



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 March 2023 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors:

W. Conian – Chair (Town Mayor)
N. Taylor - Deputy Town Mayo
S. Cloughton
A. Foster
G. Stevens
P. Fisher

ALSO PRESENT

Sue Severn, Town Clerk.

Members of Public

No member of the public was present.

FC 26/23

Apologies for Absence

The following apologies for absence were received:
from Councillors P. White who is away on business, A Peeler away on business, G Corry unwell, J Jones on holiday.
Apologies were accepted unanimously.

Opening remarks

FC 27/23

Declarations of Interest

None.

FC 28/23

The **Minutes of the Previous** Berkhamsted Town Council **Meeting** held 6th February 2023 (previously circulated) were received and approved and signed by the Vice Chairman as a true record.

FC 29/23

Open Forum

No members of the public were present

Updates from Dacorum Borough and Hertfordshire County Councils:

Cllr Taylor reported that there was no update since last meeting. He advised that he had updated with a broad report on traffic and speed control to the ATM and it was well received. Other casework he has in hand includes yellow lines in some places and he is pursuing them. He wanted to stress that if people want to have yellow lines other than a controlled parking zone they could speak to Cllr Taylor and he would put all appropriate requests together annually.

Updates from Dacorum Borough Council

Green bins are now being charged for. Cllr Foster said only about 50% of people have signed up, and a large number are putting them out anyway stating they didn't know about it. There has been an issue with receiving stickers and putting on bins.

Cllr Stevens advised that £3 million of CIL money has been released for projects (none in Berkhamsted).

Cllr de Hoest stated it was good that DBC was doing something about e-charging points and he asked if there was a plan – they would be in council owned car parks only but Cllr Freedman couldn't say, at present, where they would be. Cllr Stevens believed a report would be on the next SPAY agenda at DBC.

Cllr Conian suggested BTC could approach Borough to ask that Berkhamsted be included since we are under pressure to put good provision in Berkhamsted. Cllr Taylor asked if a view of BTC could be established on where they should be installed, particularly in areas with on-street parking. Suitable locations to be found – combination of on-street and car park would be perfect. (It was believed that only car parks are being considered). Sports Centre not being considered as it's a free car park and may be re-developed in the future.

BTC statement should be provided of where they should be – and council should actively lobby for these locations.

Action Clerk to produce a letter and circulate for comment.

FC 30/23 Police & Neighbourhood Planning

The clerk reported that no report had been received from the local policing team. They had provided the local crime figures to the end of January 2023, presented to the Annual Town Meeting. These were as follows: Overall, Berkhamsted remains a safe place.

Theft from motor vehicle – 3

Burglary – 2

Theft from shops & stalls – 7

Dangerous dog – 1

Criminal damage to building – 1

Criminal damage under £5,000 – 1

Criminal damage under £5,000 to a vehicle – 5

Action Fraud – 2

Theft of motor vehicle – 4

Making off without payment – 1

Possession of an offensive weapon – 1

Cllr Cloughton reported that a constituent had reported incidents of anti-social behaviour in their area. Police are aware.

FC 31/23 Planning and Neighbourhood Planning

No urgent planning applications were received for consideration. It is hoped that less applications will be forthcoming at present due to housing market.

Neighbourhood Planning

Councillor Stevens advised that funds have now been received to start the Neighbourhood Plan, an initial meeting held with Sally Chapman, neighbourhood planning consultant. It has been decided to proceed to the next stage which is to convene a group to become a steering group. Draft terms of reference have been circulated. Most work after next elections. Volunteers include: Cllr Wendy Conian. Meeting of interested parties in early April to pin down membership. Invitations to be sent to representatives of Citizens, BRAG, Adrian Barham from Castle Trust, Canal & River Trust. Cllr Stevens suggested councillors nominate members and discussion with Sally Chapman after election.

Action: Joanna Harley will circulate councillors for nominations for steering committee members

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Terms of reference were agreed and accepted as circulated

FC 20/23

Finance and Council Administration

The following matters were considered:

Finance

The monthly financial reports

Accounts to 31st January 2023 **were received and agreed as circulated.** (February account had also been circulated on day of meeting).

Cllr Freedman happy with the accounts, he requested a change of cost code, previously agreed, and these would be completed.

He further mentioned the town clock which is not owned by the TC and the office team are actively looking for the owners. The clerk was asked to seek the owners to pass on responsibility to them. If the landlord cannot be found the clock will continue to be maintained.

Action Clerk to contact owners if found.

Cllr Foster asked whether a cost should be included in the accounts for cyber security under IT: IT Security Contracts. This was agreed.

It was **resolved** to join Gallagher's Cyber Secure Centre. It was understood that if the service proved not to be what was needed it could be cancelled at any point and a refund would be given for the remainder of the year.

Banking arrangements It was recommended by the finance officer that funds be placed with NatWest (or another main clearing bank).

It was resolved to move all funds in investment accounts be moved to NatWest initially and then dispersed into additional clearing banks to spread risk. It was suggested that we open a donation account for funds raised by events and received from other sources.

Proposed by: Cllr Paul de Hoest, seconded by Cllr Stevens, agreed unanimously.

Staff salary progression

It was resolved that the Project Officer's salary should increase by one salary point from scale point 25 to 26 with effect from 1st April 2023.

Administration

Berkhamsted Town Council Risk Register The Risk Register was reviewed (previously circulated): Councillors made the following points. Cllr de Hoest stated that the deposit guarantee scheme should be removed given that the council's income is in excess of the maximum to qualify for the scheme. Cllr Stevens said that the wording around volunteers for the council should confirm that they were covered by the council's insurance when engaged on council business. Cllr de Hoest requested that the risk loss of town clerk should state mitigation currently in place. Cllr Freedman reminded that this is a live document and items can be added or removed as required.

Annual Town Meeting The chair reported that the ATM was a successful event with a good turnout. Guest speakers from Berkhamsted Citizens Association, Open Door/Way Inn and Swan Youth gave presentations about their work. Berkhamsted Rotary's President presented the Citizens' Awards. The chair wished to thank everyone for their participation, particularly the Scouts who served refreshments.

FC 33/23 Community and Events

Coronation

Cllr Foster reported the entertainment, infrastructure and other arrangements were all in place. Sponsorship of £8850 has been raised to date, with lottery funding decision awaited. There will be a range of food stalls providing an international food court and many great raffle prizes. There will be approximately 130+ tables with 6 chairs at each and spare chairs for picnickers. The stage will be outside the Civic Centre.

Dementia Friendly Town The clerk reported that further meetings were being held this week with Age UK and dementia specialists to move the project forward. A detailed report would be prepared on progress after these meetings.

Summer Front Garden Competition (Gardens for nature) The advertising was ready to publish for this and the competition will run this summer. Further posters would be produced to encourage more gardeners to take part.

Free summer activities for children

The clerk reported that no contact had been received from Diane Southam, Dacorum's Assistant Director Place, Communities and Enterprise, nor from her colleague Fraser Willcox. She will chase in order that bookings can be made for entertainers for the summer.

FC 34/23 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

Cllr Foster met the manager of Waitrose and parking officer together with electrical contractors from Dacorum. There is insufficient power for the renovated M & Co building. Waitrose paid for extra power capacity in the sub-station and they don't want this to be utilised to increase power to other buildings in the High Street. The parties will be working to find solutions to these difficulties.

FC 25/23 Date of next meetings

Monday 3rd April 2023

Town Mayor's Civic Reception

Friday 17th March 2023

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.12pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____