

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE**

19TH MARCH 2020 at 8.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Parminder Basra (Town Mayor) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Nick Brown, Amanda Hack, Leanne Lee, Sam Maxwell, Phil Moitt, Tracey Shepherd, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Imran Uddin, Marion Waterton and Robert Waterton.

Officers in Attendance: Mr Darren Tilley, Executive Officer & Town Clerk.

There was one member of the public present at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR PARMINDER BASRA, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

5834 Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Newly Elected Councillor (Millfield Ward)

Following the Millfield Ward by-election on 27th February 2020, in accordance with Standing Order 4.8, the Executive Officer & Town Clerk reported that a Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Councillor Leanne Lee had been duly signed and witnessed.

5835 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Ajmer Basra, Alex Dewinter, David Di Palma, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Sohan Johal, Paul Kennedy, Satindra Sangha and Darshan Singh.

5836 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

5837 Public Session

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There was one member of the public present at the meeting. Mr. Roger Berrington gave everyone on the Council his best wishes.

5838 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 30th January 2020 were circulated (item 5 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Parminder Basra and seconded by Councillor Nick Brown and was:

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 30th January 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5839 Vote of thanks to Mr Roger Berrington

Council proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Roger Berrington in recognition of his services to Braunstone Town Council and the residents of Braunstone Town.

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Amanda Hack and was

RESOLVED that Braunstone Town Council offers its thanks to Mr. Roger Berrington in recognition of his distinguished long service to Braunstone Town Council and the residents of Braunstone Town.

Reason for Decision

Mr. Berrington had first been elected in 1991 and served as a Town Councillor until 2011. He returned to the Town Council following a by-election in 2013 and served until 2019. Mr. Berrington served as Town Mayor twice in 1997/1998 and 2004/2005. During his service on the Town Council, Mr. Berrington served on the Planning Committee and the Committee had benefited from his knowledge and experience. Mr. Berrington had also served the Town by supporting community groups and organisations, including Braunstone West Social Centre, Braunstone Town Community Mini Bus and Braunstone Life. In addition, Mr. Berrington had also served the Town as a Blaby District Councillor for a number of years.

The Town Mayor presented Mr Berrington with a framed certificate and an engraved desk clock. Mr. Berrington thanked the Town Council for their support and added that it had been a privilege to serve the community.

5840 Request to Waive Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – Thorpe Astley Tennis Court Improvements

Council considered a request from Policy & Resources Committee to waive Standing Order 6.6c(i) and Financial Regulation 11.1(i) to enable it to consider utilising a single supplier for the installation and maintenance of an access gate and associated booking software at Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts, including entering into a service contract, in the event that the Committee decided to go ahead with the project (item 7 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Amanda Hack and was

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 6.6b and Financial Regulation 11.1e, that Standing Order 6.6c(i) and Financial Regulation 11.1(i) be waived in order to allow Policy & Resources Committee to use CIA Fire & Security for the installation of access gate, and associated works, and to enter into an ongoing maintenance and service contract.

Reason for Decision

To enable the provision, installation and ongoing maintenance of the access gates and locking system which was a bespoke system only provided by CIA Fire & Security, and the use of the venue management system, which was only provided by the Lawn Tennis Association, both of which were unavailable from any other providers.

5841 Request to Waive Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – Thorpe Astley Welcome Signage

Council considered a request to waive Standing Order 6.6c(i) and Financial Regulation 11.1(i) to enable Planning & Environment Committee to use a single supplier for overseeing the installation of welcome signage at Thorpe Astley, in the event that the Committee decided to go ahead with the project (item 8 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Robert Waterton and seconded by Councillor Phil Moitt and was

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 6.6b and Financial Regulation 11.1e, that Standing Order 6.6c(i) and Financial Regulation 11.1(i) be waived in order to allow Planning & Environment Committee to use Leicestershire County Council for the manufacture and installation of welcome signage at Thorpe Astley, including approval of the locations, design, installation and associated legal agreements.

Reason for Decision

To utilise Leicestershire County Council's experience and expertise in highway matters, combining the procurement of the design, manufacture and installation of the proposed signage alongside the permissions and approvals process, providing for cost effectiveness and efficiency.

5842 Committee Appointments

Council considered Committee Appointments following changes in the membership of the Council (item 9 on the agenda)

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Amanda Hack and

RESOLVED that Councillor Leanne Lee be appointed to the vacancy on Planning & Environment Committee.

Reason for Decision

To enable the efficient and effective transaction of Planning & Environment Committee's business.

5843 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Councillor Parminder Basra, reported that in the current circumstances with the spread of Covid-19, it was considered appropriate to postpone her Charity Dinner and Dance and Awards Night. The Town Mayor hoped that these events could be rearranged later in the year.

In response to questions, the Town Mayor agreed she would wish to enable people who wanted to make a contribution to her charity to be able to and she hoped that the events could go ahead later in the year with the agreement of the incoming Town Mayor.

b) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown, stated that the Covid-19 situation presented the most serious challenge to the economy, society and individuals since World War 2. The Town Council's overriding priority was the safety of residents, staff and Councillors. Councillor Brown added that Principal Authorities had responsibility for essential services; for the Town Council the focus needed to be the community and providing support to residents and the community to support the elderly and vulnerable. Councillor Brown asked for patience and understanding as the evolving situation was assessed and resources were re-allocated in response.

c) Executive Officer and Town Clerk

The Executive Officer and Town Clerk reported in respect of the evolving Covid-19 situation and associated response as follows:

“On Tuesday 17th March 2020, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Council's Management Team met and, in accordance with the Business Continuity Plan, I “declared an incident” due to the Coronavirus and associated Government, Public Health England and NHS advice, which activated the provisions of the Council's Business Continuity Plan and enabled us to convene as the Incident Response Team”.

“The activation period, subject to confirmation by Policy & Resources Committee, is from 17th March until 30th June 2020”.

“This approach enables us to:

- identify Key Roles & Responsibilities;
- analyse the emerging risks to the Council's Services, our customers, hirers, users, councillors and staff;
- define and prioritise the Critical Functions of the Council's business; and
- detail the agreed response to the emerging and evolving official advice".

"The approach also provides justification for utilising the urgency delegated authority provisions in the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers, enabling the Executive Officer & Town Clerk: *To take such action as is required in the case of an emergency or urgency subject to:*

- a) consultation with the Town Mayor, Leader of the Council and the Chair of the relevant Standing Committee, or, in their absence, the relevant deputy; and*
- b) a report on the action taken being made to the next meeting of the Council or relevant Standing Committee, as appropriate".*

"There is no intention to draw the public's attention to the fact that the Business Continuity Plan has been activated and an incident declared. The purpose is to provide focus and utilise the available powers to take timely and appropriate action to protect our services, staff and councillors and to support our community, customers, users and hirers".

"While the Business Continuity Plan had been aimed at single unforeseen major incidents, such as fire or loss of utility, many (although not all) of the principles can and should be applied to the Coronavirus situation. Furthermore, it provides an important and useful opportunity for us to test the workings and operation of the Plan when we have comparatively more time and space to do so (compared to a closure of the Centre for use as an evacuation centre or as result of fire)".

"As a public body, Braunstone Town Council has a duty to respond in a balanced and proportionate manner. HM Government has access to the best medical advice through the Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England and the best scientific advice through the Chief Scientific Officer. Therefore, the approach has been to respond in accordance with the advice issued through the Department of Health, Public Health England and the NHS, since to act consistently and in accordance with the national response provides for the best way to protect individuals and communities from the Coronavirus".

"The Management Team agreed initial actions on 12th March 2020 in response to guidance and advice issued by the Government and Health Services". Copy circulated and filed with these minutes.

"The main focus initially was:

1. to ensure that our buildings maintained high standards of cleanliness and hygiene to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people; and
2. to share the most up to date public health messages and advice concerning self-isolation and contacting NHS 111, as well as

advice concerning handwashing and hygiene”.

“As the Government and Public Health England advice has evolved and developed, particularly advice on self-isolation, social distancing and non-essential travel, the Incident Response Leadership Team’s focus has been on preparing the Town Council for reduced staffing capability and exploring alternative options”.

“In addition, the Executive Officer & Town Clerk took two decisions under the urgency delegated powers to facilitate the application of the social distancing advice; these are applicable from 17th March until 30th June 2020, subject to consideration by Policy & Resources Committee”.

“First was to make the following amendments to our Centres Terms & Conditions of hire:

~~In all cases~~ Where a booking is on or after 1st July 2020, the £100 non-refundable deposit paid for the large function rooms will be forfeited.

- (a) Should the hirer cancel a booking, the deposit of £100 or total cost of the room hire shall be forfeited, unless the booking falls between 17th March and 30th June 2020 and the booking was made prior to 17th March 2020. All cancellations must be notified in writing to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk.*
- (b) Should the Council, before a function commences, be of the opinion that it is likely to be of an objectionable and undesirable nature, it shall have full power to cancel the booking and return the hire fees and shall not be liable to pay compensation*
- (c) All cancellations must be made in writing to Braunstone Town Council. Bookings will NOT be cancelled unless written notification is received from the person signing the booking form.*
- (d) A booking may be transferred to another date provided 28 days’ notice is given, except where the booking falls between 17th March and 30th June 2020 and the booking was made prior to 17th March 2020, then no notice is required. If the booking is transferred more than once, a modest administrative charge will be levied”.*

“The second decision made was to close the Millfield Hall, Council Chamber and Thorpe Astley Main Hall to new hires to prevent large gatherings”.

“The Fosse Room has been booked around any remaining bookings for Town Council use. The room has been utilised for meetings of the Incident Response Leadership Team and for meetings with partners, for example, the Bar Operator. This is to avoid close proximity which would arise if the meetings were held in the Town Clerk’s office as would normally be the case”.

“The community rooms at both Centres and the interview rooms at the Civic Centre remain available for use given groups who work with vulnerable people, Counsellors and Citizens’ Advice Bureau make use of such facilities. This is designed to strike a balance between supporting social distancing guidance and the spread of the virus while minimising the adverse impact of

social isolation. However, this is being kept under review as official guidance evolves and is updated”.

“Currently existing bookings are being honoured at both Centres and the Centres, Library and Bar remain open during business hours. However, this is also being kept under review as official guidance evolves and is updated”.

A list of the Actions agreed by the Business Continuity – Incident Response Leadership Team on 17th March 2020 was circulated and filed with these minutes.

“In order to ensure the authority can conduct its business and meet its legal obligations, Councillors are asked to contact the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, which includes via the PA & Administrative Officer, at the earliest opportunity to advise if you have been instructed or decided to self-isolate or whether you have been diagnosed with the Coronavirus. In the event that current measures and guidance remain in force for several months, this will also assist the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to recommend to Council approval of absence for those Councillors who are not likely to attend meetings for a period of 6 months or more in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972”.

“Following consultation with the Leader of the Council, an Extraordinary meeting of Policy & Resources Committee has been scheduled for Thursday 2nd April 2020 at 6.30pm. The Committee will receive an updated report on the actions being taken in the context of the most recent guidance and will consider recommendations on the Council’s approach going forward. Following the meeting, both Planning & Environment Committee and Community Development Committee are scheduled to meet as normal. All Committees will be asked to determine their priorities, along with flexible delegation arrangements to enable the Council to continue to function and respond to the ongoing and evolving Coronavirus situation”.

“The Business Continuity – Incident Response Leadership Team is scheduled to meet at least weekly to review guidance and progress with actions. In light of the decision made on 18th March 2020 to close schools, the Team is scheduled to meet on Friday 20th March 2020 to consider the impact on staffing and our services”.

In response to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk’s statement (above), the following issues were raised by members of the Council:

- (a) the next services being reviewed were the Library and Customer Services, given the imminent closure of schools to most children;
- (b) it was important to prepare for the next stages of the Covid-19 incident, including planning for the worst case scenario;
- (c) the Town Council needed to lead by example, follow health advice and safeguarding;
- (d) it was important for the Town Council to support residents and the community to respond to the Covid-19 incident;
- (e) the Town Council would need to ensure partnership links with the Principal Authorities and with Local Area Coordination were harnessed in order to maximise the effectiveness of the response;

- (f) providing support for the community should include a leaflet drop with information on support available, volunteers would be needed to deliver the leaflet and information would be needed to support people and to channel people's wish to volunteer to assist others;
- (g) it was important to recognise that advise was to socially distance, therefore, this presented challenges with providing support to others;
- (h) Councillors, staff nor residents should be put into situations where they should have to be in contact with others;
- (i) supporting vulnerable people would require DBS Checks;
- (j) it was important not to duplicate the efforts of community groups, principal authorities and other agencies, therefore it was important to find out what they would be doing in order to compliment those services;
- (k) guidelines would be needed on what could and could not be done when helping others;
- (l) to contact those who need help, the Town Council should utilise existing contacts, including existing services and community groups;
- (m) coordination would also ensure that people who needed help would get essential supplies, such as food;
- (n) the Town Council could provide a Hub support service, where people offer to volunteer to help those in need in their neighbourhood and those who need support phone in to request help; the Town Council could then put the resident and volunteer in touch;
- (o) Council and Committee meetings should only take place where there was a legal requirement for them to take place or essential business had to be transacted and this could only be legally undertaken by the Council or a Committee;
- (p) Officer Delegated Authority and Urgency Powers should be used in the first instance to undertake the Council's business; Council and Committee meetings would need to be as few as possible and only meet in exceptional circumstances if it was unavoidable, three Councillors was the quorum for Policy & Resources Committee;
- (q) there was a need to investigate remote systems, such as that used by Leicestershire County Council, to provide access to meetings;
- (r) the Local Government Association were lobbying to get changes to legislation to allow Council meetings to take place remotely;
- (s) the Annual Meeting should not take place if at all possible, if it was required to take place, then it should do so with the minimum quorum attendance and transacting only the business it was required to by statute; and
- (t) it was a fluid situation and the Council, Councillors and Officers should look at other ways to deliver, while social distancing and utilising other ways to keep in touch.

5844 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

5845 Reports of Standing Committees

Council received the following reports of Standing Committees:

- (a) Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 6th February 2020 (p6826 – p6931);

- (b) Community Development Committee meeting held on 6th February 2020 (p6932 – p6941);
- (c) Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 13th February 2020 (p6942 – p6948);
- (d) Employing Committee meeting held on 18th February 2020 (p6949 – p6951);
- (e) Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 5th March 2020 (p6952 – p6960);
- (f) Appeals Committee meeting held on 6th March 2020 (p6961 – p6962).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Reports be adopted.

5846 Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice had been submitted.

5847 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

5848 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

A report was given.

b) Blaby District Council

A report was given.

5849 Outside Body Reports

a) Braunstone Town Community Minibus

A report was given.

b) Braunstone West Social Centre

A report was given.

c) School Governors

A report was given.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____