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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2022 AT 6.00 pm

Attendance:

The Mayor (Hutchison) (in the Chair)

Councillors Ms Ballard, Beavis, Bradley, Burgess, Casey, Chegwyn, Mrs Cully, Earle, Mrs Huggins, Hutchison, Hylands, Jessop, Johnston, Miss Kelly, Mrs Morgan, Pepper, Scard, Westerby, Durrant, Marshall, Maynard and Cox

Also in attendance: Honorary Alderman Dickson

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR MEMBERS FOR THEIR INABILITY TO ATTEND THE MEETING

Apologies for non attendance were received from Councillors K Bradley, Gledhill, Herridge, Hammond, Philpott, Raffaelli and Honorary Alderman Searle and Kimber.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cully advised that her husband had an allotment on a non GBC site.
Councillor Kelly advised that her partner had an allotment.
Councillor Westerby advised that she had an allotment.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor made a presentation to Debbie Cane who was retiring from the Council after 24 years employment.

The Mayor also advised that he had been very impressed with a recent visit to the BMX track, seeing nearly 200 young people supported entirely by volunteers.

TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2022 AND 22 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the extraordinary meetings of the Council held on 28 September 2022 and 22 November 2022 and the meeting of the Council held on 28 September 2022 be signed as a true and correct record.

DEPUTATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 3.4 AND TR PUBLIC QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO.3.5.

There were no Deputations or Public Questions.

QUESTIONS (IF ANY) PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 3.3

There were two Members Questions.

Councillor Burgess to the Leader of the Council of the Council

Gosport has the highest percentage of veterans in the country, many of whom have lost colleagues during their service to this country. Gosport is also unique in having three Memorials in the Borough, one at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, one at the sunken garden in Lee on the Solent as well as the National Memorial to all those in the Fleet Air Arm who lost their lives at sea.

Gosport has always recognised this and has funded road closures to allow the Act of Remembrance to be carried out at both the Gosport War Memorial Hospital and at the National Memorial to the Fleet Air Arm.

Gosport Borough Council is also due to renew its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2023.

In recognition of the importance to the people of Gosport of the Armed Forces, will the Leader confirm that funding will be in place to enable both Remembrance Services to take place in 2023.

Answer: The Borough Council are committed to supporting the Official Remembrance Event at the War Memorial. There were many others that took place throughout the Borough including Elson, Hardway, Bridgemary and Alverstoke and that these were financially independent from the Council.

The Borough Council could not and should not contribute to the cost of road closures and that as a County Councillor, enquireies should be made to the County Council to waive the fees as it should not be for the Borough Council to fund the County Councillor.

Supplimentary Question:

Will Gosport Borough Council fund the road closures for the Remembrance Event in Lee on the Solent as it had done for the past 20 years to allow vetrans to parade safely.

The Council does recognise vetrans at the Council's official event and that any support for funding the event at Lee on the Solent sould be firected to County Council, or considered being paid for from the devolved Councillor budget.

Councillor Huggins to Councillor Chegwyn.

In May of this year, you increased parking charges to support the 1-hour free parking scheme for all short stay Town Centre car parks, the scheme was offset by implementing an increase to long-stay town centre car parking charges by an average of 10.6%

At the same time, you changed the chargeable periods for all our seafront and leisure car parks, increasing the chargeable time by 3 hours and in turn, would assume an increase in revenue for the council but this was not detailed in the report from May. Can the Leader confirm an estimated income from this since its implementation on the 1st of August 2022? If not can he confirm when he will present the findings and impact on revenue of the additional chargeable 3 hours to Full Council or the relevant board?

Answer: No.

Supplimentary Question: At the meeting at which the additional parking charges were introduced a deputation was presented to the Council detailing the damaging impact of the charges on access to the seafront. At the time the Leader of the Council advised that he would meet with Stephanie Suter to discuss the matter further, could the Leader of the Council confirm that this meeting had taken place?

Answer: At the meeting it was confirmed that a meeting would take place with parkrun, not the depute and that this had taken place.

The impact of the changes on parkrun had been measured and there had not been any complaints or reduction in participants or volunteers.

The Leader of the Council advised that the figures raised from leisure car parks was 10.6% which matched the predictions and would help protect the essential services without making cuts.

TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING PART I MINUTES OF THE BOARDS OF THE COUNCIL.

Consideration was given to the Part I recommendation of the Policy and Organisation Board.

At its meeting on 30 November 2022 the Policy and Organisation Board considered a report of the Borough Treasurer detailing the amended Fees and Charges. The recommendations are now presented to Full Council for approval.

An amendment was proposed to the report as follows:

To amend the Fees and Charges by deleting the £150 charge for an allotment key charge and replacing it with a figure of £50.

This was proposed by Councillor Chegwyn and seconded by Councillor Cully.

This was unanimously agreed.

The exploration of the proposal to allow Hackney Carriage Drivers access to Radar keys was welcome.

Some Members expressed concern that the increases to the car park permits were significant, and that this impacted on the wellbeing of residents. The freezing of the cost of permits for Town Centre residents was welcome.

It was recognised that the parking charges would contribute to the protection of essential services and that budgeting had not been undertaken previously for increasing costs such as inflation.

An amendment was proposed to the recommendation iii) by Councillor Huggins, and seconded by Councillor Burgess as follows.

Following the review described at recommendation ii) above, where fees and charges are found to be significantly at variance to full cost recovery and/or other local authority charges that are demographically similar to Gosport, the Borough Treasurer be given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader of the Council to amend charges either upwards or downwards accordingly to more comparable levels. Consideration will be given to alternative cost recovery to protect the most vulnerable accessing and affording services.

A recorded vote was taken on the proposal as follows:

FOR the AMENDMENT: Councillors Beavis, Burgess, Casey, Huggins, Jessop, Morgan, Scard

AGAINST the AMENDMENT: Councillors Ballard, M Bradley, Chegwyn, Cox, Cully, Durrant, Earle, Hylands, Johnston, Kelly, Marshall, Maynard, Pepper, Westerby, The Mayor.

This AMENDMENT was LOST

It was acknowledged that difficult decisions would need to be undertaken to protect Council services and that any increase in Council Tax was limited.

A named vote was taken on the substantive motion as follows.

FOR the recommendations: Councillors Ballard, M Bradley, Chegwyn, Cox, Cully, Durrant, Earle, Hylands, Johnston, Kelly, Marshall, Maynard, Pepper, Westerby, The Mayor.

AGAINST the recommendation: Councillors Beavis, Burgess, Casey, Huggins, Jessop, Morgan, Scard.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Council approve the fees and charges referred to in the report and appendix for implementation from 1 January 2023 or as soon as practically possible thereafter unless stated otherwise (to include an amendment to deposit charge for allotment key)
- ii) The Council undertakes a further review of its fees and charges to identify areas where the council's fees and charges:
 - a. Are at a level significant variance to the cost of providing the service
 - b. Are significantly at variance other comparable charges

- iii) where fees and charges are found to be significantly at variance to full cost recovery and/or other comparative charges, the Borough Treasurer be given delegated authority in consultation with the Leader of the Council to amend charges either upwards or downwards accordingly to more comparable levels

TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING PART II MINUTES OF THE BOARDS OF THE COUNCIL (PAGES 13 - 14)

RESOLVED: That the Council accept the following Part II minutes of the following Boards.

Community and Environment Board – 16 November 2022
Housing Board – 23 November 2022
Policy and Organisation Board – 30 November 2022.

REVISED AND UPDATED CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Benefits, Procurement and Insurance detailing introducing a new set of Contract Procedure Rules to replace the existing Rules which appear in the Council's Constitution.

Members welcomed the report and thanked the Head of Benefits, Procurement and Insurance for the large amount of difficult work that had gone into the report and the updated rules.

RESOLVED: That full Council approve the Contract Procedure Rules set out in Appendix 2 to the report as a change to the Constitution, taking account of the amendments made at the Standards and Audit Sub-Board on the 17 November 2022.

FORMATION OF A GRANTS SUB-BOARD - CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer seeking Council approval for amendments to the Constitution following the approval of the formation of a Grants Sub Board at the Policy and Organisation Board on 30 November 2022.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the Sub-Board be comprised 3:1:1 to allow the administration to hold the majority in line with legislation.

Members advised that they had hoped that the nature of the Board would mean that decisions made would not be political and that nature of the work of the sub-board would not be political and that any Member would be welcome to talk on an application.

It was felt that the sub-board should be comprised the way it had previously.

The report highlighted the potential for a requirement for an additional payment for the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman should they not already be in receipt of a special responsibility allowance. The Leader advised that if any additional payments were required he would cover them.

A named vote was taken on the proposed amendment, proposed by Councillor Chegwyn and seconded by Councillors Hylands as follows:

Add at the end of 1) and that the composition be 3:1:1, 3 Liberal Democrats, 1 Conservative and 1 Labour.

FOR the proposal Councillors Ballard, M Bradley, Chegwyn, Cox, Cully, Durrant, Earle, Hylands, Johnston, Kelly, Marshall, Maynard, Pepper, Westerby, The Mayor.

AGAINST the proposal Councillors Beavis, Burgess, Casey, Huggins, Jessop, Morgan, Scard.

The MOTION was CARRIED.

RESOVED That the

1. That the Council approve the amendments to the Constitution as required for the formation of a Grants Sub-Board and that composition be 3:1:1, 3 Liberal Democrats, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour
2. That authority be delegated to the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to make any further necessary consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect these changes

ANY OTHER ITEMS

The Leader of the Council advised that Peter Baulf was present and would be heading the legal work for the Council. He also advised that it had been reported that HMS Sultan was to remain open for the foreseeable future, and that it was hoped that clarification would be provided as to what the foreseeable future was.

The Meeting concluded at 7.47 pm

The Mayor.