

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**  
meeting held on **Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 7.30pm**

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Judith Foot (JAF) (Chair); Kate Bailey; Ian Credland; Frances Gaudencio; Peter Gibbons; Sue Hatton; and Ian Weir.

Locum Clerk: Colin Hunt

Administrator: Jane Bromley

**16/481 APOLOGIES:** Justine Fisher.

**16/482 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:** None declared.

### **16/483 MINUTES**

483.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2016 as previously circulated were accepted by the Committee as an accurate record.

**16/484 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** One member of the public was present and he asked if item 16/486 could precede item 16/485 and the Parish Council obliged.

### **16/485 FINANCE**

485.1 The first draft of the 2017/18 budget was presented by the Locum Clerk.

The Locum Clerk, Colin Hunt presented his calculations of the precept which were at an early stage. He pointed out the high level of General Reserves and the fact that the External Auditor's requirements for General Reserves were that they did not exceed three or four times monthly income. The General Reserves were far in excess of this currently and estimates for the year-end indicated this would still be the case then although the figure was of course estimated.

The Councillors discussed a use for the General Reserves and it was agreed to look into the early repayment of the two loans currently running. IW believed that there were penalties for early repayment and that it why it had not been done but he agreed that it should be looked at.

KB suggested that the burial ground needed an injection of capital for drainage. FG felt a business plan was necessary to determine the priorities for the use of the capital and that this should be put together sooner rather than later.

CH suggested that he present a method to the Councillors called 'Pin Point' which relied on visual aids and would help Councillors decide on priorities for the Parish.

JAF confirmed that CH would be all of the Councillors at 7.30pm on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 prior to the Parish Council meeting which would start at the later time of 8.30pm.

*JAF Proposed that instead of holding a PRC meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November, all Councillors will be invited to take part in a Business Planning meeting led by CH. All agreed.*

FG suggested in the agenda it be called a Hassocks Parish Council Business

Plan event.

In the meantime CH would continue to work on the precept calculations.

## 16/486 DRAFT COMMUNICATION'S PAPER

486.1 To consider a Draft Communications Strategy Paper written by Cllr Frances Gaudencio.FG explained that the latest draft of this paper took into account comments and amendment requests from a previous discussion at a PRCC meeting on this paper together with comments from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. FG drew particular attention to the fact that:

- the Inclusivity section had been strengthened;
- the Clerk/Deputy Clerk should be responsible for the final editing of a communication;
- the Chairs of committees will meet regularly to decide on communications to be sent out regarding matters arising from their Committees work;
- the workload of the office will need to be monitored, carrying out the work involved to produce the quarterly newsletter publication;
- the capabilities of the website will need to be monitored such that they are not hindering the communications.

IC queried whether the Clerk/Deputy Clerk should have final editing responsibility as he felt that the publication intended by the Councillors may be changed to something they hadn't intended if this were allowed.

FG felt that this aspect was covered under the Responsibilities section of the paper as other than Press Releases the communications would be quite straight forward and not subject to be misconstrued. In the event of a press release the Responsibilities section made it clear that The Chair and Clerk together would decide together on the communication. FG mentioned however, that she was happy for others to suggest revised wording.

PG commented that he was happy with the wording as it was.

IW put forward a suggestion for the wording under Responsibilities, second paragraph to read: "Final editing of the communication will be a collaboration between the Clerk/Deputy Clerk and the Chairperson".

IC pointed out that it was not necessary to mention the Deputy Clerk as in the event that the Clerk was not available the Deputy Clerk would as specified in the job descriptions of the Clerk and Deputy, take her role, as would occur with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. All agreed with this and the proposal for wording was changed to:

*"Final editing of the communication will be a collaboration between the Clerk and the Chairperson".*

All who voted were in favour. IC abstained.

IW brought up the issue of individuals expressing their own opinions outside of the Parish Council but about Parish Council matters. FG felt that this was covered by the Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors.

*FG proposed that subject to the above agreed amendment to the paper that the Paper be put forward to Full Council with a recommendation from the PRC Committee that it be adopted as Policy.*

All who voted were in favour. IC abstained.

## **16/487 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM UPDATE**

487.1 An oral update was given by Cllr Frances Gaudencio. JF, IW, JAF and FG had produced as a result of their meetings a questionnaire that had been sent out to businesses in Hassocks to see if there was an interest in forming a Traders Association. Eleven businesses, mainly sole traders, had been interested and twenty three further businesses were interested to be kept informed of progress. FG and DS had met alone for the last two meetings as others had not been available and she was keen that the initiative did not lose impetus. FG wanted to arrange an evening session for an initial meeting for the businesses and wanted to know of Councillors that had the availability and would like to be involved. FG felt it was better to have three or four Councillors with availability rather than many who may not attend meetings very often. IW and JAF confirmed they would no longer have the availability to attend meetings and SH confirmed she would like to join the group. FG asked that if any other Councillors wanting to join the group, they contact her but that it was not necessary to have any others.

## **16/488 STAFFING GROUP**

488.1 To consider the proposed draft Terms of Reference (TOR), drawn up by Cllr Judith Foot, for the work of the Staffing Group to clarify the remit. It is proposed to revisit the TOR in May 2017 where the working experience gathered over the next few months will facilitate an informed review.

488.2 Proposed draft TOR for the Staffing Group.

To undertake and be involved in tasks relating to Staffing Matters. To liaise with the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) where appropriate and to carry out the main tasks which are:

- Recruitment process.
- Annual Appraisal of Clerk/RFO.
- Offer appropriate support/guidance to Clerk/RFO.
- To receive recommendations from the Clerk/RFO with regard to staff Job Descriptions and pay scales.
- To receive recommendations from the Clerk/RFO with regard to level of staff resources required.
- Carry out disciplinary action as required.
- To receive recommendations from the Clerk/RFO with regard to staff training.
- To ensure equal opportunity/diversity policies are followed.
- Development of policies to enhance procedures and guidelines with regard to the above tasks.

488.3 The proposed membership of the Staffing Group is:

- Chairperson of the Council
- Vice Chairperson of the Council

- Chairperson of the Policy, Resource and Communications (PR&C) Committee. If the Chairperson of the PR&C is not available to attend a meeting then the Vice Chairperson of the PR&C will substitute at the meeting.
- Plus two Members of Council elected on to the Staffing Group by Hassocks Parish Council.

488.4 **RECOMMENDATION** – Members are recommended to approve the proposed TOR and membership for the Staffing Group as outlined in the report.

All agreed to this subject to an additional item for the Terms of Reference identified at the Staffing Group meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 which was not identified at this meeting.

**16/489** Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairperson for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.  
None.

**16/490 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 15 November 2016 with a later start date of 8.30pm to follow an introduction of the Locum Clerk to the Parish Councillors.

**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.

**16/491 MINUTES**

491.1 Discussed under confidential session.

**16/492 TO CONSIDER AN ORAL REPORT FROM THE STAFFING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2016 BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STAFFING GROUP.**

Discussed under confidential session to page 1048.

**The meeting closed at 9pm**

**Signed**.....

**Date**.....

DRAFT