

BRANDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Continuation Meeting of the Full Town Council

Monday 17 December 2001 at 7:00 pm at Community Centre, Bury Road, Brandon

Present: Cllr A P Saxby (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Ahern (Vice-Chairman), Cllr E V Ashley, Cllr P S Baldwin, Cllr Ms J S Bourton, Cllr S J Edwards (7:45 p.m.), Cllr Mrs S Jureko, Cllr Mrs E Milner, Cllr R Silvester, Cllr A Thorne and Cllr N A Vant

Also present: Mrs L S Sherer (Acting Town Clerk); one member of the Public.

1. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 1

To allow the Meeting to commence at 7:00 p.m. Proposed : Cllr Baldwin; seconded : Cllr Thorne; **CARRIED** : unanimous. THAT STANDING ORDER NO. 1 BE SUSPENDED.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Hufton, Cllr Mrs Jones-Weetman and Cllr Weetman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman outlined the Rules of Debate and referred Councillors to Standing Orders which required them to stand to address the Meeting. Two Councillors were exempted from this requirement. The Chairman introduced Mrs Linda Sherer to the Meeting, as Acting Town Clerk and sought Council's approval that she minute the meeting. Proposed : Cllr Thorne; seconded : Cllr Mrs Ahern; **CARRIED** : unanimous. THAT MRS LINDA SHERER BE APPOINTED TO MINUTE THE MEETING.

5. CEMETERY MATTERS (Agenda Item 16.)

(i) Pea Sticks – removal by FHDC had cost £100 last year. Cllr Silvester suggested following the same procedure, but noted that the cost might increase as last year's price had been based on the specific availability of contractors and machinery on the relevant date. The Acting Town Clerk was requested to obtain quotation from FHDC. Proposed : Cllr Silvester; seconded : Cllr Baldwin; **CARRIED** : 6 for, 2 against, 1 abstention. THAT THE ACTING TOWN CLERK SEEKS A QUOTATION FROM FHDC FOR THEIR CHIPPING MACHINE SERVICE TO DISPOSE OF PEA STICKS IN 2002.

(ii) Town Keeper's Mobile 'Phone – it was reported that this item was not functioning properly and Health & Safety concerns were expressed in this regard. It was agreed to task the Acting Town Clerk with comparing Networks and obtaining the best deal for the Council in replacing this item. Proposed : Cllr Saxby (from the Chair); seconded : Cllr Baldwin; **CARRIED** : 7 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions. THAT THE ACTING TOWN CLERK NEGOTIATES THE BEST DEAL AVAILABLE TO REPLACE THE TOWN KEEPER'S MOBILE 'PHONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 17.)

As previously advised and held at the Town Council Offices for future reference where appropriate.

7. CIRCULARS FOR COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 18.)

As previously advised and held at the Town Council Offices for future reference where appropriate.

8. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

None received from County Councillors. Cllr Silvester gave a verbal report on matters appertaining directly to Brandon. FHDC will withdraw from the Appeal against the Planning Application in Walton Way following Legal Advice as to prognosis and costs involved. It was likely the applicant would be requested to submit another application. The Chairman thanked Cllr Silvester for his report. Cllr Vant commented upon the fact that no report had been received from County Councillors and the Acting Town Clerk was requested to contact Cllr Bishop to remedy this oversight for future Meetings.

9. C.A.B. USE OF OLD SCHOOL HOUSE (Agenda Item 19.)

The Chairman explained that the CAB had given notice to terminate their Lease. They were to relocate to larger premises, in the Town Centre, at the end of December. Discussion of the Lease terms and conditions took place, including the requirement to return all rooms to their

original state. Although the original Lease stipulated a six months' notice period, the CAB had expended in excess of £2,000 in partitioning and electrical cable work, which the Manager hoped could be taken into account when calculating the termination charge. The Chairman felt these alterations could, in fact, be of benefit to the Town Council for future lettings. Proposed : Cllr Mrs Milner; seconded : Cllr Ashley; that the CAB be asked to pay a further three months' rental to terminate their Lease; Cllr Silvester questioned the legality of this proposal and it was amended by Cllr Milner to the full six months' rental. This proposal was not seconded. It was agreed that the CAB was providing a very beneficial service for the town. Proposed : Cllr Mrs Jureko; seconded : Cllr Baldwin; **CARRIED** : 8 for, 2 against. **THAT THE C.A.B. LEASE SHOULD BE TERMINATED TO ALLOW THEM TO VACATE THE PREMISES AT OLD SCHOOL HOUSE AT THE END OF DECEMBER 2001; THAT THEIR OFFER OF ONE MONTH'S RENTAL BE ACCEPTED; THAT THE PARTITIONING AND ELECTRICAL CABLES REMAIN IN SITU.**

Cllr Ahern requested the Acting Town Clerk to ensure that all six (6) sets of keys were returned by the CAB to the Town Council. The Chairman advised that there had been some interest, from an existing tenant, in renting a further downstairs office. It was agreed that the same cost per square foot should be charged for the additional area. Proposed : Cllr Mrs Ahern; seconded Cllr Ms Bourton; **CARRIED** : unanimous. **THAT THE EXISTING TENANTS BE OFFERED THE RENTAL OF A FURTHER ROOM AT THE SAME COST PER SQUARE FOOT APPLICABLE TO THEIR EXISTING LEASE.**

Cllr Ashley enquired how long it would take for the Town Council to have its own Council Chamber again. The Chairman had attended a meeting of the Brandon Regeneration Steering Group at which various redevelopment strategies were discussed. This item to be placed on the January 2002 Full Council Meeting Agenda, to which the Chairman would be able to bring further information for discussion.

11. BASE LEISURE (Agenda Item 21.)

A new Company had been formed, named Base Leisure, but with none of the original Directors. The Chairman and Cllr Thorne had attended a site meeting with the new Base Leisure representative, who had agreed that the new installation was not of a satisfactory standard. Councillors felt that the area ought to be surrounded by warning tape and a suitable sign affixed, as soon as possible. The Chairman confirmed that the Town Council's Insurers had been apprised of the current situation. Base Leisure debts had been sold to a factoring company and the Chairman was currently in discussion with that latter company to bring a compromise offer to the Town Council for consideration at its January 2002 Full Council Meeting. At this point (7.32 p.m.) the meeting was temporarily adjourned, because of the Fire Alarm, but reconvened after ten minutes (7.42 p.m.). Cllr Baldwin queried the amount of the original invoice from Base Leisure, bearing in mind the unsatisfactory state of affairs. The Chairman reported that his initial discussions with the factoring company had indicated that the final invoice figure would be considerably lower than that on the original submission. In response to a query from Cllr Ashley, the Chairman advised that the multi-sports' area was designed for young people in the age range 7 – 16 to enjoy various activities, rather than organised, team games, such as 5-a-side football matches etc. It was emphasised that the securing of the site must form part of any proposal from the new Base Leisure and its factoring company. Proposed : Cllr Saxby (from the Chair); seconded : Cllr Vant; **CARRIED** : unanimous. **THAT A PROPOSAL ON THE BASE LEISURE INVOICE SETTLEMENT, TO INCLUDE COMMITMENT TO SECURING OF THE SITE, MUST BE PLACED BEFORE FULL TOWN COUNCIL AT ITS JANUARY 2002 MEETING FOR RATIFICATION.**

11. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE (Agenda Item 22.)

Proposed : Cllr Saxby (from the Chair); seconded Cllr Mrs Ahern; **CARRIED** : unanimous. **THAT IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSACTED IT IS ADVISABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED AND THEY ARE INSTRUCTED TO WITHDRAW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS [Section 100A(4) LGA 2972] : STAFFING ISSUES.**

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION OF MINUTES : STAFFING ISSUES

(i) Town Clerk - the Acting Town Clerk left the room to allow discussion of the circulated SALC proposal, following their consultation with NALC, on the recommended procedure to appoint a Town Clerk on a temporary fixed-term contract, described by SALC as "emergency measures". It was agreed to offer the current Acting Town Clerk, Mrs Linda Sherer, a three-month's fixed term contract with the option to appoint on a full contract at the end of a satisfactory term in office without recourse to further advertising. This compromise was intended to offer a period of stability to the Town Council during the Audit and Precept periods 01 Jan 02 – 31 Mar 02 inclusive.

The newly-appointed Town Clerk returned to the Meeting. Proposed : Cllr Mrs Ahern; seconded : Cllr Thorne; **CARRIED** : unanimous. THAT MRS LINDA SHERER BE APPOINTED THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER AND PROPER OFFICER OF BRANDON TOWN COUNCIL WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

Proposed : Cllr Silvester; The Town Clerk had submitted a report to Councillors, on progress since 03 Dec 01 and had circulated various items of information in relation to the new Code of Conduct 2000 and the possibility of appointing an Internal Auditor, from amongst the Council Members, in order to monitor the progress of the Council's business at regular intervals. seconded : Cllr Mrs Ahern; **CARRIED** : unanimous. THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR BE DISCUSSED AT THE JANUARY 2002 FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING.

In relation to the former Town Clerk, the Chairman confirmed that a Compromise Agreement was in circulation and that the agreed reference had been submitted via UNISON.

(ii) Appraisals – had been conducted by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, with the Town Keeper and Assistant Town Keeper, both of whom had received very favourable appraisals. They had performed extremely well during difficult times for the Town Council. Cllr Ahern reported that the Town Council had been complimented on the excellent work of these two members of staff. Proposed : Cllr Vant; seconded : Cllr Mrs Ahern; **CARRIED** : unanimous. THAT A LETTER OF THANKS BE SENT TO BOTH KEVIN BRISTON, TOWN KEEPER, AND LEWIS CLEMENS, ASSISTANT TOWN KEEPER, TO COMMEND THEIR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF BRANDON TOWN COUNCIL.

At this point, Cllr Mrs Milner related details of an incident which had occurred in the public car parking area behind the Forest Primary School. This matter could properly be raised during the Police report Agenda item for the January 2002 Full Council Meeting.

(iii) Brandon Regeneration Steering Group – the Chairman reported that the redevelopment of the whole town centre of Brandon was under consideration. Cllr Vant hoped that no decisions would be made without proper consultation. The Brandon Regeneration Steering Group required a member for the Interview Panel to appoint the Regeneration Officer. Proposed : Cllr Mrs Ahern; seconded : Cllr Mrs Jureko; **CARRIED** : 8 for, 3 against. THAT CLLR A P SAXBY, A MEMBER OF THE BRANDON REGENERATION STEERING GROUP, BE DESIGNATED THE TOWN COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE INTERVIEW PANEL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE REGENERATION OFFICER.

The following additional comments were made by Councillors : (i) Cllr Ashley mentioned inaccuracies in a "Brandon Life" article. The Town Clerk was tasked to identify the correct ownership of - and responsibility for - "Rectory Lane". Cllr Mrs Ahern reported that she had provided lists, since 1995, of footpaths requiring attention, but the lists appeared to be ignored by SCC Highways each year. Cllr Mrs Ahern, speaking as a council tax payer and not as a Councillor, so not required to declare an interest, informed the Meeting that St Benedicts Road had been on the list for repairs since 1995 and that S.C.C. had stated that they could not attend to the matter at that time.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:25 P.M.