

# **BRIGHTLINGSEA TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at  
The Parish Hall, Victoria Place, Brightlingsea,  
on: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors

R Morgan (Mayor)

D Atkinson, M Barry, J Chapman,

M Court, J Howard, and G Steady

Also in attendance:

Tracey Pulford – Town Clerk

County Councillor Goggin (from 8.05pm onwards)

16 Members of the public

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Carr, Judson and Paveley.

153. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024  
AND TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were accepted as a true record.  
**Agreed.**

154. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A copy of the Mayor's Announcements are annexed to the Minutes.

The Mayor briefed on the following:-

- He really enjoyed attending the meeting with the U3A and thanked the Administrative Assistant for all her help at this meeting.
- He gave an opening address to the Literacy Festival, which was an excellent event at the British Legion.
- The Mayors Community Day was held at the Community Centre on Saturday. He gave particular thanks to the Councillors, staff and volunteers who helped, along with volunteers from Winterfest. He added that the volunteers who were invited to attend the lunch thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and we should be proud of this as an event. For information this event was put on at no cost to the Town Council, and thanks go to the Community Centre who were great hosts and did not charge us for the use of the halls. We have been able to raise £500.00 towards the Winterfest Event. A round of applause was given. The Mayor added that if any volunteers were not invited, he apologised.
- The Replacement Mineral Local Plan Review – we are holding a Public Meeting on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm at the Community Centre, and we will be discussing this later in the meeting.

155. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS:

The Mayor reminded Members to declare interests when necessary.

156. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THOSE MEMBERS EXAMINING THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE CURRENT PERIOD:

The Payments and Accounts for the period ending January 2024 (as shown on the attached appendix) were proposed by Councillor Barry as follows:-

General Account - 18 BACS Payments totalling £7198.01 be authorised for payment and statements balances on the following accounts be accepted:-

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Current Account (7055)             | £8,465.69   |
| Business Premium Account (8295)    | £105,864.55 |
| Business Premium Account (9433)    | £20,810.97  |
| Making a total of:                 | £135,141.21 |
| Less one unrepresented cheque of:  | £500.00     |
| Making a total on all accounts of: | £134,641.21 |

|                                                            |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Income for January totals:                                 | £23,883.57  |
| Expenditure for January totals:                            | £23,181.28  |
| Income to date, totals:                                    | £366,033.82 |
| Expenditure to date totals:                                | £311,573.15 |
| Employee payments made for the month of January 2024 were: | £17,025.47  |

The payments were then seconded by Councillor Chapman and **Agreed** by all present.

157. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AND TO CONFIRM THE RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:

Councillor Chapman proposed that the Minutes of the Finance and Property Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 are accepted as a true record, and the recommendations (as written below) be accepted:

**F.178 - (1) The beach hut owner would be invited to a meeting with the Mayor and Town Clerk to discuss the issue further; (2) The Colne Smack Preservation Society would be contacted stating that at the recent meeting held they advised that the outstanding payment would be paid, however this has not yet been received; (3) A meeting is arranged with the Bowls Club to discuss the outstanding payment; (4) The Playcentre are contacted stating that we look forward to receiving your Solicitors letter, within 10 working days. If we do not receive a letter within this time, we will instruct our Solicitors accordingly.**

**F.179 - (1) £12,000 is moved from the Client Account into the Reserve Account; (2) Town Clerk to ask Tendring District Council whether or not the LCTS Grant is to be paid again for 2024/2025.**

**F.180 - Fenn Wright are asked to attend a future Finance Committee meeting to discuss the collection of rents.**

**F.181 - The Scheme of Delegation for Expenditure, Authorisation of Payments and Bank Transfers was accepted.**

**F.182 - Standing Annual Grants would be looked at and discussed at a future meeting.**

**F.183 – Cricket Club - (1) Refurbishment and Demolition Survey - Due to budgetary constraints, the Town Council could not support this, at this time; (2) The Mayor and Councillor Carr would draft a response to the email.**

**F.184 - Future Council meetings would be recorded and shown on YouTube.**

Councillor Chapman added that there are still two months to run in this financial year and we are very close to balancing the budget, which is a credit to all who have been recently working on the budgets.

Councillor Court mentioned the following:-

- Recording of meetings – He has come up with a solution to use the lap-top and a couple of webcams to record meetings. He added that it would not be ‘live streamed’ but would be uploaded to YouTube the next day, and the cost would be around £20.00. If we want to move to ‘live streaming’ it would cost around £20-£40 per month, and we will be testing the equipment shortly.
- Alternative Management of Town Council owned Car Park’s – Has contact been made with other parking providers. The Town Clerk replied that four car parking providers were contacted and MiPermit have come back wanting to discuss further.  
(Post meeting note: The company who made contact was RingGo Ltd, not MiPermit).
- Is there any news on the emptying of rubbish bins and the possibility of Tendring District Council collecting all of the rubbish from one area? Councillor Barry replied that the answer is no. The contract is being looked at in terms of renewal, and any local variation is not that easy to implement.
- Grants – How do organisations apply for grants? The Mayor replied that a moratorium was put on grants, and this needs to be re-looked at. The Town Clerk replied that the grants were advertised in the Chronicle around June time.

Councillor Atkinson then seconded the minutes. **Agreed.**

158. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AND TO NOTE PLANNING DECISIONS OF TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL:

Councillor Howard proposed that the recommendations in the Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be agreed by Council, together with the planning decisions from Tendring District Council. Councillor Chapman then seconded the minutes. **Agreed.**

159. TEAMS REPORTS:

Reports from the Facilities, Community and Assets Team, and the Environmental and Transport Team had been circulated to all.

**Facilities and Community Assets Team** – Councillor Morgan briefed members that a meeting was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The Facilities and Community Assets Team report was then **accepted**, and the following recommendations were **agreed**:-

- **Batemans Tower Café - ask to see a copy of the survey and also the project outline and timescale for completion.**
- **Lido Seafront Shelter – A full report would be given at the next meeting.**
- **Streetlights u/s on Town Council Land - The Council would seek a price to fix the lights.**
- **The Town Clerk would obtain a list of who has paid for ‘rear access’ to their properties in Colne Road.**
- **Confirmation is required from the Colne Smack Dock that the whole committee agree to their proposed scheme.**
- **The outstanding invoice for the Colne Smack Preservation Society is to be paid.**
- **Councillors Paveley, Atkinson and Morgan would meet with the Cricket Club to discuss further.**

- **Funding needs to be secured for the Council storage facility.**
- **Forest School can hold another block of six sessions at the Lozenge, from Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April until 22<sup>nd</sup> May, with a trial block of six sessions being held on a Monday morning as well.**

**Environment and Transport Team** – Councillor Atkinson briefed members that a meeting was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. He added that the initial contact from Essex County Council on the Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review 2025-2040 was received on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup>, and a public meeting meeting has been arranged without delay.

Councillor Court asked about Tesco trolleys and that they are still parking outside. The Clerk replied that a letter has been sent to Head Office concerning this.

The Environment and Transport Team report was then **accepted**, and the following recommendations were **agreed**:-

- **B1029 Mud on the Road – (1) Essex County Council Planning Enforcement Officer undertakes a site visit. (2) To ask the Police for an update on any incidents that have been reported, and what action had been taken.**
- **Pop-Up Recycling Site/Waste Bins - A ‘day of action awareness campaign’ is arranged on either Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024, and to ask the litter pickers if they could change their monthly date to one of these dates. Also, leaflets would be produced giving details of recycling.**
- **Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review 2025-2040 – The Community Centre be contacted for availability on a Tuesday evening, at 7pm, with the PA system, for the Council to hold a public meeting on the Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review 2025-2040. County Councillor Goggin is asked to be in attendance, and possibly a representative of Essex County Council.**

**Welfare & Residents Services Team** – Councillor Chapman updated members on the meeting with Boots Chemist. She said that she and Councillor Howard met with the Area Manager and Shop Manager. The biggest thing we queried was the lack of items on the shelves. They are now having deliveries three times a week and will produce some leaflets advising customers to ask for items. One of the reasons the shelves are not stocked up is due to theft. They are looking at redesigning the shop, or possibly going into larger premises, if any are available. They are also taking part in the Government scheme “Pharmacy First”, which is to help reduce appointments at the Doctors Surgery. They can help with sore throat, ear infections and other ailments, can prescribe antibiotics, and have an extra 7 ½ hours to cover this. When there is no one on the other counter, there is a bell, which when pressed, a member of staff will come out to serve. It was a very productive meeting.

The Welfare and Residents Services Team report was then **accepted**.

**Communication & Tourism Team** – No report had been submitted, however Councillor Court informed members that the Town Guide is now published and has been distributed around the town; the advert in the Chronicle went out, and the recording of meetings will start shortly.

#### 160. UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:

Councillor Barry updated members on the following:-

- It is budget setting time for all Councils. He said that the District Council’s share of the council tax bill will rise by 2.99%, which is £5.62 a year for a Band D property. The total

council tax that you pay to Tendring is £193.73 for a Band D property, which equates to £3.72 a week. He briefed on the government levels of funding.

Councillor Steady updated members on the following:

- The Levelling Up Fund from Central Government, Clacton has been awarded £20m and Dovercourt £6m. He asked what about the rest of Tendring and was advised that there will be some Levelling Up money for the rest of Tendring, which hopefully will include Brightlingsea too. He added that the Council should decide on some ideas to put forward. Councillor Barry said that this fits in with a Town Vision Strategy and said that maybe each of the 'Teams' should set three priorities annually, ensuring that they are measurable, costed and potentially deliverable if funding comes along. However, a lot of the money is for Town Centre projects. The Mayor said that this would be added to the agenda for each 'Team' meeting to come forward with three schemes.

A discussion then took place on the following:-

- The exit and entrance car park signs.
- Gabions – which are to be replaced with removable posts.
- Anchored Raft – looking at the best position in the padding pool.
- Nappy changing facilities in the Gents Toilets.
- Land Registry Issues – the Mayor added that the lady from Tendring District Council who attended the 'walk round' was from the Property Department and will ask for confirmation from Tendring District Council that the Shelter is on Brightlingsea Town Council land, therefore Tendring District Council have no responsibility for it.
- Fly Tipping in Robinson Road – Do Tendring District Council have any camouflage cameras, to try and track down fly tipping offenders. Councillor Steady replied that many of these cameras need a power source, however our Grounds Team do have some wildlife cameras, and these have been used in the past on the allotments.

The report from the District Councillors was then **accepted**.

#### 161. REPLACEMENT MINERALS LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2025-2040:

The Mayor informed members that a Public meeting has been arranged for Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm at the Community Centre. County Councillor Goggin will be attending; however, an Officer of Essex County Council is unable to attend. Councillor Court said that it is very difficult to submit their comments online, and Councillor Chapman said that people can write in and we should have details of the postal and email address available.

Councillor Barry mentioned the mud on the road issue and that it still continues to be a problem. He said that you also have to avoid potholes as well as mud. These are both County Council issues and need sorting out, as it will have a massive impact on the road infrastructure around here.

#### 162. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Q1) From a public point of view, what a fantastic day the Volunteers Day was, in particular thanks to Jayne, Tracey and Julie, who all worked so hard. Thank you all very much for all you put into it.

I am very concerned about the deepening of the hole at Hurst Green. It is right on the kerb side and is now over 7ft deep. The Grounds Team are keeping an eye on it but it is getting worse and goes under the road.

A1) The Mayor replied that we will look into this first thing tomorrow morning.

Q2) In December you mentioned that Energy South were coming to Tendring and were going to have 10 ambassadors. When I looked on line it mentions climate literacy courses at £85 per person or £135 per person. Who is going to pay for this? When you talk to them can you ask about their ethical policy, as I could not find anything online.

A2) Councillor Atkinson replied that he has attended a few meetings with Community Energy South. There are two aspects of the project, project division which is wind, solar etc. The other is recruiting Champions – this is more for domestic properties, draft proofing insulation, solar panels etc. It is hoped that a meeting will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, location still to be agreed, to generate interest and to explain what it is all about.

Q3) My complaint has not been dealt with by Tendring District Council, it has been four weeks now. Can the Tendring District Councillors chase this please?

There seems to be a growing number of residents that are concerned about the running of the finances of the Council. Positively, I noted today that there are lists of expenditure over £500.00 listed on the website, however some councillors were not aware of this. My question is to do with the budgets for 2024/2025. I have requested a copy of these budgets but have been told that they have not been finalised. Last month you announced the increase in precept. I understood that the process was that you did your budgets, saw your shortfall, and this is how you got to the precept amount. I do not understand how the public cannot see a copy of the budget for next year so we can see what you are going to spend our money on. I can only assume that it is tweaks to the budget in which case we could have total income and total expenditure for next year, so we can see what the total underspend is as we need to put money into reserves.

A3) Councillor Atkinson replied that we have looked very carefully at this year's expenditure, and this formed the basis on next year's budget and is dominated by our experiences this year. We made a draft budget but we were waiting for some other fundamental issues, i.e. Harbour Commissioners, which will have an impact on this year and next year. This information is now known.

A follow up question was asked:- How did you come to decide how much the precept should be increased?

Cllr Atkinson replied that this was based on best evidence at the time due to deadlines and was made as accurate as possible.

Councillor Chapman answered the question about the complaint. She said that a Councillor in another area, the complaint started in October and nothing was done until the following March.

Councillor Atkinson also mentioned that the Independent Financial Review was carried out on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024, and the report will be ready in the next few days.

The Mayor mentioned that if people are concerned about the finances, please tell them to come to the office to voice their concerns.

#### 163. UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GOGGIN:

A copy of County Councillor Goggin's notes had been circulated to all members.

County Councillor Goggin sent greetings from St Osyth and Point Clear. He then briefed members on the following:-

- Full Budget Meeting held on 13.2.24 – The budget for Essex County Council is now £2.5Billion. Additional funding for next year - £12m for highways, this includes £8M on the Local Highways Panel. There is also £2M for larger funding schemes under the Local

Highways Panel. The rate payers increase is the full 4.99%, which includes 2.99% increase plus 2% for adult social care.

- Have requested a review on why the High Street outside Jacobs Hall/YMCA has not been repaired, when the rest of the High Street was resurfaced.

Councillor Morgan mentioned the Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review, and that it has been mentioned that it is very difficult to submit your comments online. Councillor Court added that it is very difficult to make your thoughts known on line, however we understand that you can write in also. County Councillor Goggin replied that you can write a letter, including your name, address and post code and this will be included in the comments received. It is also a Freepost address, so no stamp is needed. The Mayor said that as many individuals need to make their opinions/comments known. Councillor Chapman asked if she was correct that a petition is no good. County Councillor Goggin replied no, a petition counts as one. Councillor Barry asked for the timescales on this consultation. County Councillor Goggin replied that the deadline for comments is the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024. He added that the comments being analysed would take around 6 months to analyse. Then the sites need to be visited. He said that this is not a new project, it was talked about some 15 years ago.

Members of the public then asked County Councillor Goggin the following questions:-

Q1) I have been in contact with County Councillor Goggin over the Minerals issue. I am concerned how you are going to manage the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> as a lot of feedback on Facebook is absolute rubbish on what they think the issues are. We need someone to present the issues and raise awareness, including serious health issues and environmental issues.

My questions are:- How do we raise awareness? Is the traffic assessment going to be better than the one they did at Morses Lane, and how accurate will it be? What proposals are there for future use of the site? What will happen to the waste from the site, and the water when they wash everything away? Can all these questions be raised at the meeting?

County Councillor Goggin replied don't put it on Facebook, don't send me an email, fill out the consultation form. If you have a point to bring, or a question, list it in the consultation. During the last three weeks, the A74 document has been made available and is a blue print on how to object. It lists Landscape and Visual Sensitivity, Biodiversity, Historic Buildings, Archaeology, Flooding, Transport, Access, Public Rights of Way, Geo-Environmental, Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Drainage, Air Quality, Soil Quality, Services & Utilities, Health & Amenity. This document already highlights five areas which are Red/Amber. Much discussion took place.

Q2) I have googled the plan, looked on google maps, the Brightlingsea boarder – it does not stray anywhere into Brightlingsea.

County Councillor Goggin replied that this is a good point. When the first letters went out, if you were within 50 metres and 250 metres of the site you received an individual letter, and these were sent out before it went public.

#### 164. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT:

- **Agreed** 4<sup>th</sup> Brightlingsea Scout Group can hold its Annual Classic Car Show and Family Fun Day on Lower Park Playing Fields on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. Also **agreed** that the Clerk would contact Tendring District Council about free use of the grass Car Park on the Western Promenade, as in previous years.
- **Agreed** Bert Stocks Fun Fair can hold its annual visit to Brightlingsea – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2024 on the Western Promenade.

Councillor Chapman then moved, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in order to discuss items of a sensitive nature and items which are commercially confidential, the press and public be excluded. This was seconded by Councillor Howard. **Agreed.**

165. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 –To discuss the following:-

- Property Update

166. PROPERTY UPDATE:

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners – The Mayor briefed members that a draft lease has been received from the Solicitors, and he is meeting with Councillors Atkinson and Chapman to discuss. Following this they are meeting with Fisher Jones Greenwood Solicitors via Zoom.

Brightlingsea Leisure Village – Councillor Chapman briefed members that the Managers of the site have asked if Tendring District Council would consider opening for 11 ½ months. Tendring District Council have come back with a closure period of 6 weeks, maybe 4. The site could stay open until the 2<sup>nd</sup> January, then close until the middle of February. It is up to the Town Council to decide if that is what we want to do. This would mean no weekend access, and the Council should stress that all the maintenance works must be carried out during this closed period. It would be easier for Tendring District Council to monitor occupation within that closed period, and introduction of a further clause ensuring that the chalets are not used as a primary address might be another improvement to the planning restrictions and that Tendring District Council could consider ensuring they are properly used as a holiday accommodation and not housing. We would need to negotiate an approximate 6 week closed period; however, the Environment Agency would have the final decision on this. We are meeting the Manager of the site next week and will discuss this further. We would need evidence that the residents want this, and it would have to be unanimous.

167. CLOSE OF MEETING:

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.11 p.m.

Chair .....

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024