

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

27TH JANUARY 2022 at 8.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Darshan Singh (Town Mayor), Councillor Satindra Sangha (Deputy Town Mayor) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Ajmer Basra, Nick Brown, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Amanda Hack, Sohan Johal, Paul Kennedy, Leanne Lee, Rebecca Lunn-Scoppie, Sam Maxwell, Phil Moitt, Tracey Shepherd, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Marion Waterton and Robert Waterton.

Councillor Alex Dewinter observed the meeting remotely through Zoom Video Conferencing.

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

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

COUNCILLOR DARSHAN SINGH, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

5990 Tribute to former Town Clerk, Mr. Ian Laughton

The Town Mayor, Councillor Darshan Singh, opened the meeting and recalled that just before Christmas, Councillors had received the sad news that former Town Clerk, Mr Ian Laughton, had passed away in March 2021 following illness.

Mr Laughton had been employed by the Braunstone Town Council for 28 years from November 1987 until he retired in April 2015.

The Town Mayor invited those present to join in a minute's silence in remembering Ian Laughton's contribution to the Town's public life and joining him in sending Ian's wife and family the Town Council's best wishes as they came to terms with their loss.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown, recalled Ian Laughton as an officer who went above and beyond. Ian had played a pivotal role delivering the ambitions for Council to provide new and enhanced services during the 1990s and beyond. Significant achievements had been transforming the Civic Centre facilities, overseeing the relocation of the Library to the Civic Centre site, enhancing parks facilities, including the creation of a new Community Orchard, and ensuring that a new community facility was provided and operated by the Town Council at Thorpe Astley. Councillor Brown recalled that Ian was partial to biscuits, which had been a standing joke at meetings for many years.

Councillor Brown concluded his tribute saying that Ian had been taken too early, that he would be fondly remembered and that the Council and the Community owed its gratitude to him for his achievements.

Councillor Phil Moitt added that he had been very saddened to hear of Ian's passing, recalling Ian as being very kind during his year as Town Mayor,

adding Ian was a gentlemen and “Mr Humphrey” type character who would be sadly missed.

Councillor Sam Maxwell recalled that as Chair of Community Development Committee she would often have her children with her when she attended her Chair’s pre-meeting with Ian. One of her daughters occupied herself with Ian’s post-it notes. Councillor Maxwell recalled how Ian always sent her daughter a birthday card, including a post-it. Councillor Maxwell concluded that Ian’s passing was a devastating loss.

The Town Mayor invited Mrs Jo Fox, former Town Council Leader, who joined the meeting via Zoom Video Conferencing, to share her memories and pay tribute to Mr Ian Laughton. Mrs Fox recalled how Ian had embraced change, when the Labour Group took control following local elections in 1995. Ian was hard working, diligent, committed, worked hard to ensure that ambitions were delivered and he had a wicked sense of humour. Ian’s advice was always sound. Mrs Fox recalled his major achievements as development of the Civic Centre, obtaining funding for enhanced facilities at Mossdale Meadows, ensuring that there was no access to Mossdale Meadows from the new cinema complex, overseeing the relocation of the Town’s Library and the creation of a new Community Orchard. Mrs Fox recalled Ian making apple juice on Apple Day, supporting every Town Mayor, and attending the Palace Garden Party with her when she was Town Mayor.

Mrs Fox concluded that Ian was a great character and she offered her deep condolences to Ian’s wife Lesley, his children and grandchildren.

5991 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Parminder Basra and Dipen Nathwani.

5992 Disclosures of Interest

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

5993 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 via Zoom Video Conferencing.

5994 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 18th November 2021 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor and was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 18th November 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5995 Business Plan 2022/2023

The Council considered the Council's Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, along with Service Objectives, in order to determine whether they were relevant to address current and emerging issues faced by the Council and the community (item 5 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED

1. that the Council's Mission Statement be approved without amendment;
2. that the Town Council Priorities for 2021/2022 be consolidated into four medium term Strategic Aims, supported by annual delivery objectives, and be approved as the Council's Business Plan for 2022/2023 as set out at Appendix 2; and
3. that the Council Objectives, set out in Appendix 1, be approved; subject to Community Development Objective 9 being rephrased "*To encourage the formation of new community groups by promoting free/subsidised use of the Council's Community Facilities*".

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Mission Statement set out the Council's vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, recognising that this would be within available resources.*
2. *To focus the Council's resources on four main areas of activity in the medium term to ensure effective delivery of initiatives and projects given the limits on resources.*
3. *To ensure that the Council's objectives were relevant and reflected changing issues within the community.*

5996 Capital Plan 2022/2023

The Council considered priorities and projects for 2022/2023 Capital Plan (item 6 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED

1. that the Completed Projects (section a), having now been completed, be removed from the rolling programme of Capital Projects;
2. that the projects due for completion (section b) be removed, assuming their completion prior to the end of the plan period, otherwise to be included on the 2022/2023 Capital Plan;

3. that the Current Projects (section c) be rolled forward, as amended, on to the 2022/2023 Capital Plan;
4. that the Proposed New Projects (section d) be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Plan; and
5. that the Projects proposed for Deletion (section e) be removed from the rolling programme of Capital Projects.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To confirm that the projects had been completed and there was no further work outstanding.*
2. *To ensure the plan was updated accordingly reflecting progress with its delivery.*
3. *To confirm that the projects were outstanding and were still required.*
4. *To recognise the need to undertake investment and improvement as identified.*
5. *To recognise that, following review, these Projects were no longer required.*

5997 Budget (including Fees & Charges) and Precept for 2022/2023 and future estimates

The Council considered the budget and precept for 2022/2023, including fees and charges, along with proposed estimates for future years (item 7 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED

1. that a budget of £1,000 be included as a one-off in 2022/2023 budget for Grants for community events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee;
2. that the following be included as new items in the 2022/2023 budget:
 - (a) £5,500 for Special (non-Capital) Projects, for example Climate Change initiatives, for the Town Council's facilities and parks;
 - (b) £200 for Library Cleaning; and
 - (c) £1,000 for General Events;
3. that the following one-off budgets in 2021/22 be retained in 2022/23:
 - (a) Christmas lights and decorations at Braunstone Civic Centre and Thorpe Astley Community Centre; and
 - (b) Library Capital Projects;
4. that the budget for the Covid-19 Community Response be deleted;
5. that no percentage increase be applied to Community Centres, sports pitches and miscellaneous fees and charges;
6. that £2,500 of the £25,000 one-off Library Transfer Grant received from Leicestershire County Council be earmarked in the reserves in 2022/23 to be used to offset the additional Library staffing costs transferred under TUPE;
7. that the Estimates for 2022/2023, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as the Council's Budget for 2022/2023; and
8. that a Net Precept Requirement for £720,356 for the financial year 2022/2023 be submitted to Blaby District Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure appropriate financial support to enable Queen's Platinum Jubilee anniversary events to be organised and to ensure their success.*
2. *To fund specific items identified as a priority and to allocate a separate budget heading for Library Cleaning.*
3. *Due to other commitments in 2021/22, the budget for Christmas lights and decorations had not been fully utilised. With Climate Change and other initiatives; there was a need to continue with Capital Projects provision for the Library.*
4. *Financial Resources had not been required for the Covid-19 Community Response during 2021 and the scheme was winding down.*
5. *Following a review of the budgeted income from Room Hires, Policy & Resources Committee established a Community Centres Working Group, which would report in February 2022.*
6. *To enable the Town Council to continue to employ staff at Braunstone Town Library, as set out in its proposed service model.*
7. *To meet the Town Council's operating budgets for 2022/2023 along with funding for the Capital Plan and service pressures as identified in the report on Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning.*
8. *The precept requirement for the year being the difference between expenditure and income, calculated in accordance with Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*

5998 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Councillor Darshan Singh, announced that he had been very busy before Christmas.

In November, the Town Mayor:

- (a) received a Cheque from the SWAGAT group towards his Town Mayor's Charity, McMillan;
- (b) hosted the Christmas Craft Fair and he and his Consort, Councillor Sohan Johal had a stall raising money for his charity, and the Town Mayor thanked all who supported them.

In December, the Town Mayor:

- (a) had a tour of Winstanley School;
- (b) attended a Carol Service;
- (c) hosted families at the annual Christmas Panto and Craft afternoon.

The Town Mayor's next confirmed engagement was a Community Quiz night in March.

b) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown reported that he had no announcements to make.

c) Chief Executive & Town Clerk

No announcements.

5999 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

6000 Reports of Standing Committees: Community Development Committee – 9th December 2021

Council received the Report of the Community Development Committee meeting held on 9th December 2021 (p7326 – p7333).

Page 7327, Minute 60 – Community Safety and Neighbourhood Policing Update

Councillor Robert Waterton advised he had asked a question about motorbikes riding and cars parked on footpaths; however, the Police had not been in attendance to respond. In response, Councillor Anthea Ambrose advised that the Police had confirmed their attendance at the meeting scheduled for 3rd February 2022.

Councillor Christiane Startin-Lorent highlighted that Police notices had been vandalised. Councillor Startin-Lorent advised that she had spoken to a family who were riding motorised vehicles on green space and they saw no wrong in it. She subsequently contacted the Police who did attend, however, the family had moved on.

Councillor Amanda Hack added that the Order is usually temporary and the signs are left up after the Order expires until such a time as they decay.

Page 7330, Minute 65 – Braunstone Town Community Mini-bus Charitable Funds

Councillor Anthea Ambrose reflected on the sad news that the Braunstone Town Community Mini-bus was unable to continue. However, the Group had made a generous gift to the community from their funds, which would be used over a number of years to build community activity in order to reduce isolation. Councillor Ambrose thanked the Trustees for this generous gift.

It was moved by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6001 Reports of Standing Committees: Extraordinary Policy & Resources Committee – 15th December 2021

Council received the Report of the extraordinary meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 15th December 2021 (p7334 – p7337).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6002 Reports of Standing Committees: Planning & Environment Committee – 4th January 2022

Council received the Report of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th January 2022 (p7338 – p7354).

Page 7341 and 7342, Minute 65 – Planning and Licensing Applications dealt with under Delegated Authority

Councillor Robert Waterton highlighted that there had been a meeting between local Councillors and Aldi's agents at the beginning of the planning process and that the agents had agreed to keep in touch; however, they had not done so. Councillor Waterton added that following the Town Council's comments on the proposed re-routing of the footpath, Aldi had commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment, which stated the flood risk was minimal. Nevertheless, it was important to ensure the footpath was fit for purpose for users, particularly the elderly and disabled. Councillor Waterton concluded that the proposed diversion during the works was now likely to be through Owen Close.

Councillor Amanda Hack highlighted the importance of consulting with the residents of Owen Close since the proposed footpath diversion had now changed from the original proposal.

Page 7349, Minute 68 – Planning Decisions

In respect of Planning Decision 21/1310/ADV, Display of three fascia signs (internally illuminated), three flag pole advertisements, one monument sign, and one totem pole (internally illuminated), at 1 Meridian South; Councillor Christiane Startin-Lorent advised that she had spoken to the Planning Officer who had confirmed that the policy had been followed. Currently there was no legislation to enforce LED lighting. However, the Officer had advised that the Town Council should put the suggestion forward in the forthcoming Local Plan Review consultation.

Page 7349, Minute 70 – Proposed Conservation Area for Braunstone Village

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that a meeting would be taking place with Blaby District Council planning policy officers shortly in order to map out the next stages and progress. Therefore, there would be a delay to the timescales.

Page 7353, Minute 77 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that the Council was systematically monitoring the number and location of Houses in Multiple Occupation, including those suspected of being a House in Multiple Occupation. A number suspected had been reported to Blaby District Council and were now officially licenced. Councillor Waterton advised Councillors to advise the Town Council of any suspected Houses in Multiple Occupation in order for the information to be reported to Blaby District Council.

Councillor Sam Maxwell reiterated the importance of reporting suspected Houses in Multiple Occupation in order that the number, density and impact could continue to be monitored.

It was moved by Councillor Robert Waterton and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6003 Reports of Standing Committees: Policy & Resources Committee – 13th January 2022

Council received the Report of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 13th January 2022 (p7355 – p7364).

Page 7359, Minute 73 – Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development

Councillor Nick Brown advised that the contractor undertaking the refurbishment of the tennis courts at Shakespeare Park was now on site and that the works were due to be completed around the beginning of April.

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6004 Reports of Standing Committees: Employing Committee – 13th January 2022

Council received the Report of the Employing Committee meeting held on 13th January 2022 (p7365– p7367).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6005 Motions on Notice

The Council received and considered motions moved on notice in accordance with Standing Order 4.14, as set out below:

a) Community Governance Review of the Parish of Braunstone

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

RESOLVED that the following Motion on Notice be approved:

1. Braunstone Town Council notes with disappointment the decision of Blaby District Council on 14th December 2021 to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Braunstone with a view to creating a separate parish for Thorpe Astley since:
 - (a) Blaby District Council had not received a Community Governance petition, signed by 7.5% of the electorate of the whole parish of Braunstone Town (in accordance with Section 80 (3) (c) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as amended by The Legislative Reform (Community Governance Reviews) Order 2015);
 - (b) there had been no material changes to the parish since the last Community Governance review in 2011;
 - (c) the Leader of Blaby District Council had confirmed that the District Council had not received any representations from registered electors in Thorpe Astley or any other part of Braunstone Town; and
 - (d) no consultation was undertaken with the officers or elected members of Braunstone Town Council prior to the publication of the report on Blaby District Council's agenda.
2. In the absence of any significant support from electors across Braunstone Town, the Town Council can only assume the rationale for undertaking a Community Governance Review is because of short-term partisan party political reasons.
3. Therefore, this Council calls on Blaby District Council to ensure that any future recommendation to split the existing parish and create new parish of Thorpe Astley should be shown to have the support of the majority of electors across Braunstone Town since this will:
 - (a) result in the reduction in the quality and diversity of services available to all the residents, but especially those residents in any smaller parish;
 - (b) result in an increase Council Tax Bills because of diseconomies of scale; and
 - (c) delay or halt entirely both the Town Council and any new Council's response to Climate Change and investment in new and improved facilities and services.
4. This Council also supports the Policy & Resources Committee decision to allow officers to take such action as necessary to ensure that the detrimental impact of splitting the parish is clearly communicated to residents, partners, stakeholders and the wider public, as well as ensuring that these facts are submitted to Blaby District Council as part of the Community Governance Review consultation process.

b) Forest House Medical Centre

It was proposed by Councillor Robert Waterton and seconded by Councillor Leanne Lee and was:

RESOLVED that the following Motion on Notice be approved:

1. This Council notes that a petition of 1307 signatures opposing the proposed closure of the Forest House Medical Centre's surgery on Park Drive and calling on the local East Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group to reconsider the proposal and work to achieve a satisfactory solution for patients was presented to Leicestershire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee on 19th January 2022.
2. This Council supports the petitioners' position and objective, and commits to use its best endeavours in support of Braunstone Town residents' calls for the retention of the Forest House Medical Centre's as a GP surgery.

6006 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

6007 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

Councillor Amanda Hack, as County Councillor for Braunstone Division, reported on the following matters, which had been considered by Health Scrutiny:

- (a) annual delivery pendium;
- (b) review strategy of the Joint Strategic needs Strategy; and
- (c) the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has identified that Leicestershire is getting worse supporting the first 1,000 days of Life; for example
 - i. A&E admissions were up,
 - ii. many 14 month check-ups were being missed,
 - iii. almost 1 in 5 children were experiencing traumatic events,
 - iv. vaccination rates were lower than previous years,
 - v. free school meal entitlements were increasing,

Councillor Hack added that if youngsters couldn't have an enjoyable childhood, this presented concerns for the future.

b) Blaby District Council

Councillor Sam Maxwell, as District Councillor for Ravenhurst & Fosse Ward, reported on the following matters:

- (a) Budget Scrutiny had been a challenge, many Portfolio Holders had not been able to give satisfactory responses;
- (b) the proposed Budget was grim reading, while it balanced in 2022/23 there were pressures over the following 4 years; the

Leader of the District Council was lobbying Government for fairer funding; options for the District Council were slicing services and charging for services; Councillor Maxwell added that the Administration had admitted that it had been a mistake to accept the Government Grant in 2013 to freeze Council Tax for 2 years; and

- (c) there remained concern over the ongoing methane gas leak at Huncote Leisure Centre, which meant the Centre remained closed; Councillor Maxwell added this had resulted in a loss of income and the relocation of essential services; if and when the Centre reopened it was likely to cost the District Council £70,000 per annum to undertake ongoing monitoring.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

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: _____

DATED: _____