

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**
meeting held on **Tuesday 19 September 2017 at 7.30pm**

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Georgia Cheshire (from item 5); Frances Gaudencio (Chair), Peter Gibbons, Sue Hatton (from item 4); Chris Hobbs and Ian Weir.

Clerk: Ian Cumberworth
In attendance: Tracy Bates. (Deputy Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting and requested Members to keep mobile phones off or on silent. The Chair also reminded Members about the recently revised Standing Orders and asked members to be mindful about the correct procedures for contributing to discussions.

PRC17/17 APOLOGIES: Cllrs Judith Foot and Justine Fisher. Absent without apology Cllr Kate Bailey.

PRC17/18 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS: None declared.

PRC17/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th July 2017 as previously circulated were accepted.

PRC17/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

There were no members of the public present.

Cllr Sue Hatton joined the meeting.

The Chair proposed moving item 5, Business Plan, to the end of the meeting and this was unanimously agreed by Members.

PRC17/21 CLERK'S REPORTS

21.1 Review of the Communications Policy.

The Council adopted the current Communications Policy in October 2016 and the Policy review was overdue. Therefore Members were invited to reconsider the policy and determine whether any amendments were required. The Chair asked Members to note that the Communications Policy would be developed as part of the Business Plan, and therefore any suggested amendments would form a part of this.

Cllr Georgia Cheshire joined the meeting.

Members discussed the various aspects of the Communications policy. It was noted that there had not been any regular news updates, however it had been intended that Committee Chairs were to contribute to regular

relevant news articles through Chairs' Meetings and these meetings have not yet been fully established. As an alternative approach, it was suggested that the Clerk's office could provide Councillors with relevant and current topics for articles in advance of quarterly reports. The Clerk's office would therefore guide the content of news and co-ordinate the formation of reports, however this would have resourcing issues. It was recognised that this needed to be further considered and that the Business Plan could provide a framework for such reports

The Deputy Clerk sought clarification on the use of Facebook and Twitter with reference to News posts and Minutes and Agendas. It was AGREED that News, Minutes and Agendas should all be fed to Facebook and Twitter as notifications that these had been posted on the website. The Facebook page is used to signpost to the website only and is not an interactive site.

The Clerk informed the Committee that he is using software to monitor website traffic, and to analyse visits to the site.

It was AGREED that the suggested amendments had been noted and the Communications Policy had been duly reviewed. The Business Plan would lead how the Policy is further developed.

21.2 **Policy Reviews.**

The Clerk gave a verbal report regarding the recent Policy reviews.

Standing Orders /Financial Regulations

A review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations formally adopted at Full Council on 12 September 2017. These policies set out the governance framework that the Council works within. Arrangements are being made to circulate copies to all Members and to upload copies onto the Parish Council's website.

Developer Protocol

This Policy which sets out the protocol for Meetings with Developers was reviewed at the Full Council meeting on 12 September 2017 and some minor amendments were agreed.

Terms of Reference

The Clerk informed the Committee that he had prepared first drafts of Terms of Reference for Grounds & Environment, Policy, Resources & Communications and Planning Committees, and for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be forwarded the following day to the Constitutional Working Group (Cllrs Sue Hatton and Judith Foot) for consideration prior to going forward for adoption, and incorporation into Standing Orders.

The Clerk reported that the Terms of Reference had been structured with a view to setting out responsibilities and accountabilities for each

Committee and aimed to provide clarity for both Members and the Public of the work of each committee.

21.3 **Training.**

The Clerk provided a report on Training initiatives which had been undertaken by both Councillors and Officers.

Councillor Training.

Cllr Nick Owens attended a course organised by the Campaign to Protect Rural England on 16.9.17. This course was an 'Introduction to Planning'.

Cllr Victoria Standfast and Deputy Clerk, Tracy Bates are to attend a Planning Training Seminar on 10.10.17 which has been organised by Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council (HSCPC).

Therefore both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Committee would have received specific training in relation to planning issues.

The Clerk also informed Members that he has held some informal discussions with HSCPC regarding the possibility of exploring future joint training initiatives for Members.

Members were in agreement that training sessions were useful, and it was noted that some new Councillors had not had the opportunity to attend any training. The Clerk proposed initiating a Member Training assessment later in the year in order to identify gaps in training. There may be a possibility to liaise with HSCPC to provide joint training. It was noted that a formal induction training programme would be useful, however Cllr Sue Hatton's support to New Members was recognised as being very helpful.

The Clerk agreed to circulate the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) forthcoming Training Programme for Members information. It was discussed that there is value to several Members attending certain training sessions, however there is a cost implication which needs to be considered in future budget setting.

Cllr Gaudencio referred to a course on 'The Role of the Chair' which several Members had attended earlier in the year. This had been a very useful course, however the opportunity to feedback to other Members had not been created and this would be valuable.

It was AGREED that Members should be invited to feedback after attending a course to enable the Council as a whole to share and benefit from the learning.

It was also AGREED that a training session would be organised by the Clerk to provide the opportunity for the relevant Members to feedback following the 'Role of the Chair' training session. Some discussion took place as to the format and timing of the session and it was decided that this should be an informal session with refreshments, to be held at a

different time to any other scheduled meetings. The Committee hoped that as many Members as possible would attend the session, and the Clerk was asked to proceed with arranging this for a suitable date in November.

21.4 **Officer Training**

Various training has been undertaken by individual staff over the last six months. This included some training in Burial Grounds procedures and legal compliance, Allotment management and legal obligations and the use of Parish Online, which is an online geographical system which the Council is utilising. As the responsible Officer, the Clerk had hoped to attend a course on Legionella Management recently, however this had been cancelled. He will be attending a course organised by Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils on budget setting and precept on 10 October 2017.

21.5 **Staffing Matters.**

The Clerk reported that in addition to the management of general Council business, Staff were also working on specific projects including a review of Burial Ground Procedures and Policies, a review of the Asset Register and the creation of a photographic portfolio of assets and a review of the current Allotment Agreements and procedures.

21.6 **Pension Auto enrolment.** The Clerk informed Members that confirmation has now been received from the Pensions Regulator that the council has met its responsibilities with regard to pension auto enrolment.

21.7 **Christmas Closure.** The Clerk informed Members that for the last two years the Parish Office had been closed for the Christmas week and there had been no reported issues. Emergency numbers were made available via the website and an auto response on email and the Office Closure was publicised well in advance using posters and the website.

Members were invited to consider the Christmas Hours for 2017. After a short discussion Members were unanimously AGREED that the office would close to the public on Friday 22 December 2017 at 12 noon and re-open on Tuesday 2 January 2018 at 10.00am.

It was agreed that this would be considered on an annual basis to allow for variations in how the Christmas period falls.

21.8 **Financial Reports.** Cllr Ian Weir raised the view that the Committee have not had the opportunity to review detailed Financial Reports which enabled Members to see how much money was being spent in relation to budgets set. The Clerk informed Cllr Weir that the format of such reports was currently being reviewed to provide the most useful information to members and it was AGREED that a draft report would be available at the next Committee meeting for Members to consider.

PRC17/22 Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chair for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

There were no other urgent matters.

PRC17/23 BUSINESS PLAN

Cllr Gaudencio invited Members to review the content of the draft 'Business Plan' as previously circulated and propose any additional amendments or additions. Once all of the contributions have been received, modifications will be made in consultation with the group to enable the paper to be further developed.

Members considered each element of the working paper under the headings 'Engaging with the Community' and 'A Parish for All'. Detailed discussions took place and suggestions were made for amendments. These were recorded by Cllr Gaudencio and will be used to further develop the draft plan. Due to time constraints, Members were asked to review the elements under the headings 'Neighbourhood Plan', 'A great Place to Live and Work and Enjoy' and 'Our Staff and Ourselves', at home and to forward any suggested amendments to Cllr Gaudencio, copying in members of this committee, before the next meeting.

PRC17/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. 17 October 2017

The Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed..... Date.....