

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 November 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Present: Bill Hatton (Chairman) Frank Rylance
 Jane Baker Penny Wadsworth
 David Cumberland Ian Weir
 Judith Foot

Clerk: Linda Baker

Also present were Elliott Bance, Asprey Homes Southern Limited, and County Councillor Colin Wilsdon.

12/127 Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received from Chris Bere, who was away, Alan Berry, who had a work commitment, Leslie Campbell, Peter Gibbons, Sue Hatton, who had a meeting at MSDC, and Phil Mead. Absent without apology, Paul King.

12/128 Declarations of Interest. None.

12/129 To consider a request from the WSCC Valuations and Estates Manager that the Parish Council provide a letter of support for transferring a long term interest in the Beacon Centre, Hassocks to Kangaroos, registered Charity number 1041988. Graham Glenn, the WSCC Valuations and Estate Manager, had emailed the Chairman of the Parish Council on 3 November 2012 asking for the Parish Council to send a letter supporting the Kanagroos, a charity for children in Mid Sussex with severe learning difficulties, taking a sub-lease of the Beacon Centre. The Beacon Centre is held by WSCC under a long lease from the freeholders, CCHF, and the lease restricts the use of the building to a limited number of youth education activities. WSCC are currently in breach of the lease because they have allowed Kangaroos access without an agreement being in place, no youth work is taking place on the site in accordance with the terms of lease, and the building has not been maintained in accordance with the lease.

Bill Hatton said that the Parish Council was very disappointed that WSCC had withdrawn youth services on the Beacon Centre site and HPC had budgeted for some limited youth work in the village, which would not necessarily have to be provided at the Beacon Centre. WSCC had not kept HPC informed on the discussions with Kangaroos on the future of the Beacon Centre, which had been taking place since 2011. Aspreys, at a meeting with the parish council's Planning Committee on 8 October 2012, had suggested that there was an opportunity to explore a long term strategy for a multi functional community facility on the site that the community actually needed, that some S106 money could be used to fund this, and that the local community should be consulted.

The parish council had not made an official response to this suggestion, and did not have all the information regarding the lease negotiations which it had now. Bill Hatton said that the parish council was now faced with a choice of supporting Kangaroos, who had done some stakeholder consultation, and produced some proposals for possible future youth provision on the site, or stepping back and supporting a more comprehensive community engagement exercise. There was the question of who would run a community engagement consultation, and how it would be organised. A church group had looked at the possibility of taking over the Beacon Centre, but had withdrawn, so there was danger that if the parish council did not back the Kangaroos now and the charity decided to withdraw, the building would be left empty.

Judith Foot said that she had been on the Beacon Centre Management Committee, and that the centre could have continued operating if WSCC had not withdrawn funding, and CCHF had not enforced the lease conditions so that adult groups could not use the building. Kangaroos had produced a good business plan, and employed a consultant to progress the negotiations over the lease, and that Kangaroos would safeguard the future of the centre if the issues over the lease could be sorted out.

Judith Foot proposed, and Penny Wadsworth seconded a motion that the parish council should support WSCC transferring a long term interest in the Beacon Centre to Kangaroos. Councillors voted 4 in favour, 2 against, with 1 abstention. It was therefore RESOLVED that the Parish Council would provide a letter of support for transferring a long term interest in the Beacon Centre, Hassocks, to Kangaroos.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....