

CHRISTCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2021 at Homelands Hall, Kings Avenue, Christchurch, BH23 1NA

Present:-

Cllr Mrs S Bungey – Mayor

Cllr A E Coulton – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr M Cox, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C A Gardiner, Cllr W Grace, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr G R Jarvis, Cllr D C Jones, Cllr T Lane, Cllr S J McCormack, Cllr Mrs S Spittle and Cllr M J Tarling.

Also in attendance: Cllr P Broadhead, Deputy Leader BCP Council, Sir Christopher Chope OBE MP, and Cllr Mrs M Phipps, BCP Councillor for Commons Ward.

Apologies: Cllr V Charrett, Cllr S Fotheringham and Cllr Mrs F Cox,

Officers Present: Cllr Daniel Lucas, Town Clerk
Susan Roxby, Democratic Services Officer

Members of the Public present: 9

Members of the Press present: 1

70. Motions from Councillors

A motion was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Mrs Bungey to suspend the Council's Standing Orders for a period of one hour, this proposal was seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Mrs Coulton.

RESOLVED that the Council's Standing Orders be suspended for a period of one hour.

Voting: unanimous

71. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

71. BCP Christchurch High Street Strategy

The Mayor, Cllr Mrs Bungey, welcomed Cllr Broadhead, Deputy Leader of BCP Council to the meeting and invited questions from Members, and explained that the public would not be allowed to ask questions during the meeting, but 20 minutes would be given for questions from the Public with 3 minutes for each question at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Broadhead gave a presentation to Members on BCP's proposals for the future of Christchurch and its High Street. He stated that there had been miscommunication and confusion as there was a launch paper about the High streets in February, but a strategy was yet to be made and he wanted to hear from residents for their views. BCP Council were looking at regeneration plans, and he considered that there was a prime opportunity to look at the site of the former civic offices. At present there was not much public access to the site, and considered that this should not just be for housing, but a development for the benefit of all people.

Cllr Broadhead stated the Deputy Mayor had mentioned to him that she had heard the rebuild of Saxon Square carpark was going to be discussed at cabinet shortly and confirmed this was not the case and was not happening and there were no projects yet. The Town Council survey consultation would come up with some core proposals and consultation would take place. The Council was using new technology to engage with people for consultation and a test in the technology took place in March.

Cllr Broadhead summarised that BCP have no plans to rebuild Saxon Square carpark or Waitrose carpark, although there was the need to look at the future of car parking in Christchurch. He stated that the previous authority removed too many car park spaces, and this needed to be looked at,

The Mayor then invited questions from the following members:

Cllr Dedman stated that it seemed more to residents than a rumour as there had been 2 emails. The Town Council had not heard anything, clearly there were plans, and asked that he please state in public that the Town Council would be consulted.

Cllr Broadhead replied that a number of residents had emailed concerns to him to complain about the plans for Saxon Square. The last he had heard was that this was only an idea and not plans. He agreed that we should be working together, with the community, Town and Parish Councils. He reiterated that the Town Council had not been consulted as there were no plans.

Cllr Cox stated that the emails were sent around to Conservative Councillors and excluded Lib Dems Councillors and wanted reassurance that everyone should have a say. He stated that Cllr Brooks did talk to people in Christchurch, but he had not explained his ideas, and asked that he could please talk to the Town Council and residents about these plans.

Cllr Broadhead replied that he had made a commitment to include every Councillor, but it was unrealistic to copy everyone into the initial email and was at the formation stage of listening to people.

Cllr Spittle asked for an explanation as to why a Councillor from Highcliffe was appointed, and not a Christchurch Councillor.

Cllr Broadhead replied that it was the leader who ultimately decided who was appointed to cabinet. Cllr Brooks' responsibility was for looking at regenerating the high streets as he had experience in a retail background and that Cllr Brooks had asked to help and to undertake this due to his previous experience.

Cllr Jones stated that the consultation received 26 responses as it was held in lock down and would not receive many answers. He advised that the Town Council was developing a Neighbourhood Plan and was surprised that Cllr Brooks who was involved in Highcliffe Neighbourhood Plan had not come to the Town Council to ask to be included in this which he considered was disappointing. He further stated that at a meeting of the Shadow Authority in 2018 that he welcomed the establishment of Christchurch Town Council and suggested that Poole & Bournemouth did the same and that Cllr Greene had said that he did not want little councils. He asked that BCP Council please work with the Town Council and wanted a commitment.

Cllr Broadhead replied that he had not received a request to work with anyone and made a commitment that he wanted to work with the Town Council.

Cllr Hall enquired if Cllr Broadhead was aware of the Christchurch BID who had consulted with over 200 business. He asked if Cllr Broadhead was also aware that Dorset Council had plans in 1999 to develop Fountain Roundabout and regenerate the Highstreet, but this had been rejected by the former Christchurch Authority.

Cllr Broadhead replied that he was aware of this and advised that Bournemouth also had a BID which was going to ballot this year.

Cllr Tarling felt that there had been a lack of consultation and asked as the civic centre staff were moving out, when and what were the plans for the civic centre and when would the plans start.

Cllr Broadhead replied that it was likely the plans for the Civic Offices development would start in the later part of summer to autumn. He stated there was a 500% increase into the Council's regeneration budget and that a regeneration company had been set up by BCP Council which would engage with the Town Council and that the development would not just have housing on the site.

Cllr McCormack stated that he had only heard what Cllr Brooks had done, but not what he had not done.

Cllr Broadhead replied regarding Cllr Brooks emails, that he would consider any ideas and then look at the evidence. BCP had been looking at the retail strategy including vacant units across 19 High streets in the BCP area and were working with key landowners and agents and would talk to as many people as possible.

Cllr Lane stated that there seemed to be a disconnect with BCP regarding concerns for traffic in Christchurch. He considered that a one-way system and pedestrianisation was not going to work unless a ring road was put in to take traffic out of Christchurch.

Cllr Broadhead replied that he totally agreed with the traffic concerns as there were problems across the whole conurbation. He had previously suggested a bypass for Christchurch but was advised that the previous authority felt this would not work.

The Mayor asked why BCP had not come to the Town Council to consult and wanted a promise from BCP that they would approach the Town Council.

Cllr Broadhead replied that BCP wanted to work together with the Town Council.

The Mayor then invited questions from Members of the Public.

An elector asked for a guarantee that the Two Riversmeet Leisure Centre would remain safe.

Cllr Broadhead replied that it was a most successful leisure centre, so he would want to see it stay as it was a great community asset. He further added that there may be the need to expand leisure provision in Christchurch.

An elector asked why biodiversity protocol had not been included in the plans as it was an integrated approach in Planning Policy and pan Dorset and was an essential part in protecting biodiversity.

Cllr Broadhead replied that BCP were talking about a net gain policy, but did not know specifics, and he would look into it.

An elector stated that BCP needed to be proactive and not have a one size fits approach.

Cllr Broadhead agreed that with 19 High Streets in the BCP area, there would be different approaches and consultation with local people once they had proposals. He asked for members of the public to email ideas to him.

Sir Christopher Chope OBE MP stated that there was a need for consultation on traffic issues and hoped it was the first of many meetings with the Town Council. He further stated there was strong opposition by the public to the Barrack Rd cycle track and asked how we could be assured that BCP were going to listen and take into account the congestion in Christchurch and what effect the proposals would have.

Cllr Broadhead replied that the point of a consultation was that you find out what people think and then listen to it. Some of the consultation feedback forms were negative and he could not support all of them and needed to mitigate, or don't do if the public and Ward Councillors don't agree with what was proposed. He advised that consultation with Ward Members would be next.

Cllr Mrs M Phipps, BCP Councillor for Commons Ward asked whether BCP would consider a bypass or ring road. Cllr Phipps advised that she had the previous Cost Benefit Ratio information which she could forward with the different routes.

Cllr Broadhead replied that this may be the long-term solution, although the previous authority had said that it could not be done, but perhaps they hadn't tried hard enough and surely this was worth another look.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Broadhead for attending the meeting and reiterated the need for the Town Council and BCP to work together closely.

Cllr Broadhead stated for clarity that he will commit to consulting with the Town Council and Ward Members.

Cllr Jones proposed the following motion:

That this council

1. Expresses its thanks to Cllr Broadhead of BCP for attending and answering questions;
2. Notes your explanations given for the ideas set out in Cllr Brook's emails of 20 November and 8 June; and
3. Regrets that the District Council did not consult with the Town Council in the intervening period between November and June (and welcomes assurances of Full consultation in the future).

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Dedman. On putting to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Council:

- 1. Expresses its thanks to Cllr Broadhead of BCP for attending and answering questions;**
- 2. Notes your explanations given for the ideas set out in cllr Brook's emails of 20 November and 8 June; and**
- 3. Regrets that the District Council did not consult with the Town Council in the intervening period between November and June (and welcomes assurances of Full consultation in the future).**

Voting: unanimous (1 abstention by Cllr Spittle)

72. Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan

A report was submitted, a copy of which had been circulated to each member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were asked to consider if the Town Council crest and photo of a Councillor representative should be included in the Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan.

Two members considered that it should be the Mayor's photo as the head of the Council on the Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan, and not a Councillor and stated this was not in support, only that the Council was a consultee.

Cllr McCormack considered that there should be no one on the BID plan as he considered that it endorsed the BID before it was voted on.

The Town Clerk stated that an email was sent to all members for expressions of interest to be considered as the Council representative for the Christchurch BID on 23 April and that Cllr Spittle expressed had expressed an interest and was appointed as the Council's representative unopposed.

Cllr Spittle stated that she was on the BID steering Group and attended as the Council's representative and reported back to the Council on the activities of the BID. She was disappointed that 2 councillors had queried why her photo should be included in the Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan.

Cllr Spittle proposed a motion that her photo as the Council's representative be included in the Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan and the Council's crest, this proposal was seconded by Cllr Tarling.

RESOLVED that Town Council crest and photo of Cllr Mrs Spittle as the Councillor's representative should be included in the Draft Christchurch BID Business Plan.

Voting: 7:5:0

Cllr McCormack and Cllr Jones requested that their votes against be recorded.

The Mayor did not vote.

Cllr Mrs Spittle left the meeting at 7.30pm

73. BCP Transforming Travel - Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme

A report was submitted, a copy of which had been circulated to each member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were asked to consider BCP Council and Dorset Council's joint proposed new sustainable travel route between Merley, Poole to/from Christchurch, and to resolve a response for the purposes of replying to the consultation.

Cllr Mrs Phipps, BCP Councillor for Commons Ward raised concerns from residents regarding the proposed Barrack Road cycleway. Parking had been taken away along Barrack Road and moved to the side streets which were very narrow and congested and there would be difficulties for deliveries to the businesses along the route. She considered that the proposal was not good for businesses or for the air quality.

Members felt there was lack in consultation and the proposal needed to be looked at as they were not good for pedestrians, cyclists or drivers.

Cllr Jones proposed a motion that the Council writes to BCP, express concerns and ask for assurances that we will be consulted in the future. This proposal was second by Cllr Jarvis.

RESOLVED that that the Council delegates to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor:

a) writes to BCP, expressing concerns on the following:

- 1. Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists along the route**
- 2. creation of Pinch points from toucan crossings**
- 3. would increase vehicle traffic due to planning issues**
- 4. take more proactive steps to promote and encourage cycling and the specific use of cycle lane infrastructure already in place and proposed.**
- 5. and effect on businesses in the locality by removing the on street parking to side roads.**

b) and ask for assurances that we will be consulted in the future.

Voting: 12 in favour, 1 against.

The meeting ended at 8:01pm

CHAIRMAN

