

Present: (Chairman), (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Katie Chalmers, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Viven Edge, Neill Hastie, Paul Goodale, Brian Rush, Yvonne Stevens and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Community Safety Manager and Section 151 Officer. Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Apprentice.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Democratic Services Apprentice opened the meeting and invited nominations for the position of Chairman for the new municipal year.

Councillor Anne Dorrian proposed Councillor Neill Hastie and Councillor Brian Rush seconded.

Councillor Stephen Woodliffe then proposed Councillor Paul Goodale and Councillor Yvonne Stevens seconded.

On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Paul Goodale be re-elected as Chairman of the Boston Town Area Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year
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2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Anne Dorrian proposed Councillor Neill Hastie, this was seconded by Councillor Brian Rush.

Councillor Alison Austin then proposed Councillor Stephen Woodliffe and this was seconded by Councillor Anton Dani

On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Stephen Woodliffe be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the 2021/22 Municipal year.
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3 APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Deborah Evans, Martin Howard and Martin Griggs

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held 20th May 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman

5 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

There were no updates from the last meeting.

6 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following declaration was received from Councillor Yvonne Stevens in relation to Item 2 – Grant Request – Arranging Community Events Group:

“I wish to declare that in May of this year, Mr Abbott, whom I suspect is connected to this grant application, provided several Conservative Councillors with a meal and refreshments as a thank you for helping with election campaigning. I would have assisted any prospective Conservative candidate standing and did not seek any reward for the help I provided. The hospitality amounted to about £20/£25. I have carefully considered whether this presents a conflict of interest in considering this application. However, noting the amount and the time that has elapsed, I feel I can consider this application with an open mind and will consider the facts before me tonight. That hospitality does not in any way mean I am required to vote in favour of the application. I make this declaration in the interest of transparency.”

Councillor Anne Dorrian, following the confirmation that Mr Darron Abbott was involved with Item 2, declared that although there has been previous circumstances involving Councillor Dorrian and Mr Abbott, she would consider the Item on its own merits and not let the past affect her judgement.

7 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received

8 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

None

9 CENTRAL PARK SECURITY

The Community Safety Manager provided the Committee with an update in relation to the Central Park locking trial and the CCTV operative employed by BTAC.

The Committee was made aware that the trial would commence as of the 6th September 2021 and that the CCTV operative would be starting on this day as well and then working mostly weekends 8pm to 4am.

The Officer also set out the agreed opening and closing times. As follows;

- 6th September – 20th December open at 6.00am and close at 20.00pm
- 21st December – 20th March 2022 open at 6.00am and close at 18.00pm
- 21st March – 21st June open at 6.00am and close at 20.00pm
- 22nd June – 5th September open at 6.00am and close at 22.00pm.

These times coincide with ‘Dusk till Dawn’ which is what is being advertised.

Overall Members recognised the need to close the park prior to darkness descending to ensure that staff locking down the site would be able to be satisfied, as far as practicable, that the public had left the park prior to locking the gates.

The term 'Dusk till Dawn' was discussed by members and whilst some felt it to be a little ambiguous, others noted it was reflective of the proposed times. The Chairman however advised that defined opening and closing times would be required for the staff who would open and close the gates, and that clarity of the timings would be expected by the public in knowing when they could access the park, and also when they needed to leave.

Members felt it would be beneficial to have the new closing times clearly advertised on each of the access gates surrounding the park. Furthermore, they agreed that publicity both on the Council's own website and on all other forms of media should be prominent during the changeover period to enable members of the public to become familiar with the new opening hours.

Following various suggestions of alternative opening and closing times, a Member suggested that the closing times remain the same but the opening hours be extended by 30 minutes with the gates being opened from 5.30am to accommodate early morning walkers. Committee discussion followed in respect of the proposal which included concern at opening the park so early in the winter months when it would be dark at that time, however there was recognition that it would be used during the additional 30 minutes of opening.

RESOLVED: That the park gates open at 5.30am rather than 6.00am all year round.

Councillor Alison Austin abstained from the Vote.

10 GRANT REQUEST - ARRANGING COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP

The lead officer for the Committee presented a report on behalf of the Programme Delivery Manager as she was unable to attend the meeting. The report set out a grant request from Arranging Community Events for a grant of up to £5,000 to run an event in Boston, open to all to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The report recommended that the Committee discuss and consider the request from Arranging Community Events for the grant to stage an event to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The Committee were in agreement that there was insufficient information provided by Arranging Community Events for BTAC to be able to support the grant.

The Chairman then invited Mr Darron Abbott to address the meeting where he informed Members that he had offered more information but was told it was not needed.

RESOLVED: That the Item be deferred to the next meeting of BTAC (7th October 2021) to allow the applicant to submit the additional information to enable the Committee to fully consider the request and make an informed decision.

11 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES COSTS AND OPTIONS AROUND CHARGING AND OPENING TIMES

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which set out both the financial details and the provisions of the public convenience service for Members consideration of options for charging for use of the facilities and moving the service forward.

It was recommended that the Committee:

1. Approves up to £20,000 of reserves be allocated to have a full options appraisal undertaken for future provisions of the service and;
2. Agree a way forward for charging or whether or not to defer this pending a full options appraisal

Prior to seeking committee determination, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that following publication of the report, a new Government grant had become available. The 'Changing Places' initiative offered up to £30million for local authorities to upgrade disabled toilet facilities. The deadline for submission for funding was the 26th September 2021, and as such, the Committee was asked to agree the first recommendation as tabled, and then agree that Officers' move forward to submit a grant application and report back on the outcomes at a future meeting, at which point they could determine the second recommendation.

Members fully supported the opportunity to source funding for improved disabled toilets; however, clarification was sought on the perceived high cost of the options appraisal. It was confirmed that the projected cost was to ensure that all requirements of the appraisal would be covered, should the actual cost come close to the £20,000 the item would come back for member consideration again. The Officer further confirmed the Council would employ an external company to undertake the appraisal with, input from the relevant Council staff as required.

Referencing appendix A within the report, a member questioned the high cost of the water rates for the park and asked if the costs included the groundskeepers watering the flowers, alongside the obvious costs incurred for the toilets. The member suggested that, if this was the case, that water butts be established around the park as a solution to watering the planting.

RESOLVED: That the committee agree:

- To approve up to £20k of reserves to enable a full options appraisal to be undertaken for the future provision of the service
- To defer any decision on recommendation 2 to enable officers to seek funding from the new Government Grant
- To request that a report on the outcomes of the submission for funding be brought back to the committee to enable them to finally determine recommendation 2 of the original report.

<p>RESOLVED: The Committee approved the full appraisal and agreed that the item would come back at the meeting in October for an update on the funding</p>

A financial update was attached for members to note. It provided an update to members on the financial position of BTAC, showing the budget and projected outturn for the 2021/22 financial year, and the projected BTAC reserve at the year-end 31 March 2022.

ACTION: PH

To clarify if the amount of £36,000 for the CCTV operators was for all of the CCTV operators or just one member of staff.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that because the trial period for the locking of the park gates was September to September that would have to be taken into consideration at the next budget meeting.

The report was noted by members.

13 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM

The lead officer gave an update on the Bulky Waste Collection Item that initially going to part of the meeting.

A decision was made by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, to offer one-month free bulky waste service during September 2021. Officers were drafting a procedure to roll out this service and to provide details on how customers can access the new service.

The Deputy Chief Executive, then addressed the Committee to clarify that as part of the initiative an Upcycle Sunday would take place on the first Sunday of the month – this would be where members of the borough could place their bulky waste items outside of their houses for other members of the public to collect if they felt they could Upcycle it. At the end of the day, if the item has not been taken the public would then be able to call the Bulky Waste Collection team for that item to be collected free of charge.

Members were in full support of this initiative and agreed that it would be a good way to help tackle the fly-tipping situation throughout the Borough. It was requested that full media coverage be provided for the events to include if possible TV coverage and all communications be issued in multi languages where possible to encourage uptake. Confirmation was given that both services would be Borough wide and not just urban.

The Chairman informed the Committee that in the coming days he would be walking around the Town with the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder to identify where larger bins could be installed.

The Committee The Committee asked if it was possible to invite Inspector Fran Harrod to come back to the Committee meetings as she had done historically, to answer member questions. The Chairman advised that the Police alongside officers of the Council now held their own public meetings on a monthly basis to enable public questions. Members also requested updates on the new opening hours of the park and the supporting CCTV service.

Confirmation was provided that the Annual CCTV reporting and Annual ASB report would be considered at the forthcoming Environment and Performance Committee on

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the 7th September, at which the relevant officers and Inspector Harrod would be in attendance, providing an opportunity for members to table any questions they may have.

A member further sought an update on Covid19 coming out of the pandemic and it was agreed by Councillor Stephen Woodliffe that such a report would be for a Scrutiny Committee and agreed he would request such a report be added to the work programme of the Corporate and Community Committee, of which he was the Chairman.

The Meeting ended at Time Not Specified