



# Bracknell Town Council

## Strategy & Finance Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Date	Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Time	19:42 - 21:18
Location	Council Chamber, Brooke House
Present	Councillors: Kwabena Adutwum-Quaye, Roy Bailey (7.54 – 8.50pm), Graham Firth, <b>Guy Gillbe</b> , Anna Keen, Kathryn Neil (7.49 – 8.45pm), Megan Wright (7.49 – 9.10pm)
Substitutes	Councillor Jodie Watts
Co-opted	Councillors Ellen Mac Hale, Simon Carter
Officers	Jackie Burgess, Rachel Gorge

## Minutes

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### SF124/25 ATTENDANCE

There were no apologies received but it was noted that some Councillors would arrive late due to a previous meeting. Councillor Jodie Watts attended as a Substitute in case one of the Councillors did not make it in time. Councillor McHale requested to be co-opted for the entirety of the agenda, and Councillor Carter also requested to be co-opted for the entirety of the agenda this was agreed by all present.

### SF125/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received prior to the meeting. The Chair reminded everyone to declare any interests that might arise during the course of the meeting. Councillor Anna Keen later advised that she has an interest in item SF142/25 as the daughter of Councillor Mary Temperton.

### SF126/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th January 2025 were reviewed. As no amendments were proposed, the minutes were recommended for approval as a correct record by Councillor Guy Gillbe. Councillor Anna Keen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously agreed upon.

### SF127/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Several matters arising from the minutes were discussed.

- The Mayoral Chain was taken to South Hill Park for assessment, and quotes are awaited. Quotes for engraved and blank plates will be sought.
- Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are being updated and will be ready for the next meeting.
- The Pump Track planning update revealed concerns raised by the tree officer, and changes to the flood zones necessitating layout tweaks.

- The Play Equipment update noted that Mill Park and Jocks Lane areas are completed, with Ennerdale equipment on order, expected to start installation in June or July.
- The Website update confirmed its completion and functionality.
- Bracknell Matters and the Local Council Award Scheme are on hold due to workload.
- Conversations regarding tree planting strategy at Mill Park are ongoing, with updates pending.

#### **SF128/25 BUDGET MONITORING WORKING GROUP**

The Budget Monitoring Working Group report from the meeting on 9th April 2025 was reviewed. The Clerk introduced the report, detailing the review of income and expenditure against the budget, receipts and payments, and cash and investment banking. Copies of bank statements were provided to ensure accuracy and transparency. No questions or comments were raised, and the report was noted.

#### **SF129/25 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT**

The interim internal audit report was reviewed, as deferred from the previous meeting. The Clerk explained that the auditor conducts interim reviews and will return in May to review year-end documentation and sign off the AGAR form for the external auditors. The report showed no significant concerns, and no questions or comments were raised. The report was noted.

#### **SF130/25 INSURANCE SCHEDULE**

The Clerk explained the renewal process, highlighting the difficulty in obtaining competitive quotes due to previous arson incidents. A three-year deal was signed with Zurich, resulting in an overspend on the budget. The schedule covered all buildings and assets. No questions or comments were raised. The insurance schedule was noted.

#### **SF131/25 BRACKNELL HISTORY WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Mac Hale provided an update on behalf of the Bracknell History Working Group.

- Information panels are being finalised, with drafts sent for verification.
- Local structures have been added to the list for local listing held by Bracknell Forest Council.
- Efforts are ongoing to list the Mitchell mural.
- The group is also looking at the canyons between the college for potential issues.
- The Chair commended the group's achievements and their collaboration with other local societies.

**SF132/25 GREAT HOLLANDS PAVILION PERFORMANCE**

The performance growth of Great Hollands coffee shop was discussed. Since opening seven days a week and implementing positive changes, Great Hollands now accounts for 75% of total weekend income across both sites. Plans to replicate this success at Jocks Lane coffee shop were noted, including reconfiguring the layout and introducing hot food and indoor play areas. The importance of hiring the right staff was emphasised. The Chair commended the efforts of all involved, particularly Rachel, who spearheaded the changes at Great Hollands, which were facilitated by the new member of staff, Suzie.

**SF133/25 AGM REFRESHMENTS**

The provision of refreshments at the AGM was discussed. It was agreed that refreshments contribute to a welcoming atmosphere for guests and Councillors. The budget for refreshments of £150 was noted, with a suggestion to maintain the previous year's level to encourage networking and appreciation of guests. The Chair proposed that Councillors be encouraged to stay and interact with guests after the meeting. Cllr Keen offered to make a cake to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bracknell Town Council

**SF134/25 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW**

The review of the Strategic Plan was discussed. The previous plan ended in 2024, and the new plan needs to reflect the current Council's aspirations. The idea of holding a workshop to gather Councillors' input and using examples from LCAS Gold award Councils was proposed. It was agreed that a workshop would be beneficial to steer the officers on the Council's big picture aspirations. Councillor Guy Gillbe will organise this workshop for Councillors.

**SF135/25 ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

The proposal for Bracknell Town Council to sign the Armed Forces Covenant was discussed. Councillor Simon Carter had initiated the idea, highlighting the Council's support for veterans and the armed forces community. Amendments to the standard covenant were made to reflect the Council's remit, including promoting employment support, organising civic events, and contributing to the maintenance of the war memorial (The Angel).. The proposal was supported by Councillors, with Councillor Simon Carter formally proposing the motion and Councillor Jodie Watts seconding. The motion was unanimously approved. This will be recommended to Full Council.

**SF136/25 LIBRARIES**

The provision of library services within Bracknell Forest was discussed extensively. Councillors expressed their views on the importance of libraries, noting their value as free community spaces, study areas, and places for social interaction. Concerns were raised about staffing issues, the need for modernisation, and the accessibility of library services. Suggestions included enhancing library facilities with 3D printers and hybrid meeting spaces and improving opening times. The discussion highlighted the community's reliance on libraries and the need for continued investment and support. The DTC was requested to write to Cllr Iskandar Jefferies and Kevin Gibb at Bracknell

Forest Council asking for a written response and attendance at a future meetings to discuss these concerns.

**Task:** Create an email regarding library issues to send to Councillor Jefferies and Kevin Gibbs asking for a written response and an in-person response at a future meeting.

*@Rachel Gordge*

**SF137/25 SOUTH HILL PARK UPDATE**

Councillor Paul Bidwell provided a written update on South Hill Park's (SHP) decision to go cashless. The Council decided to send a formal letter to SHP requesting a meeting to discuss the cashless status and its implications. Concerns were raised about inclusivity and the impact on residents who prefer to use cash. The justification for the decision included the low number of cash transactions and the cost of handling cash. It was agreed that the Council should lobby South Hill Park to reconsider their decision, emphasising the importance of inclusivity and the substantial grant provided by the Council.

**Task:** Draft and send a formal letter to SHP requesting a meeting to discuss the cashless status and its implications. *@Guy Gillbe*

**SF138/25 BRACKNELL FOREST COMMUNITIES STRATEGY MEETINGS**

The Council discussed nominating a Councillor as a representative to attend the Community Resilience and Cohesion Partnership. The leader of the Council will request volunteers, and this will be voted upon at the AGM. Cllr Megan Wright said that she would be interested in putting her name forward.

**SF139/25 EVENTS**

Upcoming events were noted. The Council acknowledged the importance of these events in fostering community spirit and engagement.

**SF140/25 CIL**

New ideas for CIL funding were discussed. The updated CIL report will be sent to the Committee.

**SF141/25 CONFIDENTIAL - SUB-TENANT REQUEST**

The Council considered a confidential property-related request from a third party in relation to existing tenancy arrangements. After discussion, it was resolved that the Council will not support the proposal in its current form. However, the Council would be open to further consideration should a viable alternative arrangement proposal be brought forward.

**SF142/25 CONFIDENTIAL - FREEDOM OF THE PARISH**

The Council discussed awarding the Freedom of the Parish to Cllr Mary Temperton. This was proposed by Councillor Guy Gillbe due to Councillor Temperton's commitment to the community, her long service, the lives she has changed. She has

been an exceptional servant to the community. This was seconded by Councillor Graham Firth and the motion was unanimously approved. A draft policy has been drawn up.

Policies and awards for other exceptional achievements will be discussed at the Strategy and Finance Committee in the future.

**Date of the next Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Brooke House**

Sign:

Date: