

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** on 14th February 2017 at **7.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Nick Owens (Chair), Peter Gibbons, Leslie Campbell, Jane Baker, Darryl Sinclair, Kate Bailey, Bill Hatton, Sue Hatton, Frances Gaudencio.

WSSC Cllr Andy Petch (left the meeting at 7.55 pm)

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

17/653 APOLOGIES

653.1 To Accept Apologies for Absence. Parish Councillors: Ian Weir , Judith Foot , Justine Fisher , Victoria Standfast ,Chris Hobbs

District Councillor Gordon Marples

17/654 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

654.1 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.

Cllr Sue Hatton declared an interest in item 9.5

Cllr Peter Gibbons declared an interest in item 9.4 during the discussion on Bus routes

17/655 MINUTES

655.1 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10th and the Parish Council extraordinary meeting held on the 17th January 2017 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

17/656 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was 1 member of the public present who observed proceedings and did not raise any questions or comments.

17/657 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes

657.1 **Neighbourhood Plan Working Group** – 12th January 2017

Council considered the recommendation from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to progress the Neighbourhood plan to the Examination stage.

657.2 **RESOLVED** Council approved the progression of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Examination stage.

657.3 The minutes of the Neighbourhood Working Party Group (5.1) meeting held on the 12th January 2017, and the Policy, Resources & Communications Committee (5.2) held on the 17th January 2017 were noted.

657.4 The Grounds & Environment Committee (5.4) held on 30th January 2017 minutes were noted. Although Cllr Bill Hatton acknowledged the minutes were only for noting he did raise some comments over the minutes in relation to the siting of the skate park. The Clerk confirmed he had a scheduled meeting with the appointed Consultant in the near future and would ensure that skate park scheme would focus on utilising the existing site. Cllr Hatton indicated he was satisfied with this approach.

657.5 The Council accepted the minutes of Planning Committee (5.3) held on the 23rd January 2017

17/658 FINANCE

658.1 The Finance report and payments totalling £20,635.18 for the period ending 31st December 2017 were approved.

17/659 REPORTS

659.1 Police Report – none

659.2 District Councillors' Report – Cllr Marples had sent his apologies however he provided an update report to be read to Council. Cllr Owens read the report to members.

- Cllr Peter Martin had a successful cancer operation about 10 days ago, and he remains in the County hospital. He will require some further treatment over coming months, possibly followed by assessment at the Kleinwort Centre, mainly to determine what he will need when he returns home.

Hassock Parish Members indicated they wished to record their best wishes to Cllr Martin.

- Last week, I spoke to the Head of the Council's Environmental Health team for an up-date on the pollution reading monitoring at Stonepound. I was told that pollution levels have fallen slightly (possibly as a result of improving vehicle technology?) but there is some way to go before the designation can be lifted. I also asked whether there are any new initiatives that could be introduced to drive levels further down so that, at least, we could get rid of the infantile signage at the site which I believe is ineffective as it is largely ignored. Unfortunately the answer is no and, as motorists, we all have a role to play.
- As previously reported, MSDC's council tax review this year is likely to be just under 2% or about £3.50 per annum on the average Band D property.
- The budget has gone through scrutiny and will come to full Council on 1 March. I do not expect there will be material changes and £25,000 has been allocated for expenditure on the refurbishment of the loos in Adastra Park. Good news
- I have spoken to the new Parish Clerk about the negotiations with Compass Bus over possible revision to existing services. I need to get back to the residents who raised the matter with me some weeks ago and I will pick up the position from the minutes of tonight's meeting in due course.
- I apologise that I cannot be present tonight and as you know Peter Martin is indisposed and Kevin Burke has work commitments.

659.3 County Councillor Report

West Sussex County Councillor Andy Petch provided members with a verbal update.

- A site visit was undertaken at Woodlands Road with a Highways engineer. It is confirmed that due to the condition of the road it is likely the whole road will need to be resurfaced.
- AP indicated that highway funds had been set aside to enable Burgess Hill Town Council to paint new Driveway Protection Markings (DPM) white lines at a cost of £180. Further advice can be provided by Highways.

Cllr Peter Gibbons questioned whether any money was available for re-marking. Cllr Petch indicated he was unsure.

- Funding for DFE schemes – Cllr Petch confirmed that funding for a Car Park scheme at the Railway station had passed the initial phase assessment. This was agreed to be put forward to WSCC to consider as a potential scheme for progression
- WSCC Budget meeting to be held Friday (17/02/17)
- The Community Infrastructure Funding (CIF) initiative is coming to an end. More money is still available for potential qualifying schemes therefore any ideas are encouraged to be submitted.

Cllr Petch confirmed to Cllr Frances Gaudencio that the closing date had passed but further applications may be considered.

Cllr Nick Owens sought clarification as to whether a WSCC school could benefit from this funding stream. Cllr Petch indicated probably not.

- A discussion took place amongst all members regarding the condition of some of the roads in the parish with regard to potholes. Members discussed a number of roads including Ockley Way and Woodlands road. Cllr Petch agreed to follow these up.

659.4 Rail Matters

Cllr Peter Gibbons provided an update on a recent meeting held with the Group Station Manager Paul Wyborn (PW) regarding the current standard of cleanliness and condition of the station. PW undertook to raise our concerns with the Station Manager to establish why checks do not appear to have been carried out or defects reported.

It was confirmed that the repairs post cash machine raid are likely to be completed by the end of this month.

In January 478 trains were cancelled with a further 37 that ran but failed to stop at Hassocks.

659.5 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Bill Hatton provided members with an update on the progress of the appeal for Friars Oak. Dates are currently trying to be agreed between the parties, Rydon are keen for the inquiry to progress as soon as possible however it is for Mid Sussex DC to arrange and for us to comply. Cllr Hatton indicated that it may be possible for the inquiry to be held here in Hassocks but it would be dependent on being able to accommodate the number of people attending.

The sequential flood risk assessment for the National tyre site continues to be making slow progress which may result in the plan being held up.

659.6 Cllr Frances Gaudencio asked whether the Council should be participating in the recent white paper on Housing. Members requested that the Clerk make further enquiries regarding the response dates and provide members with further details to enable a decision. If members determine that a response is required this could be delegated to either the Planning Committee or the Neighbourhood Working Group to complete.

17/660 Mid Sussex District Plan Examination – report was noted

17/661 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

661.1 Nothing to report

17/662 CLERK'S REPORT

Policy, Resources & Communications Committee (Minute 16/550) at its meeting on 29th November, agreed that the Locum Clerk would commence reviewing the existing Council policies and be charged with submitting revisions or additions as necessary.

662.1 (i) **MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL – Appendix 3**

Following consideration of the Member /Officer Protocol (Minute 611.1) by the Policy, Resources and Communication Committee Council

662.2 **RESOLVED** to ratify and approve the policy for adoption.

662.3 (ii) **STANDING ORDERS / FINANCIAL REGULATIONS Appendix 4**

The Clerk introduced the report setting out the draft Standing Orders /Financial Regulations in Appendix 4 and requested members to review the document and submit any comments/points of clarification to enable the Clerk to document and answer prior to the meeting where the Standing Orders are debated.

Members agreed to submit written comments / points of clarification to the Clerk for consideration to enable a response to be provided at a future meeting.

662.4 **INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

Members were informed that the Council had received the interim internal audit report and that the full report was available for inspection by members in the Clerk's Office. An action plan has been drawn up to address the five recommendations made by the Internal Auditor. In addition, members were advised that the Internal Auditor was provided the opportunity to comment on the draft Standing Orders/Financial Regulations and had indicated that they would provide the basis of a robust policies and procedures that would be 'fit for purpose'.

662.5 **CO-OPTED MEMBER**

The Council were reminded of the current vacancy and that a written request had been received from a member of the public to be co-opted onto the Council. The resident is known to the Council therefore it is recommended that Georgia Cheshire be co-opted onto the Council.

662.6 **RESOLVED.** That Georgia Cheshire be co-opted onto the Council subject to the resident meeting the requirements to become a Councillor.

662.7 **BUS ROUTE**

Members considered the response from Compass set out in Appendix 5. The Clerk advised Members that he had contacted Compass to establish what potential additional service(s) they could provide and an indication of the level of subsidy they would require. Compass confirmed they would be able to provide a once a week direct service to Brighton from Hassocks at a subsidy level of £140 per week. They indicated that any Pilot scheme would require a minimum commitment of 12 months (£7,280)

The Clerk sought further direction from members as to how this work stream should be progressed. Members were of the view the Compass option should not be progressed at this stage.

Cllr Peter Gibbons suggested the Council may wish to explore opportunities via Community Transport Sussex. Cllr Peter Gibbons declared an interest at this stage as he sometimes drives on behalf of the organisation.

Cllr Gibbons indicated that under the 1985 Transport Act (s22) it allows the running of community bus services providing it is not in direct competition with a private operator.

Members discussed a number of potential bus routes that may be beneficial to Hassocks residents therefore agreed further options should be explored. Cllr Gibbons confirmed that the Chief Executive of Community Transport Sussex Matt Roberts would be interested in exploring the potential of offering a service.

Cllr Frances Gaudencio requested that the Chief Executive Matt Roberts be invited to come and talk to the Council to assess what potential bus services could be provided. Members agreed that this would be helpful.

662.8 Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk

- i) contact the Chief Executive of Community Transport Sussex and invite him to attend a future meeting to discuss potential services that could be offered &
- ii) contact both Ditchling and Hurstpeirpoint Parish Councils to assess whether there would be any interest in taking forward a joint initiative.

662.9 **OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE SPACE**

Members considered the recommendation made by Grounds & Environment Committee (17/632) on the 30th January 2017 to provide a financial contribution towards the building of an outdoor performance space at Downlands School. The Clerk updated members that we had now received an indication that construction would commence subject to all other funding being in place in spring 2018.

662.10 **RESOLVED** To approve the funding of £10,000 towards the construction of an outdoor performance space at Downlands School subject to all other funding being in place.

662.11 WEBSITE

Members were informed that the Councils website had been hacked the previous week. The vulnerability occurred when the system was updated with a new software release. Passwords have been changed and a new security patch has been installed which has resolved the vulnerability. The Council have been informed that a large number of sites operating the same software were similarly hacked.

17/663 Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

There were none

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.

17/664 PENSION SCHEME (Auto enrolment) Appendix 6

Members considered and discussed a detailed report on the options available to the Council for the introduction of an Auto enrolment pension scheme to enable the Council to discharge its legal obligations. Members carefully considered the implications for the employees of the Council; the on-going financial implications and ensuring the Council was able to meet its legal obligations.

664.1 RESOLVED

- i) That Council agrees to join the Local Government Pension scheme, as administered by West Sussex County Council and all employed members of staff are given the opportunity to join.
- ii) In accordance with the Councils Standing Orders the Chair and one other member is authorised to sign the West Sussex County Council pension pooling agreement, on behalf of the Council.
- iii) and to postpone the introduction of auto enrolment to allow sufficient time to align pension payments to the Payroll run.