

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the **Annual Town Meeting** held on Thursday 12 March 2020 at 6.00 p.m. in the Shire House Suite, Shire House, Bodmin

**PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor J P Cooper, presiding; together with Councillors E Ahearn (arrived at 6.09 p.m. and from item ATM/2020/002), J A Bassett, T M Barber, A J Coppin (arrived at 6.12 p.m. and from item ATM/2020/002), P T Cooper, D A Henderson, A M Kerridge, K J Phillips, and P L G Skea.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr P Martin (Deputy Chief Executive) and Mrs B Briggs (Senior Admin Assistant).

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES:**

Apologies had been received from Councillors L L Frost, J Gammon and S H Kinsman. It was noted that Councillors E M Ahearn and AJ Coppin would both be arriving to the meeting late.

ATM/2020/001 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 7 March 2019**

A copy of the minutes was circulated with the agenda.

ATM/2020/002 **Questions from Members of the Public**

A document containing responses to the questions submitted in advance of the meeting was circulated to those present.

The Chairman outlined that the questions received in advance would be addressed first, before opening the floor to questions in the meeting.

**Hillside Park – An update on the on alleviating the current parking issues**

The Chairman reported that this was an ongoing negotiation between BTC, Cornwall Council and the owners of Bodmin Jail. BTC are currently in discussion with Bodmin Jail relating to the works being undertaken on Hillside Park in development of the Car Park being built on BTC land which has been leased to Bodmin Jail for this purpose. The parking issues are forming part of the ongoing negotiation and all parties are keen to come up with solutions to alleviate the issues prior to the commencement of the 2020 summer season.

The Chairman noted that there were conditions applied to the Bodmin Jail redevelopment planning application which was available on the Cornwall Council Planning Portal, and that some of those conditions relates to this matter. He commented that the situation was something BTC was aware of.

**Coldharbour Sports Pitch - Why should the lease be so restricted that the Youth Football Club could not allow other Bodmin voluntary organisations to use it**

The Chairman reported that the new lease was on the same terms as the previous lease, allowing use of the grounds by Bodmin Youth Football Club. BYFC have undertaken a significant amount of work to improve the facilities at the site. Progress was last reported to BTC at the Properties Committee meeting held on 27 June 2019 (minute ref PP/2019/49 refers). These minutes can be found online at: <https://bodmin.gov.uk/committees/properties-committee/>

The Chairman commented that the feedback received by the Council was that the Club have unfortunately suffered the problem of vandalism which BTC has also suffered and has made no secret of fact that it's a cost the town could well do without. He commented that the football ground was subject to similar damage as well as the results of inconsiderate dog walkers. He noted that the Club must balance the care of children with the ability of the wider community to use the pitch.

The member of the public who had submitted this question was present at the meeting and reiterated that he wished to know why other community organisations were not permitted to use the pitches.

Councillors E M Ahearn arrived at 6.09 p.m.

The Chairman responded to advise that other organisations should contact BYFC directly to discuss such arrangements as this was not part of the lease negotiation and therefore would not fall under BTC's remit. Councillor P T Cooper commented that he was aware that BYFC had submitted a grant application and there were certain conditions as part of the grant draw-down which may also influence the pitches' use.

Councillor A J Coppin arrived at 6.12 p.m.

### **Tour of Britain - Do we know the route into and through Bodmin**

The Chairman advised that information regarding the route of Stage One of the Tour of Britain could be found on the ToB website at:

<https://www.tourofbritain.co.uk/stages/stage-one/#finish>

The Chairman advised that the finish line has been confirmed at St Nicholas Street, as per the new story on the BTC website published on 3 December 2019:

<https://bodmin.gov.uk/2019/12/03/tour-of-britain-website-launch/>

The Chairman advised that this information was also displayed on the BTC website and would be updated as more information was made available. The Chairman confirmed that the route would take riders up Westheath Avenue, through Church Square and that the finish would be outside the Bodmin and Wenford Railway Station. He noted that the Promotions Committee and BTC staff had made great efforts in terms of arrangements for events throughout the town over the course of the weekend and that it would be a great day for Bodmin.

### **Shire House**

#### **a. how much does the Shire House cost the council tax payers each year**

The Chairman advised that this information is publicly available within our annual budget, which can be found online at:

<https://bodmin.gov.uk/documents/finance-documents-and-information/precept-and-budget/>

The Chairman noted that the building does cost a lot but that BTC had worked to reduce the costs, had attracted a number of tenants to occupy various rooms in the House and were looking at more creative ways to use the spaces. He commented

that the Council has a duty to protect the heritage of the historic building, but was looking at ways of offsetting the maintenance costs.

The member of the public who had submitted this question was present at the meeting and questioned why it was not possible to provide an exact figure. He commented that those without the internet would not have access to this information.

The Chairman responded that the exact figure would require detailed calculation and was not available at this time. He commented that the information was in the public domain and anyone without access to the internet was welcome to request them.

**b. Is it the intention that Shire House will provide sufficient income to support itself**

The Chairman confirmed that this was the long-term plan. BTC is investing in the refurbishment of the building in order to make it fit for purpose, and revised hire charges have been agreed to make the Shire House Suite affordable for community use. The majority of the rooms in the main building have now been let, with lease negotiations ongoing with some prospective tenants.

BTC has set up a Shire House Complex Advisory Committee, Chaired by Councillor K J Phillips, to oversee works and discuss long-term strategy. More information can be found online at: <https://bodmin.gov.uk/committees/shire-house-complex-advisory-committee/>

The Chairman commented that, whether or not cost neutrality was achievable, BTC was trying as hard as possible to attain this by looking at creative ideas and trying to create more community access.

**Why are the Minutes of the Sub Committees approved at the Full Council Meetings when the only people that know if they are correct are the Councillors who attended? This is also very off putting for the public who attend**

The Chairman outlined the fact that each Committee and Sub Committee of BTC has the power to make recommendations to Full Council. These recommendations have to be considered and voted on at the next available Full Council meeting. This process is standard across Town and Parish Councils and forms part of the Council's Standing Orders, which can be found on our website here: <https://bodmin.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BTC-Standing-Orders-V2.1-21.03.19.pdf> (Item 13 refers). He noted that a paper copy could also be requested.

The Chairman commented that this process was an important and necessary part of the democratic process, allowing all 16 members of the Council to debate and vote on recommendations from Committees. He noted, however, that the Council had undertaken a review of its operating structure having been conscious that there was room for improvement in order to make things more efficient and that there were plans in place to make committee structure more streamlined. He reported that, as the Council moved into the 2020 civic year, the see fruits of those labours would become evident.

**Why has the refurbishment / rebuild of the Fair Park toilets not taken place and in the light of modern thinking has the Council thought of single sex toilets**

The Chairman reported that plans had been produced for Fair Park Toilets. This tender was originally posted to Contracts Finder with a closing date of 27 October 2019 in order to adhere to BTC's procurement process which requires three quotes to be sought. Due to the fact that an inadequate number of quotes were received, BTC then agreed to re-tender the contract on 28 November 2019 (minute ref PP/2019/112 refers). This tender was published on Contracts Finder with a closing date of 27 February 2020. He noted that the matter would be reported to the next Properties Committee meeting due to be held on 26 March 2020.

The plans, as published on Contracts Finder, include individual unisex toilets as per the plans originally presented to the Properties Committee on 27 June 2019. These plans can be viewed as part of the agenda pack for that meeting online here: <https://bodmin.gov.uk/committees/properties-committee/properties-committee-agenda-pack-archive/>

The Chairman commented that the Council had been working hard to be creative with provision of public toilets and that it was looking into various options including a community toilet scheme. He also noted that the Council were very aware of the increase in the precept and that, although the Council would love to look at refurbishment of all its public toilets in the town this was a very expensive proposition.

The Chairman commented that community toilets had the potential to offer more secure as they would be monitored and noted that BTC public toilets were susceptible to ongoing vandalism which exposed BTC to significant costs that it would rather be able to invest elsewhere.

#### **How much effort has been made to bring in an income from Narisa Hall or what is the future thinking**

The Chairman reported that BTC was currently in ongoing lease negotiations with a prospective tenant. As these negotiations are ongoing, they are currently of a confidential nature, but BTC hopes to be able to report on an occupation of Narisa Hall in the very near future.

The Chairman noted his thanks to BTC Officers who had worked to come up with creative approach to this.

#### **What is the maintenance upkeep plan for the Dennison Road due to the patch work and what seems to be excessive wear and tear in a short period of time**

The Chairman commented that this was a matter for Cornwall Council Highways Department, as these roads are not under the ownership of BTC. He reported that representatives of BTC, both Officers and Councillors, have spoken with Cornwall Council regarding this scheme and have fed back public opinion to them over the course of the works and since their completion.

More information about Cornwall Council Highways Department can be found on Cornwall Council's here: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/>

The Chairman confirmed that he had made representations himself and attended a number of meetings. He hoped that, in the lead up to the Tour of Britain, residents may see improvements due to the upcoming demand on the surfaces. He noted that Councillors would continue to apply pressure in this regard.

The Chairman reported that he had witnessed Cornwall Council employees earlier that day undertaking preparation work for the implementation of the no waiting zone within the low speed environment. He confirmed that the plan was to bring this in across the whole low speed area (i.e. all red tarmac and block) to prevent undesirable parking.

Councillor A J Coppin commented that the Planning Committee had recently objected to the new Indian Cuisine establishment being a takeaway due to concerns over parking and felt that people collecting takeaways contributed to the disruption of inappropriate parking.

The Chairman commented that Cornwall Council were currently undertaking a consultation on parking enforcement and encouraged members of the public to take part in this survey.

Councillor P T Cooper commented that he would contact Councillor L L Frost in order to feed back to Cornwall Council that general opinion was that issuing tickets would prevent future offences.

### **Has the town got any plans to smarten up derelict areas of the town, old St John's hall, old garage on Lostwithiel Road**

There was some discussion around the areas in question, with the Chairman considering that the member of the public who submitted this question may have been referring to Launceston Road rather than Lostwithiel Road or whether the garage referred to was in actual fact the site of the former Focus DIY store. It was noted that none of these areas of land were under BTC ownership.

The Chairman advised that a planning application had been made by Ocean Housing with respect to the former Focus DIY site, and that the BTC planning committee had considered the application appropriate. The Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor E M Ahearn added that the developer had indicated their intention to address concerns about the junction and were in liaison with Cornwall Council Highways Team in this regard.

The Chairman commented that St Johns Ambulance Hall would be an excellent location for a community interest group, and encouraged anyone with an idea of how best to utilise this building to come forward and that they would have the full support of Bodmin Town Councillors. Councillor A J Coppin advised that there had been a planning application to turn the building into a dwelling some years prior. There was consensus that this building offered an opportunity for a community option should there be an option put forward which proved sustainable.

Councillor J Bassett commented that part of the Bodmin Vision initiative was to scope sites around the town and establish ownership.

**Can the town publish an updated plan on expansion planned with what new infrastructure if any are planned, i.e. schools etc.**

The Chairman advised that he is the Chair The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which is in the process of creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and more information can be found on BTC's website here: <https://bodmin.gov.uk/bodmin-neighbourhood-plan/> or by contacting Councillor Cooper.

The Chairman apologised for the fact it had been some time since the past Steering Group meeting or since any information had been circulated. He hoped that a meeting would be arranged soon, but reported that work was still going on in the background including the creation of a website which was currently at design stage and would be brought back to a future meeting.

The Chairman noted that BTC are a consultee on planning applications, but the Principal Planning Authority is Cornwall Council, who makes final decisions on all planning applications in consideration of comments made by BTC, other consultees, and members of the public as well as their own Planning Case Officers.

However, the Chairman advised that, as a Council, BTC has continued to push for master planning, before allowing developers onto sites. He noted that Boundary Road had been an exception to this, as this Wainhomes development was outside Development Plan Document (DPD). He advised that for any new developments, it was stated in the DPD that they should be master-planned and that BTC had been pursuing this with Cornwall Council.

Councillor P T Cooper commented that the Bodmin Vision document had identified the requirement for an additional school in the area and had made representation to Cornwall Council to improve facilities in the town in light of the additional housing development.

It was noted that other developments in the town included the second platform at Bodmin and Wenford Railway station, the proposed Camelford Bypass and the Chairman's recent discussion with Scott Mann MP regarding additional funding for public services including Bodmin Health Centre.

**Anti-social behaviour seems to be increasing within Bodmin, can the Town Council explain any actions they have/are taking or planning to take to assist with the reduction**

The Chairman advised that BTC works closely with the local police and has invested in CCTV in the town. BTC is currently in liaison with Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service to arrange a presentation on the benefits of the CCTV system in conjunction with Devon & Cornwall Police. This presentation will take place during the public session of a Council/Committee meeting in order to enable members of the public to attend.

Information relating to this presentation will be published on the BTC website and Facebook page in due course.

The Chairman added that police are not always at liberty to publicise all incidents where CCTV has assisted, but it was there in background and was certainly an

asset. Councillor E M Ahearn added that prevention of crime is an additional benefit and this is inevitably difficult to measure and record.

Councillor J A Bassett noted that there was a Police and Crime Commissioner election coming up on Thursday 7 May.

Councillor P T Cooper added that BTC had been able to secure funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office to have a monitor installed at the police station in Bodmin which was now active.

The Chairman reported that, during the term of the current Council, the Parks Team had worked with a vandal who had been brought in to see the work involved in maintaining the Town's open spaces. He commented that this is work the Council would like to be more involved in.

**A Cornwall Council matter that a resident would like BTC comment on – The 'Dennison Road' scheme – are they going to mark the cycle ways better to prevent obstructive parking. i.e. parking at the old Cat and Fiddle, parking on the roundabout at the church**

The Chairman noted that this was a Cornwall Council matter, but that BTC had considered a Highways Scheme Expression of Interest in this regard. As he had reported at the BTC Full Council meeting held on 16 January 2020 (minute ref C/2020/014 refers) there was now a plan in place to implement Traffic Regulation Orders throughout the low speed environment which would prevent parking on the roads throughout the low speed environment. As such, BTC's expression of interest had been put on hold pending the outcome of these works. The Chairman noted that an update had been discussed under an earlier question.

The Chairman then updated on a Cornwall Council initiative to regenerate the Dennison Road area which re reported had been prompted by the Bodmin Vision document and discussion with BTC. He reported that Cornwall Council had appointed a consultancy company, who have been involved in regeneration projects throughout the country, to engage with residents. He reported that a Charrette meeting was to be held to engage with residents about the project and that ideas from this meeting would help to shape a plan for the area. He encouraged members of the public to keep an eye on the BTC website as more information would be advertised in due course.

**A Cornwall Council matter that a resident would like BTC comment on – Is there a final solution for one-way bridge on Beacon Road**

The Chairman confirmed that CORMAC had made this scheme permanent on 6 March 2020 following a six-month consultation period. This matter had been reported at the BT Planning Committee meeting held on 4 March 2020 (minute ref P/2020/061 refers). He advised that the notice could be viewed on Cornwall Council's website:

<https://www.engagespace.co.uk/cornwall/uploaddocs/Consult1831/Final%20Decision%20Letter.pdf>

The Chairman reported that the no entry signs were now fixed and it was pleasing to see this trial be made permanent after much lobbying by residents to make this happen. Councillor T M Barbery spoke on his objection to the scheme, and his concern regarding the speed at which motorists were coming over the bridge which was he felt was a danger to those using the Harleigh Road and Crabtree Lane junctions.

There was some discussion about extending the one-way scheme to include Harleigh Road to reduce this risk and the Chairman advised that, if there was the will in the community it should be taken up with Cornwall Council.

Councillor Barbery also noted that he had been advised by Cornwall Council that there would be no entry signs on the road in addition to the signs which were already in place.

**A Cornwall Council matter that a resident would like BTC comment on – why are developers allowed to open up sites without putting the final entrance in first**

The Chairman commented that each development Planning Application is considered by Cornwall Council as principal planning authority on its own merits and BTC acts as a consultee. When each application is considered by BTC the Planning Committee will raise any concerns they have over access routes etc.

Due to its position as a consultee on applications, members of BTC must refrain from commenting on specific sites except during the planning application process, in order to prevent prejudicing themselves and therefore excluding themselves from future voting.

Members of the public are able to comment on any active application and are therefore within their rights to raise any concerns over access. Should members of the public have any concerns over current development sites, they should raise this concern with their ward member who will be able to canvas Cornwall Council on their behalf.

A list of BTC ward members can be found on the BTC website here:  
<https://bodmin.gov.uk/home/councillors/>

The Chairman reported that Bodmin Town Councillors had assisted in making the case for completion of the access Road to the new Wainhomes site on Boundary Road including an open letter to Planning Officers to raise residents' concerns and attendance at planning meetings.

A member of the public considered that Cornwall Council had not enforced the condition on the planning consent whereby internal development cannot proceed without access being put in place. The Chairman acknowledged this enforcement issue and assured those present that BTC would keep making the case on residents' behalf.

There then followed some discussion regarding the absence of Cornwall Council representatives at the meeting and other Council meetings throughout the course of the previous year. The Chairman commented that there were to be local elections

in 2021 when residents would be asked to elect Town and County Councillors, and residents would ultimately have the final say at that election.

A member of the public, Mrs C Howard, reported that she had attended a meeting the previous week where it had been reported that the 92% of Cornwall Council housing development applications would not have been approved if they had they applied the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) regulations. She noted that it was her intention to obtain the minutes from that meeting and that she would forward them to BTC officers. She also reported that it was the hope that local MPs would take the issue of the NPPF to parliament with the view to it becoming a statutory obligation.

The Chairman commented that, although the NPPF was only a guideline at present, a Neighbourhood Plan area had now been designated and a Neighbourhood Plan for Bodmin would serve to bolster guidance in NPPF.

**A Cornwall Council matter that a resident would like BTC comment on – The Council has said before that one reason the precept in Bodmin is so high is that with have a greater proportion of C band properties and below than other places. What is being done to change this.**

The Chairman reported that the Cornwall Site Allocations DPD was adopted by Cornwall Council at a meeting held on 26 November 2019. This document includes the planned development sites for Cornwall, including Bodmin. More information can be found online at:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/development-plan-documents/cornwall-site-allocations-development-plan-document/>

The Chairman advised that all developments are subject to planning applications. BTC is a consultee on all applications and will consider each one on its own merits. Consideration will be given to the types of houses being proposed. Comments will be submitted to Cornwall Council for consideration. He noted that members of the public are also welcomed to submit comments via the Cornwall Council Planning Portal at:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/online-planning-register/>

The Chairman commented that the precept was calculated on a Band D rather than Band C property. He noted that it was well documented that BTC has worked to raise the profile of Bodmin needing more diverse housing stock. He added that BTC are listening to residents and were conscious of the BTC portion of precept.

The Chairman noted that, when setting the budget in January, Members had spent a great deal of time debating matters as they were very conscious of taking money out of the pockets of residents. He hoped that residents would agree that BTC had worked hard to keep the precept rise as low as 2.97%.

The Chairman noted that BTC had previously inherited devolved responsibilities that other towns traditionally had not. He noted that, as these responsibilities are passed down to town and parish councils in other areas, their residents may well see higher increases.

**Have you had a reply, or meeting, with Ms Kennally (Chief Executive of Cornwall Council) in response to the Open Letter to her dated 21 October 2019? May we please be updated.**

The Chairman reported that, as was reported at the Planning Committee meeting held on 18 December 2019 (minute ref P/2019/285 refers) a meeting took place on 21 January 2020 with Ms L Wood, Service Director for Planning at Cornwall Council. Members of the Planning Committee attended this meeting and were invited to provide an overview of discussions.

The Chairman noted that, in respect of housing developments generally, the Cornwall Site Allocation DPD was adopted by Cornwall Council in 26 November 2019. He advised that there is currently no consultation open for BTC to comment on in relation to housing development in Bodmin, or any active planning applications in relation to housing developments for the BTC Planning Committee to consult on, but that BTC will continue to consider the community's comments and concerns as appropriate in any future consultations. Due to the need not to prejudice themselves and predetermine any future vote, he advised that Members must be considered in their responses to any queries and speculation in this regard. They will willingly listen to your concerns and take them on board and, although unable to comment on personal opinion, this does not detract from their understanding of residents' concerns.

The Chairman commented that he hoped residents felt that BTC was listening. He noted that, as Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor E M Ahearn was at residents' disposal.

He commended Mrs Howard on the job she and fellow residents had done to raise the profile of the issues surrounding the developments and raising the profile of the cause. He commented that, although the adoption of the DPD may not be desirable position they had hoped for, he felt that the town would be in a worse position had they not put the work in.

Councillor Ahearn reported that she had felt positive following the meeting on 21 January 2020 with Ms L Wood and felt that she had understood the issues.

The Chairman enquired as to whether there were any further questions from members of the public, and none were forthcoming.

The Chairman summed up by saying that there was great progress currently being made in the town, with the new skate park coming forward, redevelopment at Dennison Road was being explored, and a second platform was being constructed at Bodmin and Wenford Railway Station.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for attending the meeting.

ATM/2020/003 **Any other urgent / relevant items which the Chairman considers appropriate**

There being no other items for discussion, the meeting closed at 7.47 p.m.