

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**  
meeting held on **Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 7.30pm**

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

Locum Clerk: Colin Hunt

**16/546 APOLOGIES:** Kate Baily sent her apologies as she would be arriving a little late. This was accepted by Committee.

**16/547 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:** None declared.

### **16/548 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2016 as previously circulated were accepted by the Committee as an accurate record with the exception of the following matters but which were considered not to be material:-

Item 16/487.1 – some minor changes to the wording for clarity.

Item 16/490 – The date of the next meeting was given as 15<sup>th</sup> November but this meeting was cancelled as councillors undertook a visioning workshop exercise.

**16/549 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** One member of the public was present who observed the meeting but didn't raise any matters.

### **16/550 VISIONING WORKSHOP – 15th November 2016**

A number of Members took part in the visioning workshop which was acknowledged to be the first step in a future strategy for Hassocks and would inform this year's budget.

The question posed was: What project or initiative would benefit the community?

Councillors presented a wide variety of ideas all of which were documented and photographically recorded and below is a precis of the outcome of the workshop.

The following matters were presented in the priority order of votes cast by councillors:-

- Play equipment including a Skate park (19 votes)
- Community Centre (9 votes)
- Pavilion (7 votes)
- Greener Hassocks (7 votes)
- Redevelopment of the Parish Centre (6 votes)
- Toilets (6 votes)
- Working with businesses (5 votes)
- Burial ground improvements (4 votes)
- Parking and Traffic (3 votes)

The above list was suggested to represent the priorities for Council to focus attention at this time. However, all other ideas that emanated from the workshop were not lost or forgotten as these were recorded for future consideration as necessary.

It was acknowledged that within each priority grouping there may be short, medium and long term wins that can be achieved which would likely be identified as debates ensue on each subject matter.

Copies of the workshop boards were circulated and the Locum Clerk will forward an electronic copies to all Councillors.

**RECOMMENDATION** - Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the list to Full Council for approval whereupon it may wish to begin debates in order of identified priority.

### **16/551 REVIEW OF EXISTING COUNCIL POLICIES**

A number of existing Council policies and procedures were found to be not as current and robust as would be ideal which was impacting on Council work. Immediate policies for scrutiny will include Standing Orders (Including financial SO's), Member/Officer protocols and risk assessments. Others may likely follow.

**RECOMMENDATION** - Committee agreed to charge the Locum Clerk with the task of reviewing existing Council polices and submitting revisions or additions as necessary for consideration.

### **16/552 DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/18**

Attached to the agenda were 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

The Locum Clerk presented the budget and explained the reasons for the change of codes and the new look spread sheets. Committee addressed a number of questions all of which were explained to its satisfaction.

In explaining the budget the Locum Clerk referred to financial reserves as not only being considered for use in emergencies but also for opportunities that may arise during the year that would benefit the Parish and its residents. Committee was keen to embrace this concept and would bear this in mind going forward.

The Locum Clerk also advised that consideration should be made when setting capital project budgets to allow for any specialist design and/or supervision costs that may be necessary as some capital projects may fall outside of the 'skill set' of officers.

**RECOMMENDATION** - Committee agreed unanimously to endorse the budget with the following amendments and to recommend the same to Council.

The amendments made by Committee included:-

#### Appendix A

120 - Civic Costs - code 4210 – page 1 – Members allowances/expenses – Although this subject would need to be determined by Council, Committee added an annual sum of £2.25k to the budget should Council approve this matter.

140 – Allotments – Grounds projects – page 2 - reduced from £1,400 to £1,200 annually

220 – Street Scene code 4525 – page 3 – Finger post maintenance increased from £200 to £500 annually

250 – Neighbourhood Plan code 4800 an additional £8k was allocated next year in the event that Council agree to commission feasibility work in connection with a possible Judicial Review

#### Capital funding

The Youth project be moved into revenue budgets and £7.5k allocated in the next two years to the initiative which will be discussed by Council in due course. Also, the contingency pension fund was reduced from £26k to £23.1k next year.

All the aforementioned amendments will be made and included in the final budget presented to Council for approval.

It was also suggested that to clarify further the summary of finances detailed in appendices D & E for Council scrutiny that the capital funding be separated to show the revenue expenditure comparatives.

### **16/553 PRECEPT**

**RECOMMENDATION** Committee was split on whether to recommend raising the level of next year's precept to Council. Much debate ensued and after which a vote was taken and by a majority vote of 4 to 3 Committee agreed to recommend that the level of precept remain the same as last year at £181.5k.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Locum Clerk for his work on the budget and the new look layout of the budget which had helped clarify Council's financial affairs.

There were no Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

### **16/554 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

### **16/555 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.

Two matters were discussed in camera concerning staffing and contractual matters.

**The meeting closed at 9:30 pm**

**Signed**.....

**Date**.....