

BRIGHTLINGSEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at
The Parish Hall, Victoria Place, Brightlingsea,
on: Thursday 18th April 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors

R Morgan (Mayor)

J Carr (Deputy Mayor)

D Atkinson, M Barry, J Chapman, M Court, J Howard,
M Judson, K Mitchell, C Paveley and K Pentney

Also in attendance:

Tracey Pulford – Town Clerk

County Councillor Goggin (from 7.53pm onwards)

18 Members of the public

Before the meeting started, the Mayor informed members of the sad death of John Pitt who died on Tuesday. He said that he was a Harbour Commissioner, the Clerk to this Council for many years, and a very well-known personality. His wit, intellect and wisdom was much admired and he served the Brightlingsea Town Council for nearly 20 years. We will all remember John with his buggy riding around the town, with his little dog, every day going up to the fields in Folkards Lane. He was a great character.

He then asked everyone to stand for a minute's silence.

190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Steady.

191. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST MARCH 2024
AND TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st March 2024 were accepted as a true record.
Agreed.

192. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A copy of the Mayor's Announcements are attached to the Minutes (see appendix 1).

The Mayor briefed on the following:-

Last night attended Brightlingsea 4-Youth Jack Petchey Awards, with the Mayoress, which was a very enjoyable evening.

193. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS:

The Mayor reminded Members to declare interests when necessary.

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

The Payments and Accounts for the period ending March 2024 (as attached – see appendix 2) were proposed by Councillor Chapman as follows:-

General Account - 22 BACS Payments totalling £16,914.01 (14 payments totalling £7,079.96 relate to the 2023/2024 accounts, and 8 payments totalling £9,834.05 relate to the 2024/2025 accounts) be authorised for payment and statements balances on the following accounts be accepted:-

Current Account (7055)	2,823.91
Business Premium Account (8295)	72,147.92
Business Premium Account (9433)	8,781.95
Instant Access Account (0373)	206.09
Current T2 Account (0360)	2,998.61
Making a total on all accounts of:	86,958.48

Income for March totals:	£9,756.68
Expenditure for March totals:	£30,145.20
Income to date, totals:	£380,133.41
Expenditure to date totals:	£367,593.61

Employee payments paid for the month of February 2024 were:	£16,666.29
Employee payments paid for the month of March 2024 were:	£16,957.47

The payments were then seconded by Councillor Morgan and **agreed** by all present.

195. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 16TH APRIL 2024 AND TO CONFIRM THE RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:

Councillor Carr proposed that the Minutes of the Finance and Property Meeting held on the 16th April 2024 are accepted as a true record, and the recommendations (as written below) be accepted:

- **Budgets for 2023/2024 and procedures for 2024/2025 - (1) a small committee would be formed consisting of Councillors Atkinson, Court and Paveley to look at machine leases/maintenance contracts, utilities etc., to ensure that the Council is obtaining best value for money; (2) preferred suppliers, i.e. Electricians etc., would be looked into; (3) any non-essential maintenance items would be brought to the Finance Committee for agreement, before any commitment is made.**
- **Financial Summary - (1) The Town Clerk moves a substantial amount of money from the Barclays Account to the new Unity Trust Savings Account; (2) a savings account with Redwood Bank Limited, is opened, as they offer a better % rate than Barclays or Unity Trust.**
- **Debtors List as of 31.03.24 - A letter is written to the Bowls Club, Colne Smack Preservation Society and Carter Jonas stating that unless payment is made within the next 7 days, legal proceedings will take place.**
- **Authorisation of Payments - Recommendation: 22 payments totalling £16,914.01 are approved for payment, with Councillors Chapman and Morgan signing off the invoices.**

Seconded by Councillor Mitchell, **Agreed**.

196. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 2ND APRIL 2024 AND TO NOTE PLANNING DECISIONS OF TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL:

Councillor Paveley proposed that the recommendations in the Minutes of 2nd April 2024 be agreed by Council, together with the planning decisions from Tendring District Council. Seconded by Councillor Carr. **Agreed.**

197. 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 9th April 2024.

Updates were given as follows:-

Scouts and use of the Boating Lake – Contact had been made with the Scout Leader, and a meeting is due to be held shortly. He will let us know the outcome as soon as possible. If they cannot use the boats, we may offer to help store them/sell them off.

Councillor Judson declared an interest in this item as he is a member of the Model Boat Club.
CCTV upgrade for night vision – the Clerk replied that the Grounds Manager has been advised to look into obtaining quotations for the upgrading of this equipment.

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

- **Cricket Club** – (1) the original Planning Permission still stands; (2) a letter of support would be given to the Cricket Club; however, some resolution needs to be found regarding the storage solution.
- **Playcentre** – the Solicitors are contacted asking for a response within 7 days, or further action would be taken.
- **Brightlingsea Leisure Village** - the Town Council would return these leases to the BLV Association as they are a contract between the resident and BHL direct.
- **Use of Boating Lake** - Councillor Morgan would telephone the Scouts direct, to get an update on their use of the lake and hut.
- **The Teams' future aspirations** are:- (1) Boat Park and Hard strategy; (2) Lower Park Recreation Ground; (3) Western Promenade – Skatepark, Shelter / Keep fit improvements / Seafront.
- **Western Promenade** – Look into the possibility of upgrading the CCTV to allow for better night vision.
- **Ask Tendring District Council** about the possibility of using mobile cameras.
- **Bayard Recreation Ground** – **Agreed** that the Groundworks can be carried out.
- **Walking football** – any decision is down to the Grounds Manager.
- **Van Lease** – all quotations/proposals to go to the Finance Committee for ratification.
- **Parish Hall Fire Exit** – Agreed that Andy Nepean of Tendring District Council would be contacted to obtain approval for a new DDA ramp at the rear of the Parish Hall, which would exit into the car park. Also look at the Department of Work and Pensions for a possible grant.

Environment and Transport Team – Councillor Atkinson briefed members that a meeting was held on the 9th April 2024.

Updates were given as follows:-

Community Energy South – A zoom meeting has been arranged for Councillors on Tuesday 7th May at 12 noon, for Councillors to be briefed on the scheme. There is a public event being held at the Community Centre, in conjunction with Tendring District Council, on Saturday 11th May 2024 from 11am until 2pm.

Tesco and the delivery Trolleys – The situation is getting worse again. Town Clerk to chase.

High Tides – There is a lack of signage at the Hard. It was suggested that metal signs could be produced advising public to check out the tide tables etc.

Finger Signs on the post at the Community Centre – Can the Tourism Panel be consulted on this as they have ideas/suggestions?

Bin Sticker idea – Can the Communications Team be briefed on this suggestion, so they can come up with ideas?

The smell is still there, but people have lost faith in reporting it.

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

- **Obtain the cost of purchasing stickers saying ‘this bin belongs to Brightlingsea Town Council. If there are any issues with this bin, please contact Brightlingsea Town Council on Tel: 01206 303535 or email: admin@brightlingseatowncouncil.gov.uk’**
- **Brightlingsea Town Council supports kerbside collections for glass but do not want to lose the glass recycling points in the town. This comment to be fed into the consultation.**

Welfare & Residents Services Team – No report had been submitted. Councillor Chapman reported that the YMCA will be hosting the Covid and Flu Vaccinations, sometime in May.

Councillor Chapman mentioned the Leisure Village, and that she would now like to stand down from the sub-committee. She said that we have done everything we can do, we are constantly working with the residents but feel that the situation has come to a standstill and feels that she has done everything that she can. The Mayor replied that this would be reviewed at the next Facilities and Community Assets Team meeting.

Communication & Tourism Team – No report had been submitted. Councillor Carr informed members that the Tendring Hundred Show is being held on Saturday 13th July, and the Council will again be having a stand, with representatives from the Town Centre, Water Sports and Harbour and Museum. It is a wonderful day, which showcases our town for tourism, heritage etc. If any Councillor wishes to come and help, they would be most welcome.

Councillor Court mentioned the website survey, and asked Councillors and public to respond with their comments. He then mentioned the filming of the council meetings, and everything should be in place to record from the Annual Council Meeting in May, with the recording on the website the following day. Another survey will be going out in the next couple of weeks regarding tourism.

198. UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:

Councillor Barry updated members on the following:-

The launch of the Consultation on the Sport and Activity Strategy, which has now gone live. We are asking residents to prioritise what they consider the main action points on the survey. A number of briefings have already been carried out, an All Members briefing took place last night, and in May I will be going round all the Town and Parish Councils in the District.

Brightlingsea's will be on the 15th May, and we will be inviting Alresford, Great Bentley, Frating to come along and send representatives, along with sports organisations and representative bodies to consult on the contents of the strategy. We would urge all members of the public to look at the link, strategy and questionnaire and give some feedback. The consultation closes on the 9th June and then we will be taking into account all the comments, revising the strategy, which will then go to Full Council in July, then it will become an active working document late summer.

Councillor Carr asked about North Essex Parking Partnership and that from the 1st May the new waiting restrictions come into effect. A discussion took place.

Councillor Chapman said that she forgot to add the All Members briefing on the Sports Strategy, which was very interesting and very well put together.

Councillor Court said that he did not expect Tendring District Council would be putting in a response to the Essex County Council Minerals consultation, however, can we see a copy of the response. Councillor Chapman said yes, she would get a copy, however it would be online and was the very last page of the agenda pack.

Councillor Court asked about the Governance Review informal meeting that took place a few weeks ago, and whether any notes had been produced. The Clerk replied that Councillor Chapman was taking the notes. Councillor Barry replied that at the meeting he said he would be updating some of the responses and that we need to look at the new year from May 2024, we would be updating the Vision/Strategy document with some of the issues from the current team. Therefore, the first meetings of the Teams, under the new regime, a member of each team should form a small working party, to produce an updated version of that document for circulation and endorsement at Full Council. A discussion took place.

The report from the District Councillors was then accepted.

199. CORRESPONDENCE FROM JORDAN KNIGHT – YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL:

Councillor Howard briefed members that Jordan Knight had made contact and she has organised a meeting to float ideas on Friday 26th April 2024 at 11am at the Parish Hall. She asked all Councillors to attend if they are able to.

A discussion then took place on the times of Council meetings.

200. UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GOGGIN:

As County Councillor Goggin had not yet arrived at the meeting, the Mayor moved onto the next agenda item.

201. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Q1) Parking Partnership – Are Colchester still running the Traffic Wardens?

A1) Councillor Barry replied Colchester City Council run the North East Parking Partnership on behalf of the County Council. They provide Officers, Officials and Governance and have 50-60 Traffic Wardens/Civic Enforcement Officers who go around the District – Braintree, Colchester, Uttlesford, Harlow, Epping and Tendring – a big area to cover. The Parking Partnership is about traffic management. Regarding on street parking, this is already in place in Wales, Scotland and London – there are lessons to be learned from this. It would have to go out to consultation before measures are introduced, and we would have to make representations on behalf of our residents.

Q2) Can you clarify that the Covid people are coming to the YMCA this year? We have already had letters telling us to go to Colchester and other areas.

A2) Councillor Chapman replied yes, it is sometime in May, but she does not have the actual dates.

Q3) Have you looked at all the recommendations in the recent Governance Review, discussed them and what are your plans and timescales to implement and communicate this to Councillors and residents?

A3) Councillor Chapman replied that an informal meeting took place, where we went through the recommendations and marked off what have been completed. She added that she would get the notes typed up. The Mayor added that the report was taken seriously and will be reviewed again. He then asked the Town Clerk to send a copy of the Governance Report to the two new Councillors. Councillor Paveley asked if the Council is taking up the training on the Code of Conduct. The Town Clerk replied that she has liaised with the Monitoring Officer and her colleague, and we are waiting for dates on when the training can take place.

Q4) If the Town Clerk was not present, and no one took minutes, was it a properly constituted meeting? There are a number of policies that the Council is supposed to have, not on the website. When are they going to be? The website is missing lots of information, when will it be published?

A4) Councillor Paveley replied that following another consultant's report, he has been going through policy by policy, as has Councillor Chapman, and month by month we are filling the gaps. They will be put on the website, as soon as possible. Councillor Court added that the report stated that the website should be revamped, which we are looking at, at the moment.

Q5) What are the Council's aspirations on the Boat Park/ Dinghy Park?

A5) The Mayor replied that the Council is in the final stages of negotiations with the Harbour Commissioners, who have had a Management Agreement with the Town Council to run it for the past few years. This should be finalised in the next months.

Q6) What is happening to the Heritage/Fisherman's Pier?

A6) The Mayor replied that it is getting more and more use, and this item is to be discussed under Part B of the meeting.

Q7) I believe the Council planted 500 odd trees last year. Can you give a survival rate on them?

A7) The Mayor replied that he will pass this onto the Grounds Manager and ask for an update.

202. UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GOGGIN:

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

There is an extra £8.5M coming to Essex from Central Government to specifically deal with pot holes and pavements. The old system still works, however there is now a new system – Tendring has 8 County Councillors covering the whole of the District. The money is being spent on 8 teams. Each team will be in the area, which means 2 or 3 people with machinery, basic equipment and knowledge to be able to do the basic things. Once every 6 weeks every County Councillor will have a team for a week, however as my area covers the five parishes, this would mean that the most you would get is the team in Brightlingsea for one day. He said that he is expected to come up with a programme of works for this week. Brightlingsea Town Council needs to think about location and use of time. If you can give me a list of priority issues listing the top 5, then another 5, that would be good. The first lists have already been submitted. Please remember emergency potholes will still be resolved as part of the emergency.

There are 16 different areas being worked on in Brightlingsea over the next four days.

The consultation on the Minerals has now closed. Over 5,000 responses had been received. It will be 6 months before we have all the responses collated. I am told that the four parishes in my division that have sandpits in their areas, have the highest returns.

Today we scrutinised two issues, which have a huge concern on vulnerable people in the County. Firstly, Home to School Transport with SEN. At the moment there is a £5.1M overspend this year to date. The budget is £36.8M, and £139,000 is spent a day on Home to School Transport with SEN. This is more than we spend on potholes and highways.

Essex County Council have 1,000 children in care. This is part of a nationwide issue of 15,000. This ranges from fostering to single premises where one person has a two adult cohort 24/7. There is one child in Essex that is costing £711,000 for their year's looking after, another two costing £600,000. These are the extremes, who are a danger to themselves, society and being exploited. Children in Care has a £21.6M overspend. These children are looked after, whatever the cost. I am proud to report that Ofsted rated Childrens Care at Essex County Council the highest rate.

Councillors then asked County Councillor Goggin the following questions:-

Councillor Howard asked about County Councillor Goggins visit to the crossroads at the Museum, and the area is very dangerous with the bollards being missing. She then mentioned the island – Gandergoose Green, which has two lights that have been out for at least two years. County Councillor Goggin replied that they have looked at the lights, repaired some surface and white lining. He also mentioned a possible Zebra Crossing, however where he saw people crossing, there is not enough splay line going either side. This needs to be considered.

Councillor Paveley mentioned the broken bollards in Brightlingsea Road Thorrington. They are very dangerous and need fixing. Who should people phone up about this? County Councillor Goggin replied Essex County Council either on their website or the usual phone number.

Councillor Court asked if there is a date for the resurfacing in Bellfield Avenue? County Councillor Goggin replied no.

Councillor Court mentioned the 30mph sign on the left as you come into Brightlingsea, which has been missing for years. He said that when he had a Speed Watch session with a local Policeman, and he said that this needs fixing as a matter of urgency. County Councillor Goggin replied that this should be added to the list of most important items, when round 2 of the pothole and pavement scheme takes place.

A member of the public briefed County Councillor Goggin about the road repairs that happened in the High Street. He said that on the day they turned up to carry out the work, from Jacobs Hall to Tower Street, the head man was walking down the road, and saw the sink hole, and said that he had not been told about this. Subsequently the sink hole has now been fixed but this area has not been resurfaced. The workforce do not appear to communicate.

203. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT:

A copy of the Town Clerk's Report had been circulated to all members. This report was to note only.

Councillor Morgan 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 Chapman. **Agreed.**

204. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 –To discuss the following:-
- To receive the Staff Minutes from the meeting held on the 3rd April 2024 and confirm as a correct record.
 - Property Update.
205. TO RECEIVE THE STAFF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 3RD APRIL 2024:

Councillor Chapman proposed that the Minutes of the Staff Meeting held on the 3rd April 2024 be accepted as a true record, and the recommendations (as written below) be accepted:

- Committee Terms of Reference – add the following
Substitute Members – A councillor who is not a member of the Staff Committee can substitute for a member who is unable to attend.
3g – A Member Staff Protocol is produced, for agreement at the next meeting.

Councillor Barry thanked Councillor Morgan for standing in at the interviews for the new Groundsman on the 10th April 2024. Members were then advised of the successful candidate, who will begin their employment with the Council on Monday 22nd April 2024.

Seconded by Councillor Barry. **Agreed.**

206. PROPERTY UPDATE:

A discussion took place on the Facilities and Community Team Notes of 9.4.24, and the following was **agreed**:

- **Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners Lease** – Councillor Atkinson briefed members on the current situation, and that a meeting is being arranged with the Harbour Commissioners and the Councils sub-group.
- **Charges relating to Heritage Pier** – Councillor Morgan briefed members and after discussion it was **agreed** use of the Heritage Pier would be charged at £3.00 per metre, per week, plus VAT (as per the attached application form), with charges applicable from 1st May 2024. It was also **agreed** that any revenue from the Heritage Pier, would be ‘ringfenced’ towards the cost of piling. It was also **agreed** that the following is added to the application form:
 (1) The Hammerhead reserved for Fishermen alighting and embarking crew and cargo. Strictly 15 minutes only maximum stay.
- **Quotation from John Philips for Stoney Ground** – Councillor Morgan briefed members that a meeting has been arranged with a local fisherman for Tuesday 23rd April 2024. After discussion it was **agreed** that the time of the meeting is changed to 5.30pm. *Councillor Pentney declared an interest in this item during the discussions.*
- **Land Registry** – Councillor Morgan briefed members the Land Registry has suggested that we ask for a review on our complaint under the second and final stage of the complaint’s procedure. After discussion it was **agreed** that the Council asks for a review on its complaint under the second and final stage of the complaint’s procedure.

Councillor Chapman updated members on her reason for resigning from the Leisure Village sub-committee. After discussion Councillor Court gave thanks to Councillor Chapman for all her hard work on this issue and said that he was willing to put himself forward to sit on the sub-committee. It was **agreed** that a copy of the Brightlingsea Leisure Village lease is circulated to all members.

207. CLOSE OF MEETING:

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.33 p.m.

Chair

Date: 16th May 2024