town Mayor)
S. Cloughton
G. Corry
A. Foster
J. Jones
G. Stevens
P. Fisher

ALSO PRESENT Sue Severn, Town Clerk.

Members of Public No member of the public was present.

FC 14/23 **Apologies for Absence**

The following apologies for absence were received:
from Councillors W Conian who was unwell, P. White who is away on business, M-J Hardinge
detained on business and A Peeler on holiday.
Apologies were accepted unanimously.

Opening remarks

FC 15/23 **Declarations of Interest**
None.

FC 16/23 The **Minutes of the Previous** Berkhamsted Town Council **Meeting** held 14th November 2022
(previously circulated) were received and approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

FC 17/23 **Open Forum**
No members of the public were present
Updates from Dacorum Borough and Hertfordshire County Councils:
Cllr Taylor reported that no change to the 20 mph speed limit project. He said that it wasn't the
policy of police to enforce, but it would be legally binding if enforced. Cllr Jones was concerned that
it was hard to enforce. Cllr Taylor confirmed that having the policy and tone was important. Cllr
Corrie stated that the lower speed limit could help to give people a false sense of security.

Cllr Stevens said he would report on Air Quality at the appropriate time on the agenda.

Cllr Foster asked whether the excess street furniture could be removed/tidied up. Is it possible to investigate whether the posts can be removed from the pavement. Cllr Corrie said they were there for a purpose to prevent pavement parking and to stop people from using disabled bays. Cllr Taylor suggested it could be considered later in the year by the council.

Cllr Stevens advised that enforcement has agreed a new workstream is to review A-board enforcement in the High Street.

FC 18/23 Police & Neighbourhood Planning

The clerk reported that a new acting Sgt Julian Divney has replaced Sgt Sarah Bunyan has been promoted to Inspector and is working elsewhere. Councillors congratulated Sgt Divney on his appointment and wished Inspector Bunyan the best for her new role and thanked her for her excellent service to Berkhamsted. She has spoken to Sgt Divney and our PCSO to request either a short report, or presence, at council meetings to report on neighbourhood policing and they will try their best to do this.

FC 19/23 Planning and Neighbourhood Planning

No urgent planning applications were received for consideration.

The clerk reported that the funding offer should be with the council this week. This will allow BTC to appoint Mrs Sally Chapman, Town Planner, as consultant to complete first stage work towards a neighbourhood plan before 31st March. After this the council will need to apply for further grants for next-stage work including technical assistance. The government funding scheme is expected to be extended into next financial year for neighbourhood plans.

FC 20/23 Finance and Council Administration

The following matters were considered:

Finance

The monthly financial reports, as circulated, were received:
Accounts to 31st January 2023.

Grants Policies revisions to the Grants policies were considered as follows:

Revised documents included Grant Policies for Community Service (large) Grants and Small Grants up to £1,000 together with associated monitoring forms.

It was suggested that the wording in paragraph 3 be for 'registered' charities. Agreed.

It was agreed smaller unincorporated groups can approach the council for funding, via their ward councillor or to the office. This funding would be for specified items for which the invoices will be paid direct by BTC.

It was further agreed that grant applications will be considered by either full council or the finance & policy committee, whichever is earlier, in order to expedite the grant process for small grants.

Administration

A revised **meetings timetable** was circulated to councillors for consideration.

Cllr Taylor advised that he is happy with it until the elections, but the new council should have the option to review and re-consider the timetable. T & E committee needs to decide how it will work with the new council.

Cllr Stevens likes the layout of the timetable and suggested we introduce a new meeting on 2nd October to work as a pre-budget preparation workshop. He agreed the timetable should be reviewed later in the year, and Cllr Taylor thought the review should address the number of committees and meetings held. Cllr Corrie thought the new council would include review of the need for committees.

It was pointed out that the council agrees the membership of committees at the Annual Town Meeting.

Cllr Stevens re-capped that Transport and Environment had had sub-groups created to deal with specific workstreams. It might be more practical to have one level of committee without sub-committees. Structure changes can be considered by the new council in due course.

Terms of Reference

Updated terms of reference for Planning, Finance & Policy and Transport & Environment committee and Allotment Working Group were considered.

It was agreed that changes should take place with immediate effect.

Suggested that the words 'at its annual meeting' be deleted from the revised Allotment Working Group terms of reference.

Cllr Taylor commented that the remit should be reviewed in September once the council has had an opportunity to decide its policies.

Air Quality Monitoring

Cllr Stevens had previously circulated an update on his findings to date. There are very variable levels of particulate matter in any area, very dependent upon number of vehicles. People will be affected by particulates when they breathe them in, but if they are exposed for a length of time it could affect them badly.

The hand-held device has shown that readings vary enormously and the only way to have an indicative condition state is to have a permanent real-time recording device. The borough's scrutiny committee received a report last week that due to increased national awareness of damage to public health, particulates are important and county will be having more devices installed.

Cllr Stevens recommended, and it was agreed that Berkhamsted should request monitors in suggested locations such as St John Well Lane, Lower Kings Road close to new mini-roundabout. Cllr Cloughton thought Lower Kings Road a good location.

It was **resolved** that CC & DBC be requested to instal suitable measuring equipment in Berkhamsted. Proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Taylor. Agreed unanimously. ACTION Office would request this.

In the meantime, it was further suggested that schools be offered the use of the monitoring equipment to monitor air in their playgrounds and outdoor space.

FC 21/23 Community and Events

Coronation

Cllr Foster reported

Going ahead. First working group meeting tomorrow, initial proposal is that tables and chairs for 1000+ people can be made available. Plans will be reported and advertised as they go forward.

Dementia Friendly Town The clerk reported that an initial meeting had been held with Age UK and further meetings with other organisations/experts were being arranged after which a working group could be set up to work together.

Summer Front Garden Competition (Gardens for nature) The advertising was ready to publish for this and the competition will run this summer.

Free summer activities for children A meeting had been held with Diane Southam, Dacorum's Assistant Director Place, Communities and Enterprise, together with her colleague Fraser Willcox. Cllr Conian and the clerk advised that the council would like to be able to use public amenity land either under a 'mowing licence' arrangement or as owned or leased land to enable it to arrange activities for the benefit of Berkhamsted residents with permanent permission. Mrs Southam has indicated that she will look into the matter and will revert as soon as possible.

Marketing Consultant for recreation questionnaire (brought forward from January agenda). Cllr Foster suggested that this is put in abeyance until the neighbourhood plan questionnaire is prepared to include recreation and leisure spaces. Cllr Foster will advise the schools that having listened to their students' views the council has decided to get further feedback.

- FC 23/23 Communication**
Flyer with coronation event and 'save the dates' for summer events would be published as soon as final details confirmed. The next Berkhamsted News would be issued after the election including the council's annual report and biography with small photograph of all newly-elected councillors.
- FC 24/23 Meetings and matters of report**
None.
- FC 25/23 Date of next meetings**
Monday 6th March 2023

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.22 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____