

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD USING ZOOM VIDEO AND WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

25TH JUNE 2020 at 6.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Parminder Basra (Town Mayor), Councillor Darshan Singh (Deputy Town Mayor) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Shabbir Aslam, Ajmer Basra, Nick Brown, David Di Palma, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Amanda Hack, Sohan Johal, Paul Kennedy, Satindra Sangha, Tracey Shepherd, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Marion Waterton and Robert Waterton.

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

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR PARMINDER BASRA, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

5854 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sam Maxwell, Phil Moitt and Imran Uddin.

5855 Disclosures of Interest

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

5856 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 were no members of the public present at the meeting.

5857 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 19th March 2020 were circulated (item 4a on the agenda) and also the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 4th June 2020 were circulated (item 4b on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Robert Waterton and seconded by Councillor Ajmer Basra and was:

RESOLVED

1. that the Minutes of the meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 19th March 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record; subject to the following amendments:
 - (a) the title of Minute 5841 reading "Request to Waive Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – Thorpe Astley Welcome Signage", and
 - (b) under Minutes 5848 and 5849 where it stated "No report was given" it being amended to read "A report was given"; and
2. that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 4th June 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record; subject to inclusion in the heading that the meeting was "Held using Zoom Video and Web Conferencing Software".

5858 Covid-19 Incident – Fixed Term Amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Council considered fixed term amendments in the form of an addendum to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to take account of the circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 Incident (item 5 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED

1. that a fixed term addendum to the Standing Orders, attached at Appendix 1, be approved until Friday 7th May 2021 unless superseded, amended or terminated earlier by Council or if the Secretary of State supersedes, amends or terminates the Regulations; and
2. that a fixed term addendum to the Financial Regulations, attached at Appendix 2, be approved until the May 2021 Annual Council Meeting unless superseded, amended or terminated earlier by Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To facilitate remote meetings, in response to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, in a clear and transparent way.*
2. *To provide alternative ways of approving and making payments in response to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions.*

5859 Internal Audit Report 2019/2020 and Internal Audit arrangements 2020/2021

Council received the Internal Auditor's Report in respect of compliance with relevant procedures and controls in operation during the financial year ended 31st March 2020 and considered appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2020/2021 (item 6 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED

1. that the observations of the Internal Audit (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and confirmation that the Council had appropriate accounting arrangements in place for the financial year ended 31st March 2020 (attached at Appendix 2 of the report), be received and noted;
2. that the outstanding recommendations for improvement from the 2018/2019 Internal Audit, along with the proposed response, as set out in the Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report), be rolled forward and implemented by May 2021; and
3. that the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils Internal Audit Service be appointed to undertake the Town Council's Internal Audit for the Year Ending 31st March 2021.

Reasons for Decision

1. *There were no additional recommendations for improvement from the Internal Audit 2020.*
2. *To note that recommendations from the Internal Audit 2018/2019 remained to be implemented due to the Covid-19 Incident and to ensure that these would be addressed in the next twelve months.*
3. *To ensure arrangements were in place for compliance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

5860 Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020

Council received a report enabling it to consider whether arrangements were in place to ensure sound systems of internal control, including the management of risk and the preparation of accounting statements during the financial year ended 31st March 2020, and to consider authorising the completion and submission of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 accordingly (item 7 on the agenda)

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

RESOLVED that the systems of internal control and management of risk be confirmed as sound and that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

Reason for Decision

Having reviewed the control measures for each of the areas listed on the Annual Governance Statement and the assessment of risks facing the Council and associated mitigating measures, Policy & Resources Committee were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2020, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.

5861 Accounting Statements 2019/2020

Council received the End of Year Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2020 and considered whether to adopt and submit the Accounting Statements 2019/2020 accordingly (item 8 on the agenda)

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

RESOLVED that Section 2, Accounting statements 2019/20, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2020, attached at Appendix 9 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

Reason for Decision

Having carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's financial arrangements, the Policy & Resources Committee concluded that there were sound systems of internal control. The Internal Auditor, having reviewed the annual accounts, found the Accounting Statements to have been prepared on the correct basis and were supported by adequate audit trails to underlying records.

5862 Schedule of Council and Committee Meetings until May 2021

Council considered for approval a Schedule of Meetings until May 2021 (item 9 on the agenda)

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

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Meetings, attached at Appendix 1, be adopted; with meeting start times being the subject of consultation with Councillors.

Reason for Decision

In the short term, to meet the requirements to respond to the impact of Covid-19, including recovery of services. In the medium term, to support the recovery of the Council's non-essential business, while recognising the ongoing risk that normal business may continue to be interrupted by Covid-19 and the associated restrictions and response. To avoid time clashes with meetings of the other Councils and provide for maximum attendance.

5863 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Councillor Parminder Basra, announced that there were no engagements or events planned due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions; which had also resulted in her period of office being extended to the next Annual Council Meeting, scheduled for May 2021. The Town Mayor announced that she was considering online opportunities to raise funds for her Mayoral Charity.

b) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown, announced that since Policy & Resources Committee met on 11th June 2020, a significant easing of the Covid-19 restrictions had been announced which would enable outdoor play areas and outdoor gym equipment to be used. In addition, the restrictions would be lifted on Libraries, Community Centres and Bars/Cafés.

The Leader stated that the Council was working towards managing and mitigating the risks of opening these services in the context of financial pressures. While the Council continued to receive its precept income, it faced a significant budget shortfall with the loss of facilities hire income and fees and charges.

The Leader added that there were difficult decisions ahead and the Council would need to keep under constant review the viability of opening its facilities if the income generated was consistently short of the additional cost.

c) Executive Officer and Town Clerk

The Executive Officer and Town Clerk announced that the Town Council was making good progress with implementing the phased reopening of the services which were closed due to Covid-19.

Next week, Customer Services at Braunstone Civic Centre would be reopening for face to face enquiries on reduced hours, in order to accommodate safety mitigations and enhanced cleaning. Opening hours would be Tuesday – Friday 9:30am - 12:00 Noon and 2pm - 4:30pm.

The pedestrian thoroughfare from the Car Park between the Centre and Library to Kingsway shall be closed until further notice. Access to both the Civic Centre (for all services as they open) and the Library (from 6th July) shall be from the Car Park/Welcombe Avenue entrance only. This was to avoid congestion under the hood at the entrances/exits of both buildings.

Customer Services at Braunstone Civic Centre would be dealing with one stop general enquiries, dog bag purchases, and reporting any general issues. Facilities bookings would not be taken at this stage. Also since

31st March, Blaby District Council transactional Services were no longer provided through Customer Services since the district council were not in a position to renew the service level agreement with the Town Council.

There was space for two people/households/bubbles to queue while maintaining social distancing inside the Foyer in addition to those being served at the Reception desk, which has been equipped with a Perspex screen and hand sanitiser. There would be no seating and it was not anticipated that there would be large queues since most of the services available should be transacted in less than 5 minutes. Telephone, email and web enquiries continue to be available and should be encouraged where this was possible.

The Library was due to reopen to the public on Monday 6th July to find, borrow and return books only. The layout had been reorganised to comply with social distancing, the soft furnishings and tables would be removed. The computers would not be available. The Council has also explored whether it could participate in the County Council's Click and Collect service; however, the County Council confirmed that this service would only be available at County run libraries and would not be made available to community run libraries.

The toilets at both venues shall remain closed to the public for the time being.

At Thorpe Astley Community Centre priority continues to be given to the nursery, Pop Up Care, and the GP Branch Surgery, which was likely to commence minor operations in the treatment room in July once Pop Up Care have closed for the summer. After this initial period of operating separately, Officers would be working with both Pop Up Care and Kingsway Surgery to risk assess and devise joint operating arrangements for September onwards. There were no plans to reopen the Reception at Thorpe Astley, at least until room hires become available at that site. As current guidance stands, due to the set up arrangements to ensure both the nursery and GP service would be Covid-19 compliant, it was likely that when Room Hires become available these would only be available at weekends.

Also, due to open from 4th July were playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment. Further guidance had been issued by government on ensuring these operate safely and the Executive Officer & Town Clerk was currently reviewing this ahead of the next Incident Response Leadership Team on Tuesday to see whether the risk assessment and mitigating actions would need to be revised to ensure that residents could use these facilities as safely as possible.

5864 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

5865 Reports of Standing Committees

Council received the following reports of Standing Committees:

- (a) Policy & Resources Committee held on 30th April 2020 (p6973 – p6979); and
- (b) Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 11th June 2020 (p6982 – p6990);

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Reports be adopted.

5866 Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice had been submitted.

5867 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

5868 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

Councillor Amanda Hack, as County Councillor for Braunstone Division, reported on the following matters:

- i. all committees and scrutiny bodies continued to meet; the next Council meeting would be a week on Wednesday;
- ii. Councillors have been receiving briefings from Service Directors, which included Education, Health, Highways and Births, Marriages and Deaths;
- iii. during the restrictions Government Guidance changed in a number of areas; for example the opening of Household Waste and Recycling Sites;
- iv. the Director of Education had provided an update on work to ensure schools were Covid-19 secure; many primary schools had reached pupil capacity, including Kingsway Primary School; and
- v. Joint Health Scrutiny had received Covid-19 figures; also it had looked at the situation with care homes and how officials had been ringing round care homes to find out how they had been affected by Covid-19, many were struggling financially;
- vi. Leicestershire was one of 11 public health pilots concerning the Covid-19 response; however the Council had no powers to authorise a local lockdown; and
- vii. Councillor Hack stated that there were many overgrown areas which were causing access problems, particularly on walkways and cycle paths, and asked that if Councillors were aware of any to take a picture and forward it to her.

In response to a question from Councillor Robert Waterton, Councillor Amanda Hack confirmed that during the lockdown only a small percentage of those children classed as vulnerable continued to attend

school. Winstanley School offered free hot meals to encourage pupils to attend.

b) Blaby District Council

Councillor Nick Brown, as District Councillor for Millfield Ward, reported on the following matters:

- i. at the last Full Council meeting a Green Strategy to 2030 had been approved; it was important to ensure that the Council changed and reviewed its wider policies and operations in order to deliver the targets in the Green Strategy;
- ii. the Annual Air Quality report shows improvements across Braunstone Town; and
- iii. an update on the Covid-19 Community Hub and support for parishes had been given, particularly in relation to the forthcoming end to the official shielding period.

Councillor Shabbir Aslam reported on the continued work to ensure that all those who needed support during the Covid-19 restrictions continued to receive the support they needed; for example with shopping.

Councillor Tracey Shepherd, as District Councillor for Winstanley Ward, reported on the Homelessness Policy and that 13 families were currently reported as being at risk; she added that there was a need to obtain further funding to ensure vulnerable families were supported.

5869 Outside Body Reports

a) Braunstone Town Community Minibus

Councillor Sam Fox-Kennedy reported that the Minibus was not operating during the Covid-19 restrictions since the drivers and most of those involved were either elderly or shielding. She hoped that the situation would improve so that it would be up and running again soon.

b) Braunstone West Social Centre

No report was given.

c) School Governors

Councillor Nick Brown reported that Millfield Academy Governors were meeting on Monday. Attendance in Early Years and Year 6 was similar to the national average.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

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: _____