

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 13th December 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Ian Weir (Chairman); Nick Owens; Peter Gibbons; Kate Bailey; Frances Gaudencio; Judith Foot (JAF); Rev Darryl Sinclair; Victoria Standfast; Jane Baker; Chris Hobbs (joined the meeting after Co Option at item 16/574.2).

Locum Clerk: Colin Hunt

MSDC Gordon Marples.

Administration: Jane Bromley

Four members of the public.

16/566 APOLOGIES

566.1 To Accept Apologies for Absence.

Parish Councillors: Leslie Campbell; Bill Hatton; Sue Hatton and Justine Fisher

16/567 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

567.1 Disclosure by Councillors of personal interests in matters on the agenda, and whether the Councillor regards their interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

Parish Councillor Nick Owens declared an interest in item 16/574.5 owing to his directorship in HKD Energy Ltd. (he later disclosed this was a non-pecuniary interest).

16/568 MINUTES

568.1 To accept the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th November 2016.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 8th November were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting.

16/569 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public spoke about her concern at the dissolving of the Hassocks Amenity Association (HAA) due to monies they held, being recompense monies for the loss of garden space associated with the Station which were to be applied to the application of new garden space. PG relied to say that the Treasurer for HAA was to become the Treasurer for the organisation into which it was merging (the Hassocks Community Partnership) and he had assured PG that the money was ring fenced.

There was a second member of the public present who requested to speak about a matter that was not on the agenda. This request was denied by the Chairman as advised by the Locum Clerk.

16/570 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes:

- 570.1 Planning Committee 21st November 2016;
12th December (For noting only).

FG pointed out that a matter brought up at the Planning Committee dated 21st November for inclusion on the full Council meeting agenda was not itemised on the agenda and she asked whether it was to be discussed. IW confirmed that due to an oversight this matter was not included as an item on the agenda and therefore on the advice of the Locum Clerk could not be discussed but would be included for discussion and resolution if appropriate at the earliest possible date.

The Planning Committee minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.
The Planning Committee minutes of the meeting of 12th December 2016 were noted by the Parish Council.

- 570.2 Policy, Resources and Communications Committee 29th November.

The Policy, Resources and Communications Committee minutes of the meeting of 29th November 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting.

- 570.3 Grounds and Environment Committee 28th November.

The Grounds and Environment Committee minutes of the meeting of 28th November 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting.

16/571 FINANCE

- 571.1 To approve the Financial Report and authorise the list of cheques for November 2016. (Appendix 1)

The Parish Council approved the financial report and authorised cheques as listed to the appendix 1 in the total sum of £20921.57

16/572 REPORTS

- 572.1 Police Report. No report.

- 572.2 District Councillors' Report.

Mid Sussex District Councillor Gordon Marples reported that he had attended the three and one half days Public Inquiry into the MSDC Local Plan. Principal players in this hearing included the Barrister for MSDC, the developers' forum QC, the Mayfield QC and LLAMS were represented by a QC. The Examiner had started by saying he was looking for 900 plus dwellings per annum to satisfy the housing need whereas the Plan had included 800 per annum which included the recently identified strategic site at Pease Pottage. The developers are looking for 1000 plus per annum. Both MPs have spoken supporting the Plan emphasising the pressure on the existing infrastructure and the threats to the Neighbourhood Plan programme. There has been some debate about which sites are deliverable the developers are not in favour of the sewerage works site at Burgess Hill.

MSDC have argued successfully that site identification and deliverability need to be considered contemporaneously.

The Examiner is concerned about the unmet demand for housing in Brighton in the order of 17000 dwellings and also in Crawley and expects Mid Sussex to increase its numbers to assist this problem. Brighton has an approved District Plan and this will be revisited when the Public Inquiry re opens on 12th January 2017.

MSDC have concerns about 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans if numbers have to be re- visited.

GM supported the letter sent by HPC to Compass Travel concerning the withdrawal of Bus Service 40X from Friday 4 November 2016.

572.3 County Councillor Report. No report.

572.4 Rail Matters (Oral report, Cllr Peter Gibbons)
PG reported the ongoing strike action by ASLEF continued. In November 467 trains were cancelled at Hassocks rail station and 69 weren't cancelled but didn't stop as timetabled at Hassocks. Overall for the year to November 3152 had been cancelled and a further 930 didn't stop.

572.5 Youth Matters update (Oral report, Cllr Justine Fisher).
KB reported in JF's absence that numbers were good at the youth Club and the last week before Christmas, last Friday, had been particularly well attended. KB and JF were working with Downlands School and the Local PCSO regarding youth anti-social behaviour. The Christmas Tree Exhibition had been well attended by 130 children with 24 trees on display and pictures of this event would be circulated to Councillors.

572.6 Report from Councillors on Outside Bodies where the Council is represented.
PG reported that Hassocks Amenity Association was to merge with Hassocks Community Partnership.

JB reported that she had attended a planning meeting of SDNP in Lewes. The meeting had been poorly attended but could report that they were fully respecting 'Made' Parish Neighbourhood Plans.

IW had attended a meeting of the Parish, Town and District Communications Group. There had been a report on parking services and following successful recruitment Traffic wardens were up to numbers which meant that now more could be done to tackle bad parking. It was also reported that MSDC had invested in property to generate an income of £220,000 per annum and this had led to the availability of an infrastructure fund from which parishes could apply for funding. With regard to Emergency planning MSDC encouraged Parishes to have a Plan for emergencies in place. Hurstpierpoint had such a plan and Hassocks might be able to use this as a template for its own.

MSDC GM reported that Traffic Wardens now carried cameras and so were able to successfully report abuse, this was making it easier to maintain staff. GM reported that a lady with poor sight had fallen down a step behind Budgens and this area was being looked at by MSDC from a safety perspective.

16/573 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

573.1 Hassocks Traffic and Parking Scheme – Progress report (Oral report)

HPC had produced a report in 2013 on Traffic and parking in Hassocks and had asked MSDC, Network Rail and WSCC to comment on the report.

Mid Sussex District Council carried out changes to the local carpark layouts resulting in a modest increase in off street parking and they have also worked hard to recruit more traffic wardens which has seen a gradual improvement in enforcement of regulations

Network Rail worked on proposals to increase Car Parking space at the Station but none of the solutions they investigated could be implemented. The only viable option appears to be a car park in the Station Goods Yard which would require Community or District / Parish Council involvement.

WSCC undertook a public consultation in June 2016 and proposed a scheme based on some of the HPC recommendations together with an additional request for traffic calming in Lodge Lane and Keymer Crossroads. The initial HPC report focused on Traffic Flow issues in the Village Centre and in certain residential roads as well as improving short term parking for the shopping area nearest the station.

One of HPC's original recommendations, which sought to develop a package of parking restrictions to assist residents in High Response roads close to the station, had required further work between the PWG and WSCC – as this did not happen in time it was omitted from the consultation--Not surprisingly, there was significant feedback on this specific issue as well as other aspects of the scheme that residents sought changes to, and Sally Booker, a local resident, co-ordinated the community response to WSCC.

As a result WSCC have modified their original proposals and produced a revised scheme that addresses the Traffic Flow issues in the Village Centre and certain residential roads together with enhanced short term parking around the village shops nearest the station. It will also include speed restrictions in Lodge Lane and Traffic Calming around Keymer Village Crossroads. The scheme will be introduced in 2017/2018. The scheme is a high value capital scheme and Hassocks is fortunate to have this implemented.

As a result of community feedback - a second stage scheme is currently being proposed to address the Parking issues in residential roads near the station to improve life for residents and address the outstanding recommendation of the Parking Report.

The Chairman wished to record his considerable thanks to County Councillor Andy Petch for the extensive work he has done with WSCC Highways department and to Sally Booker who translated resident's feedback into a clear and practical proposal.

16/574. CLERK'S REPORTS

574.1 DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-18

Attached to this agenda are the following appendices:-

- Appendix A - Expected expenditure;
- Appendix B - Expected Income;
- Appendix C - Financial Projections to 2019 and;
- Appendix D - Summary of finances relating to the precept charge

At its last meeting the PR&C Committee agreed unanimously to endorse the budget (with some amendments and additions, which have been made) and to recommend the same to Council.

On the question of the Precept for 2016/17, Committee was split between recommending raising the level or leaving it at the current level. After much debate a vote was taken and by a majority vote of 4 to 3 Committee had agreed to recommend that the level of precept remain the same as last year at £181.5k.

Council is requested to RESOLVE:-

1. Whether it will accept the budget as recommended by PR&C or otherwise and;
2. Whether it will accept that the precept remain at last year's level of £181.5k or otherwise.

CH talked the Councillors through the figures and IW produced a spreadsheet with capital and revenue expenditure separated for ease of identifying revenue shortfall.

There was a lot of discussion surrounding the budget and NO requested that in future capital expenditure and revenue expenditure be kept separate.

The figures highlighted that revenue expenditure was being supported by Reserves and not wholly covered by the precept. This would mean that at some time in the future the reserves would be exhausted. JAF felt that it was a shame that the reserves were being used for this purpose and not being put towards something worthwhile for the Parish.

CH pointed out that the revenue expenditure for 17-18 as reported was estimated however a total precept of £230,785 would be required to wholly cover the estimated revenue expenditure for 17-18.

FG felt that staff costs were a high proportion of the revenue expenditure and this was partly attributable to the use of outside help for the office and would be exacerbated further if projects were undertaken where the office staff did not have the expertise to carry out the projects without outside help. She felt that projects should be limited in order for there not to be such a pressing need to raise the precept and allow new staff in the office to become accustomed to their role.

The prospect of additional housing in the Parish allowing for a greater precept with little impact on individual residents was discussed.

IW proposed that the precept as recommended by the PR&C of £181500 be accepted. Seconded by VS 4 in favour and 5 against. This proposal was REJECTED.

IW proposed that the budget be accepted and the precept raised. Seconded by JAF 5 in favour and 4 against. Proposal RESOLVED

IW proposed that the precept be raised by 4%. Seconded by JAF. 5 in favour, 3 against 1 abstention. Proposal RESOLVED.

574.2 CO-OPTING ONTO THE COUNCIL

Following the resignation of two former councillors from Council, statutory notices were posted as required and Council is advised that as residents did not call for polls, the Council can now co-opt a suitable person(s) onto the Council.

Notices, which expired on 30th November, were posted which requested persons, who may be interested to be co-opted onto the council to apply.

One resident has applied and providing they meet the requirements to become a councillor then Council should RESOLVE to co-opt that person onto the council. The remaining vacancy will continue to be advertised until such time as other applicant(s) are forthcoming.

IW proposed to co-opt Chris Hobbs on to the Parish Council. Seconded by KB and all in favour. Proposal RESOLVED

Chris Hobbs signed the declaration of acceptance of office and witnessed by the Locum Clerk CH. Chris Hobbs joined the table as a Councillor.

574.3 DIARY OF MEETINGS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Attached to the agenda is a schedule of meetings for the remainder of the 2016/17 Municipal year for information.

Council is requested to note this matter.

Some date errors were reported to the Locum Clerk CH however all were happy with the layout.

The Parish Council noted the schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2016/17.

A discussion ensued regarding procedures for committee Resolutions needing to be brought to the attention of the person preparing the full Council agenda. This matter will be addressed by the Clerk's office.

574.4 DIRECT DEBITS

Council is advised that direct debits will be set up to pay utilities companies direct from the Council's bank accounts. This will save the necessity to pay by cheque and avoid any late payment penalties that may be incurred by not paying on time.

Other payments to companies by either standing orders or direct debit will be looked at from time to time which may also yield financial and/or efficiency savings.

Council is requested to ENDORSE this matter whereby the Clerk's office will make the necessary arrangements.

JAF commented that the RFO of the Parish Council should endorse this matter and IW felt that a list of payments made by direct debit should be presented to the Parish Council for their information.

IW proposed that the Clerk be authorised to pay bills by Direct Debit and that a list of all such payments made should be reported to the Parish Council. Seconded by PG and all in favour. Proposal RESOLVED.

574.5 LOW CARBON TECHNOLOGIES IN NEW BUILD HOMES, COUNCIL PROPERTIES AND SCHOOLS.

At its meeting on 21st November, the Planning Committee, (Minute 16/525 & 16/525 refers), following discussion on the Paris Climate Change agreement, resolved to recommend to Full Council that Hassocks Parish Council champion the adoption of low carbon technologies for heating in new build homes, council properties and schools in the Parish. Although it was accepted that perhaps that this should have been included in the

Neighbourhood Plan, nevertheless amendments would be possible at the next stage of the Plan.

Therefore, Council is requested to RESOLVE that the Council champion and lobby accordingly for the adoption of low carbon technologies for heating in new build homes, council properties and schools in the Parish.

FG queried if this were championed what level of involvement and responsibility the Parish Council would have.

NO commented that we have no planning powers and could only give a recommendation to MSDC for a blanket policy to developers for schemes of 5 or more houses that carbon neutral heating be used in the development. He felt that MSDC could make it a condition of planning approval and produce a higher standard of building in Hassocks.

FG considered if this could actually be imposed via planning consent as DM had suggested this was now a matter for Building Regulations.

IW proposed that the Parish Council champion and lobby accordingly for the adoption of low carbon technologies for heating in new build homes, council properties and schools in the Parish.

No VOTE

JAF proposed that the Parish Council write a letter to MSDC expressing support for the adoption of low carbon technologies for heating in new build homes, council properties and schools in the Parish. Seconded by PG and 9 in favour one abstention. Proposal RESOLVED.

574.6 REVIEW OF EXISTING COUNCIL POLICIES

At its meeting on 29th November, the PR&C Committee (Minute 16/550) accepted that there were a number of existing Council policies and procedures which were not as current and robust as would be ideal and agreed to charge the Locum Clerk with the task of reviewing existing Council policies and submitting revisions or additions as necessary for consideration.

The more immediate policies for scrutiny will include Standing Orders (Including financial SO's), Member/Officer protocols and risk assessments. Others may likely follow and Council is requested to RESOLVE that the Locum clerk begin to undertake the scrutiny of Council's policies and procedures.

IW proposed that the Locum clerk begin to undertake the scrutiny of Council's policies and procedures. All in favour. Proposal RESOLVED.

16/575 URGENT MATTERS

Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda

IW explained the issue with the missed agenda item for the funding for Dowsett Mayhew to prepare a brief such as might be required if the SOS did not call in the Friars Oak Planning Application.

IW confirmed that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council would be called for Monday 19th December 2016 at 7.30pm

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors were referred to the Confidential Agenda. Members of the public or press in attendance were requested to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.

16/576 RECRUITMENT OF NEW CLERK

Interviews for the vacant post of Clerk were held on the 6th December 2016 and the Chair of the interview panel will provide an update on this matter.

IW reported, six people were invited to interview and four accepted. Of the four three were invited to come back on 4th January 2017 to undergo some practical tests. CH confirmed that all three have accepted and will attend.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed Chairman-----