

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 29th June 2020
Held via Zoom
Livestreamed on YouTube

Meeting Commenced: 19:04.

Meeting Concluded: 21:01

Present:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------|
| Cllr Keith Bonin | Present | Cllr Lise Michaelides | Present |
| Cllr Nicholas Busvine OBE, Mayor | Present | Cllr Tom Morris Brown | Present |
| Cllr Sue Camp | Present | Cllr Rachel Parry | Present |
| Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet, Deputy Mayor | Present | Cllr Richard Parry | Present |
| Cllr Tony Clayton | Present | Cllr Robert Piper | Present |
| Cllr Andrew Eyre | Apologies | Cllr Simon Raikes | Present |
| Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter | Present | Cllr Claire Shea | Present |
| Cllr Roderick Hogarth | Present | Cllr Edward Waite | Present |

In attendance: Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, Senior Committee Clerk**63. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted as noted above.

64. Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Noted that, following the decision by Council to roll over current governance arrangements until May 2021, the following appointments made on 13th May 2019 remained in place:

(a) MAYOR – Cllr Nicholas Busvine OBE

[Minute 50, 13.05.2019 refers]

(b) DEPUTY MAYOR – Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet

*[Minute 52, 13.05.2019 refers]***65. Requests for Dispensations**

In accordance with Sections 31 and 33 of the Localism Act 2011, written requests for dispensations were received by the Town Clerk and granted by the Council to enable the Town Councillors listed below, who were also Trustees of The Stag, to participate in the discussion and vote on Agenda Item 6, The Stag Sevenoaks. Dispensation was granted on the basis that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business, and that it was in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the members to take part.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cllr Keith Bonin Cllr Nicholas Busvine Cllr Sue Camp Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet Cllr Tony Clayton Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter Cllr Roderick Hogarth | Cllr Rachel Parry Cllr Parry Cllr Piper Cllr Raikes Cllr Shea Cllr Waite |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

66. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interests were received in respect of Agenda Item 6, The Stag Sevenoaks, and dispensations granted as detailed at Minute 65 above.

67. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2nd March and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 23rd March 2020

RESOLVED: To receive and agree the Minutes as true records.

68. Governance Arrangements

Noted that, following the decision by Council to roll over current governance arrangements until May 2021, adoption of the following on 13th May 2019 remained in place:

- a) Standing Orders 2019/20 *(Minute 62, 13.05.2019)*
- b) Standing Committees/Sub-Committees *(Minute 63, 13.05.2019)*
- c) Appointment of Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen and Members of Standing Committees and Sub-Committees *(Minute 64, 13.05.2019)*
- d) Representation on Outside Bodies *(Minute 65, 13.05.2019)*
- e) Terms of Reference – Standing Committees/Sub-Committees *(Minute 66, 13.05.2019)*
- f) Annual Subscriptions *(Minute 68, 13.05.2019)*
- g) General Power of Competence *(Minute 69, 13.05.2019)*
- h) General Data Protection Regulations Policies *(Minute 69, 13.05.2019)*

69. Annual Town Council Report 2019/20

The Mayor presented the Annual Town Council Report for 2019/20, noting the achievements during the year. He thanked the Town Clerk and her team for their hard work during the year and especially the extraordinary effort in light of the challenges of the Covid-19 Lockdown period. Mention was made of the excellent progress on the Bat and Ball Community Centre in particular.

RESOLVED: To agree and receive the Annual Town Council Report 2019/20

70. Stag Community Arts Centre

Council considered a report detailing the critical financial position of the Stag Community Arts Centre (“the Stag”) due to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, together with a recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8th June 2020 proposing in principle that grant aid be awarded. A report outlining its Post Covid-19 Recovery Plan had been provided by the Stag, including an update received shortly before the meeting. Council members also received and noted the 1690 messages from the public and organisations of support for the Stag received to date, recognising the loyalty and commitment of the local and wider community. It was noted that c.£18,000 had been raised by the community fundraising appeal.

Councillors asked that their thanks be conveyed to the Town Council and Stag staff for their hard work during these difficult times.

Question from member of the public

The Town Clerk presented a question submitted by a member of the public:

“Given that all Trustees of the Stag are publicly elected councillors, will the Council make it a condition of any funding to The Stag that its Trustee Meetings are open to the public and minutes published on the Town Council website?”

Council considered the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee as set out in the report.

It was noted that Kent County Council had been unable to offer any financial support to the Stag. Sevenoaks District Council had offered a loan to the Town Council which it could not legally accept due to it not being capital expenditure; it was understood that the District Council was considering further whether a discretionary grant could be awarded to the Stag.

Revised resolutions were proposed by Councillor Bonin, seconded by Councillor Clayton, as set out below:

Sevenoaks Town Council is committed to keeping the Stag Community Arts Centre open and operating for the benefit of the residents of Sevenoaks. Therefore, Sevenoaks Town Council proposed to help the Stag achieve funding in the current fiscal year, in line with the Stag’s Recovery Plan. It is noted that the Stag’s Recovery Plan will develop as circumstances change and will need to demonstrate how the Stag will recover to a viable operation, as follows:

- 1. Sevenoaks Town Council will initially grant the Stag £65,000 in line with the request in the Recovery Plan, to cover the first three months of the Stag reopening.*
- 2. The Stag launches a fundraising appeal, with Sevenoaks Town Council agreeing to match fund up to £60,000 achieved by the Stag.*
- 3. Sevenoaks Town Council commits to revisit the Stag’s financial situation on a quarterly basis, offering further grants if needed at the same time being mindful that the Town Council’s revenue reserves should not fall to levels which would put at risk its own services to the Town.*

It was proposed by Councillor Clayton and seconded by Councillor Granville-Baxter, that the revised resolutions be amended to include the creation of:

A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to regularly review the financial position of the Stag and its Recovery Plan

At the request of the Mayor and in accordance with Standing Order 1(s), a recorded vote was taken:

| In Favour of the Resolution: | | Against the Resolution: |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr Bonin | Cllr Morris Brown | None |
| Cllr Busvine | Cllr Mrs Parry | |
| Cllr Camp | Cllr Parry | |
| Cllr Dr Canet | Cllr Piper | |
| Cllr Clayton | Cllr Raikes | |
| Cllr Granville-Baxter | Cllr Shea | |
| Cllr Hogarth | Cllr Waite | |
| Cllr Michaelides | | |

It was proposed by Councillor Shea and seconded by Councillor Dr Canet, that the revised resolution be further amended to include the creation of:

A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to review alternative governance arrangements to those currently operated at the Stag

At the request of the Mayor and in accordance with Standing Order 1(s), a recorded vote was taken:

| In Favour of the Resolution: | | Against the Resolution: |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr Bonin | Cllr Morris Brown | None |
| Cllr Busvine | Cllr Mrs Parry | |
| Cllr Camp | Cllr Parry | |
| Cllr Dr Canet | Cllr Piper | |
| Cllr Clayton | Cllr Raikes | |
| Cllr Granville-Baxter | Cllr Shea | |
| Cllr Hogarth | Cllr Waite | |
| Cllr Michaelides | | |

RESOLUTION

The Mayor put the proposed resolution, as amended, to the Council:

Sevenoaks Town Council was committed to keeping the Stag Community Arts Centre open and operating for the benefit of the residents of Sevenoaks. Therefore, Sevenoaks Town Council proposed to help the Stag achieve funding in the current fiscal year, in line with the Stag's Recovery Plan. It was noted that the Stag's Recovery Plan would develop as circumstances change and would need to demonstrate how the Stag would recover to a viable operation, as follows:

1. Sevenoaks Town Council would initially grant the Stag £65,000 in line with the request in the Recovery Plan, to cover the first three months of the Stag reopening.

2. The Stag to launch a fundraising appeal, with Sevenoaks Town Council agreeing to match fund up to £60,000 achieved by the Stag.
3. Sevenoaks Town Council committed to revisit the Stag’s financial situation on a quarterly basis, offering further grants if needed at the same time being mindful that the Town Council’s revenue reserves should not fall to levels which would put at risk its own services to the Town.
4. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to regularly review the financial position of the Stag and its Recovery Plan
5. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to review alternative governance arrangements to those currently operated at the Stag

At the request of the Mayor and in accordance with Standing Order 1(s), a recorded vote was taken:

| In Favour of the Resolution: | | Against the Resolution: |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr Bonin | Cllr Morris Brown | None |
| Cllr Busvine | Cllr Mrs Parry | |
| Cllr Camp | Cllr Parry | |
| Cllr Dr Canet | Cllr Piper | |
| Cllr Clayton | Cllr Raikes | |
| Cllr Granville-Baxter | Cllr Shea | |
| Cllr Hogarth | Cllr Waite | |
| Cllr Michaelides | | |

71. Press Release

Press Release to be issued regarding the proposals to support the Stag Community Arts Centre.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting.

Signed

Dated

Chairman