

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 10th November 2020
at 7.30pm.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir (Chair), Jane Baker, Bill Hatton, Alex Simmons, Sue Hatton, Kristian Berggreen, Frank Rylance, Frances Gaudencio, Bob Brewer. Claire Tester, Nick Owens, Leslie Campbell, Kate Bailey

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member(s): County Councillor Kirsty Lord

MINUTES

PC20/62 APOLOGIES Cllr Peter Gibbons

PC20/63 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. - None

PC20/64 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th October 2020 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC20/65 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no Members of the public present.

PC20/66 MINUTES

To note the following Minutes.

Planning Committee 26th October 2020.

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To note the minutes of the Grounds & Environment Committee 22nd October 2020

PC20/67 FINANCE

Members considered the finance reports and the supporting bank statements and reviewed the payment list. The Finance report and payments totalling **£19,164.22** for the period ending 30th September 2020 were considered and **APPROVED**.

PC20/68 Reports

- 68.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) informed members that MSDC were required to consider a 4,000-signature petition regarding MSDC decision to close Clare Hall and were required to debate this matter further. Although the Council upheld their original decision, they have agreed to work with the interested parties to discuss options on interim usage until works commence on the building. Cllr Hatton indicated that the debate could be viewed via a recorded YouTube link on MSDC website if members were interested in seeing the content of the debate.

MSDC are in the process of rolling out a small electrical appliance collection where items can be picked up as part of the kerbside collection service. Further details will follow as to the requirements of this service and what electrical goods would be considered for collection via this service.

With the ongoing pandemic budget pressures continue and it has also been necessary to close the Leisure centres again.

A recent planning application for a traveller's site in Copthorne has been withdrawn.

Cllr Simmonds sought an update on any proposals on Belmont Recreation ground and some funding applications submitted for users of the facilities. Cllr Hatton was unable to provide any further detail other than s106 funding attributable to the two neighbouring development sites has been identified to fund improvements to the facilities however in light of the pandemic this is likely to impact on timelines but it is anticipated a feasibility study will be undertaken to look at possible options as to where funds could be expended on the site.

Cllr S Hatton was also asked for any update on the Gleeson strategic site development, Cllr Hatton was not aware of any particular movement on this scheme at present.

- 68.2 **County Councillor** – Cllr Lord indicated that currently the County Council funding gap as part of costs associated with the pandemic is between £23m - £49m therefore this could result in significant service cuts having to be considered for next year if this gap is not closed.

Members were advised that in March earlier this year between 10,000 -11,000 children were entitled to 'free school meals' this had now risen to around 15,000 due to the impact of the pandemic.

Cllr Lord stated that although the Hassocks & Keymer Covid support group volunteers were not working during the current restrictions County Council is continuing to support people when needed via its Community Hub which can be contacted via phone. Links to the hub can also be found on the WSCC website.

Woodlands Meads College will be considered by planning in the next week.

KL indicated that she would be holding preliminary discussions with Highways regarding the viability of a crossing near the entrance to Adastra Park in light of the increased usage within the park together with exploring options of traffic calming measures within Grand avenue.

Cllr Gaudencio sought an update from (KL) on progress regarding the crossing previously reported north of Station Approach and South Bank.

Cllr Lord confirmed the scheme had been agreed in principal and will now progress through the funding process to establish when funds can be allocated to deliver the scheme.

WSSC are currently seeking to obtain the support of parish councils with regard to encouraging bio-diversity on grass verges by the use of wildflowers which would include reducing the frequency of verges being cut.

KL agreed to provide details to the Clerk to distribute to members for further consideration.

Cllr Lord then provided a detailed update in relation to the flooding experienced by the village on the 24th October which impacted on a number of businesses resulting in their properties being flooded.

Members were advised that under the current highways contract the drains in Keymer road were scheduled for regular drain clearance. Roads are scheduled to be cleaned on one of three cycles – 6-monthly, 12-monthly or 4-yearly. Keymer road is currently on a 12-month cycle. Gullies are normally cleaned annually in October however it is unclear whether this task had been completed prior to the incident.

In relation to Parklands Road (side road) this is on the 4-year cycle but there may be some flexibility to move this up in priority. Representations have been made to Highways to increase the priority for both Parklands Road and Keymer Road due to the low point of the village. It is suggested that if the gullies were jetted more frequently than the current annual cycle this would reduce the risk reoccurrence. All gullies drain into the local Herring stream.

KL indicated that the problem was probably exacerbated by a number of factors including leaves lying across the road/drains and vegetation that had been cut back west of the railway line but had not been cleared away.

Cllr Lord had indicated that a Hassocks Surface Water Management Plan which originated in 2015/16 is still working its way through various stages of consideration. It is understood that the Environment agency are in the process of launching some funding initiatives to support modelling in the next few months that can identify properties that can be taken out of flood risk so there may be some potential to access funding in 2021/22.

Cllr Lord suggested that the Parish may wish to formalise a number of questions to the highways department around what future measures could be put in place.

Cllr Weir sought confirmation that when reference is made to Keymer Road this included up to Stone pound crossroads. KL indicated that this was the case. Cllr Owens also raised the issue regarding blocked drains in Hurst road which impacts on London road and requested whether this matter could also be taken up. KL undertook to do so.

Members sought clarification on the number of flood incidents in recent years in Keymer road. KL indicated that she had been advised that there had been

approximately eight occurrences in the last 2 years however she was not aware of the severity of these occurrences.

Members expressed concerns that with the increase in frequency of torrential downpours and the likely impact these will have on the village were highways looking at the drainage capacity and whether it remains fit for purpose. It appeared County were investing minimal money improving prioritisation of drain cleaning within Hassocks.

KL undertook to obtain more detail regarding the eight incidences referred to and ascertain their severity.

Cllr Tester sought clarification as to whether county could do something more focused for the shops directly affected by the flooding by providing funding for floodgates for their premises. KL indicated that government had not made any funding available to WSCC in relation to flood measure.

KL drew member's attention to owner's responsibilities under riparian rights if their properties back onto watercourses which may render them to have responsibility for maintaining gullies/ditches. There may be merit in trying to raise awareness of this responsibility possibly through one of the local publications.

Cllr Gaudencio stated that a number of factors needed to be considered regarding the issue of flooding. With the changing climate in relation to increased rainfall, leaves are likely to continue to block drains, the village sits at the bottom of the South Downs and has been subject to accepting significant additional development. A more strategic approach should be adopted as part of flood management. A community group HKD have previously plotted areas where surface water is likely to accumulate in Hassocks. Cllr Gaudencio suggested that County should work with HKD and other interested parties alongside the parish to establish ways of managing flooding.

Cllr Lord agreed to establish further information on the incidents in the last 2 years and would be prepared to explore the proposed option.

Parish members were supportive of this approach but wished to receive information from County regarding the flooding incidences before committing to this piece of work at this stage. However, it was agreed that if any member wish to progress this initiative prior to the Council formally considering the matter they should liaise directly with Cllr Gaudencio in the first instance.

Cllr Baker drew member's attention to an interesting article in the November 'Hassocks Life' publication which incorporated a contribution from HKD covering the recent flooding incident.

68.3 **Rail matters** – nothing to report.

68.4 **Youth Initiatives** - The Youth club had recently started to run some skateboard coaching sessions but due to a combination of adverse weather and the current lockdown restrictions these sessions have currently ceased. The group are looking at ways that they can continue to provide youth activities in the current climate.

68.5 **Police matters** – nothing to report.

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

PC20/69 CHAIRMANS REPORT –

The Chair (IW) informed members that Cllr David Hammond had tendered his resignation to focus on his volunteering interests.

Members were advised that the Council is currently in discussion with WSCC regarding the proposed Hassocks traffic scheme (phase 2) and are in the process of appointing contractors.

PC20/70 CLERK'S REPORT –

- 70.1 Resolution to extend 6 month rule – Section 85 Local Government Act 1972. – Cllr Campbell was present at the meeting therefore this matter was not required to be considered

- 70.2 Neighbourhood Plan Group.

The Clerk introduced the paper which was produced in response to a request from the Chair of the Council to consider revisiting the current working group membership and to consider disbanding the current group and creating a committee in its place to oversee work in this area going forward.

Members were advised that the primary remit of the committee would be to assume responsibility to periodically review the current plan and respond to any responses from government white papers that may impact on the plans position.

To assist members in this consideration a draft Terms-Of-Reference was set out in Appendix 2, members attention was drawn to a typographical error on the first line of para 2 which should read in the 'committee' and not working group.

Members were requested to consider whether they wish to disband the current working group which was initially established as a task and finish group and to create a committee to oversee the ongoing periodical reviews of the plan.

The Clerk indicated that if members were in agreement to this approach, he would welcome further nominations of any members that may be interested in participating on this committee.

The Clerk confirmed that when the first meeting is called the members of this committee will determine the chair and vice chair of the committee.

Cllr B Hatton indicated he was supportive of the proposal but wished members to consider amending para 8 of the terms of reference to enable any parish council member to attend and participate in the meeting but not able to vote to be consistent with Councils current protocols within Standing orders.

The clerk indicated he was happy to amend the terms of reference accordingly to reflect this.

Members welcomed the proposed amendment. Members were then invited to consider the following proposals.

To disband the existing Neighbourhood Working group and reconstitute as a committee in line with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 2.

Members **RESOLVED** to disband the current working group and approve the creation up of a Neighbourhood Plan Committee to consider future reviews of the plan. All members were in favour of this proposal

Members **AGREED** that subject to the amendments discussed regarding the Terms of Reference that they be formally adopted.

Five members Cllr Ian Weir, Claire Tester, Bill Hatton, Nick Owens and Frances Gaudencio indicated they would like to be considered for this Committee.

The Chair indicated that if any other members were interested in joining this committee, they should contact the Clerk directly.

- 70.3 **Grants Awarded by Hassocks Parish Council** – The Clerk informed members that letters of thanks had been received from the following beneficiaries Air Ambulance, Victim Support, Citizens Advice, 4 Sight Vision Support, St Catherine’s Hospice and the Monday Group.

- PC20/71 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN** the Clerk advised members that further to Cllr Hammonds resignation a Notice of Vacancy has been published. In the event of an election being called this would have to be held over to next year to comply with the current legislation. However, if no election is called members will have the opportunity to co-opt onto the Council.

PC20/72 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 8th December 2020 at 7.30pm.**