

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council** meeting held on 10th July 2018 which commenced at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir, Jane Baker, Nick Owens, Bill Hatton, Sue Hatton, Francis Gaudencio, Judith Foot, Kate Bailey, Georgia Cheshire

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member: Cllr Gordon Marples (MSDC)

MINUTES

PC18/18 APOLOGIES

Cllr Leslie Campbell, Peter Gibbons, Victoria Standfast, Mark Higgins and Emma Wood.

Visiting Members Cllr Michelle Binks (MSDC) and Cllr Kirsty Lord (WSCC)

PC18/19 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

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.

None.

PC18/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 12 June 2018 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC18/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were 3 members of the public present none of whom wished to speak but observed proceedings.

PC18/22 TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee 18th June 2018 were noted.

Grounds & Environment Committee 28th June 2018 were noted.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – 27th June 2018 were noted

PC18/23 FINANCE

The Finance report and payments totalling £26,975.55 for the period ending 31st May 2018 were approved.

PC18/24 Twinning Group visit to Wald Michelbach

Gift to Wald Michelbach - The Chair updated Members that the Parish Council had donated some local wine from a vineyard located in Albourne to raise the profile of Sussex wine.

Twining Group visit to Wald Michelbach. Carolyn Barton from the Twining group updated members on the visit.

A 3 way meeting involving the partners in the Twining/ Jumelage/ Partnerschaft arrangement - Hassocks, Montmirail (France) and Wald-Michelbach (hosts).

Hassocks was represented by 13 adults, including the President of Hassocks Twining Association and 3 new members for the first time. Emma Warren (local teacher of German/French to the very young) and Nicki Burston - PA to the Senior Leadership Team at Downlands were specifically invited, but could not attend due to other commitments. The visit was relatively informal - comprising home stays, group suppers, visits to places of historical and cultural interest (i.e. a guided tour of the mediaeval town of Michelstadt and the Schmucker brewery there) and participation in 'Heimattfest' (home festival) which included a costumed parade with floats through the streets in a large friendship group. Some from Hassocks extended their visit by travelling on to Stuttgart, the Black Forest and around France.

We were introduced to W-M's new Burgermeister - Herr Sacha Weber who has recently taken up his post and received an update on local issues – for example the controversial expansion of wind energy in the forests of the Odenwald surrounding W-M.

Discussion took place with education professionals/teachers regarding continuance of the exchange between French/English/German students involving Downlands, deepening of links with younger children through local teacher Emma Warren and 'Le Club des Etoiles' and furtherance of links between youth groups such as tennis, football and basketball teams and any other interest groups.

The gift of 3 Albourne wines from Hassocks Parish Council was very much appreciated and invoked much discussion as to the various attributes of the UK's burgeoning wine industry – particularly in Sussex - and so close to Hassocks.

A 3 way business meeting/2 day visit to either Hassocks or Montmirail involving the Mayor, Burgermeister, Parish Council representative(s) and Jumelage/Partnerschaft officers was proposed and a window of **08/10 – 14/10** has been suggested by W-M and will need to be discussed by the Partners in depth in the next few weeks.

An invitation was also extended for Partners to visit Montmirail on the weekend of **27 and 28/04 2019**.

Prior to the visit and to underline the growing importance of international (and particularly European) studies by young people in Hassocks and surrounds - on **21/06** some of us attended Downlands School's private view of their impressive Fine Art and Technology Exhibition, the De La Vigne award was made to Hassocks student who speaks good French and German and is about to study at Varndean School for his International Baccalaureate which is a growing trend among our young people. The speaker at this event and one of the judges was Downlands Alumni Magda Bullivant who left the school recently, then studied at Chelsea Art School continuing her studies in Berlin and who will depart Hassocks shortly to further her studies of art in Paris. All of this reveals the legacy of language teaching in our schools and the focus and aspirations of our young people in a changing and challenging period in the nation's history vis a vis its position in the world.

The Wald-Michelbach visit also took place the weekend after Hassocks hosted a visit of 11 tennis players from Montmirail Tennis Club to Weald Tennis Club (WTC) (**22- 24/06**). One participant Jean Paul Bernier is the deputy mayor of Montmirail and helped plant the friendship tree here in the memorial garden last June. Various young people attended.

This visit took the form of 2 tennis sessions on separate days, a supper with WTC and Twinning members in the Club on Friday evening and a lunch on Sunday, and an all day visit to the Eastbourne Tennis Tournament, town and attractions guided by HTA members on Saturday followed by suppers in various host's homes and visits to the windmills and surrounding countryside. The Friday and Sunday sessions were also attended by the Parish Council Chairman. A number of old connections from many years ago were rejuvenated and a return invitation from Montmirail Tennis Club has been given to WTC for September 2018. The whole weekend was a great success, as the visitors appreciated the very good facilities at The Weald and also the attractiveness of Eastbourne (a new experience for them), the beauty of the coast and South Downs and the intimate and relaxed nature of the tournament, where it was possible for the young people in particular to get close and speak to tennis players, practice their English and collect autographs as well as some souvenirs.

Going forward - on Thursday (12th) the HTA Margaret Rose award for best foreign language student(s) will be awarded for the 11th year at Downlands School.

On 17 July myself as Chair and Michelle Binks are having a meeting with Downlands Head Mark Wignall, Nicki Burston - PA to the Senior Leadership Team, and members of the MFL Department to discuss the revival of exchange visits to the two partner communities. Information from the W-M visit and the aspirations of the Partners' will be fed into this meeting. The aim will be to recreate school and teacher links with a view to another trip in 2019 following a gap in 2018 caused by staff changes at Downlands.

On 19 July HTA will be holding its 26th AGM with Emma Warren as guest speaker in the Green Room Adastra Hall. This year's report will of course include feedback on the Celebrate Hassocks event here at Adastra and at Downlands in June 2017.

The Chair thanked Carolyn for her report.

PC18/25 REPORTS

25.1 Mid Sussex District Councillors Report

- 25.2 Cllr Gordon Marples (GM) informed members that he was just returning from a training session on Universal Credit which Cllr Binks is currently in attendance. GM confirmed that the District Council had a slight underspend for 2017/18 in part due to an increased revenue from planning and car parks. A medium term aspiration of MSDC is to be able to transfer funds from General Reserves to build its own affordable housing.

The development of Burgess Hill Town centre is continuing to progress. One significant recent announcement relates to a land purchase arrangement with Homes England (new government agency to boost house building) that has secured all the land options within the Northern Arc and overcome the previous infrastructure complications that have halted development progress. This will now enable the house building programme to commence. It is anticipated that the original landowners (various developers) will be utilised to build out the properties.

GM informed Members that MSDC are installing new Pay and Display parking machines which will allow cashless payment /phone payment facilities as well as continuing to be able to handle cash transactions.

- 25.3 Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) advised members that she had been in discussion with a speed watch group about potentially establishing a group in Hassocks. SH indicated she believes the group have also been in contact with the Clerk regarding possible funding options.

SH also updated members that some future planning applications will be fast tracked (subject to specific criteria being met) and decided under a different framework. These would no longer require full planning permissions which may impact on the ability/timing of any consultations. Not aware of any cases that meet this criteria at present therefore it should be a watching brief to see how and if this develops as more information on the process becomes available.

25.4 County Councillor Report.

Cllr Kirsty Lord had sent her apologies but submitted a written report that was read out by the Clerk

Highways - The County-funded part of the parking plan was approved at County Local Committee (CLC) on 26th June. The Parish-funded part of the parking plan is currently timetabled for approval at the October CLC

I sent questions to Bob Lanzer, Cabinet Member for Highways, after the long delays at the traffic lights at Stonepound Crossroads in April/May. There was a meeting at County to establish what went wrong and I have now received a response. I have made suggestions on what can be actioned going forwards, particularly when the works relating to Ham Fields are carried out there.

I am working with Richard Speller on two Community Highways Scheme applications:

- a. Dale Avenue (Age Concern to junction with Keymer Road): widening the pavement by removing the verges which get muddy and slippery in winter and straightening the edge of the green. Resurfacing where needed including making the pavement on the corner by National Tyres more user friendly.
- b. Cycle path on Lodge Lane

Other highways options being pursued with Richard Speller and residents including a crossing point from South Bank to Station Approach and the possibilities around Stonepound and Brighton Road to slow traffic and improve pedestrian facilities

The corner of Friars Oak Road and Little Copse Road will see the extension of the pavement over the Semley Road opening and dropped kerbs directing pedestrians across the road. This is expected to be delivered in this financial year.

Trains

I have been supporting Catherine Cassidy of the Rail Group and some commuters on the campaign to reinstate direct peak time trains to Clapham Junction. This work is ongoing.

I have worked with Mark Wignall of Downlands and Nick Herbert on the problems caused by the ongoing removal of the 8.28 train from Wivelsfield to Hassocks that school pupils use. This train will now be reinstated into the temporary timetable from 15th July.

School crossing patrol

My written question on school crossing patrols in June revealed a 30% vacancy rate across the County. I also asked an oral question on the specific issue of the lack of a school crossing patrol on Grand Avenue since April 2017. I am pushing County to improve their advertising for the role and I spoke on BBC Sussex about the need for a lollipop lady or man in Hassocks to encourage applicants.

At County

I proposed a motion on increasing women's participation in local government and this was passed unanimously

I also proposed an amendment on a motion around Motor Neurone Disease, asking for the Charter to be adopted for all residents living with a life-limiting condition and this was also accepted.

25.5 **Rail Matters** –

Cllr Peter Gibbons had sent his apologies but submitted a written report that was read out by the Clerk.

I am not able to attend this evening's Parish Council but I submit a report, because I am attending a Govia Thameslink Railway forum on a new timetable due to commence on Sunday 15th July. This timetable is a temporary substitute for the current timetable because GTR although on paper have sufficient numbers of drivers to drive their trains, they are not *route trained* on the routes that they are supposed to be driving on, and some are yet to receive basic training on trains themselves, hence the problems they appear to be having.

During the month of June there were **1,291 train cancellations at Hassocks**. This is easily the worst month since I started compiling these figures in January 2016 when I first realised that something was going terribly wrong with this franchise and felt we needed evidence to back up our concerns.

Of the 1,291 train cancellations, 1,254 were cancelled outright or never passed through Hassocks as passenger trains. 37 trains did run through Hassocks, but failed to stop even though they were scheduled to do so.

Of the cancelled trains some 964 were pre-planned train cancellations, meaning they were cancelled the previous day, and as such do not feature in the Public Performance Measure (PPM) figures. Nevertheless these trains do appear on the current public timetables which is why they have been included in my figures.

In the first 181 days of 2018 from the **1st January to the 30th June 2,221 trains were cancelled**. This can be broken down to 1,954 trains cancelled outright with a further 267 trains which should stop at Hassocks but failed to do so.

This equates to an average daily cancellation figure of 12.27. However due to engineering works trains did not run on 8 of the days. If these days are removed from equation, then the average daily figure rises to 12.83 trains daily.

With regard to the 15th July timetable revision, I've not had a chance to read it in detail, but on the face of it looks little changed from what Hassocks should receive now. Whether or not this revised timetable will actually work, only time will tell.

What I can confirm though, is the GTR timetable change for December 2018 will now not take place.

25.6 **Youth Initiatives** – Cllr Kate Bailey informed members that a thriving youth group is being established at Frances Hall. Cllr Sue Hatton also informed the group that a youth group were about to use the Adastra Hall - green room. The

Clerk confirmed this was the same group that had previously used the Pavilion but felt the green room was more suitable for their needs.

- 25.7 **Police matters**– Cllr Bailey updated members that the village is continuing to experience spates of anti-social behaviour and encouraged all residents to report any crime to ensure the police are aware of any incidents. Members discussed the issue and requested that information be posted in the parish offices window and rotunda detailing ways the police can be contacted. The Clerk undertook to arrange this.

25.8 **Reports from Councillors on meetings outside bodies where the Council is represented. –**

Cllr Sue Hatton attended the Adastra Hall management board and commended the excellent work that is being done to maintain/improve the usage of the facility. SH also attended the Hassocks Community Organisation where they considered a number of AGM reports for some of the partner groups.

Cllr Judith Foot attended the tree group meeting where they considered the tree planting programme for the forthcoming year.

PC18/26 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

The Chair informed members that he only had one item to raise. The Council were seeking ideas on potential parish infrastructure improvements that could be realised from developer contributions. The intention was to establish a task and finish group and he was seeking volunteers to participate in this group. The Chair invited any interested Members to contact the Clerk directly. A report will be considered at the forthcoming Policy Resource and Communications Committee to agree the representation on the group and outline the tasks to be undertaken. The Clerk undertook to provide further detail to Members on how the Development contribution process (s106/CIL) works (types of things that can and can’t be considered) to assist Members in deciding whether they wished to be part of this group.

PC18/27 CLERK’S REPORT

- 27.1 Members were requested to consider recommendation from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to continue to progress the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

9NP18/6) Members RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Full Council that option 2 ‘light touch review’ should be pursued and that Hassocks Parish Council should continue to employ Dowsett Mayhew to support this process.

The working group recommended that after careful consideration of the detailed report which is set out as Appendix 3 that the option 2 approach ‘light touch review’ should be approved together with the continued employment of Dale Mayhew to support the process.

The Clerk indicated that it would be hoped that if this option was accepted we could deliver a Neighbourhood Plan within about 12 months.

Cllr Bill Hatton Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group took members through the rationale why the group had recommended this option and the importance of reflecting the changing environment. This approach would enable the Council to utilise most of the considerable work that is already in the draft NP and to strengthen this. It is not proposed that the Council reinvent the wheel on housing numbers now that we have a District Plan requirement for the whole plan period. It would be proposed that we work with MSDC on numbers, and they have indicated they would support option 2 to enable us to progress to a Regulation 16 plan in the autumn.

Cllr Ian Weir reaffirmed Cllr Hatton's comments and added that all planning decisions are evidenced based therefore with a Neighbourhood Plan in place it should provide the Parish with added protection.

Members considered the detailed report and the comments of the NPWG Chair and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups recommendation that the option 2 'light touch review' approach would be adopted, and that the Council will continue to employ Dowsett Mayhew to support this process.

All Members present voted in favour of this option.

PC18/28 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

None

PC18/29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
To note that the date of the next Council meeting is Tuesday 11th September 2018 at 7.30pm.