

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL** held on
13 September 2016 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks

PRESENT:

Cllrs	Ian Weir	Chairman
	Kate Bailey	Jane Baker
	Leslie Campbell	Ian Credland
	Justine Fisher	Judith Foot
	Frances Gaudencio	Sue Hatton
	Bill Hatton	Nick Owens
	Victoria Standfast	Carol Wise

In attendance: Jo Whitcombe – Parish Clerk
 Graham Fairbairn – Administration

7 Members of the Public

APOLOGIES

Cllr Peter Gibbons
 Cllr Darryl Sinclair
 Cllr Gordon Marples - Mid Sussex District Council

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman gave his personal thanks to Cllr Sue Hatton for her advice and support given as Vice Chairman over the past year. Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chairman for Hassocks Parish Council and Cllr Sue Hatton proposed Cllr Nick Owens which was seconded by Cllr Ian Credland. Cllr Owens said he was happy to stand for the position of Vice Chairman and a vote took place.

16/424 RESOLVED unanimously that Cllr Nick Owens be appointed as Vice Chairman of Hassocks Parish Council.

MINUTES

Matters Arising

It was noted that an agenda item on the Hassocks Twinning Association event planned for 2017 will be considered at the 11 October 2016 meeting of the Council.

16/425 RESOLVED to adopt the non-confidential minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 July 2016.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sally Booker thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak at the meeting. She drew the Councillors attention to the email previously sent to Members regarding the petition she had organised regarding parking issues in the village. She felt that the village high street was in decline due to parking availability being utilised by Commuters who were not contributing financially to the local economy. She also said that the Dale Avenue Car Park by Age Concern was also used by Commuters plus people parking and then using the train station to get to Gatwick Airport. 84 roads were represented in the petition and 72 responses were from people who did not live in the village but liked to shop in Hassocks and had struggled to find somewhere to park. Sally said that since the Hassocks Train Station had benefitted from refurbishment there had been a 30 per cent increase in parking, the station car park was always full and the parking in the village needed to be reviewed.

Sally advised that she had organised a public meeting in Adastra Hall on 11 October 2016 and asked what Hassocks Parish Council was prepared to do regarding this problem?

The Chairman advised that this issue would be considered under Agenda item 14.

MINUTES

Planning Committee – 18 July 2016

16/426 **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18 July 2016.

Policy, Resources and Communications Committee – 25 July 2016

The Minutes were noted.

Planning Committee – 8 August 2016

16/427 **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8 August 2016.

Planning Committee – 30 August 2016

16/428 **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 30 August 2016.

Grounds and Environment Committee – 8 September 2016

The Minutes were noted.

PARTNER REPORTS

District Councillors' Report

Following the resignation of Cllr Pru Moore from the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Cabinet (Leisure and Sustainability), cabinet portfolios will be considered at the MSDC meeting on 21 September 2016.

Mr Jonathan Bore has been appointed as the Inspector for the District Plan and documents re the submission are now being considered.

Regarding Devolution, there are no signs that following the change of leadership that the Government is changing its stance on Devolution. Proposals, signed by the Leaders of 26 District and Town Councils which address infrastructure/investment issues etc. are now before Government. The question of whether a Mayor would be appointed/elected for our area remains a matter of significant debate!

Budget planning for 2017/18 is about to commence.

The Green Waste Service has been accelerated in order to clear the back log of residents still waiting for a green garden bin.

The present agreement for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to delegate planning decisions to MSDC will end in 2017. It is most likely that the SDNPA will assume responsibility and MSDC is keen to see this happen as dealing with the applications does not make the best use of the Council's resources.

County Councillor report

Cllr Petch advised that there is funding available through the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Community Initiative Fund (CIF) and he would like to see more applications made for Hassocks initiatives.

He advised that there had been a reduction to the opening hours of some Civic Amenity sites in the County but as yet the opening hours at the Burgess Hill site remained unchanged.

Cllr Petch told the Group that a Speed Indicator Device (SID) had been placed at various sites around the village, including Brighton Road, Lodge Lane and Ockley Way. He pointed out that as the machine was not calibrated, the speeds indicated were advisory. Whilst there was a perception that there was a speeding problem in the village, some statistics do not support this.

Cllr Petch will be meeting with Louise Goldsmith, Leader of WSCC, to discuss possible funding available for youth work in the village from the closure of the Beacon Centre. He welcomed applications on what this could be used for and would consider the Skate Park initiative.

He advised that WSCC has an Integrated Works Programme (IWP) which is a list of works that are scored by trained Highways Officers and allocated a priority score. The consultation exercise undertaken this year on parking issues is currently being reviewed.

Police report

Members were pleased to receive the Crime Data from 13 July to 11 September 2016 and it was noted that it contained a low level of Crime.

Cllr Kate Bailey advised that subsequently there had been a spate of break-ins to works vehicles in the village and tools had been stolen.

FINANCE

16/429 RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Financial Report and the schedule of payments for July 2016, totalling £20,702.67 as per Appendix 1.

GRANTS

Members considered the 5 applications received and agreed that the following Grants should be made to the local organisations from the agreed Grants and Donations budget of 2016/17.

Members were pleased to hear that £500 awarded to the Hassocks Community Association in 2015/16 was put towards the redecoration of the Adastra Hall and the work was now complete.

16/430 RESOLVED that the following Grants be awarded from the Grants and Donations budget of 2016/17.

▪ St Catherine's Hospice	£200
▪ Hassocks Amenity Association	£400
▪ Victim Support (Sussex Area)	£100
▪ Adastra Junior Stoolball Club	£250
▪ West Sussex Mediation Service	£100

REPORTS

RAIL MATTERS

Cllr Leslie Campbell advised that the Hassocks Rail Group had not met since the last Council meeting. However he had concerns over further ticket office closures experienced on a regular basis and the condition of the subway due to lack of maintenance and the state of cleanliness. He reported that the lift had been out of action for the last 4 weeks.

A discussion ensued and the Group learnt that some Commuters were researching 'Crowd Funding' to employ a Solicitor to represent them at a Judicial Review meeting to ascertain why the ongoing service disruption had not been resolved.

- 16/431** **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be asked to write a formal letter of complaint to the Chairman of Network Rail, stating the issues at the Hassocks Railway Station as outlined in the Minutes, and, copy to the Rt. Hon Nick Herbert MP and the Chairman of the Hassocks Amenity Association Rail Group.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Cllr Justine Fisher briefed the Group on the Streetmate 'Initial 6 weeks Summary Report' on the Hassocks project previously circulated to all Councillors. She advised that the Hassocks Hub would be using the Community Pavilion on Friday nights, 7pm-9pm, until 28 October 2016. A BBQ and disco would be organised for this coming Friday to try and achieve an 'older feel' to the session.

As it had been proven that Affinity Sutton (AS) tenants had accessed the Streetmate trial, AS could consider the Community Initiative funding bid of £5000 and a decision is expected in October 2016. It has been established that Affinity Sutton is a useful partner along with Hassocks Amenity Association who had allocated lottery funding towards the work of the Hassocks Hub.

REPORT FROM COUNCILLORS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES WHERE THE COUNCIL IS REPRESENTED.

No reports were presented.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

HASSOCKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION.

The Chairman read though Agenda item 11.1. Cllr Ian Credland told the Group that whilst other organisations had been put forward for consideration, Mid Sussex District Council had advised of its preference for either Andrew Ashcroft or Peter Biggers to be considered to act as the independent examiner for the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Examination and that their availability be sought as the next course of action.

Members were asked to consider the recommendation that the Chairman be given the authority to ascertain each person's availability. Members agreed that both men are eminently qualified but felt if both were available then the local knowledge gained from undertaking the Burgess Hill examination could be a valuable factor.

- 16/432** **RESOLVED** that Hassocks Parish Council delegate the power of authority to the Chairman to ascertain the availability of Andrew Ashcroft and Peter Biggers. Should Mr Biggers be available, advise Mid Sussex District Council of its preference to appoint him as the independent examiner for the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Examination process. If Mr Biggers is unavailable then the Chairman has authority to select Mr Ashcroft and advise the District Council accordingly.

CLERK'S REPORT

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members were asked to consider a report to raise the amount that the Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council from £200 to £1500 as outlined in Agenda item 12.1.

A debate took place as Members felt the recommended figure of £1500 was too high and did not think that emergency situations would arise too often that would negate the need to seek a Committee decision to spend public money. Members also felt that no one person should be authorised to spend public money that would be reported retrospectively to a Committee. Members also felt that this recommendation did not fit with how Hassocks Parish Council makes its decisions though it's Committees.

Cllr Judith Foot told the Group that Trevor Leggo, Chairman of the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils had advised that between £1500 and £2000 would be considered an appropriate amount for the Clerk to authorise expenditure on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Frances Gaudencio recognised that the recommendation was to address the speed of which Council work gets done. She asked how proactive the Council wanted to be and said that the Clerk also acts as the Responsible Financial Officer whose role is reviewed and constantly monitored.

After further debate the figure of £750 was proposed as the new limit for the Financial Regulations and a vote was taken.

- 16/433** **RESOLVED** to revise the current Financial Regulations for Hassocks Parish Council and increase the current limit of £200 to £750 for the Clerk to authorise expenditure on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 16/434** **RESOLVED** to approve the work required to the vegetation and the trees on the Memorial Garden boundary with Keymer Road and that James Wilson Tree Care be asked to undertake the work for the total of £450.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

- 16/435** **RESOLVED** to authorise the Clerk to undertake a tender exercise for the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

PARKING ISSUES

Members acknowledged the email received from Sally Booker regarding parking issues and the Chairman advised that he had received an email from West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) regarding the Hassocks and Keymer Parking and Traffic Schemes – Feasibility Designs, Public Consultation which had been carried out earlier in the year.

CH2M, the County Councils consultant advised that the public consultation generated 258 responses with 47% agreeing with the objectives of the scheme and 22% stating they disagreed. The most widely raised issue was of long term parking by users of the railway station which creates parking difficulties for residents and can cause obstructions. Whilst some respondents welcomed the proposed parking measures a greater proportion said that the scheme did not tackle the issue or would move the problem elsewhere. There was significant interest in a residents parking scheme and in construction of a new long term car park. Whilst there is support for speed reduction and traffic calming schemes, many residents do not want speed bumps. CH2M is now focussed on developing a further technical note that is looking into evolving the acknowledged feedback.

This will include a more detailed engineering assessment and further discussions held with the WSCC Highways Team and Parish Council.

Cllr Ian Credland explained that as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process the Parking Working Group was set up in 2012 to come up with a set of proposals which were forwarded to WSCC, which not all were taken up.

It was agreed that a further discussion was needed with WSCC and that Sally be asked to meet with the Parking Working Group to see how they could work together.

Cllr Nick Owens said that a Residents Parking Scheme could offer a potential solution to problems caused by commuter parking and or regular enforcement of current parking restrictions.

The Chairman confirmed that the Parking Working Group would ensure they would meet with Sally and would continue to have dialogue with WSCC on this matter.

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

Members considered the road closure received by Mid Sussex District Council from the Clayton and Keymer Royal British Legion regarding the Remembrance Day Parade for Hassocks.

- 16/436 RESOLVED** that there were no objections to the road closure and that the organisers be reminded of their responsibility for Health and Safety requirements for this event.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors will be referred to the Confidential Agenda. If any members of the public or press are in attendance they will be requested to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.

16/437 **RESOLVED** that this Council excludes the public and press from this meeting on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 section1.

9.10pm The Clerk and all Members of the Public left the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....