

CHRISTCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2021 at at Homelands Hall,
Kings Avenue, Christchurch, BH23 1NA

Present:-

Cllr Mrs S Bungey – Mayor

Cllr A E Coulton – Deputy Mayor (apologies)

Present: Cllr V Charrett, Cllr M Cox, Cllr H Farrell-Jarvis, Cllr S Fotheringham, Cllr C A Gardiner, 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.

Apologies: Cllr A E Coulton, Cllr Mrs F Cox, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr W Grace and Cllr G E E Polson.

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

Members of the Public present: 2

Members of the Press present: 0

174. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Canon Charles Stewart opened the proceedings with prayers.

175. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

176. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

Voting: unanimous (1 abstention)

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S Spittle

Seconded: Cllr D Jones

177. Announcements

The Mayor

The Mayor welcomed new Councillor Harvey Farrell-Jarvis and the new Mayor's Secretary and announced that since the last meeting of the council she had been privileged to attend some wonderful engagements.

The full schedule of events had been circulated to each Member, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

In addition, the Mayor gave mention to the Civic Service being held on 10 October requesting that Members respond to the invitation, and also announced that a Memorial service for former Honorary Freeman, Cllr Colin Bungey was being held on 22 Oct at 12noon, and that everyone very welcome to attend.

The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk informed Members that a Planning application for 43 Bargates, Christchurch to raise objection was not send in time to the BCP Planning Department. The Town Clerk made the Chairman of the Planning Committee aware and the objection concerning was concerning policy HE 2 for the hight, bulk & mass of the application. However, the BCP planning officer had deal with this objection from the Town Council. To address this a diary note would be made for objections to be reported following each Planning and Regulatory meeting.

The Town Clerk stated that he had received comment from Cllr Vanessa Rickett, BCP Ward Councillor for Commons Ward, Christchurch, that at a BCP Council meeting on 14 September she had asked the following question regarding the Barrack Road cycle scheme:

'A petition with approximately 500 verified signatures has been handed into Council, from residents of Commons Ward concerned with the effect on road safety and business viability of the proposed dual cycleway along Barrack Road, as part of the Transforming Cities Fund'.

Please could the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Sustainability confirm that he is in receipt of this petition, and further guarantee that the concerns raised by residents will be fully taken into consideration and evaluated before any further action is taken on this part of the TCF scheme?'

The following reply was received from Councillor Mike Greene, Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability:

‘The proposed improvements on Barrack Road form part of a fast, safe cycle route linking Christchurch to Merley via North Bournemouth and North Poole, with links to the wider Dorset network too.

The biggest problem on our roads is congestion. If by giving people safe and attractive choices we can persuade just a small percentage to choose a more sustainable mode of travel, this will have a significant impact on the level of congestion seen on our roads, allowing junctions to operate within their physical capacity and freeing the space up for those who do still want to use their cars. There will be benefits from reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality too.

As well as positive feedback and support for the proposals, we have also received a petition and other responses which express concern about proposed parking reduction outside some Barrack Road businesses. We will, of course, consider these responses and look at whether there are any mitigating or alternative measures which might be included before reaching any decisions on the final design.

I can assure Cllr Ricketts that any changes to the road, as with all highway improvements carried out by this Council, will strictly adhere to Department for Transport guidance to ensure that what is being designed will be safe for all road users, including emergency vehicles.

While the previous Administration adopted a dogmatic approach to road closures and other such measures, often without any pre-consultation, this Administration’s approach is a much more pragmatic one which weighs up all the aspects fairly before making any changes.’

Cllr Ricketts had since been in contact with Cllr Greene and asked that they work together on both this scheme and the scheme that runs across the Golf Course in order that they can address the concerns of the residents of her ward.

178. Public Participation

An elector spoke raising concerns for the former Police/Magistrates site, a copy of which appears as Appendices ‘B’ to these minutes in the Minute Book.

Cllr Tarling, Chairman of the Planning and Regulatory Committee thanked the elector for raising his concerns and responded that the application was being held up by the section 106 agreement.

179. Public Questions

The Mayor reported that no questions had been submitted to the Town Clerk in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

180. Questions from Councillors

The Mayor reported that no questions had been submitted to the Town Clerk in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

181. Motions from Councillors

Cllr Mrs S Spittle proposed a motion, which was seconded by Cllr M Cox as follows:

1. "Christchurch Town Council is fully supportive of BIDs and the significant benefits and investment that they bring; and
2. Christchurch Town Council supports the Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID); and agrees that if the ballot is successful, the Council will pay any BID levy due in relation to the Council's hereditaments within the BID area (totalling £92.75 per annum) for 5 years".

Members were divided on their support for the proposed motion, some felt they could not support this motion, whilst others felt it should be supported.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **Christchurch Town Council is fully supportive of BIDs and the significant benefits and investment that they bring;**
- b) **Christchurch Town Council supports the Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID); and agrees that if the ballot is successful, the Council will pay any BID levy due in relation to the Council's hereditaments within the BID area (totalling £92.75 per annum) for 5 years; and**
- c) **Delegates to the Town Clerk to sign the ballot papers and return these on behalf of the Town Council.**

Voting: 7: 4 (2 abstentions)

182. Verbal Reports from Partner Organisations

The Mayor announced that she had attended a Clingan’s Trust charity meeting last week and that they were presently looking for a new clerk.

A Member queried the Legates charity, the Town Clerk informed Members that this charity was not transferred to this Town Council and as such the Town Clerk was not employed to undertake the Trust’s work and that a new clerk was being sought.

183. Committee Minutes

The Committee Minutes for the last cycle of meetings were received as follows:

Planning Committee 20 July 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Resources Committee 3 August 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Planning & Regulatory Committee 17 August 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Community Committee 31 August 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Personnel Sub-Committee 1 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Planning & Regulatory Committee 1 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Personnel Sub-Committee 2 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2021 were received.

The recommendation arising from the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 2 September 2021 was then considered and approved:

Minute No. 152 Interviews for the role of Projects Officer (Exempt)

Voting: Unanimous

Personnel Sub- Committee 6 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2021 were received.

The recommendation arising from the meeting of the Personnel Sub- Committee held on 6 September 2021 was then considered and approved:

Minute No. 159 Interviews for the role of Mayor's Secretary (Exempt)

Voting: Unanimous

Resources Committee 7 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were received.

Voting: Unanimous

Cllr Cox joined the meeting at 6.34pm.

Planning & Regulatory Committee 14 September 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 were received.

The recommendation arising from the meeting of the Planning & Regulatory Committee held on 14 September 2021 was then considered and approved:

Minute No. 173. Commissioned Planning Report and Governance Structure at BCP Council (exempt).

Voting: Unanimous

184. Christchurch BID

The Christchurch BID Business Plan 2021 – 2026 was submitted, a copy of which had been circulated to each member a copy of which appears as Appendices ‘C’ to these minutes in the Minute Book.

Cllr Mrs Spittle thanked the Mayor and members of the Council for allowing her to represent this Council on the BID Steering Group and stated the following:

“For several months I have been keeping you up to date with the BID’s Steering Group’s activities which I am delighted to say is now coming to fruition. But first, what is the “BID”? Let me explain:-

In 2011, Mary Portas the retail expert and television personality, carried out a review into issues affecting the retail sector in the United Kingdom, and particularly high streets. This contained a stark assessment of the challenges high street retailers face, including online shopping and out-of-town superstores, all in the aftermath of a tough recession. That was followed by a further threat to businesses we have just experienced – a Pandemic. She recognised the importance of high streets to British society and called them: ‘the heart of towns and cities’.

As a result, in December 2013, the government announced a billion pound package of support for the UK’s high streets, the Business Improvement District Scheme that would be led by and involved Businesses having a say in the improvement of their High Streets. There was also further funding to enable High Streets to set up their own proposed steering groups.

Also in 2013, the government announced its intention to introduce Property Owner Business Improvement Districts. This is how and why Christchurch Town council is eligible due to the ownership of The Old Town Hall, the centrepiece of Christchurch High Street.

BIDs can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and allow the business community and local authorities, in this case BCP Council, to work together to improve the local trading environment, which, in Christchurch, includes tourism.

They are financed through a levy, based on the rateable value, being charged on all businesses and property owners in a defined area in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the local area.

There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures.

The proposed Christchurch Town Council levy is £92.75 per year (or 25 pence per day)

The Business Improvement District proposer is required to develop a proposal and submit this to the local authority, along with a business plan, which members received from our Town Clerk. In addition there are regulations concerning the Ballot which is under discussion this evening, and you'll be pleased to know is overseen by the Secretary of State, at the Ministry of Housing.

Before that stage, as you will see from the plan, a considerable amount of work was done, to include an initial survey to ascertain whether Businesses were interested to the Business Plan Launch event that you, Madam Mayor attended last month. The Consultants – Heartflood, well experienced in dealing with BIDs have been visiting businesses, and contacting Head, and Regional Offices of national companies who have now come on board, and can be seen in the papers before you.

Now the good news;-

Already, many towns and city retail areas have benefitted from this scheme for example;

Salisbury City Centre – £9,355,301

Yeovil – £9,756,897

Taunton, Somerset – £13,962,981

Ramsgate, Thanet – £2,704,213

Commercial Road, Portsmouth – £3,122,375

Fratton, Portsmouth – £3,858,489

Christchurch High Street must not be let down by this Town Council nor left behind their neighbours who have been successful in obtaining funds to improve their areas.

Unfortunately, there is often bad news and members may recall a fraud inquiry at the Bournemouth Coastal BID, which I cannot comment on tonight, not having

sufficient information. I believe however, this is the first case of that type that I'm aware of. There are now over 300 BIDs, many of which have been operating for over 15 years.

Speculation has been made regarding the BID manager's salary, and I can assure not just members but also our two valued officers that it is no way near the figure banded around. I will not mention the amount, here, but if anyone wants more information see me afterwards.

Throughout the preparation, BCP Council, as the Local Authority, has been overseeing the process and will continue for at least the next 5 years. I am pleased to report that on 1st September 2021 the BCP Council Cabinet unanimously passed the resolution fully supporting and endorsing the BID proposal, agreeing to the Ballot being run by CIVICA, agreeing to pay the share of BID Levy (£16,211 per annum) for 5 years. I therefore recommend that a similar proposal be agreed by this Council concerning the agreement of the Christchurch BID, and payment of the levy charge of £92.75 per annum for 5 years.

There are strict requirements for the local authority to manage the collection and enforcement of BID Levy charges. In practice the BID body and the local authority establish a levy collection agreement often known as an Operating Agreement.

By Christchurch Town Council being part of the BID and its Ballot for agreement, this council will be an invaluable member through its ability to overview the Local Authority and ensure it is aware of any concerns raised by businesses in the Town Centre. The major benefit of having CTC on board is that we know, and have often been reminded, that this Council has been around for centuries and will be here for many more centuries. Christchurch Town Council can be relied on by the ever-changing Business fraternity of fair play, transparency and much more.

RESOLVED that the update on the Christchurch BID be noted.

185. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group informed Members that wider public consultation would be the next stage on the options being considered,

It was likely that some groups would need to commission external technical support, including on matters of traffic management, design and potentially the town centre.

A newsletter was being prepared to keep the public up-to-date and to provide opportunities for feedback.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

Voting: unanimous

Exempt Business

RESOLVED to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the matter relating to the personal information and emerging policy.

Voting: unanimous

186. Personnel Sub Committee – Recruitment consideration (exempt)

The Personnel Sub-Committee minutes were received.

187. BCP Planning Committee report (exempt)

Members were updated on the BCP Planning Committee report.

The meeting ended at 7.03pm

CHAIRMAN