

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of **Hassocks Parish Council** held on 10th November 2015 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

PRESENT: Cllrs Ian Weir (Chairman) Sue Hatton (Vice Chairman)
 Jane Baker Leslie Campbell
 Justine Fisher Judith Foot
 Frances Gaudencio Peter Gibbons
 Bill Hatton Nick Owens
 Darryl Sinclair Victoria Standfast (7.50pm)
 Carole Wise

In attendance: Cllr Gordon Marples – Mid Sussex District Council
 Linda Butcher – Locum Parish Clerk
 One member of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Ian Credland

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

Before the official business of the Council commenced the Chairman asked everyone to stand for one minute's silence in memory of Mavis Flowers, former Councillor and Clerk who had recently passed away

MINUTES

Parish Council - 13th October 2015

15/125 RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th October 2015

Extraordinary Council – 22nd October 2015

15/126 RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 22nd October 2015

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The member of the public present did not wish to speak

MINUTES and REPORTS

Police Report

Cllr Jane Baker referred to the report on recent criminal activities and explained that the police would be mounting an operation in the future.

Because the Talkabout deadline for December had been missed, Members agreed that an article should be placed on the Council's website asking people to be more vigilant and to report any antisocial or criminal behaviour that they witness. The Council was informed that Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators are disseminating information but the co-ordinators would benefit from more support.

15/127 RESOLVED to put a small item on the Council's website and in the meantime, ascertain which roads are covered by Neighbourhood Watch. [**Action Point: JB/JF**]

District Councillors' Report

Cllr Gordon Marples informed Council that he would be attending a police presentation on the future of policing in this area the following day and would report back to a future meeting.

The Mid Sussex District Plan is at the scrutiny stage and he hoped it would go through with 800 houses per year included. A new site at Pease Pottage had been identified.

Devolution discussions were also taking place involving West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey Councils and it was gaining impetus. The Manchester (northern powerhouse) model is being used as a basis for discussions. All district and town councils have signed up for these discussions to cover infrastructure, road, rail and all transport etc. Cllr Marples thought this will be the future shape of local government in this country. In answer to a question, he confirmed that the purpose is to reduce the heavy hand of central government and is all about less money being available.

Moving onto Dog Bins, Cllr Marples confirmed the two year plan involving an investment of £21,000 and the first stage of installation is about to start.

WSCC received a Disability Facility Grant of £800,000 to enable people to remain in their own homes and will also have a new Business Unit Leader coming to Sussex.

Discussions on MSDC's Council tax are taking place and there are likely to be some increases but car parking fees will not be increased and introducing charges in Hassocks is not in our sight.

There is a waiting list of 800 for green bins and we are investing in this service in order to meet our recycling targets.

7.50pm Cllr Victoria Standfast arrived

The Chairman thanked Cllr Marples for his report. Cllr Marples then left the meeting.

County Councillor's Report

No report had been received but was received later and is attached to these minutes.

Planning Committee meeting 19th October 2015

- 15/128** **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 19th October 2015

Policy, Resources and Communications meeting 14th October 2015

- 15/129** **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Policy, Resources and Communications Committee meeting held on 14th October 2015

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting 15th October 2015

- 15/130** **RESOLVED** to note these minutes as they have yet to be approved by the NPWG

Rail Matters

Cllr Leslie Campbell reported that letter a letter regarding the opening of the ticket office had been sent by CatheC:\Users\Clerk\Documents\Hassocks PC\Committees\PC Minutes\10.11.15 Council minutes.docrine Cassidy but that no response had been received from the Rail Authority, however, a letter on the same topic had been 'published' in a Rail Magazine. Hassocks Station ticket office is being closed randomly without warning and it was suggested that Nick Herbert MP should be informed of this unsatisfactory service.

Cllr Nick Owen said that there is an 1814 train out of Victoria which is advertised as stopping at Hassocks but sometimes it does not stop. The Council was advised that this is called "skip stopping" in order to ensure that the train arrives on time in Brighton. Other services do not run consistently with the advertised timetable and this causes problems for local residents.

Cllrs Leslie Campbell and Peter Gibbons AGREED to deal with this matter.

Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented

Cllr Justine Fisher reported on the Sports Hall Committee meeting earlier in the day at Downlands School and advised that the dance studio bid in the sum of £100,000 had been successful. Freedom Leisure and the School were together contributing £300,000 and were going to combine this with the new development at the school to increase the school size and the whole development amounted to £5.5m West Sussex County Council hoped the work would commence as soon as possible.

Cllr Justine Fisher also reported on the Hassocks Hub explaining that there is a clear indication of support to the idea of a youth facility and that lots of research needs to be undertaken in order to take the plan forward.

Cllr Frances Gaudencio reported on the District briefing and advised that the identified site at Pease Pottage for 500 homes is no longer confidential. Although Mid Sussex District Council has met its housing need Crawley and Horsham have not met their need therefore Mid Sussex has had to accept additional development at Pease Pottage. There will need to be 1900 homes elsewhere but the timing depends on when land is available and it is crucial that a five year land supply is achieved in order to balance need and constraint. There will be a review of density in the towns All this should have no impact on the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and of note is the low density in Hassocks and in other rural villages - the Authority respects the different nature of rural villages. The District Council is employing a very good barrister to try and ensure the plan goes through the first time. It was turned down last time because of insufficient consultation with neighbouring councils.

It was AGREED the Parish Council would like to see any formal minutes or reports of these meetings. There is also a need to check out the National space standards. **[Action Point FG]**

The Council thanked Cllr Frances Gaudencio for attending and reporting back.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(a) Cllr Ian Weir informed the Council that Jo Whitcombe will be starting as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 1st February 2016.

(b) The Chairman indicated that the bank arrangements were not flexible enough and it is important that staff are able to access bank statements electronically instead of having to wait for paper copies to arrive.

(c) At the recent Finance and Legal Day he attended professional external advice was identified. Central Government has confirmed that more public information will have to be included and the Council needs to consider a Data Retention Policy.

(d) The Chairman was pleased to report that the Parklands Copse project is complete and that Hassocks Uncovered had contained a positive article on this topic. It was envisaged that there would be an official opening in the New Year.

(e) The Chairman reported that he had attended the Hassocks Remembrance Day Service and that Cllr Jane Baker had attended the Clayton Service.

(f) Linda Baker had left the Council's employ on 28th October 2015 and had been given a £100 John Lewis voucher together with a huge bunch of flowers. Tea, scones and cream were then served for those present and everyone wished her well in the future.

(g) On Saturday 14th November the Members of the Council have been invited to an Open Day for the Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan at Ditchling Village Hall from 10am – 5pm. Cllr Frances Gaudencio volunteered to attend on behalf of Hassocks Parish Council. Cllr Nick Owen advised that he might attend too. Members noted that Ditchling will have only 18 new homes because it is within the National Park.

(h) Cllr Ian Weir advised that with regard to the Christmas Tree Forest he had contributed £50 from the Chairman's Allowance and that the matter would be further discussed at the Environment Committee meeting the following week. Cllr Justine Fisher advised that she had brought a group of pupils into the Parish Council office in order to explain to them about the Council. She also advised that businesses are now involved in this project.

CLERK'S REPORT

To consider the dates of meetings for 2016

When looking at the dates it was realised that some do not match up to previous years and Members felt there were too many meetings so it was AGREED to wait until the new Parish Clerk starts in February before agreeing the new meeting schedule. In the meantime, meetings for just January and February would be considered at the next Policy, Resources and Communications committee meeting and then a further recommendation put to Council in February for the rest of the Council year.

In the future the meeting schedule would be approved at the Annual Statutory Meeting in May each year in order to comply with the Council's Standing Orders and regular good practice.

To agree co-option date as 8th December 2015 at the Parish Council meeting

The Locum Clerk explained the process for co-option and the Council

- 15/131 RESOLVED** to carry out this process at the Council meeting on 8th December 2015 and the election would be voted on by the signed ballot method.

FINANCE

To note the finance reports as presented.

- 15/132 RESOLVED** to authorise the Locum Clerk to research a more suitable finance package for the Parish Council for discussion with the new Clerk.

Councillors requested that any new package should include bank reconciliations that include both opening and closing balances which tie up with the bank statement.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

There was a question of whether the Parish Council has a Facebook page. With regard to the earlier discussions, Cllr Justine Fisher would draft something for the website and would liaise with Cllrs Jane Baker, Sue Hatton and Ian Weir over the content. **[Action Point: JF/JB/SH/IW]**

The Chairman read out the legal notification for excluding and press and public and it was

- 15/133 RESOLVED** under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the confidential staffing matter to be discussed would be prejudicial in the public interest.

8.50pm The member of the public left the building

STAFF MATTERS

- 15/134 RESOLVED** to endorse the contents and actions taken in Confidential Report No. 002/22.10.15 [minute 15/122]

The Locum Clerk was asked to investigate with West Sussex County Council the pension costs for the new Clerk.

- 15/135 RESOLVED** to endorse the contents and actions in Confidential Report No. 001/14.10.15 [minute 15/119]

- 15/136 RESOLVED** to adopt the Staffing Arrangements Confidential Report No. 003/10.11.15 presented by Cllr Judith Foot and refers to changes in working hours for existing staff in the office. The matter will be reviewed by the new Clerk and the PRC Committee in March 2016.

- 15/137 RESOLVED** to adopt the Clerk handover arrangements Confidential Report No. 004/10.11.15 and to authorise the Locum Clerk to write to the former Clerk on this matter.

- 15/138 RESOLVED** to endorse the contents of the Confidential letter No. 005/10.11.15 from the Locum Clerk setting out the terms of our working arrangements for three months.

With no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Chairman.....

Date.....

DRAFT