

BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL**
held in the **BEXHILL SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB, EVERSLEY ROAD,**
BEXHILL-ON-SEA

On **Wednesday 26th March 2025** at **6:30pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr Byrne; Cllr Blagrove; Cllr Carroll; Cllr Crotty; Cllr Drayson; Cllr El; Cllr Goss; Cllr Hunt; Cllr Huseyin; Cllr Peters; Cllr Plim; Cllr Thomas; Cllr Timpe; Cllr Wilson; Cllr Winter.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: J Miller, Clerk; J Daeva; One videographer; 10 members of the public, Cllr Christine Bayliss (Rother District Council); Cllr Ian Hollidge (East Sussex County Council).

00675 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A representative of the businesses in the Colonnade addressed the meeting regarding six businesses, four of which are members of the Chamber of Commerce. They expressed concern that the businesses had not been given the opportunity to return to the kiosks following renovations carried out by Rother District Council. The Town Council was asked to consider resolving this issue by taking on the leases through the devolution of the Colonnade, thereby preserving the businesses.

A member of the public enquired whether the Town Council would develop a Neighbourhood Plan and requested a timeline for its implementation.

The Council is working on a Neighbourhood Plan. The first steering group meeting failed to take place, another meeting is being arranged.

Another member of the public asked whether the Town Council would confirm if the beacon would be lit on VE Day. Yes, *the beacon will be lit on Thursday 8th May 2025 at 21:3-hrs as part of the national lighting ceremony.*

A member of the public raised a question regarding the Special Expenses of £732,104 listed by Rother District Council for 2025/26. They asked whether these expenses would be transferred to the Town Council as part of devolution. They also enquired about the time the beacon would be lit, suggesting it coincide with the timing of Winston Churchill's announcement 80 years ago. Additionally, they asked if there were any plans to commemorate VJ Day.

Special Expenses are charged only to the taxpayers in the areas that directly benefit from them, and the funds are collected through Council Tax. Because Special Expenses are tied directly to the services provided and funded by Rother District Council, they are not transferable to the Town Council. If a service is devolved to a Town Council in the future it would no longer be included in Rother's Special Expenses and instead would be funded directly by the Town Council through its own precept (the part of the Council Tax that goes to the Town Council). The Engagement and Communications Committee is considering VJ Day commemorations.

Another enquiry was made regarding the refurbishment of Devonshire Square mentioned on the agenda, specifically whether it was related to the public toilets. The member of the public also asked whether the toilets were

under licenses or leases. *The Devonshire Square item is regarding the public toilets, these are being let to the Town Council by way of a licence.*

00676 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and approve apologies for absence with reasons from Cllr Rustem and Cllr Jacklin.

00677 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllr Byrne declared an interest as a member of Rother District Council.

Cllr Drayson declared an interest as a member of Rother District Council.

Cllr Timpe declared an interest as a member of Rother District Council and Cabinet member for Neighbourhood Services.

Cllr Winter declared an interest as a member of Rother District Council and in the Housing Strategy consultation item.

00678 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Trudy Hampton's resignation was reported, Cllr Hampton was thanked for her service as a Town Council member.

00679 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the following meetings of the full council:

a) Wednesday 26th February 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 26th February 2025.

00680 COMMITTEES

a) To note minutes from committee meetings held since the last meeting:

i. Amenities Committee 05/03/25 – noted.

ii. Finance and Audit Committee 12/03/25 – noted.

00681 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

a) Amenities Committee:

i. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the ringfencing of £100,000 from General Reserves for the re-opening of the toilets.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the ringfencing of £100,000 from General Reserves for the re-opening of the toilets.

ii. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the Town Ranger capital costs of £10,602.50 to Full Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Town Ranger capital costs of £10,602.50.

iii. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend refurbishment works quote for Devonshire Square to Full Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with refurbishment works quote for Devonshire Square.

00682 MAYOR'S OFFICE

- a) To receive update on the work of the Town Mayor – an update was given.

00683 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

External councillors may report for 3 minutes. Written reports must be received three days before the meeting.

- a) To receive reports from Division County Councillors.
Cllr Hollidge addressed the meeting and gave updates on devolution.
- b) To receive reports from Ward District Councillors.
Benches Relocation: Due to coastal erosion making the area unsafe, the benches will be relocated.
Colonnade Update: Cllr Bayliss provided an update, stating that members are consulting with officers. Some questions were raised, though most were operational matters for officers to address.
DISC System & ShopWatch: Cllr Bayliss reminded members that the town centre ShopWatch WhatsApp group cannot be used as evidence for the police. It is essential to report incidents through the DISC system instead.
Tennis Coaching: An update was given on the availability of tennis coaching on the newly refurbished tennis courts in Egerton Park.
- c) To receive ward reports from Town Councillors.
Cllr Crotty advised that he had met with Colonnade businesses. Cllr Crotty has also reported a missing signpost and he had received an enquiry about Special Expenses was directed to the Town Clerk. Cllr Crotty also reported the perceived danger of the pot holes on Buckhurst Road.
Cllr Goss advised the he had asked for an update on the Old Town Speedwatch group.
Cllr Wilson and Cllr Peters reported that they had hosted a councillor surgery in the Hub on Western Road.

00684 ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL LIASION

- a) To receive update on public conveniences.
An update on the toilets was given. It was noted that the following toilets are being licensed to the Town Council for cleaning and maintenance and shall be open from April 2025.
- i. Little Common Roundabout
 - ii. East Parade
 - iii. West Parade
 - iv. Sidley
 - v. Little Common Recreation Ground

- vi. Norman's Bay
- vii. Cooden Sea Road (subject to utility company reconnecting water supply)

Channel View East is being leased to the Town Council on a long-term lease, until the lease is signed Rother District Council is managing this site. Devonshire Square is being leased from Network Rail and is undergoing a refurbishment.

- b) To note leaders meeting moved to 4th April 2025. – noted.

Cllr Crotty asked if the leaders could be asked for a location for a banking hub.

- c) To note list of discretionary services received and report to follow on the devolution of services at the next Full Council meeting. – noted.
- d) To note Channel View East Public Convenience lease still ongoing with solicitors. – noted.
- e) To note Bexhill War Memorial confirmed as owned by Rother District Council, ownership of Little Common War Memorial is unknown. – noted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council seek ownership of the war memorials.

- f) To note lease for Pebsham Play Park ongoing with solicitors. – noted.

00685 EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES

To receive reports from external representatives (circulated prior to the meeting) - all noted.

- a) RALC – Cllr Jacklin and Cllr Thomas.
- b) Citizen's Advice – Cllr Byrne.
- c) Bexhill Air Cadet Squadron – Mayor.
- d) Bexhill Maritime – Cllr Timpe.
- e) Little Gate Farm – Cllr Jacklin.
- f) Town Board – Cllr Wilson.
- g) Combe Valley CIC – Cllr Jacklin.
- h) Chamber of Commerce Centenary Fund Assessment Panel – Cllr Wilson.

00686 ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING CONSULTATION

- a) To consider response to Rother District Council housing consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** to submit comments as follows:

That the Town Council continues to dispute the housing numbers allocated by Central Government and encourage Rother District Council to have a proactive approach to infrastructure development. The local infrastructure must be improved to cope with the proposed house building.

The Town Council also wants to see Rother District Council working much more closely with Town and Parish Councils at all stages of the housing and development process.

00687 MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

a) Cllr El

For this Council to consider lobbying East Sussex County Council and local bus operating companies to extend the bus service to the bottom of Galley Hill to serve East Parade.

It was **RESOLVED** for this council to lobby East Sussex County Council and local bus operating companies to extend the bus service to the bottom of Galley Hill to serve East Parade. The Community Bus company will be included in this lobbying.

00688 CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS FOR INFORMATION –

There were none.

00689 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

a) To receive answers to questions raised at the last meeting.

Cllr Crotty asked if the town council could do something on VE Day 8 th May 2025, perhaps in conjunction with Rother District Council.	Arrangements for VE Day have already been made and are underway.
Cllr Blagrove asked if someone from Eastbourne could speak to someone from the Town Council about the marches that take place and things being in the wrong place.	The individual has been put in touch with the Royal British Legion officer responsible for the parades in Bexhill.

b) To receive questions from councillors at the meeting.

Questions shall be noted and responded to in the next meeting agenda.

Cllr Peters asked if ID cards could be provided for councillors.

Cllr Peters asked can the town council do something for Armed Forces Day this year, as there is a grant available to Town Councils.

Cllr Hunt reported that there was a fire at Gullivers land and asked if the town council can do anything to ensure that the land is made safe.

Cllr Blagrove asked if one of the flyers for the Rother Forum could be included in the parish council noticeboards.

Cllr Plim asked if the Marketing and Communications officer would be able to reply to social media comments.

Cllr Blagrove asked why the Facebook is not monitored and why were there links to a Facebook group on posts for three days.

c) To note any future agenda items – there were none.

- d) To consider any new risks to be added to the risk register – Concerns were raised about the risk of key staff departures and the reliance on a these staff members holding critical knowledge.

It was noted that business continuity planning is essential to ensure smooth operations and knowledge-sharing across the team.

00690 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 30th APRIL 2025

All motions for the next meeting of full council on 30th April 2025 must be received by 21st April 2025

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press will not be permitted to attend during the following items:

Cllr Blagrove and Cllr Winter left the meeting at 20:09pm.

00691 MAYORAL CADET

- a) To agree Mayoral Cadet 2025-2026 – further advice will be sought and feedback to the April Full Council meeting.

A cadet was chosen in anticipation of the advice being received.

Cllr Crotty left the meeting at 20:22pm.

00692 TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON LEGAL CLAIM – an update was given.

Meeting closed at 20:24pm

Signed.....

Date.....