

Present: Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman), Councillor Colin Woodcock (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Deborah Evans, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush and Stephen Woodliffe

Observing: Councillor Paul Skinner

Officers –

Head of Place and Space, Accountancy Manager (Revenues and Systems), Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator and Senior Democratic Services Officer

44 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Viven Edge, Martin Howard and Yvonne Stevens.

45 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2019, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

46 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Lead Officer, Phil Perry updated Members on actions from the minutes of the last meeting.

2020/21 Events Programme Update (Minute 38)

Cabinet met on 4th December 2019 and made the following decision:

That the Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) recommendation of an increase of £27,000 expenditure for the 2020/21 Events Programme be agreed, subject to a report being submitted to the next meeting of BTAC including detailed costings for the programme and published as part of the public agenda papers.

Papers included in the agenda pack set out detailed costings for the programme.

Setting Up a Town Council (Minute 39)

This would be considered by the Committee at its March meeting

BTAC Financial Position (Minute 40)

The 'bottom line' statement requested by Members was included in the report within the agenda pack.

Update on Town Centre Operatives' Activity (Minute 41)

1. The list of improvements of the BTAC Operatives had been published on the Council's website.
2. The Council could take no action regarding litter on private land, the responsibility was the land owners unless it was to do with dog fouling.

Proposed removal of BT payphones (Minute 42)

1. An email was sent the day after the last meeting to request that the payphone on Carlton Road be cleaned and repaired, which was promptly responded to by BT to the affect that this would take place
2. The Committee's objection to the removal of the payphone had been relayed to the Development Management Department to be included in the Council's consultation response.

47 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe in relation to his connection with The Cross Roads Lunch Club, which had applied for a grant from the BTAC Small Grants Scheme. He declared that he would take part in discussions but would not vote.

48 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

49 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

None.

50 POLICING ISSUES

Inspector Fran Harrod attended the meeting and provided Members with an update on the policing issues within the BTAC area.

Staffing

There was a new beat manager, who was assisting Inspector Harrod in the town centre. It was explained that his aim was to focus on anti-social behaviour and drug issues within the town.

Four new officers would soon be arriving from their training in addition to the officers who had been assigned to Boston.

The Major Crime Unit was investigating into the recent murder in Boston, complimented by the knowledge and experience of local officers. Inspector Harrod commended the residents of Boston for the way they had rallied together and assisted Police by reporting any information they had, no matter how minor.

Two officers who were interested in transferring to Boston and had heard bad reports of the town had all commented on what a nice town it actually was.

It was a priority to the Police that young adults were made aware of the possibilities of joining the Police force and how many jobs were available within it.

General Policing

In December there were 1,214 calls, 553 recorded crimes and 236 people placed in custody (which took prisoners from the both the Boston and Spalding areas).

A successful case saw three members of the public targeted relating to shop theft, which led to seventeen charges of theft. One of the individuals was sentenced to twelve months in prison and had been banned from all shops in Lincolnshire. ARC Lincolnshire, Assisting Rehabilitation through Collaboration (a multi-agency team striving to reduce offending in Lincolnshire) had been involved.

In terms of anti-social behaviour, additional priority had been given to dealing with youths gathering around McDonald's on bikes.

Mental Health Issues

December had been a challenging period in relation to incidents involving people with mental health issues, with significant resources being focused at any time on individuals at risk. One case had involved two police officers trying to prevent an individual from jumping from a bridge, with others having to block off the road and carry out negotiations. One weekend, officers had been called to two separate suicides before 9 am, which was not unusual. One person had been making persistent calls and officers had to deal with missing persons who sometimes had mental health issues. As well as significant resources, there was the impact such situations had on officers themselves and it was credit to the station that officers coped.

Licensing Enforcement

The Police Licensing Section had carried out more test purchases and other licensing enforcement action, and licence revocations had received a lot of press attention, as the public were keen to know about them.

During debate, Members' comments included people not feeling safe in West Street on an evening and no longer reporting crime because they felt the Police took no action, though others expressed the opposite view and it was remarked that the situation was not helped by negative press and social media articles.

Inspector Harrod then responded to other questions and concerns.

- The responsibility for children on bikes without lights and helmets lay with their parents. An opportunity had been given for them to buy bike lights at a discounted price. Officers planned to go into all schools and they already held actions days on this subject.
- It was a valid point that crimes committed by young people were particularly worrying and earlier interventions should be increased. This problem was increasingly approached by the Police jointly with the Council. Young suspects went before a multiagency Youth Diversionary Panel to look at interventions that might be more

effective than simply criminalising them. A lot of other work was also ongoing, for example, officers often attended schools to deal with worrying behaviour and safeguarding work with troubled children. It was not easy to quantify the effect this work had in order to measure and report the level of crime prevented. The Assistant Chief Constable had spoken to Boston College students, inspiring them to aim to become police officers.

- The offer to Members to join police officers on a Ride-Along was repeated, in order to witness the positive work going on.
- There had been a shift in recent years from incidents involving excess alcohol; there were now more relating to substance abuse amongst people who often had, or developed, mental health conditions and a stance had to be taken against those selling drugs, which were cheap and easy to get hold of.
- The Boston team were skilled at problem solving, finding ways to prevent crime in the first place, the efficient use of resources and partnership working.
- Migrant workers arriving in the area recently were of a different nationality and were taking positions left vacant by previous migrant workers who had worked their way up to better jobs. Employers reported that the new arrivals did not seem to aspire work their way up the employment ladder.
- There was nothing the Police could do with respect to people moving around public areas in large groups, who were not breaking the law or causing anti-social behaviour in doing so.
- There was an equal percentage of crimes committed by those of non-English origin.
- A 'day of action' was held in the town centre twice a month, when Police flooded an area and stopped people who were cycling in restricted areas. This was seen as a useful exercise although it was believed that most individuals continued doing so when the officers were not there. It was important to provide a visible Police presence in the villages too; Members could contact Inspector Harrod about a day of action in their areas.
- If members of the public reported a vandalised wheeled bin it would be recorded, but not investigated as a priority.
- All authorities recognised the increase in people presenting with mental health conditions, which was also putting additional pressure on the NHS as well as the Police. A new 'spoke and hub' approach was to be introduced, which the Chief Inspector would be leading on. The pressure on children and young people was particularly worrying. Officers helped people in crisis as best they could.

Action: FH

Link up Councillor Woodliffe with the Chief Inspector in order to invite the Inspector to a Health Scrutiny Committee meeting.

- Although Ward Members reported that residents in Fenside were fearful of crime due to lack of CCTV, the Police did not find the area to be problematic. There were other areas where there were more incidents that had never had cameras. Provision of CCTV, however, was not an issue for the Police.

[Councillor Alison Austin left at 7.45 pm]

- Members could advise people, as Councillors, that they should not park on pavements where this was causing problems. Members could contact Inspector Harrod regarding any persistent issue of people parking on the pavements in a

particular area and it would be addressed by the attendance of officers, a leaflet drop and random enforcement. However, if there was a large obstruction, the Police should be called and officers would attend if possible.

A Member was concerned about some referring to incidents as 'perceived' crime, as though they were not really happening, which made caused negativity when people wanted to work together with the Police. Inspector Harrod stressed that she did not use that term and that any unhelpful language should be challenged.

Members recognised the significant police resources used dealing with people who were drunk and/or suffering with mental health conditions. Inspector Harrod and the Police were thanked for their hard work.

51 TOWNS FUND MANAGEMENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

The Chairman of the Committee presented a report on the Towns Fund Management Board Representative.

During discussion, Members expressed disapproval of being asked to leave the Board meeting as members of the public so early, and that it was felt the Committee could have been given more information prior to the meeting.

Action: LS

Email Members with a link to the agenda of the Board meetings prior to the meeting so that Members of the Committee can report their questions and views to the Chairman.

Resolved: That the Chairman of BTAC, who ever that may be, will represent the Committee at the Boston Town Deal Management Board meetings.

52 BTAC SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

The Local Communities Development Officer and BTAC Grant Administrator presented the details of the applications received in the current round by the Small Grants Working Group.

Members expressed their appreciation for Lunch Clubs, which helped tackle loneliness within the town.

Action: ME

Publish details of Lunch Clubs and other charities on the BTAC website

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the recommendations made by the working group in respect of eligible applications be endorsed, as set out below.**
- 2. That, funds be allocated to purchase promotional materials with the BTAC brand in accordance with the quote of £75.00 + VAT for 100 9.8cm x 9.8cm static fix window stickers.**

Applicant	Project	Amount requested	Suggested Award	Working Group recommendations
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Boston Community Transport	Targeted promotion of Boston Community Transport Services within the BTAC area through holding coffee mornings in venues across 7 BTAC Wards	£981.00	£481.00	To award minus £500 for advertising in the Target – Through another application from another application BCT will be in receipt of this amount
The Boston in Bloom Partnership	To purchase plants and fertiliser to carry out planting project in the final raised bed adjacent to the Police Station as part of the ongoing development of the B&M area.	£709.00	£709.00	Award full amount requested
The Crossroads Lunch Club	To contribute towards running costs of the Lunch Club provision bringing together lonely and isolated people from within the BTAC Wards of Boston.	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	Award full amount requested which includes an allocation of £500 towards transport costs provided by Boston Community Transport
The Wednesday Club	To enable young people with special needs to have the opportunity to go on trips to Yorkshire Wildlife Park, to the Pantomime at Blackfriars and hold a Christmas Party in the family room of Queen of Spades Public House.	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	Award full amount requested
The Parish of Boston	To contribute towards staff costs to run their community breakfast club out of St Botolph's and St Christopher's Churches.	£1,000.00	AGREED NOT TO FUND	Cannot support staffing costs

53 BTAC 2019/20 FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE

The Accountancy Manager provided Members with an update on BTAC's financial position as at December 2019.

The current financial position of BTAC was noted by Members.

54 PROPOSED BTAC BUDGET 2020/21 AND FORECAST TO 2024/25

Members of the Committee were provided with details of the Proposed BTAC Budget 2020/21 and Forecast to 2024/25.

Following Members questions, the Accountancy Manager stated that the figure of £100,000 in Table 3 of the appendices was referring to maintenance within the town instead of the stated Premises cost.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Cabinet and Council the level of BTAC's Special Expense precept for 2020/21 be £702,696 and the Council Tax Charge at Band D be £75.51.

55 UPDATE ON WORK OF BTAC OPERATIVES - STANDING ITEM

The Head of Place and Space presented a report, which provided an update on the BTAC Operatives' Activity through December and January. These included:

- Dealing with vandalism and graffiti – central park fencing, broken bins and road signs, 12 incidences of graffiti,
- Weed spraying at Lawrence Lane and Custom House Quay
- Ongoing Public Realm Improvement Projects:
 - The operatives continued to be involved in keeping a number of Boston in Bloom sites clear.
 - Cleaning and Clearing Weeds on John Adams Way, Bargate Bridge, Wide Bargate, B&M Site, Custom House Quay.
 - Street vacuuming - targeting cigarette ends specifically
 - Continue with the Street Furniture Painting Programme
 - Cleaning up chewing gum
- Reactive Maintenance:
 - Fence, seating and bin repairs and replacement
 - Replace/refit uneven paving slabs Crown House
 - Repair benches Bank Street and Dolphin Lane

Members relayed concerns from individuals who lived around Central Park in relation to the noise that would eventually be produced by the Skate Park. The Head of Place and Space explained that soundproof fencing had been considered; however, this would create a barrier from the rest of the park. It was explained that once the Skate Park had been built, if complaints were received, soundproofing would be reconsidered.

Some Members expressed their concerns of how little green space there was for young people to use within the town besides Central Park. It was suggested that there should be allocated time for Members to discuss investment in their wards and that this should be added to the Work Programme as a separate meeting.

Action: PP

Add a link to the BTAC website for members of the public to access the Community Volunteer information.

56 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM

The Head of Place and Space explained that as the open spaces working group had not yet met; therefore, the Play Area Improvements 'Wish List' would be scheduled for a meeting in the new Municipal Year.

Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC)
22 January 2020

The Work Programme was noted by Members.

The Meeting ended at 9.00 pm