

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR BOURNEMOUTH

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Phillips – Mayor

Cllr D Borthwick – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr H Allen, Cllr M Anderson, Cllr S C Anderson, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr D Brown, Cllr S Bull, Cllr R Burton, Cllr E Coope, Cllr M Davies, Cllr N Decent, Cllr B Dunlop, Cllr J Edwards, Cllr G Farquhar, Cllr D Farr, Cllr L Fear, Cllr A Filer, Cllr M Haines, Cllr M Iyengar, Cllr C Johnson, Cllr J Kelly, Cllr D Kelsey, Cllr R Lawton, Cllr L Northover, Cllr K Rampton, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr R Rocca, Cllr L Williams and Cllr K Wilson

51. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors M Andrews, M Greene, N Greene, A Jones, T Johnson, L Lewis, R Maidment and T Trent.

52. Declarations of Interests

The Honorary Clerk reported that there were no declarations of interest at this stage. It was noted that notice of a potential declaration had been given but the Councillor had not joined the meeting.

53. Confirmation of Minutes and Matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the above meeting.

54. Charter Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported on her activities since the last meeting of the Charter Trustees on 26 October 2020.

The Mayor reported that she had continued her role as Mayor by supporting local charities and residents. She explained that most if not all of the meetings she attended were held via Skype and Zoom, including as the current President of ChestHelp.

The Charter Trustees were advised that on Sunday 8 November a scaled back Remembrance Sunday Service was held an hour earlier than usual at the War Memorial and in attendance was the Mayor accompanied by the Chief Executive Graham Farrant, the Champion for the Armed Forces Councillor Dave Kelsey, the British Legion Flag Bearer and the Bugler. The Mayor explained that this was far from the usual Ceremony of respect by

Charter Trustees, the Local Cadets, Armed Forces and dignitaries and she hoped that we would be able to return to a normal situation soon. The Charter Trustees were advised that in addition a wreath was laid in the Lower Gardens in memory of HMS Phoebe Bournemouth's adopted warship during World War II. The Mayor report that a wreath was laid at the Crescent in memory of the Metropole raid that resulted in the greatest loss of life the town was to suffer at any time in its history over 130 civilians and allied military personnel were lost. On 11 November Armistice Day was held again scaled back with the same attendees at 11.00 am.

On 12 November the Mayor joined her Chaplain Rabbi Maurice Michaels from the Bournemouth Reform Synagogue, with Reverend Dr Ian Terry of St Peter's Parish Church – the Civic Church and Imam Majid Yasin of the Islamic Centre and Mosque for an interfaith Community Meeting, the purpose was particularly to make sure that Bournemouth residents were being supported during the Coronavirus Pandemic. It was reported that each of the Faith Leaders with their congregations were contacting their congregants and others with friendship and support.

The Mayor reported that she had attended various team meetings with Democratic Services and the Civic Team. On 24 November she was invited to attend a Zoom meeting with Brigadier Graeme Jock Fraser MBE ADC Royal Marines, the Naval Regional Commander of Wales and Western England.

The Mayor highlighted that last year she had attended the Bournemouth School for Girls Founders Day. However, this year she had been asked to provide a video message. The Mayor advised that she was asked to turn on the Christmas lights in Southbourne and had received an invite from Reverend Ian Terry to read a lesson on Christmas Eve unfortunately both had to be declined. The Mayor also highlight the Budget Workshop held in December 2020.

The Mayor reported on the Holocaust Memorial Day, be a light in the darkness, which she reported was attended by over 260 and referred to the speakers who recounted moving stories. She thanked Lynda Ford-Horne for arranging the event.

The Mayor thanked the National Health Service especially frontline services in Bournemouth and Poole Hospitals, the staff rolling out the vaccines, all of the carers and social workers, all shop workers, bin operatives and many more including the Police Force who have been providing high visibility patrols to support national health colleagues and members of the public attending to be given their vaccines, at supermarkets and within the community.

55. Budget and Precept 2021/22

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on the Budget and Precept 2021/22, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Charter Trustees were advised that the report sets out the recommended budget for the 2021/22 financial year which would result in a council tax requirement of £147,956 as set out in the recommendations. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the detailed budget was set out in Appendix A to the report which built on the discussions held and the guidance received at the budget workshop held on 9 December 2020. The Charter Trustees were advised of the main features of the budget, that the individual budget lines have been maintained at their current levels so that the base budget was inherently fit for purpose going forward when the Charter Trustees return to normal following the Pandemic. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that stationery, postage and accommodation costs had been reviewed and reduced to reflect the actual costs that the Charter Trustees were forecast to incur. Charter Trustees were informed that a modest investment income budget had been added and a significant review of the salary costs and recharges had been undertaken. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the main changes were for the accountancy recharge which had increased to £3,450 and the salary recharge had increased to £89,200. He referred to the detailed calculations which were set out at Appendix B to the report including costs for the Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Head of Democratic Services which did not feature before to give a fairer recharge to the Charter Trustees.

The Response Financial Officer reported that Appendix A shows total expenditure of £156,000 which was funded from the precept of £147,000 and a one-off contribution from reserves of £7,994. The Charter Trustees were advised of the position regarding reserves and that the £7,994 was carried forward into 2020/21 which was as a result of underspends last year. He explained that the outturn was expected to show a significant underspend on the current year because of Covid-19 and the curtailment of activities the Charter Trustees have carried out. So, it was anticipated that just over £36,000 would be added to reserves so by the end of the financial year there would be £44,663 in reserve. The Responsible Financial Officer explained this level of reserves would represent 30% of the proposed precept for this year and he would recommend something closer to 20% which allowed the contribution of £7,994 to next year's budget but proposed that nothing further was contributed to reserves for next year. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that there would still be 25% of the precept in reserve and once this current financial year has been closed would give the opportunity for the Charter Trustees to see if they wanted to spend that on any one-off items of expenditure.

The Responsible Financial Officer reported on the Tax base and explained that this had gone down from 63,942 to 61,887 which was due to the pandemic with the cost of Council Tax Support increasing and amendments to the collection rate which would affect BCP Council as a whole and the Bournemouth Charter Trustees. The Charter Trustees were also advised of the Community Governance Review with a new Parish being set up from 1 April namely Throop and Holdenhurst Village Council which involves approximately 300 properties. The Charter Trustees cannot charge in that area because the Parish Council raises its own precept.

The Responsible Financial Officer referred to paragraph 26 in the report which set out the impact of the precept and what it would mean in terms of a Council Tax increase. He explained that for 2021/22 this would be a proposed band D Council Tax cost of £2.39 which would result in a 24p increase or 11.2% compared to the current year. The Responsible Finance Officer explained that in respect of the draft settlement for local government Charter Trustees were not subject to referendum limits for Council Tax increases which would need to be confirmed in the final settlement which was expected to be released in February but it would be unusual for this to be changed in the final iteration.

The Charter Trustees in considering the budget and proposed precept raised a number of issues including:

- The role of Bournemouth Charter Trustees in the new Parish Council area of Throop and Holdenhurst. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the Legislation indicates that the Parish Council raises its own precept as there can only be one local precepting authority in any one area. It would be a matter for the Charter Trustees as to whether they carry out activities within that Parish.
- Unspent provision not carried forward to another financial year and how does this comply with the proposed Financial Regulations. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that paragraph 4.5 of the Financial Regulations was aimed at the individual budget heads but any outturn in the current financial year would go into the reserves pot as it was Charter Trustees money and up to the Charter Trustees by resolution on how to utilise them.
- Clarification of the individual headings being maintained in view of the impact of the pandemic and why the precept was not frozen. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that if the base budget was reduced now when the Charter Trustees return to normality there would be a council tax increase to return the budget to higher levels and he was unable to say if the Charter Trustees would be subject to Council Tax referendum limits at that stage.
- Clarification on the parishes in Bournemouth. The Charter Trustees were advised that from 1 April next year there would be one Parish Council, Throop and Holdenhurst, that would raise a precept.
- Hope that the Mayor of Bournemouth would be doing more work next year to promote the town and a suggestion that the precept was reviewed next year.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft budget for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A be approved;**
- (b) the council tax requirement and precept of £147,956 be approved;**
- (c) the Charter Trustees note the conclusion of the external audit of the 2019/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**

Voting: Agreed

56. Financial Regulations

The Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on bespoke Financial Regulations for the Charter Trustees, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Charter Trustees were advised that the Financial Regulations which govern the financial conduct, internal control and financial management of the Charter Trustees apply equally to the Trustees and the Officers who were supporting the Charter Trustees. The Responsible Financial Officer reported that since their establishment on 1 April 2019 the Charter Trustees had used the BCP Council's financial regulations and accounting systems. He explained that the Financial Regulations were based on a template from the Association of Town Councils and similar to what was used by Christchurch Town Council and the proposed Financial Regulations had been amended to make them relevant to the Bournemouth Charter Trustees. The Responsible Financial Officer outlined some key elements of the proposed Regulations as set out at Appendix A to the report, including appointment of officers and responsibilities of Charter Trustees and Officers, which would be supported by the scheme of delegation set out at Appendix B to the report. He explained that the scheme of delegation was derived from the authorities which were set out in the financial regulations which defines what officers can do and what were reserved matters for the Charter Trustees and sought to separate duties to ensure sound internal controls. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that Appendix C set out the banking arrangements. The Charter Trustees were referred to paragraph 11 of the report proposing that instead of using the BCP Council bank account that the Charter Trustees would have its own bank account and part of the BCP Ledger so that they were separately identified which would aid transparency and reporting whilst balancing cost efficiencies by being under the BCP Council Banking umbrella.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Charter Trustees approve the financial regulations as presented in Appendix A to this report;**
- (b) The Charter Trustees approve the scheme of delegation presented in Appendix B to this report;**
- (c) The Charter Trustees approve the bank mandate as presented in Appendix C to this report;**
- (d) The Charter Trustees note the other arrangements being made to further improve financial processes and procedures.**

Voting: Unanimous.

57. Risk Register

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that an initial draft of the risk register was submitted to the Charter Trustees in August 2020 as part of the outcome of the internal audit report. The Charter Trustees had agreed to establish a small group to look at the risks facing the Charter

Trustees. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that this work had been undertaken and comments from the Charter Trustees included in the updated document before the Charter Trustees. The Deputy Head of Democratic Services highlighted that the risk register was an evolving document which needed to be kept under regular review and if there were future risks or changes the Charter Trustees would be updated.

Councillor Kelsey, Chairman thanked Officers for their support on the development of the register. He reported onto two possible risks which may reach a risk level of 9 but explained that provided all other elements were undertaken correctly they would not occur.

RESOLVED that the risk register as submitted to the Charter Trustees be agreed and the register be reviewed on a regular basis as appropriate.

Voting: Agreed

58. Request from previous Mayor of Bournemouth

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported on a request received from a previous Mayor of Bournemouth relating to two chess cups. Charter Trustees were advised that these cups were used for a chess competition supported by a previous Mayor of Bournemouth in 2008/09. At that time two chess cups were purchased by the late Sir George Meyrick Snr for the competition which was operated in Bournemouth at the time and the winners of the competition were presented with the cups by the late Sir George Meyrick Snr and the Mayor of Bournemouth.

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services reported that prior to the transfer of assets to the Charter Trustees on 1 April 2019 a valuation was undertaken and at that time these cups were not included in the valuation. In the latter part of 2020, the cups were returned to the Charter Trustees and at that stage they were added to the asset list. The request had come before the Charter Trustees to determine if the cups fit the criteria as an historic asset and what approach Charter Trustees wish to take to the request from the Bournemouth and District Chess League for the cups to be returned to them. The Deputy Head of Democratic Service reported that the approach needs to be consistent with the provisions of the financial regulations which have now been agreed and subject to the appropriate checks with regard to the legal position whilst noting the limited knowledge on ownership of the cups.

Charter Trustees in considering the request made a number of comments including:

- Would the chess league continue to run the competition if the cups were returned to them? Officers reported that it was their understanding that the Chess league wish to continue with the competition but that this would include schools that were outside of Bournemouth. It was suggested that cups could be loaned out to the Chess League and that they should be retained and protected by the Charter Trustees.
- What was the current valuation of the assets? Officers reported that there was not a current valuation of the cups.

- That future Mayors should be able to award the cups.
- That the competition should retain a local flavour and maybe there was an opportunity to look at the chess competition and re-examine the use of the cups.
- Make contact with representatives from the Chess league and discuss the boundaries of the competition.
- Incorporate within the cultural compact as appropriate

The Honorary Clerk suggested that Officers take this issue back for further discussions with the relevant stakeholders and bring a proposal back to the Charter Trustees taking account of the comments made.

RESOLVED that Officers take this issue back for further discussions with the relevant stakeholders and bring a proposal back to the Charter Trustees taking account of the comments made.

Voting: Agreed

The meeting ended at 6.58 pm

MAYOR