

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Present: David Cumberland (Chairman) Peter Gibbons  
Jane Baker Sue Hatton  
Chris Bere Bill Hatton  
Leslie Campbell Paul King  
Ian Credland Darryl Sinclair  
Steven Ecroyd Penny Wadsworth  
Ian Weir

Clerk: Linda Baker

Also present were District Councillor Gordon Marples, County Councillor Andy Petch, and four members of the public.

**15/11 Apologies for Absence.** Apologies for absence were received from Judith Foot, who was unwell, and Frank Rylance, who was abroad.

**15/12 Declarations of Interest.** None.

*The meeting was adjourned for public participation. A note of the question and answer is attached at attachment 1.*

**15/13 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2015.** The minutes were taken as read. Ian Credland questioned the accuracy of the minutes and suggested that they did not reflect the comments he had made and the council's deliberations on the Adastra Community Pavilion bi-fold doors, or his comments regarding the nature of meetings not being in accordance with the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. He had emailed the Chairman on 19 February 2015 regarding these points, but had not had a response. The Chairman was not aware of the email, but indicated that the minutes could be adjusted if council approved a motion to this effect. Acceptance of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

#### **15/14 Reports.**

**a) Police Report.** The crime figures for February 2015 had been circulated.

**b) District Councillor's Report.** District Councillor Gordon Marples reported on:

- The MSDC District Plan was out to public consultation, and the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, and Ardingly Neighbourhood Plans, which had passed referendum, were being submitted for approval.
- Hassocks ward Councillors had been approached by a neighbourhood group regarding the proposed development on land north of Shepherds Walk, raising a number of concerns including flooding.

c) **County Councillor's Report.** Andy Petch reported on:

- **CLC Meeting at Albourne.** Hassocks had been well represented at the meeting, and concern had been expressed regarding the time taken to progress the parking/traffic issues in Hassocks. A report should be available within the next two months.
- **WSCC Budget.** A nil increase had been agreed for 2015/16.
- **Ham Fields.** Andy Petch asked for clarification of which day he should attend the public inquiry on the appeal.
- **Flooding.** The closing date for applications for Operation watershed funding was 31 March 2015. A camera investigation of a culvert in Lodge Lane had been carried out and Balfour Beatty and WSCC were in discussions regarding the findings.
- **Boundary Commission.** Any comments should be forwarded to Andy Petch before 19 March 2015.
- **Deliveries to Sainsburys, Keymer Road.** Andy Petch had spoken to the manager of Sainsburys regarding their deliveries and the coning off of the parking bays. Sainsburys would endeavour to arrange early morning deliveries to minimise any inconvenience.

d) **Planning Committee Meetings 9 February and 26 February 2015.**

The minutes were noted. It was noted that, on the 9 February 2015 minutes, there was no entry under Declarations of Interest. This would be dealt with by the Planning Committee as a correction to the minutes.

e) **Environment Committee Meeting 12 February 2015.** The minutes were noted. The HAA Green group had agreed to take on the planting of the horse-trough at Stonepound Crossroads. Thanks were expressed to the Monday group for their footpath clearance work.

f) **Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting 26 February 2015.**

The minutes were noted.

(i) **Protocol for Meetings with Developers.** It was RESOLVED that the draft protocol, previously circulated, (copy attached, Attachment 2), would be adopted, to replace the protocol agreed at the 24 September 2013 parish council meeting (minute 13/109 refers).

(ii) **Protocol for Meetings of Promoters of Sites or Other Stakeholders with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.**

It was RESOLVED that the draft protocol, previously circulated, would be adopted, with the deletion of the sentence "When a request for a meeting is received, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will be informed". (A copy is attached, Attachment 3).

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It was clarified that meetings with promoters of sites, and opponents of sites would be held separately, not at the same time.

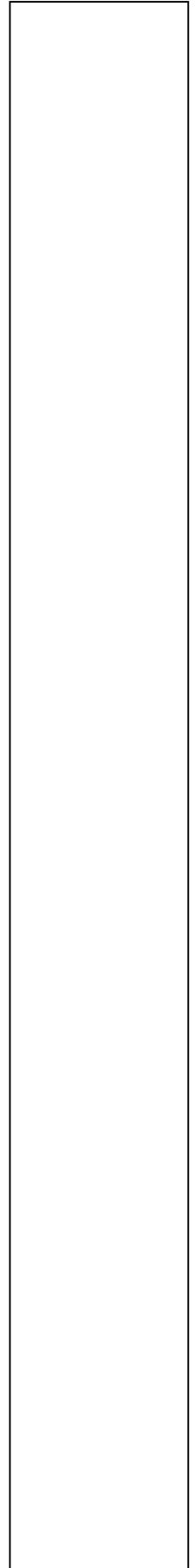
**(iii) Advice from the MSDC Monitoring Officer and Solicitor on Protocols for Councillors and NPWG.** A paper had been circulated detailing the advice given by the MSDC Monitoring Officer and Solicitor regarding the involvement of Parish Members in the site selection process for the Neighbourhood Plan. His advice was that if a member had a prejudicial interest, they cannot be involved in any part of the housing site selection. Dispensations can be issued if the application of the rule would exclude more than 50% of the parish membership from the process. In some parishes dispensations had been granted in such cases. There were currently thirteen councillors and non-council members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, and of these, three councillors and three co-opted members had declared an interest.

It was argued that people with a prejudicial interest should not be excluded from the site selection process, and that, wherever members lived in the village, even if not adjacent to the sites under consideration, they would have an interest and it would be difficult to define who did and who did not have a prejudicial interest. Those involved in the site selection process had not made a secret of where they lived, and a table of who was involved in which Neighbourhood Plan workstream and their interest had been circulated to NPWG members. Analysing data, comments, and the weighting procedure was complex and time consuming, and some of the people engaged in the process had interests, but it would be difficult to continue the work if they were excluded.

It was suggested that the MSDC Solicitor and Monitoring Officer's advice was quite clear, and that prejudicial interest was defined quite tightly, so it would be possible to identify those with a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct. The risk was that if those with a prejudicial interest were involved in the site selection process there could be a perception that the process had not been completely fair and transparent, and the process could be challenged at examination stage.

Following a vote, it was RESOLVED that a blanket dispensation should be granted to all councillors, and non-councillor members of the NPWG, under section 33 (e) of the localism Act 2011, to allow them to be involved in the site selection process regardless of whether they had a prejudicial interest in any of the sites under consideration.

**(iv) Council Voting Procedure for Site Selection for the Neighbourhood Plan.** A draft procedure for voting produced by the NPWG had been circulated. After discussion, it was



RESOLVED that the procedure would be adopted, with the deletion, under paragraph 5, of “100%”, and the insertion of “same percentage”, (copy attached, attachment 4).

- (v) **Appointment of Sue Hatton to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.** Sue Hatton confirmed that she did not wish to become a member of the NPWG, but was assisting on one of the workstreams.

(g) **Rail Matters.** Work on the new bike store at Hassocks station was progressing well.

**(h) Meetings of Outside Bodies.**

**MSDC Workshop on the District Plan, 27 February 2015.** Bill Hatton and Ian Weir had attended. The Plan had an indicative housing number of 600 for Hassocks, but this did not take account of any constraints and excluded the area of the village in the SDNP, which would be dealt with in the SDNP Plan. MSDC were relying on sufficient housing coming forward from town and village Neighbourhood Plans, but if there was a shortfall, the number required would probably be divided among villages. It was likely that the District Plan would be in place in approximately a year’s time. Any developments completed after April 2014 would be counted towards the housing numbers for the plan period.

**Downlands Sports Centre Management Committee.** Steve Ecroyd reported that since Freedom Leisure had lost the contract for MSDC facilities, there had been a drop in membership at the facility at Downlands because the membership did not cover other MSDC sports facilities. The funding application for a new dance studio had been unsuccessful, so other sources of funding were being explored.

**15/15 Chairman’s Remarks.** None.

**15/16 Clerk’s Report.**

**Staffing.** Jane Barker had been appointed to replace Pat Elliott as a parish office assistant when Pat retired in April 2015. In response to a question regarding the resourcing of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Chairman said that the parish office was not able to cope with the administrative support now required in addition to the normal work of the parish council and the NPWG would be looking to recruit someone on a fixed term contract who could be dedicated to the Neighbourhood Plan.

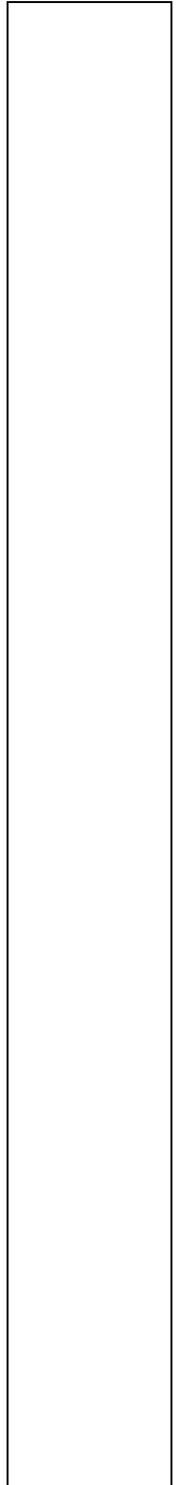
**15/17 Financial Report.** The financial report and list of cheques presented were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

**15/18 Correspondence.** None.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.42 pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....



HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL, 10 MARCH 2015.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Michelle Binks wished to raise the question of a May Day event in Adastra Park. The Chairman advised her that this was not on the agenda, but would be discussed by the council's Grounds Committee at its meeting on 11 March 2015.

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