

BODMIN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

THURSDAY 09 MARCH 2023 AT 18.00 P.M.

Members present: Chair - Cllr P Cooper (Ex-Officio)

Cllr T M Barbery (Vice Chair) Cllr J Cooper, Cllr K Philips, Cllr P Skea, , Cllr H Blacklaw, Cllr P Brown, Cllr B Crowle, Cllr J Burden, Cllr J Whatton, Cllr C Rowe, Cllr E Ahearn, Cllr J Gibbs,

Officers present: P Martin (Town Clerk - TC), A Bright (Community Services Manager/Assistant Town Clerk CSM/ATC), A Colquhoun (Senior Administrative Assistant and Committees Administrator – SAA&CA), S Gooch – Senior Administrative Assistant (SAA)

One member of public was in attendance.

Meeting Start time: 18.00pm – **Finish** 19.02pm

1 Mayor/Chairman’s Announcements and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members that the meeting is being recorded or the purposes of minutes taking. The recording will be deleted once the minutes have been ratified.

There were no announcements and no apologies received.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting - 10th March 2022

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the Annual Town Meeting minutes 10th March 2022.

3 Questions from Members of the Public

The Chair read out the questions and answers to the meeting as follows:

Q1. Can the Town Council confirm whether they are developing plans to create a community service building in the area of Priory Park?

If so, can they advise how the local community are being consulted and included in the development of this proposal. In addition, what sort of budget are they allocating to exploring this development further?

Bodmin Town Council are currently scoping a potential re-implementation of plans drawn up in 2006-2008 for a Community Support Centre as per Policy and resources meeting held on 20th October 2022.

The decision and recommendation to scope the project was based on the recognition that such a development could be a potential solution to some of the wants and needs of the community as evidenced in recent surveys and consultations such as the Charrette and the recent Shire Hall and Shire House survey. A repeating theme from the findings alludes to a need for usable and sustainable community spaces, continuing community participation, to bring more people in to Bodmin and to create investment potential.

Early scoping has been difficult due to a delay in obtaining the necessary permissions to share the plans, however we are continuing to find solutions to this.

The public minutes (10th March 2022) and resolves are detailed below:

“To consider and agree scoping the potential of re-implementing the 2006-8 Priory Community Support Centre plans:

- a) Relevant permissions to utilise plans and existing documentation
- b) Investigate reasons for failure of project completion
- c) Scope up to date costings and building considerations
- d) Look at aligning with current ongoing projects within the town i.e Town Team Re-imagination and Youth Investment
- e) Scope community interest.
- f) To delegate authority to spend up to £15,000, dependent on progress cost analysis”

Minutes

“Cllr A Coppin- shed light on situation back when the original plans were created. There were lots of issues, the project was looking good from funding point of view, but the Football Club did not have as much money as thought and they wanted a solid fence all around the football pitch. There has since been a change in flood risk on Leat, it was a 1 in 100 risk and now a 1 in 50, would have to have deep foundations to mitigate flood issues. It was deemed unviable and would cost too much when they drilled to pile drive the foundations.

Cllr P Cooper- As Bodmin has a lot of community groups crying out for space this could attract healthy sums of money so worth exploring the potential of this development. BTC are in the process of declaring an interest in the Athelstan site so that could be another potential location for a community support centre.

Cllr J Cooper- can we move this item into confidential? As may be more info that can be shared there. All in favour to move to confidential.

It was proposed to agree on all six points (a to f), majority carried, one voted against and one abstained.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree scoping the potential of re-implementing the 2006-8 Priory Community Support Centre plans:

- a) Relevant permissions to utilise plans and existing documentation
- b) Investigate reasons for failure of project completion
- c) Scope up to date costings and building considerations
- d) Look at aligning with current ongoing projects within the town i.e Town Team Re-imagination and Youth Investment
- e) Scope community interest.
- f) To delegate authority to spend up to £15,000, dependent on progress cost analysis.

Up to £15k agreed at P&R Committee meeting in October 2022 with £5k allocated in reserves.”

a) What is the net annual cost of the Shire Hall. (single figure).

2022/23 Budgeted £41,475 YTD £57,681.23 (both figures include £19K loan repayment)

b) What is the net annual cost of the Shire House.

(single figure) - 2022/23 Budgeted £29,060 YTD £29,671.51

c) What were the results of the public survey about the Shire House.

The survey report has been produced by BTC and we are working with our architects to produce and develop potential refurbishment options for consideration. We are considerate that our neighbourhood plan is also in progress, along with the Town Team development and we are wanting to work alongside these vital projects and town visions to ensure any development is as comprehensive and as effective as possible whilst meeting the needs of the community in a sustainable and robust way with best value as the Council's guiding principle.

Our collaboration with Bodmin College and Falmouth to create a higher education provision in Shire House means that there is a need for a sensible but timely approach to phase works to completion.

We are looking to release this information early in the new financial year along with a number of other developments and alongside our annual report and budget release. We hope to be able to progress with our architects as soon as possible to begin the first phases of the project.

The member of the public asked why it is taking so long to release the survey results – The Chair explained that following previous feedback from the public, they preferred information to be provided in one comprehensive piece rather than released in ‘drips and drabs’. The Chair also suggested in future that it might be possible to send out a briefing of the findings prior to the

survey results report. He briefly summarised that public feedback had indicated that they wanted the refurbishment of Town Council buildings to be modern, an income stream for the Council and an asset to the Community.

d) Why is it taking so long to resolve the issues with the Jail Car Park.

Bodmin Town Council have been in mediation with the Jail, which has been reasonably successful. Legal teams are working towards a resolution.

BTC is now in a position to sign off legal documentation subject to agreement to heads of terms with Bodmin Jail. A public statement will be released upon agreement.

The member of the public asked for clarity about what the Council was intending to do in regard to Bodmin Jail. The Chair clarified that the Council currently manage the Car Park as Bodmin Jail had not met the planning conditions. The aim is that Bodmin Jail will eventually take back responsibility for running the car park.

e) Can the council taxpayers in Bodmin afford the cost of so much due diligence to do small tasks.

Bodmin Town Council could not afford not to undertake due diligence.

A recent legal case involving Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council reinforces the need for thorough due diligence. Whereby the council did not follow the correct process for the disposal of land contained within the Open Spaces Act 1906. Both Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council were faced with hefty costs.

The Chair emphasised that not following due diligence correctly could cost BTC a huge amount of money in legal costs as well as loss of reputation.

f) How much money has been spent to date in getting to the point that new toilets can be replaced at the Fair Park.

BTC Estates team are working with Healthmatic to submit a planning application once the design and access statement has been written.

£3690.34 has been spent to date on the planning application.

The member of the public asked why this was taking so long to complete. The Chair clarified that this situation was around tendering for repairs caused by vandalism and not the original refurbishment costs. The Council has to consider best value for money. The TC had been advised to take planning advice from Cornwall Council and the police. The new toilets should also be as 'vandal proof' as possible.

g) Has the Council any influence on the way the utilities scar our town with unsympathetic installations and which are not aesthetically pleasing.

Bodmin Town Council are not consulted on new utility installations in the town. We are not sure which one you are referring to but the one at West Heath Avenue is not aesthetically pleasing to say the least.

The member of the public outlined three examples of installations put in by Gas suppliers on the way out of Bodmin, GPO – Queen's Crescent and Electricity – Trelawney Road – he felt this was ruining the town. Cllr Cooper said that with regard to the installation at West Heath – BTC had objected and had been promised by Cornwall Council that they would be sympathetic. The residents had also objected and yet Cornwall Council still continued with the work. It was suggested that that the public could write to their MP and Cornwall Councillor, Pat Rogerson with their concerns. The Chair added that BTC are not always consulted or taken notice of.

Cllr J Cooper added that there had been a consultation previously but enough time had been allocated for people to speak. He added that there was a safety issue for traffic and the Chair said that there was a visibility issue. Cllr Barbery said that he had contacted Cllr Pat Rogerson with regard to the planning permission but had not yet had a reply back.

Cllr J Whatton arrived at 18.23.

h) How does the Council know that it has receive all money collected by the County Council on their behalf. When does it receive the payments.

The Precept is collected by Cornwall Council via Council Tax. BTC receives the precept from Cornwall Council in 2 payments – 1 in April & 1 in September each year.

The Precept for 2023/24 is £1,622,158 an increase of 3.73%. which equates to a weekly increase of 22.61p for Band D properties.

The Chair clarified that the right amount allocated by Cornwall Council is based on the number of properties in Bodmin. Cllr J Cooper stated that Cornwall Council estimates as they do not know the exact number of properties and legal capacity is with Cornwall Council and not BTC.

i) With all the extra houses built in Bodmin and the additional council tax income that brings why is it has Bodmin the highest precept of all the minor councils in Cornwall.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/24jhqnof/parish-precepts-2022-23.pdf>

Bodmin Town Council is one of the larger town Councils in Cornwall. Cornwall Council precept list for 2022/23 (see attached document) following councils who are similar in size to us all have higher precepts Truro, Falmouth, Newquay & Penzance.

Bodmin also has a disproportionately low number of Band D properties compared to other town of a similar size.

The TC showed a print out of the precept list to the member of the public. Cllr J Cooper explained that properties are 'zoned' by Cornwall Council – much of Bodmin is '0' rated.

He suggested that residents need to support the Neighbourhood Plan – this might ensure that more money may be available for residents in the future. The next meeting will be 15 April – presenting information. Cllr J Cooper said that that we are at the end of stage 2 of a 5 stage project.

The member of public asked when the next election was due – this was confirmed in 18 months time.

The topic of having a Mayor for Cornwall was also raised by the Chair – he confirmed that BTC has expressed that the community should have a say as this appears to be a foregone conclusion. This could be very expensive and compared this with the costs of having a Police Crime Commissioner which costs £100,000s to run.

The Chair said he had attended a session with Kate Kennally and that limited time had been allocated to ask questions and express opinions on this matter. The Cornwall Councillors were also not allowed to answer questions and there had been no supplementary questions.

The Chair raised the point that public feedback from the previous Annual Town Meeting that communications from BTC were poor.

The Chair stated that BTC had taken this issue on board and mentioned that Councillors now had surgeries on Market days, the BTC newsletter is now bi-monthly, the Mayor's column (he clarified that he had mentioned the meeting in his column the two previous weeks also advertised the 'Warm Space' and 6 day opening). BTC has a website and the Community website is being utilised to advertise community activities and information. Also the staff have been provided with relevant training and are able to sign post if required.

The Chair said that it might be possible to provide more general statements about what BTC are doing without legal implications and that a 'litmus test' of how the public are feeling about BTC is that they don't come to the meetings in high numbers as previously to raise issues. Cllr Barbery added that he has received positive feedback about BTC from the people of Bodmin.

The Chair also said that since Covid BTC has been supportive with events eg. Jubilee celebrations and even with a small budget allocated there had been positive feedback from the rest of the County.

Cllr Ahearn raised the concern with Social Media reporting that there has been negative criticism from people in Bodmin and there had been little support from the public in terms of volunteering for events.

The Chair stated that there were many selfless individuals and groups in Bodmin who did fantastic work. The Camera Club are now present at events taking photographs. £10k has been raised to help keep many of these groups going. He also said that the TC has also worked hard on preparing a 4 year strategic plan for Bodmin.

The CSM/ATC outlined when asked by the member of the public what was happening on the Coronation weekend.

There is to be a three day event – if they can obtain a large screen the coronation will be broadcast and also the Sunday night concert. There are to be a 'Big Lunch' and 'Big Help Out'

events. Volunteers will be involved with demonstrations and activities. BTC still waiting for the proclamation.

The member of public mentioned the tree planting – Robartes Road – Lower Beacon – they want the town crier and Cllr Barberby to be present.

St Piran's day was discussed – it was observed that many children attended the event on the Folly. The High Sherriff also attended – there had been a design a reusable water bottle competition sponsored by Proper Cornish including pasties for the children.

The member of the public stated that he felt that the Council had moved forward this issue but felt BTC should state more on what it is doing for the people of Bodmin by being more focused in the newsletter. He further added that he felt the Annual Town Meeting had not been particularly well advertised – The Chair suggested improved advertising of the Annual Town Meeting as an action.

The member of the public suggested that a draft copy of the minutes should be made available on the website within one month of the meeting. This was agreed as an action for the administration team.

Netball update - MUGA

A quote of £56k has been received but BTC is looking at an alternative source.

This project has not been budgeted for in this year's budget, also need to make clear than no club/group will have exclusive rights to the use of the netball court so it will be for general use only.

KBSK

BTC are in support of the concept and are seeking clarity around the length of lease and valuation of the site for rent. It is hoped a meeting with the KBSK directors to discuss further.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions or comments. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting finished at 19.02pm

DRAFT

Action	Details	Responsible officer/ department
To make available a copy of the draft Annual Town Meeting minutes to the public as soon as possible	Member of public requested that the draft Annual Town Meeting minutes be made available to the public as soon as possible – The Chair asked if this could be actioned	Administrative Team
To improve the advertising of the Annual Town Meeting	Member of public felt the Annual Town meeting had not been particularly well advertised	Administrative Team

Annual Town Meeting 09th March 2023 – Action table