

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess  
J Carroll  
E Cooper  
Y Farrell  
S Goodchild  
D Jones  
T McMahon  
R Morgan  
A Slough  
C Slough  
S Thorne  
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk  
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 8

Apologies: Councillors: C Copleston

Absent: M Kennedy

### 12316 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor C Copleston.

### 12317 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- Feedback was requested on the effectiveness in terms of crime reduction of the CCTV camera placed on Windsor Drive and requested the number of prosecutions as a direct consequence of the camera being in situ.  
It was confirmed that it was not possible to link prosecutions with CCTV footage.
- The camera on Windsor Drive had been removed, would this be replaced?  
It was confirmed that the Council's Combating Crime Working Group managed the camera locations based on the advise of the police. Cameras were sited around the town in locations considered to be most at need.
- Would the council consider registering Windsor Drive Open Space as a community asset?
- Were the council considering offering grants for Coronation celebrations?  
It was confirmed that a report to Community Services Committee was envisaged to facilitate this.
- It was asked what the HRTC response was regarding the 'no funding' announcement in relation to the pressures on GP's.
- It was asked why the Town Partnership Committee recording from the last meeting was unavailable



To was advised that there was a technical problem with the recording and as such was unavailable.

- It was asked for the damaged tree stump on Windsor Drive to be removed

It was advised the remaining questions would be responded to in due course.

#### 12318 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

#### 12319 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### 12320 COMMITTEE AND SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

Office Provisions Sub Committee	None to present
Proposed New Cemetery Working Group	None to present

**Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.**

#### 12321 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were advised that an upcoming charity dinner was to be held in Bedford Square, and the Memorial Hall had planned a Bingo evening to be held during March.

#### 12322 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Members provided verbal reports from meetings they had attended of outside organisations or from training courses they had attended on behalf of the Council.

Cllr McMahon advised members she had attended the Houghton Hall Park Project Management Advisory meeting, discussions included repairs to play equipment, the extension of the café tender, a Youth Ranger was to be introduced for 13 – 18 year olds and the Classic Car and Dog Shows would continue for the coming year,





Cllr Cooper advised members of the completion of the Memorial Hall decoration, the kitchen refurbishment had been put on hold as the need to refurbish the toilet facilities had taken priority. The decision had been made for the Memorial Hall not to hold a Coronation Event, as there would be other local events held, however, it was confirmed they would be holding a race night in June.

Cllr Jones had attended the BATPC Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting and advised members that the office move had been temporarily halted by the finalisation of the lease. An accounting software package was to be purchased for use by the honorary Treasurer and there was promotion of training through Breakthrough Communications Network on Communication and Data Protection.

### 12323 2023/24 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Members were presented with the Town Council draft budget for 2023/24 for consideration and requested that members approve a budget for 2023/24 and set a precept.

Discussions were held in depth regarding proposed alternative budgets with emphasis on various needs of the local community along with cost saving suggestions.

An amendment to the officer recommendation was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Morgan to read:

*To approve the budget as amended by the Amendments and Allocations set out by the Liberal Democrat Group and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, showing a deficit budget of £14,140 to be covered by General Reserves brought forward, and to set a precept of £1,196,781 for 2023/2024.*

The officer recommendation read:

*To approve the budget and set a precept of £1196,781 for 2023/24.*

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs C Slough, A Slough, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, K Wattingham, S Thorne, R Morgan and Y Farrell

Members against: Cllr McMahan

Abstentions: 0

The amendment was carried, subsequently this became the substantive motion.

Proposed by: Cllr Jones, seconded by: Cllr Morgan

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs C Slough, A Slough, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, K Wattingham, S Thorne, R Morgan and Y Farrell

Members against: Cllrs T McMahan, P Burgess and J Carroll.

Abstentions: 0



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**Resolved:** To approve the budget as amended by the Amendments and Allocations set out by the Liberal Democrats Group and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, showing a deficit budget of £14,140 to be covered by General Reserves brought forward, and to set a precept of £1,196,781 for 2023/2024.

#### 12324 REVIEW OF EAR MARKED RESERVES

To enable Members to review the status of the Council's Ear Marked Reserves part way through the financial year.

**Resolved:** To note the Schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2022/23 and the predicted schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2023/24.

#### 12325 PROPOSED PAN-BEDFORDSHIRE BUS USERS' FORUM

The Town council had been advised of the following and had been invited to nominate a representative to attend:

##### Background

The National Bus Strategy for England, "Bus Back Better" published by the DfT in March 2021, formalised the expectation that all local transport authorities in England would establish Enhanced Partnerships with the local bus operators to deliver better bus services in their areas.

In October 2021, local authorities published their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP), which acted as the bidding documents for funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), Bedford Borough Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council liaised on the development of a number of joint proposals, which were included in the BSIPs.

In November 2022, the DfT confirmed a total funding allocation of £19.1 million for Luton and £3.7million for Central Bedfordshire, from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

One of the BSIP joint commitments was to create a pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum covering Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. The Partnerships recognised the importance of the views of their local communities and wanted to build on existing relationships with bus passengers to better understand their needs and to expand that relationship to include under-represented user groups and the views of non-users. The Bus Users' Forum served as a consultation medium for considering Partnership Schemes as they emerged and developed and also provided valuable feedback on all aspects of the bus network. The Partnerships agreed that Central Bedfordshire Council would act as the lead on the establishment of the Forum.

The intention was that the Bus Users' Forum would act as an umbrella organisation comprising representatives from any current bus user groups within the Bedfordshire area as well as transport representatives from Parish and Town Councils.





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The purpose of the proposed pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum was:

- To provide community and bus operator awareness of public transport needs and developments
- To allow informed and constructive public discussion of existing and proposed service and infrastructure provision
- To consult on both current and future transport policies, strategies and proposals
- To ensure the voice of regular bus users was heard in an equitable way.

The Bus Users' Forum would be non-party-political and participation in the forum, including attendance at any meeting, would not require the payment of any membership subscription. Similarly, there would be no financial remuneration for participation in the forum, or attendance at any meeting

#### Participation

CBC were inviting Parish and Town Councils across the area to participate in the Bus Users' Forum to represent the interests of their residents and communities. Councils may choose to participate in the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum on an individual basis or may choose to link together with neighbouring Parish or Town Councils, where common bus routes serve adjacent areas, or where a larger Parish or Town may already have a councillor with a transport portfolio who was happy to attend on behalf of a wider local area.

CBC were keen that all individuals participating were able to represent their local residents through constructive and strategic discussion at meetings, coupled with the ability to work in a respectful way with both bus operators and council officers, in order to achieve mutually beneficial results.

#### Launch meeting

CBC intended to arrange a launch meeting early in 2023, when CBC would be able to give attendees a full briefing on the plans for delivering the measures identified in the BSIPs through the Enhanced Partnerships. In advance of this inaugural meeting, CBC would welcome expressions of interest for involvement in the proposed Forum.

It was anticipated that the launch meeting would be in hybrid form and was most likely to be late afternoon/early evening for an hour or so.

Once the user group was up and running the format would be decided by the members.

Cllr McMahon volunteered to act as the Houghton Regis Town Council representative on the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum.

**Resolved: To appoint Cllr McMahon as Houghton Regis Town Council representative to attend the pan-Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum.**



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Members were formally advised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) launched their budget consultation exercise which was open for public consultation until 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Feedback from the consultation would be presented to the February Executive, in advance of decision making on the finalised budget, which would be recommended to Full Council.


**12327 APPOINTMENT TO APPEALS SUB COMMITTEE**

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference members were requested to nominate 3 councillors to sit on an Appeals Committee. Due to the sensitive nature of this matter further details would be provided in due course to the appointed Appeals Sub Committee.

**Resolved: To appoint Cllrs C Slough, D Morgan and T McMahon to sit on the Appeals Committee.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm**

**Dated this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023**

  
**Chairman**