

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 8th September 2020
at 7.30pm.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir (Chair), Jane Baker, Bill Hatton, Peter Gibbons, Alex Simmons, Kate Bailey, Frances Gaudencio, Sue Hatton, Kristian Berggreen, Frank Rylance, Bob Brewer, Clare Tester and David Hammond.

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member(s): none

MINUTES

PC20/40 APOLOGIES

Cllrs Leslie Campbell, Nick Owens

PC20/41 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Disclosure by Councillors of personal interests in matters on the agenda, and whether the Councillor regards their interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

Cllr B Hatton declared an interest in 9.1 grant item 6 and 7
Cllr S Hatton declared an interest in 9.1 grant item 7

PC20/42 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th August 2020 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC20/43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one Member of the public present who observed proceedings but did not wish to speak.

PC20/44 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes.

To agree the minutes of the Planning Committee 3rd August 2020 and to note the minutes for the 24 August 2020.

To note the minutes of Policy Resources & Communications Committee 28th July 2020.

PC20/45 FINANCE

Members considered the finance reports and the supporting bank statements and reviewed the payment list. The Finance report and payments totalling

£35,365.54 for the period ending period ending 31st July 2020 were considered and **APPROVED**.

PC20/46 Reports

- 46.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) informed members that most MSDC staff members are continuing to work remotely. The impact of Covid 19 has had a significant impact on the district council's finances generally but in particular the impact on the operational costs/revenue associated with the Leisure Centres which have only just recently reopened.

Members were advised that the future of Claire Hall was due to be considered at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting next week.

Burgess Hill Martlets development proposals have now been approved but there will not now be any affordable housing provided as part of this development.

- 46.2 **County Councillor** – no report submitted

- 46.3 **Rail matters** – PG informed members that the rail Emergency Measures Agreement is due to come to an end later this month therefore the government may need to revisit this arrangement.

Members were advised that in August there were 193 cancellations in part due to availability of staff and train crews of which 166 were cancelled outright and 27 ran but failed to stop at Hassocks.

- 46.4 **Youth Initiatives** - The Clerk informed members that he had recently received notification from the youth club that they had secured some additional funding to enable them to organise some 'free' skateboard training sessions run by professional coaches at the park. The sessions will be open to all and will run alongside the youth club sessions with a view to improving youth engagement. The dates are yet to be finalised.

Cllr Gaudencio (FG) advised members that she understood that the group were arranging to run some purple bus sessions at the park now that the group are on a stronger financial footing.

Cllr Gaudencio (FG) also updated members regarding the progress on initiatives being developed by the Hassocks Youth Project group which is an independent group of which Cllr Gaudencio and Cllr Hammond are on the steering team.

(FG) indicated that progress of developing initiatives continues to be hampered due to the impact of Covid and the difficulties of running activities indoors but the group are in the process of exploring a number of options.

- 46.5 **Police matters** – nothing to report.

- 46.6 **Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented** - None

PC20/47 CHAIRMANS REPORT – Nothing to report.

PC20/48 CLERK'S REPORT –

48.1 GRANTS

Members were informed that the Council had received eight applications for grant funding through the Council's funding scheme this year. Members were requested to review each application in turn and determine whether they resolved to award the grant funding requested. The Councils 2020/21 grant budget was £3,000 therefore sufficient funds were available to meet the total value sought via the applications if members were to approve all applications. The Council carefully considered each of the following grants in detail taking into account the merit and purpose of each funding request together with the level of support being sought together with the content set out within the respective submissions:

The following grant requests were considered for 2020/21

1	St Catherine's Hospice	£ 300.00
RESOLVED – to award St Catherine's Hospice £300.00		
2	Hassocks Christmas Day Lunch	£ 100.00
RESOLVED - to award Hassocks Christmas Day Lunch £100.00		
3	Victim Support	£250.00
RESOLVED - to award Victim Support £250.00		
4	Citizens Advice	£500.00
RESOLVED - to award Citizens advice £500.00		
5	Air Ambulance	£250.00
RESOLVED – to award Air Ambulance £250.00		
6	4 Sight Vision	£400.00
RESOLVED – to award 4 Sight Vision £400.00 <i>** Cllr Bill Hatton disclosed an interest and did not vote on this matter</i>		
7	HKD Transition	£ 500.00
RESOLVED – to award HKD Transition £500.00 <i>** Cllr Bill Hatton & Cllr Sue Hatton disclosed an interest and did not vote on this matter..</i>		
8	AG Family Support	£ 500.00
RESOLVED – to REFUSE the award of grant: Although members were very supportive of the areas of work this organisation were involved they expressed reservations that this entity was trading as a commercial limited company and felt the information provided in support of the level of grant to run a potential workshop was not sufficiently robust to demonstrate a clear benefit to parishioners within Hassocks specifically to Hassocks at this point in time therefore on this occasion were unable to approve the application.		

Overall members determined to award £2,300 of this year's budget, members were advised that for the next financial year 2021/22 it was proposed to move over to a twice yearly grant system where grants will be considered in September and February of each year.

Members welcomed this approach and requested that the Clerk seeks clarification from some of the current applicants regarding the outcomes achieved from their proposals for those receiving a grant of £500.00 or above where relevant and request that those organisations provide a report back to the Council on the actual outcome of their initiatives at a later point.

48.2 **Grants 2021/2022**

The Clerk introduced the report setting out the proposed revised Grants Scheme which is due to come into effect in 2021/22 that was recently considered and approved by Policy Resources & Communications Committee.

The proposal set out that grants would be considered twice during each financial year. In addition the grant scheme conditions had been strengthened to provide greater clarity and more accountability in accounting for how the grants are used and their outcomes.

Members sought clarification from the Clerk in respect of the types of entities that could be considered for grant funding. Members were referred to the grant conditions and in particular the first four bullet points set out on page 3 in Appendix 4. Members were satisfied that this provided some clarity and suggested that the new scheme could be reviewed post the next round of grant consideration to ensure the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and agreed to programme in a review of the new grant arrangements in October 2020 shortly after the first round of applications have been considered in September next year under the new arrangements.

48.3 **Replacement boiler for the Parish centre:** A recent service identified a number of defects in the Council's existing boiler, that although it remains safe to use it would benefit from being replaced. We have been advised that the issues identified are not repairable.

The Clerk informed members that he has sought a quote for an 'A' rated boiler from the Council's service engineer. The cost of the replacement and associated works would be circa £1,700.

Authority was therefore being sought to commission the replacement system.

Members were advised that sufficient funds were currently held within the parish centre repairs budget to enable the cost of the replacement to be met.

Members discussed the various boiler manufactures and warranties and were content with the proposed installation, therefore.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the installation of a replacement boiler within the Parish Centre and for the costs to be met from the Parish Centre repairs budget.

48.4 Small Business Grant:

Members were informed that the Parish Council had recently secured a grant in the sum of £10,000 from the government Covid support package via Mid Sussex District Council which is provided to offset some of the additional costs and loss of revenue as a result of the impact of the pandemic.

The Clerk advised members that until recently the office team have been able to work remotely using a third party software product which unfortunately is no longer available to use, which has impacted adversely on the effectiveness of the offices work. This product had enabled the team to continue work throughout the lockdown period.

With the potential of future restrictions longer term solutions were explored to build the Councils resilience with our IT support provider to enable the team to continue to have the ability to work remotely if required.

A number of proposals were considered in consultation with the Chair and in accordance with *Financial regulation 3.7* it was agreed to commission the installation of a WatchGuard firebox with total security which will enable the team to access the Councils network remotely without having to rely on third party software and at the same time strengthen the Councils system security. Members are asked to note the actions taken

The Clerk informed Members that at present the current arrangements are reliant on some individuals using their own personal IT equipment for work purposes to enable them to work remotely which is not an ideal arrangement.

With the benefit of this additional funding members were asked to consider whether these funds could be utilised to acquire two additional laptops for the team, in addition members may wish to acquire a 'pool' device (e.g. tablet) that could be used by any members who are currently unable to access virtual meetings due to technology issues to enable them to participate in meetings going forward.

The Clerk informed members that he had sought some indicative quotes from the Council's IT support provider and a suitably specified i5 machines would cost circa £580 - £650. The Clerk informed Members that any device acquired would be for work purposes only and remain the property of the Council

Members were supportive of the proposal and emphasised the need to ensure the laptops were sufficiently specified, the Clerk indicated this would be the case.

With regard to the tablet Cllr Sue Hatton suggested that it might be worth approaching Mid Sussex District Council for advice on a suitable machine as they have been provided to some district members to assist them in attending remote meetings. Cllr Simmons also offered his assistance regarding advice on machines if required.

Members **RESOLVED** to authorise the purchase of two suitable laptops for use by the office team and to acquire a suitable 'pool device' that could be used by any member(s) that are experiencing difficulties in attending virtual meetings

due to technology issues. The cost of the equipment and any associated software to be funded from the small business grant fund

PC20/49 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

There were none.

PC20/50 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 13th October 2020 at 7.30pm.**

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