

BRIGHTLINGSEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at
The Parish Hall, Victoria Place, Brightlingsea,
on: Thursday 19th October 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors

R Morgan (Mayor)

J Carr (Deputy Mayor)

D Atkinson, M Barry, J Chapman,

M Court, M Judson, J Howard,

C Paveley, G Steady and S Walsh

Also in attendance:

Tracey Pulford – Town Clerk

County Councillor Goggin

9 Members of the public

87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None received.

88. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023 AND TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st September 2023 were accepted as a true record.
Agreed.

89. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

90. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS:

The Mayor reminded Members to declare interests when necessary.

91. TO RECEIVE A STATEMENT FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR RIC MORGAN:

The Mayor read out the following:

Following a Councillor led report on the Brightlingsea Town Council accounts, performance and procedures, it has revealed that over the past two years a requirement for Brightlingsea Town Council to use its reserves to support an annual shortfall in income over expenditure.

In the light of on-going significant increases in Wages, Maintenance, every day running costs and now depleted reserves, our council will need to review Brightlingsea Town Council's annual council tax precepts to balance our income over expenditure. The Council is committed to balancing its accounts but at the same time maintaining its core services and offering value for money to our residents whilst continuing to look for all possible savings now and in the future.

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

Councillor Walsh informed members that due to unforeseen technical issues on the AdvantEdge Accounts Package, it has not been possible to provide the monthly figures for September 2023. These will be presented at the November meeting.

Councillor Walsh confirmed the Bank Balances for September 2023 as follows:

Current Account (7055)	3,030.21
Business Premium Account (8295)	42,872.87
Business Premium Account (9433)	32,442.44
Making a total of	78,345.52

Councillor Walsh then proposed 18 payments in the total of £10,373.16. The payments were then seconded by Councillor Atkinson. **Agreed.**

Councillor Howard asked about the payment for Tower Security and that the gates on the Western Promenade are due to be locked at 9pm but are never shut at this time. The Town Clerk informed members that this is the time stated by the Security Company, but they close the gates at a time convenient to them on their schedule.

93. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER 2023 AND TO CONFIRM THE RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN:

Councillor Carr proposed that the Minutes of the Finance and Property Meeting held on the 10th October 2023 are accepted as a true record, and the recommendations (as written below) be accepted:

- (1) To agree the sub committee's revised budgets for the remainder of this year 2023/2024.
- (2) The continuation of the sub group of the Finance Committee working on the other outstanding issues of the financial control systems.
- (3) Revise the banking arrangements – to consolidate the BTC deposit accounts to one account, to use the second account as a clients/grants account only. Continue to use the current account as now. Also, to investigate other deposit account options with more favourable interest rates.
- (4) A statement on the current and future finances is made at the next Full Council Meeting.
- (5) To invite the Chairman of the Model Boat Club to attend the next Facilities and Community Assets meeting to give an update.
- (6) Town Clerk to liaise with Councillor Walsh regarding the financial summary cashbook report.
- (7) To pay Bev Maltby her allowance pro-rata.
- (8) Due to financial constraints, no grant would be given to the Colne Yacht Club towards the Firework Display.
- (9) No grant had been agreed or would be given, due to financial constraints, towards the sponsorship of Club Sonata 'Kooshtie'.
- (10) The jetty working party would finalise and agree the berthing rates.

The minutes were then seconded by Councillor Paveley. **Agreed.**

94. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 3RD AND 17TH OCTOBER 2023 AND TO NOTE PLANNING DECISIONS OF TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL:

Councillor Paveley proposed that the recommendations in the Minutes of 28th September, 3rd and 17th October 2023 be agreed by Council, together with the planning decisions from Tendring District Council. He said that the meeting held on the 28th September was very well attended, and he thanked members of public for their input. It was an energetic and good meeting. He added that at the last Planning meeting, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan attended, and gave an update of where we are. We need to give further assistance on the sub-committees, they started with 30 volunteers, now it is down to 3-4 people doing all the work. This will be discussed at the next planning meeting.

Councillor Howard thanked Councillor Paveley for the way he Chaired the meeting on the 28th, and also the Town Clerk for her help and assistance in setting the meeting up.

The minutes were then seconded by Councillor Howard. **Agreed.**

95. TEAMS REPORTS:

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

Facilities and Community Assets Team – Councillor Court asked if the heritage on the old Pavilion has been looked into? Councillor Morgan replied that there is a lot of history at the Museum. It was a period old Grandstand, and did have two tiers, but the top tier was removed pre-war. Councillor Chapman added that the Grounds Manager has looked at the building, and it is in a dangerous condition, and has rotten timbers. The Mayor replied that the council are expecting further reports from the Cricket Club, as they are looking into finances, but in principle we have said that they can erect the building in this position.

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

- (1) The annual fee for commercial fisherman's tenders would be brought up with the discussions with the Harbour Commissioners.
- (2) The Town Council agrees to the Cricket Club proposed scheme and location.
- (3) All allotment holders are contacted, advising of the complaints raised.

Environment and Transport Team – Councillor Atkinson briefed members. The Environment and Transport Team report was then **accepted**, and the following recommendations were **agreed**:-

- (1) A copy of the email regarding the Odour would be sent to Essex County Council, Tendring District Council and the Environment Agency. Also, to ask the resident to clarify the source of the information.
- (2) A letter drop is to be carried out to residents about the proposed loading bays at the Co-Op in Station Road and Tesco Express.
- (3) Councillors Carr and Steady would attend the Autumn Transport Meeting for Tendring on Wednesday 8th November 2023.
- (4) Non-members of the Environment and Transport Team are contacted to see if anyone is interested in joining this committee.
- (5) Andy Nepean to be asked about restrictions (if any) that could be implemented on the Western Promenade to stop overnight parking.

- (6) Councillor Barry would ask the TDC Officer, Jonathan Hamlet, if the stickers can be put on their bins, and the final designs to be circulated.

Welfare & Residents Services Team – Councillor Court asked about Covid Booster Injections and that people are having to travel to Walton, Clacton or Colchester and other areas. Why can we not get any in Brightlingsea? Councillor Chapman replied that the NHS had contacted the Community Centre but had no response. They have now contacted the YMCA to ask if it could be available for the next round. The Town Clerk added that she had taken a phone call from a local resident, who was having difficulty in arranging to have their Covid Booster at home. Councillor Chapman replied that she knew of some people who had had both their Flu and Covid injections at home and would ask how they went about organising it.

Communication & Tourism Team – No report had been submitted by the Communication and Tourism Team. Councillor Carr said that the Team are working on a couple projects at the moment, and a full report will be given at the next meeting.

96. UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:

Councillor Barry reported on the recent visit from Tendring District Council Officers. He said that the proposal to look at Shared Services is being taken forward and they are looking at Brightlingsea and Lawford to act as pilots. He added that the hedge at Samsons Road was cut on Tuesday – a joint effort by Tendring District Council and Brightlingsea Town Council.

Councillor Chapman highlighted the Waste Management Consultation. It is going to cost £1/2m to do nothing more than what they do now. The biggest item being discussed is going to 3-weekly collections. Tendring District Council said that they would do everything in their power to continue with 2-weekly collections. She added that they are talking about glass and green waste collections all coming under the same umbrella. At the moment you have to pay for garden waste, but the government want to stop this. If the District Council brings in these collections now, and the Government then bring it in, there would be no financial reward for collecting.

Councillor Steady briefed members on the recent Tendring Community Transport Annual General Meeting. He also updated on the 'Odour'. He said that a 'briefing note' provided by a local resident has been given to the Chief Executive of Tendring District Council, who is in the process of arranging a meeting with the Environment Agency. Councillor Chapman said that this briefing note has also been given to Councillor Carlo Guglielmi.

Councillor Howard asked the Tendring District Councillors if they could investigate about some sort of low-level lighting in the Victoria Place Car Park, as it is very dark and would be safer if there was some sort of lighting. Councillor Barry said that he would discuss this issue with Andy Nepean.

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

97. UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GOGGIN:

As County Councillor Goggin had not yet arrived at the meeting, the Mayor moved onto Agenda item 10.

98. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Q1) I am totally against the Cricket Club expansion in its present form. There is room for expansion to be carried out near to the changing rooms – an extension could be put on the side.

A1) The Mayor replied that if you could put your comment in writing, we will discuss it at the next Facilities and Community Assets Team meeting.

Q2) The Boat and Dinghy Park – the fees have increased 100% over 2 years, with assurances by different bodies that improvements will be made. There have been no improvements made, other than the fence being replaced 3 years ago.

A2) The Mayor replied that the Council are in discussions with the Harbour Commissioners and note your comments and will discuss this with them.

Q3) To Councillor Steady, in your Tendring report you have an abbreviation of ESNEFT– what does this mean?

A3) Councillor Steady replied Essex Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust.

Q4) Last year Brightlingsea Haven Limited wrote to increase our pitch fees at the park by the RPI, which is not in accordance with our lease. We are in correspondence with the Company through our Solicitors. The Company then denied receiving our letters of objection, so this year we would like to thank the Mayor and Town Clerk for agreeing to receive our correspondence to act as witnesses. We apologise to the Town Clerk if this has caused any extra work.

A4) The Mayor replied that we are in the process of arranging a meeting with the new management.

Q5) Regarding the Speed Traps, can you tell me how many vehicles are not speeding?

A5) Councillor Court replied that speed watch is not run by the Town Council. He added that he could not answer the question, as we do not count the number of cars not speeding.

Q6) Devolution 2 is just down the road, and there is a public consultation at the end of this month. Can the Tendring District Councillors give an update from their point of view and what is the feeling of the majority of their colleagues? Who is the main Officer dealing in Greater Essex with Devolution? This is the biggest thing since the 1990's. It will make a difference i.e. buses, roads etc. Can we have an update please?

A6) Councillor Barry replied that there have been a high level of discussions with all the Chief Executives and Leaders around Essex, including Ian Davidson and Mark Stephenson of Tendring District Council. He added that there are politics in the whole debate, as the County Council is Conservative, the Leader of the County Council wanted to push for Devolution Level 3, but there was some resistance to that. The details are not agreed yet on potential impact, but the main thing is about Devolution of Budgets, and they are trying to devolve responsibilities without paying.

Q7) The Heritage Pontoon – when weather is rocking and rolling, the Town Jetty closed off. There are no means to close off, who is responsible in closing off the Heritage Pontoon as there are no safety railings?

A7) Councillor Carr replied that the Heritage Pontoon is anchored by large chains in 4 different positions, and it would not buckle like the Town Pontoon. If we do need to close it off, we would do it or the Harbour Commissioners would. The resident asked if it is rough, would it be OK if he put a rope across to close it off. Councillor Carr replied yes.

Q8) The Wider Waste Strategy Consultation – not sure how this Council can help people get to the Clacton recycling centre. If you do not have transport, you cannot take items there, or if you cannot lift, you have difficulty. Is there anything that can be done to help?

A8) Councillor Chapman replied that she cannot answer the question about getting to the Recycling Centre, however if you ask the men at the site to help with lifting of items, they are only too happy to help. Councillor Howard added that Tendring will come out and collect items, for a charge.

99. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT:

1. **Agreed** that the Hare and Tortoise Running Club can hold its Remembrance Sunday Event on Sunday 12th November 2023, as in previous years.

2. **Agreed** the Brightlingsea Carnival Association can hold its Car Boot Sales on the grass area of the Western Promenade on 1st April, 6th May, 27th May, 28th July and 26th August 2024.

3. **Agreed** Children's World Fun Fair can visit Hurst Green 27th and 28th April 2024.

The Mayor informed members that he is holding a 'Mayor's Community Day' on Saturday 10th February 2024 at the Community Centre, to say thank you to the Volunteers, Helpers and Community Workers for their Service to the Town. It will be a free event for the Town, offering fun light entertainment, raffle, music, indoor market, food and drinks.

A resident gave thanks to the Groundsmen, who keep Brightlingsea in a beautiful condition. They are a wonderful set of people who care.

Councillor Morgan 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.** 19.52pm.

100. 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 17th October 2023 and confirm as a correct record.
- Property Update – Brightlingsea Cricket Club

101. TO RECEIVE THE STAFF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 17TH OCTOBER 2023 AND CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD:

Councillor Chapman proposed that the Minutes of the Staff Meeting held on the 17th October 2023 are accepted as a true record, and the recommendations (as written below) be accepted:

(1) Councillor Walsh fills the current vacancy on the Staff Committee.

(2) Councillors Howard and Judson fill the two vacant positions on the Staff Committee, subject to Full Council approval.

(3) Full Council adopts the following policies:-

- Alcohol and Drugs at Work
- Threats and Violence at Work

(4) Staff Meetings should take place quarterly.

(5) Members of staff to be invited to attend a future meeting, for a trial, to discuss any issues/thoughts/suggestions they may have.

(6) Graham Carter would reduce his working hours from 37 a week to 24 a week, from 1st April 2024. The Council would need to clarify where the 13 hours work will be lost and carry out the exercise for the next 6 months.

The minutes were then seconded by Councillor Court. **Agreed.**

102. PROPERTY UPDATE:

Councillors Barry and Steady both declared an interest in the following item.

Brightlingsea Cricket Club – A copy of an email from the Chair of the Brightlingsea Cricket Club had been circulated to all members.

A discussion took place on S106 monies, and that all Councillors have to have their say on how to use this money. Much discussion took place.

103. CLOSE OF MEETING:

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.07 p.m.

After the meeting had closed County Councillor Goggin arrived. He briefed members on the following:-

- His clinic at the Library
- Well Street, where a car had hit a house
- Recycling Booking System, which is proving to be a big success with no querying inside or outside the site
- Fly tipping in Tendring has gone down by 3.5%
- Devolution is coming. 50% of the Country are already working under Devolution. The Government have offered Level 2.
- Essex County Council does well in looking after Children in care. They have just had an Ofsted Visit and received outstanding.

Councillors asked County Councillor Goggin the following questions:-

Councillor Carr – What did Sir Bernard Jenkin learn from his visit. County Councillor Goggin replied that he took him to the Dunmow site, Colne Community School and Fiveways. He will discuss the situation with the Environment Agency.

Councillor Steady said that there are 1 or 2 issues at Robinson Road regarding Highways.

Councillor Barry mentioned the overgrown hedge at Samsons Road and the Lido Pool Support Fund for a Solar Panel Generator System.

Councillor Chapman spoke about the incident at Well Street, and that installing a metal place on the corner has been suggested. She also mentioned the large pot hole outside Tesco's, that has been reported, but is now in a dangerous condition.

Councillors and County Councillor Goggin then left the meeting at 20.30pm.

Chair

Date: 16th November 2023