

**BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of

**BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL**

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

**Monday 14 December 2015 at 7.30 pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors	T Ritchie	Town Mayor
	E Collins	Deputy Mayor
	A Armytage	
	J Ashbourn	
	S A Bateman	
	S Beardshaw	
	D Collins	
	G Corry	
	F Earl	
	Mrs C Green	
	J Higgins	
	B Newton	
	Dr I M Reay	
	G Stevens	

**OFFICER:** Mrs Susan Johnson, Acting Town Clerk

11 members of the public

**OPENING MATTERS**

**FC 95/15** No apologies for absence were necessary.

**FC 96/15** Councillor Higgins declared a personal interest in item FC 110/15 as he had been contacted by Ms Jones (Ref: FC 110/15)

Councillor Stevens declared a personal interest in item FC 104/15 (Ref: FP 67/15 Medals for Fun Run) as he was a member of the Rotary Club of Berkhamsted Bulbourne.

**FC 97/15** The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 October 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a true record of the meeting.

**FC 98/15** **Town Mayor's Communications**

No communications had been received.

## **FC 99/15 Public Participation**

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders so that members of the public might speak regarding items on the agenda.

Norman Cutting of Chestnut Drive commented that communications between the Council and the public were poor; and that he supported the sentiments expressed in Councillor Higgins' motions (ii) and (iv) concerning open debate and review of current Council structures respectively.

Ted Dyer of Woodlands Avenue reminded councillors that they should strive to act primarily in the best interests of the public.

Jane Collis of Graemesdyke Road, and representing B-Hive, said that B-Hive was looking for a more pro-active approach from the Town Council to protecting the town's assets. It was keen to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting was reconvened.

## **FC 100/15 Local Council Award Scheme**

Papers had been circulated relating to the publication of documents on line and in hard copy in order to maintain unbroken accreditation to the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS).

Councillor Higgins mentioned that he could not find the Action Plan for 2015/16 on line; and that minutes/notes of various working groups were not being posted promptly. The Clerk agreed to look into it.

In accordance with Minute FC 86/15 regarding publication of documents required to maintain an unbroken accreditation to the LCAS

It was **RESOLVED**

That the Council publishes on line the following:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct
- Register of Interests
- Publication Scheme
- Annual Return
- Council payments
- Calendar of Meetings
- Council minutes
- Current agendas
- Budget
- Complaints procedure
- Council contacts details
- Action Plan for current year
- Evidence of consulting with the community
- Publicity advertising Council's activities

- Evidence of participating in Town & Country planning

That the Council has the following:

- Risk Register
- Asset Register
- Contracts for all members of staff
- Disciplinary and Grievance procedures
- Policy for training new staff and councillors
- Record of all training for staff and councillors in the current Council year
- Clerk with 12 CPD points in the current Council year

#### **FC 101/15 Representatives to Outside Bodies**

It was **RESOLVED** to nominate Councillor Barbara Newton as a Trustee on the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust for a 3-year term, in succession to Councillor Elaine Collins

#### **FC 102/15 MOTIONS**

Four Motions standing in the name of Councillor John Higgins were to be considered. Councillor Higgins complained that not all the accompanying papers had been provided to councillors and the public. The Clerk explained that there had been difficulties with photocopying for a week previously; but that some correspondence Councillor Higgins had provided was not considered suitable for public exposure due to it being personal correspondence. Two reports he had provided had been circulated immediately prior to this meeting, and put up on line.

- (i) **MOTION** standing in the name of Councillor John Higgins 'That there is a lack of confidence in the current Council leadership'.

Councillor Higgins spoke to his Motion. The Motion was **SECONDED** by Councillor Earl. There was debate. Councillor Higgins responded.

On a recorded vote, the Motion was lost, 4 votes to 10.

For the Motion: Councillors Corry, Earl, Higgins, Stevens  
Against the Motion: Councillors Armytage, Ashbourn, Bateman, Beardshaw, D. Collins, E. Collins, Mrs Green, Matthews, Newton, Reay.

- (ii) **MOTION** standing in the name of Councillor John Higgins 'That the Town Council should cease acting politically and carry out all debates in open Council meetings'.

Councillor Higgins spoke to his Motion. The Motion was **SECONDED** by Councillor Stevens. There was debate. Councillor Higgins responded.

On a recorded vote, the Motion was lost, 4 votes to 10.

For the Motion: Councillors Corry, Earl, Higgins, Stevens  
Against the Motion: Councillors Armytage, Ashbourn, Bateman, Beardshaw, D. Collins, E. Collins, Mrs Green, Matthews, Newton, Reay.

- (iii) **MOTION** standing in the name of Councillor John Higgins 'That Council and all committees should be chaired by Town only Councillors or qualified non-voting co-opted members'.

Councillor Higgins spoke to his Motion. The Motion was **SECONDED** by Councillor Stevens.

An amended Motion was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Stevens and **SECONDED** by Councillor Earl 'That Council and all committees should be chaired by Town only Councillors, where feasible'. There was debate. Councillor Higgins responded to the amended Motion.

On a recorded vote, the amended Motion was carried 8 votes to 7.

For the amended Motion: Councillors Beardshaw, Corry, Earl, Mrs Green, Higgins, Matthews, Reay, Stevens  
Against the amended Motion: Councillors Armytage, Ashbourn, Bateman, D. Collins, E. Collins, Newton, Ritchie

- (iv) **MOTION** standing in the name of Councillor John Higgins 'That a new working group should review the current organisation structure, committee terms of reference, update standing orders and make recommendations to and emergency Full Council meeting before the end of February.'

Councillor Higgins spoke to his Motion.

An amended Motion was **PROPOSED** by Councillor D. Collins and **SECONDED** by Councillor Reay 'That a new working group should review the current organisation structure, committee terms of reference, update standing orders and make recommendations to the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2016.'

The amended Motion was carried unanimously.

The new Working Group would be set up by Finance & Policy Committee at its forthcoming meeting on 18 January 2016.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **FC 103/15 Town Planning Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Town Planning Committee meetings held on 19 October 2015, 9 November 2015, and 30 November 2015 be received and adopted.

**FC 104/15 Finance and Policy Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 23 November 2015 be received and adopted.

Arising from Minute FP 80/15, subsequent to the meeting Councillor Higgins had declined membership of the Communications Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Beardshaw be appointed to the Communications Group in place of Councillor Higgins.

**FC 105/15 Transport and Environment Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Transport and Environment Committee held on 2 November 2015 be received and adopted (noting the correct spelling of Gossoms Ryde in minute TE 65/15).

Arising from Minute TE 68/15, councillor Reay, speaking as the County Councillor for Berkhamsted, indicated that the positions of the proposed cycle racks in the High might be reviewed.

The T&E Committee Chairman, Councillor Matthews, highlighted several commissions of the Events Working Group, including its signing off of the now annual theatrical event in the Castle.

**WORKING GROUPS**

**FC 106/15 Canal & Riverside Partnership**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Canal and Riverside Partnership meeting held on 1 December 2015 be received and adopted.

The Council endorsed CARP's reluctance to allow 14-day moorings on the Canal in the centre of town.

**FC 107/15 Allotment Management Team**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Allotment Management Team meeting held on 15 October 2015 be received and adopted.

Arising from minute AMT 44/15 it was agreed that the next meeting of the Allotment Management Team be changed from Thursday 11 February 2016 to **Monday 8 February 2016**.

**COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**FC 108/15 PCSO Report**

The Council noted that the PCSO report for September to December 2015 had not been submitted by the Police Community Support Officer due to a misunderstanding over financial support from the Town Council for the Officer

concerned. The acting Town Clerk would clarify the situation with Sgt. Adele Hopkin. **Action: Acting Town Clerk**

**FC 109/15 Exclusion of press and public**

**RESOLVED:**

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the items in Part II of the agenda for this meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

**FC 110/15 Staffing matters**

The Mayor and the Acting Clerk made statements concerning what had led to the departure of the previous Clerk of the Council. There was debate.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor D Collins, **SECONDED** by Councillor Ashbourn and, on a recorded vote, **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Support Services Group had implied Terms of Reference to deal with appointments and dismissals
- (ii) That the Council notes the actions of the Support Services group and endorses its recommendations and outcomes
- (iii) That the Support Services Group be empowered to negotiate a mutually agreed full and final settlement with the outgoing Clerk
- (iv) That the Support Services Group nominate one of its members to negotiate that settlement, with the participation of the Acting Clerk
- (v) That the Support Services Group be authorised to begin, when appropriate, the procedures leading to the recruitment of a new Town Clerk
- (vi) That Mrs Susan Johnson be appointed Acting Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer from 3 December 2015 on the terms agreed

For the Motions: Councillors Armitage, Ashbourn, Bateman, D. Collins, E.Collins, Mrs Green, Newton, Reay, Ritchie  
Abstentions: Beardshaw, Corry, Earl, Higgins, Matthews, Stevens

It was further decided to appoint Councillor Stevens to the Support Services Group.

**FC 110/16** The meeting closed at 10.04 pm.