

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on

Monday 17 December 2018 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors S Beardshaw (Town Mayor)
D Collins
E Collins
G Corry
Mrs C Green
J Jones
P B Matthews
B Newton (Deputy Mayor)
Dr I M Reay
T Ritchie
G Stevens
G Yearwood

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sergeant R Hemmings, Berkhamsted and Tring Safer Neighbourhood Team

Mrs J Mason, Town Clerk

FC 122/18 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Armytage, Cllr S Bateman and Cllr F Earl.

FC 123/18 Declarations of Interest

Cllr G Corry declared a personal interest in item FC 137/18.

FC 124/18 Minutes of Last Meeting

The **minutes of the last Full Council Meeting** held on 22 October 2018 were received and approved as a correct record. The minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

FC 125/18 Town Mayor's Communications

- (i) Hertfordshire County Council Annual Budget Survey
- (ii) HAPTC November Bulletin

- (iii) Hertfordshire Business Services Future Plans. Information received from Catherine Tallis, Music Transformation Lead, about exploring the possibility that HMS acquires charitable status and operates independently. A full public consultation is planned in early 2019.
- (iv) Green Spaces for Good: Fields in Trust email update December 2018
- (v) NALC Chief Executives Bulletin 7 December 2018.

FC 126/18 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

FC 127/18 Berkhamsted and Tring Safer Neighbourhood Team

Sergeant R Hemmings presented an update report on policing issues. His team is made up of five PCs and six PCSOs, covering Berkhamsted and Tring. He had started working in Berkhamsted in September 2017 and during that period there had been an increase in knife crime both nationally and locally. There had sadly been a fatality as a result in Berkhamsted. The crime “hot spot” in the town was the skate park where mostly local youths drank and took drugs leading to anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The police had been able to identify the individuals involved and had worked hard with Dacorum Borough Council to implement acceptable behaviour contracts. Community Protection Notices had also been issued at three addresses in Berkhamsted, two leading to evictions and serious disruption to the perpetrators’ behaviour to the benefit of law-abiding residents.

There had also been an increase in rural crime and a meeting had been held in the summer with a number of farmers. A WhatsApp group had been established and a Hertfordshire wide initiative called Operation Galileo had introduced more rural patrols.

Turning to events in the town, Halloween had been a good-natured event this year compared to the running battles in the High Street the previous year. This year a Dispersal Notice had been enforced which had helped to prevent disorder. The Festival of Light on 25 November had gone smoothly with a strong police presence.

Since September there had been some improvement to the situation at the skate park although there have been occasional skirmishes. His team had managed to isolate and splinter the groups responsible for the crime and disorder as mentioned above. Unfortunately, that void was being filled by youths from Hemel Hempstead and Watford travelling to Berkhamsted to cause trouble. In late October a group of 8 – 10 people had run riot in the High Street resulting in four arrests. The Berkhamsted police had liaised with the transport police who closed the station barriers at Watford and Hemel Hempstead stations for 24 hours to calm the situation.

During a discussion, it was established that drugs were being supplied by people who lived in Berkhamsted and from elsewhere. Alcohol was supplied to under 18s by older people or obtained through theft. The anomalous situation at M & S Simply Food on the High Street was also raised. Although M & S has a policy of not having alcohol next to the front door, in Berkhamsted the High Street entrance, where the alcohol is located, is technically the stores back door. Councillors and the police have witnessed individuals taking alcohol from the store because it is so easy to grab it and run away down the High Street. Councillor D Collins undertook to discuss this issue with colleagues in Development Management at DBC. **Action Cllr D Collins.**

The typical profile of the young people causing problems was discussed together with plans to install an additional CCTV camera on top of the floodlight at the skate park. It was also confirmed that at any one time there would generally be one PCSO on duty in Tring and in Berkhamsted one PC and two PCSOs. Sergeant Hemmings was pleased to report that a recent recruitment drive had seen an increase in police numbers in the County. In conclusion, tributes were paid to recently retired PC Mark Procter whose contribution to the work of the team will be greatly missed.

The Town Mayor thanked Sergeant Hemmings for his presentation and for the excellent work carried out by the Tring and Berkhamsted Safer Neighbourhood Team. The Town Council look forward to receiving a further update at the Town Meeting on 14 March 2019.

STANDING COMMITTEES

To **receive and adopt** the minutes of the:

FC 128/18 Finance and Policy Committee

(F & P meeting scheduled for 15 October was cancelled and relevant items were included on the Full Council agenda for the 22 October meeting.)

- (i) Cllr B Newton, Chair, Finance and Policy Committee, reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018. The minutes were **received and adopted**.
- (ii) The **Internal Audit** report following the auditor's visit on 16 November 2018 was **adopted** (FP 70/18 (ii) of the above minutes refers).

FC 129/18 Town Planning Committee

Cllr A Armytage, Chair, Town Planning Committee, reviewed the minutes of the meetings held on 29 October, 19 November and 3 December 2018. The minutes were **received and adopted**.

FC 130/18 Transport & Environment Committee

Cllr T Ritchie reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2018. He also advised that a meeting of the Parking Forum would be held early in the New Year. The minutes were **received and adopted**.

Action: Cllr T Ritchie

SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

FC 131/18 Allotment Management Team

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 were **received and adopted**.

FC 132/18 Youth Town Council

The Youth Town Council met on 24 October. A meeting is scheduled for 19 December 2018. It was noted that the Town Mayor had arranged for representatives of the Youth Town Council to visit the Houses of Parliament in June 2019.

OTHER MATTERS

FC 133/18 Revised schedule of meetings

The revised schedule of meetings discussions at F & P on 10 December 2018 and attached to the agenda were approved. It was noted that the Annual Town Meeting will be on 14 March 2019 and the post-election Annual Meeting of the Full Council is on 13 May 2019.

FC 134/18 To **receive** feedback from attendees at the **Dacorum Town & Parish Council Conference** held on Friday 30 November at the Forum, Hemel Hempstead.

Cllr Newton reported that the event had been very well organised and informative. At Cllr Beardshaw's suggestion it was **agreed** that the Town Clerk should approach the Hastoe organisation to give a presentation on affordable housing provision. Copies of the presentation notes would be circulated and the draft Code of conduct for members of Town and Parish Planning Committee would be discussed at the Town Planning Committee meeting on 7 January 2019.

Action: Town Clerk

FC 135/18 Victoria School flooding

- (i) The Council **received and considered** a letter dated 7 December 2018 from Mr R Halls, Executive Head Teacher, Caste Federation, regarding surface water flooding at Victoria School which occurred during heavy rainfall. He was of the view that the flood water was coming from the Butts Meadow allotment site. Mr R Backhouse, Principal, Berkhamsted School, had also written in support and asked that the Town Council assess the footpath adjacent to Victoria School.
- (ii) Although councillors were of the view that other factors were causing the flooding it was agreed that Cllr G Yearwood would accompany the Town Clerk to visit the school to discuss the situation and possible solutions. It

was also suggested that depending on the outcome, Parish Paths Partnership funding might be applied for.

FC 136/18 Egerton Rothesay School Possible Relocation

- (i) To **receive** an update

Cllr Reay reported that following the October press release from Herts County Council announcing that they were working with Egerton Rothesay School to examine the feasibility of relocating the school to a site adjacent to Bridleway, there had been a great deal of objection to and protest against such proposals from members of the public throughout the town.

HCC's Resources and Performance panel had met on Friday and a paper on the proposed move was presented and discussed. At that meeting, officers confirmed that the proposed site had been assigned in 1972 as reserved for educational purposes, that is, for educational use for the County Council's purposes. On this basis the panel turned down the proposal for the time being. It was agreed that it would reconsult in 2019 once the outcome of DBC's review of the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation was known. The latter was anticipated for late 2019.

- (ii) To **consider** and as appropriate **agree** any action that the Town Council should take.

In view of the above no further action would be taken for the time being.

FC 137/18 Merger of GP Surgeries

To **receive** an update following the actions agreed at the last meeting held on 22 October 2018 (FC 117/18 refers).

Cllr Ritchie reported that he had attended a meeting of the Care Commissioning Group the previous week. The current impasse was detrimental to patients and surgery staff alike. Patients were leaving the surgery because of the uncertainty. DBC's Heath in Dacorum committee had been looking at the issue which needed much more focus. Furthermore, Cllr G Yearwood had received a report back from a meeting with the surgery from which it had become apparent that the £400,000 required to move the two surgeries to Gossoms End would become available. The Town Council would be asked to make some of Youth Centre parking available for rental. (This would be considered at a future stage.) The Town Council was encouraged by the above and it did seem hopeful that a resolution would soon be achieved.

FC 138/18 Speed Activated Device Gossoms End

- (i) It was **noted** that the Town Council had now been advised by HCC that the device will not be available until 2019. In addition, the initial speed and volume survey has not taken place despite previous assurances;

- (ii) The Town Council was disappointed with this lack of progress. It was **agreed** that the Town Clerk should order the device even though the speed and volume survey had not been undertaken. If ordered by the end of December it should be installed in March/April.

FC 139/18 It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the 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 140/18 Sunnyside Rural Trust Lease Renewal Discussions

- (i) The Council **received** an update following the meeting with SRT representatives held on 2 November 2018. Cllrs B Newton, I Reay and G Stevens attended, with the Town Clerk;
- (ii) The outline proposals were supported;
- (iii) The group was **authorised** to continue discussions and to report back on progress.

Action: Cllrs G Stevens, I Reay, B Newton and Town Clerk

FC 141/18 Meeting with representatives from St Peter's Church 20 November 2018.

The Rector and Church Warden had attended this meeting with Cllrs S Beardshaw, P Matthews and the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk would progress appropriate actions in liaison with the Church Warden.

Action: Town Clerk

Signed.....

Date.....