

**BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019/20**

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**1. WHAT IS BTAC?**

The Boston town area of the Borough doesn't have a parish council and BTAC fills that gap, reflecting and representing the views of the residents of the town wards.

**2. HOW DOES BTAC WORK?**

The Council has given BTAC the power and duty to carry out certain services and functions and so it can do this, it sets a precept called a Special Area Expense Account (SAEA), which is paid along with Council Tax. In addition, BTAC supports initiatives that have a direct benefit and positive impact on Boston's town centre neighbourhoods and communities. The Committee is committed to working in partnership with local people to deliver the Council's overall priorities to secure better services for less money and share opportunities and responsibilities wherever possible.

BTAC provides and maintains parks, open spaces, play areas, town events, public toilets and other facilities and services that are mainly intended for the use and benefit of residents for the non-parished Boston Town area. In addition, it monitors and reviews the performance of services within its responsibility.

The Committee also acts as a consultee on major initiatives, projects and developments affecting the town area and considers applications for planning permission and other consents and related matters.

Another important responsibility of the Committee is to award Community Grants to town-based organisations and events.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee is made up of all the 14 elected Members who represent the town wards of Boston; in 2019/20 this was:

Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman) - Station Ward  
Councillor Colin Woodcock (Vice-Chair) – Skirbeck Ward  
Councillor Alistair Arundell – Skirbeck Ward (Until Oct 2019)  
Councillor Alison Austin – St Thomas’ Ward  
Councillor Alan Bell – Fenside Ward  
Councillor Anton Dani – Fenside Ward  
Councillor Anne Dorrian – Skirbeck Ward  
Councillor Viven Edge – Witham Ward  
Councillor Deborah Evans – Staniland Ward  
Councillor Neill Hastie – Witham Ward  
Councillor Martin Howard – Skirbeck Ward (From Dec 2019)  
Councillor Martin Griggs – Trinity Ward  
Councillor Yvonne Stevens – Trinity Ward  
Councillor Brian Rush – Staniland Ward  
Councillor Stephen Woodliffe – West Ward

### **4. MEETINGS**

BTAC meets on dates agreed at the Council’s annual general meeting in May of each year. The Committee can also hold special meetings if necessary.

### **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BTAC MEETINGS**

Members of the public are made very welcome at BTAC meetings. There is a 10-minute public speaking slot on the agenda at the start of every meeting and this can be extended at the discretion of the Chairman.

BTAC often invites individuals or representatives from other agencies and groups to participate in the meetings to benefit from their advice and information.

### **6. AGENDA ITEMS**

Members of the public can place items on the agenda for meetings of BTAC if at least ten days notice is given to the Council.

Also, BTAC Members are entitled to give notice that they want an item relevant to the functions of the Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting.

## 7. BTAC COMMUNITY GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The BTAC Community Grant Scheme is for individuals and groups wanting to contribute directly to their town centre community. The Committee had a budget of £9,000 which was increased by £5,000 on 2 October 2019.

The scheme is operated using BTAC's Community Grants Policy with a scoring matrix based on the requirements of the Committee that it be consistent with BTAC's terms of reference; easy to understand; flexible and inclusive; and include a 'pre-assessment' process for officers with only those applications scoring above a defined threshold to be considered by a Working Group of Members to make recommendations back to the Committee.

During the year, the Committee considered the recommendations of the BTAC Small Grants Working Group.

The Committee approved the following grants:

- **£934.92** to Willoughby Road Allotments for the instillation of an electric supply at the allotments.
- **£1,000** to 1<sup>st</sup> Boston Scouts for the purchase of camping equipment.
- **£1,000** to Singing For Fun to purchase small percussion instruments, music stands, branded scarves and ties, and contribute towards volunteer expenses and travel to performance venues.
- **£800** to Forbes Road Bowling Club as a contribution towards repairing the fence at the Bowling Club site. The contribution was proportionate to the number of BTAC beneficiaries
- **£620** to East Lincolnshire Downs Syndrome Family Support Group to assist with one year's rent at St Christopher's Church. This grant was awarded with the condition that they have a year to source alternative ways to pay their rent.
- **£800** to Centenary Methodist Chapel to contribute to the cost of planned programme of refurbishment work within the building, this grant was awarded for £600 to spend on replacement flooring and £200 for improvements to the performance area on the condition that this work was carried out at the start of their programme of refurbishment.
- **£481** to Boston Community Transport for coffee mornings in venues across 7 of BTAC's wards.
- **£709** to Boston in Bloom Partnership to purchase plants and fertiliser for planting out adjacent to the Police Station.
- **£1,000** to the Crossroads Lunch Club towards the provision of lunches to bring together lonely and isolated people with the BTAC wards.
- **£1,000** to the Wednesday Club enable young people with special needs to go on trips and hold a Christmas Party.

The Committee refused two applications. Blackfriars Arts Centre Ltd requested a grant towards the cost of equipping a classroom at Shodfriars Hall, but they were asked to reapply when they have secured more funds to

begin the project. The Parish of Boston requested £1,000 towards running their community breakfast club, but the Committee could not award this as it was for staff costs.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2018/19**

BTAC considered a wide range of matters throughout the year.

The Committee received updates from Inspector Fran Harrod, Boston's Policing Inspector, giving a general overview of policing activity and took the opportunity to raise various **POLICING ISSUES** with her.

This covered a huge range of issues and concerns, from street drinking, urination and defaecation, anti-social behaviour, homelessness, youths on bikes, licensing and the Community Alcohol Partnership, drug-taking as well as recruitment of additional police staff.

### **MAIN ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

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At each meeting, the Committee received an **UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE BTAC OPERATIVES**. A team of Boston Borough Council Employees that transformed that town.

A generic email had been developed [btac.enquiries@boston.gov.uk](mailto:btac.enquiries@boston.gov.uk) to allow all BTAC Ward Members to send in information on any work or issue they wanted addressing in their own ward area. The team has received a large number of positive comments from members of the public.

Members were all in agreement in recognising the significant amount of work the operatives had carried out and the vast improvements they had achieved.

The Committee agreed an annual allocation of £500 for on-going training and £2,000 for Personal Protective Equipment (PE), fittings and consumables in the 2019/20 BTAC budget. It was also decided that a standing report be scheduled onto the Committee's agendas providing information on all incidents reported via BTAC Ward Members through the direct BTAC email link and updates on the activity of the incidents report.

The Committee later agreed that £5,000 be allocated to cover equipment for the BTAC Operatives, including machinery, tools etc. from the Committee's 2018/19 unallocated spend with items of spend reported back to the Committee.

Throughout the year, the Committee had regular updates from the BTAC Operatives, which provided to Members before and after photos and a written report including all the work that was being done.

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Members also reviewed the Committee's **WORK PROGRAMME** at each meeting, adding new items as well as ensuring that those items that needed regular attention were scheduled in for future meetings.

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Members considered regular **FINANCIAL REPORTS** by the Chief Finance Officer, which updated the Committee on BTAC's financial position, showing the budget and projected outturn (full-year spend) for the year, and the projected BTAC reserve at the year end.

The Committee held a Budget Workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and then, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020, Members discussed the **DRAFT BTAC REVENUE BUDGET REPORT – ESTIMATES 2020/21 – 2023/24** and then recommended the level of precept for BTAC residents for 2020/21.

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BTAC Members go on an **ANNUAL TOUR OF THEIR ASSETS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**. The tour took place in August 2019 and Members were pleased with the progress of improvements already carried out on the open spaces and felt these had made a significant contribution to improving the quality of those spaces provided in the town. At their next meeting, they discussed plans for further development to encourage greater, more positive use of public open spaces as well as consultation responses from members of the public that included a 'wish list' of further improvements. BTAC's Open Spaces Sub Group provided cost details for the improvements for 2019/20.

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BTAC reviewed its **EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR 2019/20 AND 2020/21**, resolving to incorporate some larger scale events in addition to the existing community based events with the agreement of an additional £27,000 expenditure, approved by the Cabinet. All free community events were retained and larger scale events were added, some with an entry charge, and provision was made for the cost of the Christmas Market & Lights Switch on event, recently funded through the Controlling Migration Funding.

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The Committee was consulted on the **REMOVAL OF PAYPHONES** and submitted an objection to the removal of the payphone on Carlton Road – it was felt that its high volume of calls indicated it much needed. The Committee also asked that the payphone should be cleaned and repaired, which was promptly responded to by BT.

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The Committee deals with **URGENT** matters when necessary.

The Council decided to keep the town's **PUBLIC TOILETS** open overnight on a 3-month trial basis in response to calls to reduce incidents of urination and defecation during the night. However, substantial damage had since been inflicted on the facilities and there was no evidence of any reduction in such incidents. The Council's Leader asked whether this trial should be terminated early, as considerable costs were being incurred and people needing to use them during the day expected them to be in good working order.

The Committee agreed that the Central Park toilets, where most damage had been caused, should be closed overnight with immediate effect. The other two facilities were to be left open overnight for one month and, if problems continued, then they should also be closed.

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The Committee also began consideration of the possibility of  
**SETTING UP A TOWN COUNCIL**

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## **9. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

At every meeting, BTAC has an item for members of the public to ask questions or raise issues of concern. On three occasions, members of the public took up the opportunity to address the Committee during this year, raising matters regarding the use of data from speed indicating devices; locking the gates of Central Park at night and its effect on anti-social behaviour; and the events budget.

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