



BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Bexhill Mascot REPORT



Introduction: The purpose of this report is to explore options with regard to the Town Council adopting a mascot to promote itself, town events, and to interact with the local community and tourists.

A number of decisions are required, such as what type of character, a name for the mascot and who will manufacture the costume, as well as how it will be used and who will wear the costume.

Mascots have been used for many years by all manner of organisations and sports clubs to promote their organisations in public. They appeal especially but not exclusively to children, and they are useful for a number of reasons:

- They add personality to a brand. It can be the personification of the organisation and makes it easier to create a physical and emotional connection to the public.
- Mascots stand out, especially at events where people should have a positive and friendly interaction with the mascot; a hug, a selfie, or just a high five.
- Mascots can also give a boost to social media accounts. The M&M's characters, Compare the Meerkat or the Bulldog from Churchill Insurance are all good examples.
- They are fun, entertaining, and engaging.



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Type of Character:

The question here is what kind of character sums up the Town Council. Perhaps an animal with social qualities and conscience, hard-working, and courageous. We may also want it to have ecological characteristics or link with social aspects of Bexhill-on-Sea.

I put these qualities to an AI which delivered the following response:

Based on the provided phrases and the location reference to Bexhill-on-Sea, the British animal that comes to mind is the honeybee. Honeybees are known for their highly social nature, working together in a hive with a well-defined division of labor. They exhibit a collective consciousness and demonstrate remarkable cooperation in building and maintaining their colonies. Honeybees are also diligent and hard-working, constantly foraging for nectar and pollen to sustain the hive. Additionally, they can be considered courageous as they defend their hive against threats, displaying protective behavior when their colony is at risk.

I believe Eastbourne used to have a bee as its mascot so the council may prefer something else.

Some suggestions are below. These are all British animals (with the exception of the bear)

Bear (Traditional type of mascot)

Badger

Hedgehog

Bird



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Martlet (mythical creature on the Sussex coat of arms)

Fox

Deer

Sheep

Hare

Rabbit

Pig

Cow

Bat

There are also some non-living objects that could be personified:

The Sun

Stars

A racing car (maybe the Serpollet?)

Flowers (maybe a Bluebell?)



However, these may be more problematic when trying to create a costume.

Names

Once again, we have a plethora of options. I would suggest that any name should be alliterative as this rolls off the tongue easier and can be more memorable.

It may be nice if the name also gave a nod to Bexhill in some way.



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Manufacturers:

A quick search on the internet reveals a number of manufacturers for this kind of costume. We will exercise the usual protocols in procuring best value and get quotes before a decision is made. We could also explore the possibility of creating the mascot as an animated (cartoon) or digital character, that could be used on our web and social sites.



How will the mascot be used:

The mascot will be primarily used as an engagement tool at events (either our own or those we attend) to promote the actions of the Town Council and engage with the community. If a digital rendition is created, it will be used in the same way for marketing and social media campaigns.

Who will wear the costume:

At live events, a member of the council staff or councillor could volunteer to wear the costume. As this should be a non-speaking role any gender or age could do this.



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Risk Factors:

The risks of this project are reasonably small.

Physical risks include an adverse reaction from a member of the public. Over-exuberant behaviour resulting in a physical reaction or attack, an attack from a scared dog or other animal, or a frightened child.

There is also the possibility of reputational damage to the council if the mascot acted in a way that was antisocial or rude.

Should this project proceed a full risk assessment will be conducted, and a code of practice created for the costume wearer.

Costs:

Costs for the manufacture of a mascot costume start at around £3500, this would include an element of design.

Costs for a digital rendering range between £350 and £1500

Conclusions:

A mascot would have a positive effect for the town council, especially enhancing our presence at events and official openings etc. it would engage our community with a very low chance of any detrimental effects.





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Appendix I Provisional List of manufacturers

1. Mascot Costumes <https://www.mascotcostumes.co.uk/>
2. Frenzy Creative Mascot Costumes UK
<https://www.frenzycreative.co.uk/>
3. Mascot Makers <https://mascotmakers.com/uk-prices/>
4. Mimics Productions <http://customascotcostumes.co.uk/>

Appendix 2 Sample designs

Billy the Bexhill Bear



Becky (Bexy) Badger



Henry the Bexhill Hedgehog



Bertie the Bexhill Bat



Costume T shirt designs



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Appendix 3 Rules/code of practice for costume wearers

Do's and Don't's

- Stay in character at all times.
- Always be friendly, courteous and animated.
- Never speak or make noises in costume.
- Do not remove any part of your costume in public or be partially dressed.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink while in costume.
- Don't be seen entering/exiting toilets.
- Do not display anger or frustration.
- Do not scare or intimidate people.

Mascot safety tips

- Always stay safe and comfortable.
- Always be accompanied by your 'handler' – these are your eyes, ears and voice.
- Sign language – make sure the mascot and handler have some simple hand signals to indicate they need to exit. (e.g. a thumbs down to indicate something is wrong.)
- Schedule breaks depending on environmental conditions. The suit is likely to be hot and the operator will need to top up on water. In warm conditions it should not be worn for longer than 30 minutes though this can be increased when it is cold.
- Practice before wearing the costume to get used to the poor visibility and weight etc.



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Common Mascot Gestures

1. **Waving** – Use your entire arm for a big wave in situations that you really need to stand out like a sports game or walking in a parade. Simply open and close your hand when waving to a smaller child in a meet and greet mascot situation.
2. **Laughing** – Bring your hands up to the mascot's mouth and nod the mascot head forward in a rapid motion to signal laughing.
3. **Blowing a kiss** – Put your hand to the mascot mouth and then flat out in front of the head with the palm up.
4. **Hugging** – Be gentle when hugging. Remember that children may feel shy or intimidated by a gigantic furry presence. Also, if you give a strong forceful hug, especially to an adult or teenager you run the risk of initiating an aggressive or confrontational situation.
5. **I love you!** – point to yourself then use both hands to draw a heart in the air and point to the recipient.
6. **I'm scared!** – run-away, cover your eyes, and shake your knees. Lifting one hand up to peek out can be very comical.
7. **Aww, shucks!** – give a little sweeping kick forward while hooking your arm in front of you.

