

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir (Chair), Peter Gibbons, Jane Baker, Judith Foot, Bill Hatton, Leslie Campbell, Emma Wood, Sue Hatton, Georgia Cheshire, Mark Higgins, Frances Gaudencio, Victoria Standfast, Kate Bailey and Nick Owens.

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member: Michelle Binks (District Councillor)  
Kirsty Lord (County Councillor)

### MINUTES

#### **PC18/74 APOLOGIES**

Gordon Marples Binks (District Councillor)

#### **PC18/75 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

#### **PC18/76 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### **PC18/77 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was 6 members of the public present one of whom spoke on item 9.3 on the agenda in relation to Anti-social behaviour the others observed proceedings. In support of the issues set out in the letter under consideration the resident raised concerns over the current level of anti-social behaviour in the village and the park and that some parents in the village had stopped allowing their children to attend the park due to their concerns over the safety of children from the current issues being experienced by the village. The resident informed Members that she had written to and received a response from the Prevention Inspector based in Crawley setting out her concerns that the current situation is affecting daily life in the village. In his response the officer set out a number of strategies the police are implementing but confirmed that although there would not be a dedicated police officer for Hassocks, there will be dedicated teams that can respond to 'hotspots'. The resident requested that with the proposed skate facility the Council may wish to consider improved lighting within the park and cameras. Cllr Weir thanked the resident for her comments and indicated this would be considered in more detail when the Council considered the item on the agenda.

## **PC18/78 MINUTES**

To accept the following Minutes.

To note the minutes of the Planning Committee for 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018

## **PC18/79 FINANCE**

Members considered the finance reports and the supporting bank statements and reviewed the payment list. The Finance report and payments totalling **£28,621.81** for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were considered and approved.

## **PC18/80 Reports**

80.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Michelle Binks (MB) and Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) confirmed that they had recently attended a multi-agency meeting to discuss anti-social behaviour which they would expand on further when the specific item on anti-social behaviour was covered later in the meeting, but generally over the Christmas break it had been relatively quiet in relation to District Council meetings.

MB confirmed that MSDC would be discussing the 500 home Masterplan in the near future and a meeting is scheduled with Clayton Mill representatives next week including the developer.

80.2 **County Councillor report** – Kirsty Lord (KL) updated Members that on the 14<sup>th</sup> December WSCC confirmed that they propose to cut bus routes, but these routes had not yet been finalised. Options are being considered by the County Council Conservative group as to whether Community Transport could fill the gaps. Parish Cllr Gibbons indicated that if this was the case it is likely the cost of this would have to be met by grants via the County.

KL informed Members that County had met to discuss the Gatwick Airport consultation proposals and have reserved their position until further information on the infrastructure is made available.

KL recently held a meeting with Parish Councillors Gaudencio and Cheshire to discuss a joint approach to developing highways improvements for pedestrian access at Stonepound Crossroads and the wider area including the route to the garden centre and across Keymer Road to Southbank and the Weald Tennis Club. (SH) indicated that County should look at the wider picture when considering this scheme rather than just the crossroads particularly in light of the likely increase in traffic which will arise from all of the developments on London Road. County Cllr Lord had a scheduled meeting with Highways to explore/develop potential options and sought the Parishes views on this joint approach. Based on Cllr Lords outline approach the Chair (IW) sought a show of hands of those Parish Councillors in favour of this joint approach, all were in favour.

Cllr Gibbons (PG) also requested that, at this meeting, highways also be requested to remove obsolete signage in the village. KL agreed to raise this issue.

*At this point the Chair (IW) proposed that item 9.3 'Anti-Social Behaviour' be brought forward on the agenda for consideration, all members approved this proposal.*

80.3 **Anti- Social Behaviour** – The Clerk introduced the report and invited Members to consider the content of the letter from a resident requesting ways in which the Council can become involved in resolving the current issues. To provide some context the Clerk had incorporated a table setting out the published Anti- social crime figures for the Parish covering the last 5 years.

Cllr Weir (IW) indicated that he had personally written to Katie Bourne (Police Commissioner) regarding the current issues in the village but had yet to receive a response. He had also been contacted by Nick Herbert (MP's) office regarding Neighbourhood village wardens.

For a Parish Council to take on responsibility for directly managing the recruitment, training, safety etc of these personnel would be challenging and would be better managed at District level.

IW referred to one approach adopted by Horsham District Council (HDC) where under a 2 year pilot scheme the District has taken on the responsibility for employment of the wardens (recruitment /training, safety etc.) with the Parish Councils paying the costs. In addition, HDC have also provided some grant funding to support the parishes during the initial years. IW was not aware that MSDC were looking at this model at present.

IW went onto say that there was an inherent conflict in introducing village wardens when the Government is already allowing additional police precept increases to provide extra funding for recruitment of officers.

District Cllrs Binks (MB) and S Hatton (SH) confirmed they had recently attended a multi-agency meeting to discuss options and strategies to deal with the current issues. At the meeting some key points were raised it was confirmed that 9 acceptable behaviour contracts have been written and issued to recent offenders in Hassocks and will be enforced if they are breached. All the agencies indicated that it was key that all incidents are formally reported, and this can be done by dialling 101 or **999** or reporting the incident on-line via the following links:

**Mid Sussex District Council**

[https://doitonline.midsussex.gov.uk/officeforms/MS\\_anti\\_social\\_behaviour\\_report\\_1.ofml](https://doitonline.midsussex.gov.uk/officeforms/MS_anti_social_behaviour_report_1.ofml)

**Sussex Police**

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/>

The agencies indicated that it was important that reports are factual and first hand reports. It was confirmed Mid Sussex District Council only deal with anti-social behaviour.

It was emphasised that by posting the occurrence on social media this does not constitute the reporting of the incident it needs to go through the formal channels.

Parish Members were informed that MSDC is currently producing information documents for all stakeholders to assist/working together in supporting action against anti-social behaviour and a meeting will be convened with all stakeholders including HPC to support this process. Members were also informed that Katy Bourne (Police Commissioner) has agreed to reinstate Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) although no timeframe had been provided at this stage. It was also confirmed that Clarion housing which is responsible for managing the housing stock previously owned by MSDC also employ an anti-social behaviour officer.

It was confirmed that when reporting a crime, the police require details of the persons reporting the crime, although it was acknowledged that some people may feel intimidated and reluctant to do this. Without this *key-information* the police's ability to respond can be significantly hampered. Members were advised that the police have various arrangements in place regarding witness protection if required.

Members were informed that invariably the police are aware of the culprits and it was important that a multi-agency approach is taken, and intelligence shared.

Members discussed various options on how the Parish Council may respond to instances, the Clerk confirmed that all known instances of anti-social behaviour on the park are reported to the police in the first instance and have been for at least the last 16 months. Members discussed the issue raised regarding the option of CCTV and lighting in the park and it was agreed this could be explored at a future Grounds & Environment Committee.

One member raised the question of the value of CCTV in so far that the police are indicating that they already know who the culprits are.

Members concluded that in the first instance in relation to the ongoing issues the Parish Council will write to the Police Commissioner demanding action in our village and that County and District members should also write setting out their concerns.

Members discussed the need for multi agencies to be more proactive. County Cllr Lord (KL) indicated that she had held discussions with County regarding prevention teams that they currently fund - some of which are acknowledged nationally as *model initiatives* which serve to prevent offenders being created. The Troubled Family Initiative has been very successful - however due to budget cuts and Council Tax increases these services are now under threat.

Members expressed the view that unfortunately services now are reactive as opposed to being proactive.

Cllr Gaudencio suggested that the Council should engage with the local traders to explore ways of them mitigating some of the anti-social behaviour they are currently experiencing

On conclusion of this item 2 members of the public left the meeting. The Council then reverted back to agenda item 7.3.

- 80.4 Rail matters – Cllr Gibbons (PG) informed Members that in December there were 391 cancellations of which 327 either never ran or failed to pass through Hassocks and 64 that should have stopped but didn't. Up until this week all 201 pre-planned cancellations from the timetable revisions earlier in the year had not been reinstated until earlier this week so that a full timetable should now be in place.

Overall 6,198 trains have been cancelled from the 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. PG reminded Members of the scheduled line closures throughout the February half term where services will be replaced by buses. Cllr Campbell (LC) expressed his thanks to PG for all the information.

- 80.5 Youth Initiatives - nothing more to report other than that raised under anti-social behaviour.
- 80.6 Police matters – nothing more to report other than that raised under anti-social behaviour.
- 80.7 Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented – None

**PC18/81 CHAIRMANS REPORT** – The Chair reminded Members that District, and Parish elections are scheduled for May and in conjunction with the Clerk published items have been submitted for January and February editions of 'Talkabout'. With the elections coming up we will also need to promote the opportunity for individuals to stand as Councillors and also any existing Members wishing to continue will be required to submit their nominations in due course.

**PC18/82 CLERK'S REPORT**

**82.1 PRECEPT 2019/20**

The Clerk introduced a report confirming that the Council Tax base had now been confirmed at 3,390 therefore based on the previously agreed precept of £280,545 the following charges will apply to each tax band.

| <u>Council Tax Band</u> | <u>2018/19 Current Charge £</u> | <u>Approved 2019/20 Charge £</u> | <u>Increase per annum £</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A                       | 54.48                           | 55.17                            | 0.69                        |
| B                       | 63.56                           | 64.37                            | 0.81                        |
| C                       | 72.65                           | 73.56                            | 0.91                        |
| D                       | 81.73                           | 82.76                            | 1.03                        |
| E                       | 99.89                           | 101.15                           | 1.26                        |
| F                       | 118.05                          | 119.54                           | 1.49                        |
| G                       | 136.21                          | 137.93                           | 1.72                        |
| H                       | 163.45                          | 165.51                           | 2.06                        |
| PROPERTY TAX BASE       | 3365                            | 3390                             | 25                          |

**RESOLVED** Members noted that the property tax base of 3390 had been confirmed and with the previously agreed precept in the sum of £280,545 noted the breakdown of the charge within the respective tax bands

### **PC18/83 EARMARKED RESERVES**

- 83.1 The Clerk introduced a paper inviting Members to consider allocating a further sum of £45,000 from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves to support the Councils current and emerging priorities. It was suggested that if Members were minded to support this option that each Committee should be requested to consider schemes they wish to see funded/supported which can then be brought back to full council for consideration and ratification of any allocations.

Members **RESOLVED** that a further allocation of £45,000 be assigned to Earmarked Reserve initiatives and that the respective Committees be requested to identify initiatives to be brought back to Council for consideration.

### **PC18/84 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Clerk informed members that the interim Internal Audit had been concluded and stated *'It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Hassocks Parish Council are very well established, regulated and followed. The Clerk ensures the Council follows best practice regulations and over time adapted and changed the internal procedures as regulation have changed to maintain compliance'*

Members were informed that no recommendations were made and that a copy of the full report is available to be viewed by Members in the Clerk's office.

Members duly noted the Auditors opinion and asked to place on record their thanks to the Clerk for all work undertaken on this area.

- PC18/85 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN** for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

There were none.

- PC18/86 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 12th February 2019 at 7.30pm.**