

BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Meeting** of **Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council** held in the Council Chamber, Bexhill Town Hall on Wednesday 16th June 2021 at 6.30pm

PRESENT:	Cllrs Paul Plim Claire Baldry Dan Barfoot Tony Carroll Tim Fenner Charlie Rustem Connor Winter	Town Mayor Deputy Town Mayor Sharon Blagrove Bryan Clasby Elly Gibson Viv Taylor-Gee Stuart Wray	Lynn Brailsford Brian Drayson David Harding Richard Thomas
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IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Christine Bayliss R.D.C.
1 member of the public
Elise Liversedge Town Forum
Linda Butcher Interim Town Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend. The first ten minutes of the meeting will be available for the public to express a view or ask a question on relevant matters on the agenda. The public and press are also welcome to stay and observe the rest of the meeting.

Patrick Stapleton, a local estate agent asked if the item ‘Bexhill, a fair rent town’ would have an impact on rents within the town for both landlords and tenants.

The Town Mayor thanked him for his question and invited him to stay for the debate later in the meeting.

APOLOGIES – to receive apologies for absence

Cllr Julie Norris – health matter
Cllr Ben Izzard – work commitment
County Cllrs Azad, Geary and Hollidge sent their apologies but had submitted written reports which had previously been circulated to all Town Councillors.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to make any declaration of personal or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is to be considered.

Cllr Sharon Blagrove declared a Personal Interest in item 5.1.1. The Bexhill Trust due organising an event within the town but confirmed this had nothing to do with the Bexhill Trust.

Cllr Claire Baldry declared a Personal Interest in item 5.1.1. as Chair of the Friends of Bexhill Events.

MINUTES

To resolve that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th June 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr David Harding raised four points but only one was upheld by Council and the others were not supported by the Council.

- 00016** **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes as amended to delete the sentence after resolution 00028 'after discussion it was agreed to take the following items together and to rename Recovery Team to "Best way of Recovering from COVID".

REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Rother District Councillor Christine Bayliss gave a verbal report about what had been happening in the Central ward and wider. She advised that Community Grants to parish councils was due to close on 15th July and it was usual for parish councils to match fund any award given. She said the Town Centre Steering Group had received £100,000 M & S money for regeneration and that there was approximately £19,000 remaining and at the end of the financial year the remaining balances would be transferred to the Town Council and the Council would also be invited to chair that meeting. Bexhill Town Councillors Paul Plim and Viv Taylor-Gee recently went to a meeting and will include Julie Miller the permanent Town Clerk to attend in future.

Cllr Taylor-Gee reported that phase 1 of the Buleah project had been completed and that £20,000 is now left. It is anticipated that there will be a joint hosting surgery for Team Central at 10am in Egerton Park.

Cllr Brian Drayson then introduced his report [attached to the agenda] with further information from Cllr Paul Plim regarding The Bexhill Trust. Several questions were raised including access to previous minutes, Black Rock Investments of £165,000 and a query about where the money is currently being held. It was acknowledged that the Bexhill Festival will be held on 21st and 22nd June.

- 00017** **RESOLVED** to authorise Cllr Brian Drayson to investigate the Bexhill Trust with a view to Bexhill Town Council taking it on.

OFFICER'S REPORT

Membership of Standing Committees

A chart showing Members' 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices had been submitted with the agenda and it was

- 00018** **RESOLVED** that the make-up of the three spending committees is as follows:

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Cllrs Claire Baldry, Sharon Blagrove, Lynn Brailsford, Bryan Clasby, Brian Drayson, Elly Gibson, David Harding, Charlie Rustem, Stuart Wray plus the Town Mayor [ex officio]

Community Committee

Cllrs Claire Baldry, Dan Barfoot, Lynn Brailsford, Tony Carroll, Bryan Clasby, Elly Gibson, Charlie Rustem, Viv Taylor-Gee, Connor Winter plus the Town Mayor [ex officio]

Climate, Nature and Environment Committee

Cllrs Lynn Brailsford, Tony Carroll, Ben Izzard, Julie Norris, Viv Taylor-Gee, Richard Thomas, Stuart Wray plus the Town Mayor [ex officio]

The Interim Town Clerk advised that the Council could change the membership at any time providing the item appears on a Council agenda.

Standing Orders – Training

There was a full report within the agenda and after discussion it was

- 00019** **RESOLVED** to undertake this training offered by Ian Davison when the permanent Town Clerk is in place so she can be included and that it should be face-to-face training as per the report.

Financial Regulations – Training

As per the report it was

- 00020** **RESOLVED** to undertake training with Mark Mulberry but that the date should be agreed between the permanent Town Clerk and Mark Mulberry.

Visioning Exercise

The Interim Town Clerk had provided one quotation for this exercise and a second quotation was submitted prior to the meeting but after the original report had been written and after discussion it was

- 00021** **RESOLVED** to defer this item and refer it to the Community Committee.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Budget and Precept agreed by CGRSC and Delegation of budgets to Standing Committees

Details of the budget and suggested delegations were previously sent to all Councillors with the agenda, as well as a detailed Notes to the Budget/Precept report, and apart from moving 'Printing, publications and advertising' from Other Costs to Communications and Events it was

- 00022** **RESOLVED** to unanimously adopt the budget and the suggested delegation arrangements (copy of budget and notes to the budget attached to these minutes).

Items deferred from previous Council meeting

- 00023** **RESOLVED** to set up a COVID Recovery Working Group under the auspices of the Communications Committee and encourage this Group to apply for grants.

The following Councillors volunteered to be on the COVID Recovery Working Group: Dan Barfoot, Sharon Blagrove, Tony Carroll, Charlie Rustem, Viv Taylor-Gee, Richard Thomas, Connor Winter.

Viv Taylor-Gee offered to call a meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 00024** **RESOLVED** to refer this item to the Community Committee.

Audit Team

- 00025** **RESOLVED** to refer this item to the Community Committee.

Bexhill, a fair rent town

There was a discussion about whether we would be asking landlords to reduce prices and concerns that this was happening already but it was felt by some that this is the wrong time as there are already lots of regulations in place.

A vote was held and the motion fell.

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Cllr David Harding proposed the question as to whether we want to continue with Bexhill Day as mentioned by Paul Lendon during the previous meeting. It was AGREED that it was not possible for the Town Council to take over at such short notice but it was

- 00027** **RESOLVED** that the Council should have a stall to ‘meet your councillors’ and that 22nd August would be known as Bexhill Day.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

There were no matters.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 21ST JULY 2021 AT 6.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BEXHILL-ON-SEA.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

DRAFT

BUDGET for Bexhill Parish Council as agreed by **Community Governance Review Steering Group 21.01.2021**

Expenditure

Central Support [F & G.P.]

Employee Costs including interim clerk	96,930
Recruitment	1,300
Training	7,500
HR and Payroll Services	3,170
	108,900

Premises Costs [F & G.P.]

Rent and Rates	12,250
Utilities – Electric,gas,phones,waste collect.	3,310
Security, Caretaking and Cleaning	3,340
Furniture	500
Meeting Room Hire	500
	19,900

Computers and Equipment [F & G.P.]

ITC Hardware and Software	3,725
Website set up and maintenance	3,000
Fireproof Safe	1,800
	8,525

Communications and Events [Community]

Newsletters	10,000
Notice Boards	11,340
Grants and Community Support	30,000
COVID Recovery	10,000
Printing, publications and advertising	6,500
	67,840

Member Representation [F & G.P.]

Election costs	62,000
Chairman/Mayors allowance	5,000
Members' expenses	200
Members' training	1,000
	68,200

Allotments [C.N.E.]

Maintenance	2,350
Water	630
	2,980

Other costs [F & G/P.]

Insurance	2,000
External Audit Fees	2,000
Internal Audit Fees	350
Legal and Professional Fees	4,000
Subscriptions	3,700
Repairs and Renewals	10,000
	22,050

Gross expenditure

Creation of General Reserve	298,395
Allotment Rents	75,000
	-1,630

Proposed Precept

371,765

Notes to the Budget/Precept

Central support includes sums for:

Recruitment which was based on quotes for advertising with NALC, ESALC and SLCC.

HR and Payroll Services in order to seek support from specialists (to be agreed) and to outsource the payroll service with a local independent person who provides this service for many local councils within East Sussex.

Premises Costs includes sums for:

Rent and Rates based on Bexhill offices/shops that were vacant during January.

Utilities, Security, Furniture and Meeting room hire was based on figures provided via RDC.

Computers and Equipment

ITC Hardware and Software based on actual quotes received from a website company which specialises in local councils and is used by SLCC, which also offers a discount to members of the Society. Of course, the new Town Clerk will need a laptop computer, printer, mobile telephone and any other necessary equipment in order to carry out her role.

Election costs were based on quotes from RDC.

It is usual for the Chairman of a parish/town council to have an allowance to cover general expenses in carrying out the duties of the role. This is something completely different from the Members' Allowance which can be paid to Councillors but which need to be put into a budget and is usually based on recommendations from the District Council. However, if Members attend meetings of, say ESALC, or training then travel expenses may be paid.

There are two Training budgets, one for staff and one for Councillors.

At the time of preparing this budget it was known that allotments would be transferring to the new Parish Council but as it was not known what else would be agreed this is the only item that was included. If, however, the Town Council negotiates with RDC to take on other areas then there needs to be a transfer of funds and in future plans for budgeting implications.

The Town Council has comprehensive Insurance and this was based on an actual quote. The company chosen specialises in parish/town councils and the first year's premium has been made by RDC and will be reimbursed now the Council is in place. A three year deal was negotiated by the Interim Town Clerk in order to qualify for the best deal.

The Town Council will need to appoint an Independent Internal Auditor and a quote was obtained from a person who specialises in local councils. The External Auditor will be the same as that allocated to RDC and the quote is a realistic one.

The Subscriptions budget was based on the Council wishing to join NALC, ESALC and RALC [National Association of Local Councils, East Sussex Association of Local Councils and Rother Association of Local Councils].

Local councils should not have a budget item called 'contingencies' but it is quite in order to have a Repairs and Renewals fund and to create a General Reserve.

Currently, the only income will be Precept and allotment rents.