

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** on 11th April 2017 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir (Chair) Nick Owens, Peter Gibbons, Leslie Campbell, Jane Baker, Darryl Sinclair, Kate Bailey, Bill Hatton, Sue Hatton, Frances Gaudencio. Victoria Standfast, Chris Hobbs, Judith Foot

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

17/723 APOLOGIES

723.1 To Accept Apologies for Absence. Parish Councillors: Justine Fisher, Georgia Cheshire.

District Councillor Gordon Marples

17/724 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

724.1 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.

Cllrs Sue Hatton, Bill Hatton and Kate Bailey declared an interest in item 7 Hassocks Twinning Association

17/725 MINUTES

725.1 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 14th March 2017 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

17/726 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

726.1 There were 2 members of the public present one of whom Philip Weir spoke briefly on the Neighbourhood Plan position which was not an item on the agenda therefore could not be considered.

17/727 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes

727.1 The minutes of the Policy Resources & Communications Committee 21st March 2017 (5.1) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (5.2) 23rd March 2017 including amendments, Planning Committee (5.3) 27th March 2017 and Grounds & Environment Committee (5.4) 30th March 2017 were noted.

17/728 Update on Operation Watershed and alleviating surface flooding.

Fred Maillardet provided a presentation setting out an overview of initiatives being delivered by Operation Watershed and specifically work being undertaken within Hassocks. The presentation is produced below:

Operation Watershed (OW) exists to empower local communities to address their potential flooding needs. WSCC announced in February 2017 that they had put aside £500k over the next 12 months to encourage this initiative.

History

The village of Hassocks started to develop when the London to Brighton railway was built in the 1840s. Prior to that date, since the Domesday Book, we had Ditchling, Keymer and Hurstpierpoint running from East to West along the foot of the Downs as Spring Line Villages, but no Hassocks. Why not? Who in their right mind would create a settlement in a depression surrounded by water meadows and where at least seven small streams merge to create the Herring Stream which eventually feeds into the River Adur. But that's Hassocks....so we shouldn't be surprised that it floods.

Photographic evidence of the extent of flooding exists from the 1960s and we've suffered periodically since then. In the period 2005 to 2015 the frequency of flooded roads and gardens has increased so that when OW was announced following the national flood emergencies in 2014, the Hassocks Amenity Association (HAA) decided to apply for funding.

Operation Watershed initial round

In 2015, successful applications were made to study why the northern end of Parklands Road flooded, what measures could be taken to alleviate the problem, and to investigate what caused the flooding around the Lodge Lane/Dale Avenue junction with particular reference to the culvert running beneath the junction being blocked and, if so, to clear it.

The consultant's report on Parklands Road confirmed that the main cause was the restricted opening in Spitalford Bridge as it could only accommodate about 3 cumecs whereas the 1 in 100 years flow estimated for the Herring Stream is about 6 cumecs. Suggestions were made that the height of the banks could be raised upstream of the bridge to protect Parklands Road, but it was acknowledged that this would only move the problem elsewhere. The HAA were convinced that 'natural flood management' was the solution rather than pouring more concrete, and so started exploring ideas with the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART) and then also with HKD Transition.

The Lodge Lane/Dale Avenue culvert was found to be very heavily blocked by hard core, tree debris and silt but was largely cleared by April 2016. There remains concern over the poor state of the culvert roof in one place and this will be monitored by WSCC. However, recent rains have demonstrated that flooding is still being caused at the junction by blocked surface water drains to the south of the junction.

Natural Flood Management

The work between the HAA, HKD Transition and OART has focused on increasing the resilience of the residents of Hassocks against the impact of heavy rainfall. Peter King, OART Project Officer, wrote a report on *Reducing the Flood Risk in Hassocks* which identified a number of cost effective flood mitigation interventions to the network of watercourses which surround Hassocks. This report enabled another OW grant to be obtained in 2016 to create three additional retention ponds in Butcher's Wood, install 'grips' to divert water away from straight pathways into rough vegetation and install 'leaky dams' to slow the water flow rate in both feeder ditches and streams. The grips and leaky dams have been installed in both Butchers Wood and Lagg Wood and appear to be working albeit not under extreme conditions!

Public Consultation

In July 2016 we mounted a well-attended public event in Downlands School entitled *Thinking Green about Flooding in Hassocks* where Dusty Gedge, a well-known Urban Ecologist, spoke on *Stemming the flow; Urban Green Infrastructures*. This presentation used illustrations of numerous successful practical applications in cities such as Portland, Oregon, and Melbourne but also stressed that installations could be on a modest even domestic scale. It included recognition of the effect of rain collected on building roofs, car parks and other impermeable surfaces. The runoff largely finds its way into the streams therefore increasing stream flooding. Dusty's presentation opened many people's eyes to the realistic possibilities of alleviating surface flooding in urban areas; indeed, it even caused Kevin Macknay (WSCC Drainage Strategy Team Leader and author of the Hassocks Surface Water Management Plan) to state publicly during the Q & A session that he had been convinced by what he had seen and heard that a green approach was practical!

This presentation triggered the formation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Team (HAA, HKD Transition and OART) which has continued the development relevant to Hassocks. It was members of this group that gave a brief presentation to your Grounds and Environment Committee on 30th March.

The Way Forward

The SuDS Team successfully applied for another OW grant this year to map the surface water problem areas in Hassocks, to identify 2 or 3 sites for demonstration purposes, to construct a 'rain garden' and write a report to be presented to local and neighbouring communities and stakeholders. HPC also gave a grant to assist in the cost of mounting two training days and a Rain Gardens Open Day.

In parallel, the OART led on winning a Postcode Lottery Fund to create three 'showcase' rain gardens (including materials costs), mount training events, produce publicity leaflets and a booklet on creating planters, rain gardens and green roofs.

Progress to Date

During March, Peter King (OART) surveyed Adastra Park and produced a report entitled *Natural Flood Management at Adastra Park, Hassocks*. This location was chosen as there is a concentration of potential flood sites in the Grand Avenue/Queens Drive area where the stream leaves the park. This report identifies four elements of natural flood management which might be applied: Debris dams in the stream, reprofiling the stream banks, constructing shallow retention ponds or 'scrapes' and planting trees in the north west corner of the park. In addition, there are a number of locations in the park where trough rain gardens ('box planters') could be located.

The first *Rain Gardens Design Workshop* was held on 25th March 2017 in the URC Church. Following an explanation of the principles and basic design, a prototype trough rain garden was installed beside the Church to slow rainwater entering the Herring Stream just north of Spitalford Bridge.

On 1st April 2017, the *Mapping Event* was held in the URC Main Hall. Some 50 local residents attended to listen to Dusty Gedge explaining the practical approach to reducing flood impact. A very lively and informative Q & A followed. The audience were invited to bring photographs of local flooding and to record their experiences. They were also able to study the WSCC maps indicating where flooding would occur under extreme rainfall conditions.

In the afternoon, 'ground truthing' - i.e. visiting the potential sites where it would be practical to construct rain gardens – was conducted by four groups of volunteers. Their results were brought back to a plenary session to round off the afternoon and were recorded for further detailed analysis. A Google Map will be produced showing the preferred sites.

Sue Furlong, the WSCC OW Lead, attended this event and her colleague took a video recording of the proceedings as they want to use Hassocks as an example of community activity under OW.

Future Programme

On 20th May, a workshop entitled *Building a rain garden in a day* will be held in the Adastra Hall Green Room. This will focus on demonstrating how to make a home rain garden with the intention of completing one or two rain gardens.

In late June, the SuDS Team plan to present a final report on the SuDS Mapping project to HPC, MSDC and WSCC Councillors and local residents in order to gain agreement on the proposed sites for scrapes and/or rain gardens within Hassocks.

The exact location of the retention ponds in Butcher's Wood are being discussed with the Woodland Trust. Work is also progressing on further slowing the stream flow on the tributary of the Herring Stream south of Lagg Wood and discussions are ongoing with the local farmer to see if another retention pond is possible near New Road. Interestingly, the potential site is close to the location of two natural ponds which became silted up commencing in about 1965.

Mr Maillardet raised a number questions including how the SuDs group could engage with the Council to progress initiatives within Adastra Park as he was conscious of the timeframe to utilise Operation Watershed funds. Mr Maillardet indicated they were keen to construct a Box planter near to the Parish Council Offices at no cost to the Council during the 20th May workshop. Cllr Weir confirmed that initiatives should be directed through the Grounds & Environment Committee

Members thanked Mr Maillardet for his insightful presentation and undertook to invite Dusty Gedge to a future meeting to provide a presentation on SuDs mapping and location of the demonstration sites in Hassocks.

17/729 HASSOCKS TWINNING ASSOCIATION

- 729.1 Carolyn Barton provided members with an update on the events scheduled for the 25th Anniversary Twinning for June 2nd – June 4th 2017 and in particular the events programmed for Adastra Park on Saturday 3rd June 2017. Carolyn thanked the Council for its support and confirmed that Hassocks Parish Council is acknowledged in publicity material and it is hoped a full page article will appear in the publication 'Living'.

The focus of the event will be a celebration of what facilities Hassocks has and does for its residents, and to engage effectively with young people to enable them to engage with visitors from other countries. Work is being undertaken in conjunction with Downlands School to assist in this.

Most of the guests are to be home hosted or located in local B & B's or hotels.

Overall the plans for the event are progressing well with only a few logistical issues to be ironed out. However it is anticipated that there will be a good representation from both French and German partners, who will be arriving on the 2nd June including various dignitaries, a dance group and possibly a band.

The events scheduled for Adastra Park are modelled on previous very successful May Day events held in the past. The Premises licence for the event is currently out for

consultation and the Twinning Association has recently funded a member of the team to become a Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) who will be responsible for overseeing the event in the park.

Carolyn confirmed that a business meeting (10 am) with all 3 communities would be held on Saturday 3 June 2017 in the morning, and requested that the Council consider allowing them to use the Parish Offices. In addition, she suggested that as a significant supporter of the event, members of the Council would be welcome to attend the meeting. Carolyn noted that was keen to explore opportunities for future developments between the partners, including raising the profile of the respective communities. Cllr Ian Weir indicated that in principal the Council would be happy to participate and allow the Council chamber to be used. Cllr Ian Weir sought clarification as to whether language may be a barrier, however Carolyn confirmed that most of the guests were able to speak English however an interpreter would also be present. Members enquired as to whether there would be any meet and greet ceremony, which Carolyn confirmed there would and welcomed the Council to participate in this. Members expressed an interest in doing so.

Members requested that the Council be provided with a full itinerary of the events to enable arrangements to be put in place to support the event. Carolyn committed to do this as soon as practical.

Carolyn confirmed that the planting of the tree ceremony was scheduled to occur on Saturday afternoon at 2pm on the 3rd June 2017 in the Memorial Gardens in Adastra Park where it would be good to have HPC representation. The Chair indicated he would be happy to attend.

Members discussed these arrangements and the Clerk confirmed that he would arrange for the appropriate hole to be dug prior to the ceremony by the Councils groundsman.

On Saturday 3 June 2017, an evening event is to be held at Downlands School to engage with the pupils within the school and encourage them to utilise their language skills. Various events /activities for the guests were scheduled for Sunday 4 June before they departed on the Monday.

Carolyn thanked the Council for all their support and the hard work of the individuals in the Twinning team including Justine Fisher, Kate Bailey and Michelle Binks.

Cllr Ian Weir indicated that the event was fully supported by the Parish Council and thanked Carolyn for her update and all the hard work that has gone into organising the event and looked forward to attending.

17/730 FINANCE

- 730.1 The Finance report and payments totalling £29,263.38 for the period ending 28TH February 2017 were approved.

17/731 REPORTS

- 731.1 Police Report – none. Cllr Jane Baker stated that the Neighbourhood Watch group have struggled to get feedback from the police on crime activity. In addition the police panel group she had previously sat on now appears to have lapsed.
- 731.2 District Councillors' Report - none
- 731.3 County Councillor Report - none

731.4 Rail Matters – Cllr Leslie Campbell indicated that a meeting was scheduled with the Rail Group on the 12th April 2017 however since 1st January 2017 1,001 trains had been cancelled of which 724 did not run with the remainder running but did not stop at Hassocks.
In addition on Sunday 9th April 2017 41 trains were cancelled. A full update report will be presented at the next meeting on the 9th May 2017.

731.5 Youth Initiatives

Cllr Kate Bailey confirmed that they had been invited into Downlands School to promote the group and to develop a questionnaire in conjunction with the school asking the 800 pupils what they do and would like to see in Hassocks. The school are allowing pupils to complete these in form time therefore a high response rate is expected, and therefore should produce a good information base that could be utilised to inform potential initiatives. The survey will capture the views of all pupils those from the village and those that travel into Hassocks to attend school.

731.6 Outside bodies where the Council is represented.

Cllr Frances Gaudencio informed members that a recent follow up meeting was held with Hassocks Traders .It is proposed an update report will be provided to the forthcoming Policy Resources & Communication committee setting out how we may wish to take forward some of these ideas.

17/732 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

732.1 Nothing to report

17/733 CLERK'S REPORT

COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE 2017/18 – Appendix 2

733.1 The Clerk introduced the report and referred Members to Appendix 2 setting out the proposed schedule of meetings and drew Members attention in particular to two anomalies in the summary table in relation to Grounds & Environment Committee. Although the dates were correct the first two meetings should read Tuesday 30th May and Thursday 29th June and not Mondays as currently stated. Members debated the proposals and although some members would be unable to attend all meetings it was agreed that the proposed schedule of meetings be adopted subject to the following amendments.

Full Council 18th July reschedule to 11th July
Full Council 7th November reschedule to 14th November and
Policy Resource & Communications reschedule from 14th November to 21st November 2017.

733.2 **RESOLVED** subject to the detailed amendments in 733.1 Members agreed the proposed schedule of meetings.

17/734 Urgent Matters

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

734.1 Members discussed the option of whether a guest speaker should be invited to the forthcoming Parish meeting on the 9th May 2017. It was agreed that on this occasion it was not proposed to do so.

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.

17/735 CONFIDENTIAL – Neighbourhood Plan Working Group minutes for the 23rd March 2017 with amendments were noted.

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....