

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 9th April 2019
at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

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

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member: Gordon Marples (District Councillor)

MINUTES

PC18/113 APOLOGIES

Cllr Kate Bailey
Kirsty Lord (County Councillor)
Michelle Binks (District Councillor)

PC18/114 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

PC18/115 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC18/116 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was 1 member of the public present who observed proceedings but did not wish to speak.

PC18/117 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes:

To accept the Planning Committee minutes for the 18th March

To note the minutes of the Policy Resources & Communications Committee for the 19th March 2019.

To note the minutes of the Grounds & Environment Committee for the 25th March 2019.

PC18/118 St Francis Church Hall Refurbishment – Representatives from the church provided a short power-point presentation setting out their aspiration to undertake various works to the hall to improve its facilities. Members were informed that a series of works had already commenced and they are keen to progress further works such as extending the hall to provide additional storage, installation of a new kitchen and to refurbish the interior and exterior of the hall. The Church had already raised some funding and were looking to access further grant funding opportunities and were seeking support via a letter from the Parish Council. The purpose of this was that some funding streams (such as MSDC grants) require evidence that the Parish Council has been consulted and is in support of the initiative.

Members acknowledged that the venue already provided valuable community usage including youth groups and mother and toddler groups and with the continued development nearby and the anticipated increase in residents this proposal should be welcomed. Members were informed that for the facility to attract more hirers it is important that they are able to provide improved kitchen facilities. It was stated that the hall currently covers its day to day running costs and remains viable. By improving the facility to maximise the benefit to the community it would be anticipated that income streams would increase which could contribute to any future capital works. Cllr Owens indicated that the Parish Council had already supported the planning application for the proposal. Members expressed the view that due to its location and the limited options of similar facilities within that part of the village it would be particularly valued by the community.

Members thanked the representatives for the informative presentation.

Members **RESOLVED** for the Parish Council to provide a letter of support for the St Frances Church Hall scheme in support of future grant funding applications.

The Clerk was requested to draft an appropriate form of wording on behalf of the Council in support of the initiative.

PC18/119 FINANCE

Members considered the finance reports and the supporting bank statements and reviewed the payment list. The Finance report and payments totalling **£13, 678.46** for the period ending 28th February 2019 were considered and approved.

PC18/120 Reports

- 120.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Gordon Marples indicated that this would be the last Parish meeting he will be attending as a District Councillor as after many years' service he has decided not to stand for re-election. (GM) went onto say that the leader of Mid Sussex District Council Cllr Gary Wall had also decided to step down as a Councillor to focus on other matters.

GM informed members that he had recently met with highways in respect of the Strategic site to raise and consider issues relating to ongoing concerns

regarding the site access. It is understood that the developer is expected to submit amendments in June 2019 to address these concerns.

Cllr Owens (NO) sought clarification from (GM) regarding whether energy efficiency/water consumption will be taken into consideration on this development. GM indicated that at present MSDC have only been requested to consider an outline application, the finer detail on items such as these would become clearer when the detailed plan is submitted.

Members expressed their general concerns over the way water issues in development/planning are considered nationally and have recently sent a letter to MSDC requesting that they consider the use of grey water for the housing development at the golf course. Although water needs are taken into account in planning considerations the consensus amongst members was that government needed to take a more proactive lead to address the future water needs and particularly in the South of England

(GM)The vandalised telephone kiosk outside the wine shop in Keymer Road is to be removed by BT. Some issues have also been raised regarding street lighting in Shephard's Walk which it is proposed to raise with County.

Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) indicated that she had been in contact with MSDC enforcement team regarding the fencing that has recently appeared blocking access to Footway 9C and it was hoped this issue would be resolved shortly. The Clerk informed members that he had been notified that the Contractor (Bellway) indicated that the error had occurred by their fencing contractor and arrangements have now been made to reopen access.

- 120.2 **County Councillor report** – Kirsty Lord (KL) was unable to be present at the meeting but had submitted a report for information which was read out by the Chair (IW)

(KL) indicated that she has been involved in trying to resolve the ongoing issues regarding the resurfacing work on Woodsland Road. It is anticipated the remedial works will be completed in the near future and is currently awaiting confirmation for the date the works will be completed. The problem occurred due to parked vehicles as WSCC do not permit contractors to lift cars that are causing an obstruction to the works.

(KL) also raised issues regarding drain works in London road which have now been scheduled - hopefully this will prevent driveway and footway flooding next winter.

(KL) also confirmed that WSCC highways are preparing a report for CLC on Stage 2 of Hassocks Traffic and Parking scheme

- 120.3 Rail matters – Cllr Gibbons (PG) indicated that the level of cancellations remained similar to previous months. Members were informed that the way trains punctuality is monitored and has recently changed so they are now monitored against each stop as opposed to their final destination. Each stop is measured as early, on-time, or 3, 10, 15, 20, 30 minutes late.

PG confirmed that a number of pre-arranged cancellations appear to be affecting the Cambridge service.

120.4 Youth Initiatives- nothing to report.

120.5 Police matters – The Clerk advised Members that he has been in discussion with Katie Bourne (Police Commissioner) Inspector Pete Domnett and Sgt Allan Philip to discuss potential initiatives regarding policing in the village. These are still in the process of being finalised however it is anticipated these will come to fruition in the foreseeable future. It was also noted that there appears to be a more visible police presence in Adastra Park.

120.6 Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented – none

PC18/121 CHAIRMANS REPORT –

Firstly Cllr Weir thanked District Cllr Marples for all the work he has done representing the village over the last 16 years and that whilst the Parish Council did not always agree with District Councillors views it acknowledged the significant value of the work done by Cllr Marples over that period.

Cllr Weir (IW) went on to say that this was the final meeting of the current Council and 5 parish councillors were leaving for various reasons: so he wished to take the opportunity to do a quick review of the last 4 years.

Firstly (IW) thanked all the Members for the work they had done over this period and to reflect on some of the things that had been achieved.

Back in 2016 HPC created a new footpath through Parklands Copse which included two bridges built by our partners in the Monday Group. We worked with Hassocks Amenity Association on the Spitalford Bridge Project and provided the new Bus Shelter which also doubles as a viewing point for a unique Downland stream - the Herring Stream. The Council also took over responsibility for the Christmas Lights from Light up Hassocks.

In 2017 HPC focussed on developing Youth Work to replace the service lost due to WSCC cuts and this proved to be challenging when you consider the personal commitment required as well as legal and safeguarding issues that had to be addressed. Two councillors Justine Fisher and Kate Bailey took on the task and worked with an external provider - Streetmate to get this going. In early June Hassocks Parish Council had the honour of hosting the 25th Anniversary Celebration of our Twinning Partnership with Montmirail (France) and Wald Michelbach (Germany). This 3 day event provided us with the opportunity to showcase Hassocks to our visitors. Hassocks Twinning Association with support from Parish Councillors and Staff as well as many others in the village produced a memorable stay for our guests with the high point being a very British Village Fair in Adastra Park. It was, for me, one of the most fun events I've experienced as a Parish Councillor.

That year we also developed a masterplan for Adastra Park through consultations with the community and later this month work will start on

delivering the first phase – the New Skate Park. This master plan will continue into the new council.

In 2018 at the centenary of the end of the First World War the Parish erected a Silent Soldier silhouette and started a programme of work refurbishing the Garden of Remembrance to commemorate the event. The work on the Garden of Remembrance has been carried out by a team of Volunteers led by Cllr Baker. In the Park we worked with HKD Transition to deliver a Rain Garden to show case ways of reducing water runoff and reduce flooding.

Throughout the four years HPC have worked hard to get WSCC to deliver the Hassocks Traffic and Parking Scheme which resulted from regular local consultation by the Parish. The first stage was delivered late in 2018 and a second stage designed to take account of strong local feedback is now awaiting approval by the CLC committee and should be delivered later in 2019.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been a labour of Hercules over the last 6 years and currently we are sprinting for the finish line with Regulation 16 and Examination due during the summer and early autumn. Many members of Council and Local Residents have worked very hard on the plan despite setbacks as they see it as important to preserving the identity of Hassocks as a village.

Much of the work achieved by Council has relied on the dedication of Councillors (at one time or another every Councillor has made a contribution) but also due to the considerable efforts of our small team of officers. During the early years of the last council we embarked on what was to become a sea-change for Hassocks Council. Initially we faced the recruitment of two new Clerks in quick succession which put considerable work on the shoulders of the Staffing committee and I particularly want to acknowledge Judith Foot, Sue Hatton and Frances Gaudencio for their support and commitment during what was for us, as Councillors, a challenging time. Following on from this, the Parish Council then embarked on the challenging transition from a small organisation to one geared, more closely, to the demands of a large and growing community and capable of delivering a wider range of projects and services that have resulted from the growing emphasis on localism in public life.

Many of these changes have taken place behind the scenes and relate to the day to day running of the Council – aspects such as the overhaul of out-of-date business and financial procedures to ensure that the council operates both efficiently and in line with good practice; Health and Safety arrangements to ensure the safety of the community when using our facilities; the introduction of pensions for our staff in line with new government legislation as well as making our voice more clearly heard at the larger District and County Councils.

I would like every councillor to know how impressed I am by their commitment particularly when there are so many other things they could be doing with their time.

Finally I want to say a particular thankyou to those members leaving the council – Judith Foot who has been a parish councillor for 12 years and whose knowledge experience and support I found so valuable during the Clerk’s recruitment. Judith has been deeply involved In Business Planning, Staffing Committee and Economic Development

Peter Gibbons who has chaired the G+E committee and whose knowledge of Rail Matters is indeed impressive. So much so that he even ended up advising Nick Herbert (MP) during the recent Southern Rail Timetable Fiasco.

Nick Owens who has chaired the Planning Committee for the last 4 years and whose dedication has included supporting residents affected by new developments.

Victoria Standfast who is Vice Chair on Planning and has stood in as Chair to ensure our voice is heard by MSDC on important applications.

Emma Wood and Mark Higgins who whilst relatively new to Council have joined committees and contributed to the work of council

(IW) thanked all members for their community spirit and efforts on behalf of our Parish and wished them all well for the future.

Members thanked Cllr Weir for his kind words.

Cllr Foot (JF) went onto say that she felt the Council should be proud of what its achieved and in particular the tree planting initiative it introduced some 9-10 years ago which has had a positive environmental impact.

Cllr Owens (NO) indicated that he had noticed quite a change since the recruitment of the current Clerk and process is far more rigorous in the way the Council works.

PC18/122 CLERK’S REPORT

122.1 Elections

Members were advised that the Council had received 10 Nominations for the forthcoming elections in May therefore the election will be uncontested. Once the new Council has been formed it will be necessary to undertake a process of co-option for the remaining vacancies. (5) It appears that across Mid Sussex all parish council elections are to be uncontested. It was also noted that some District Council seats would also be uncontested.

122.2 Meeting Schedule 2019/20

The report set out the proposed meeting schedule for the new Municipal year and members were requested to review the paper and determine whether these proposed dates were acceptable. It had been assumed that the NPWG would run for the remainder of the new Municipal Year however this may be subject to amendment dependent on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. Members were advised that the schedule was compiled using the current model of meeting frequencies.

Members discussed the proposals and indicated that in light of the number of new members joining the Council it may be appropriate to build in more flexibility to the frequency of some of the meetings once it becomes clearer as to who will sit on each Committee. There was a consensus amongst Members that it may be an opportune time to consider resetting some of the Committees frequency to every 5 – 6 weeks as opposed to the current fixed monthly sessions.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the proposed meeting schedule as detailed but to review the frequency of meetings at a future Policy Resources & Communications Committee once the Committee memberships become clearer. At this point if Members agree alternative frequency/dates will be proposed.

122.3 Play Equipment Repair

The Clerk updated Members on the action required to undertake an urgent repair on a piece of play equipment. This matter had been reported to Grounds & Environment committee as the Clerks delegated authorised limit of expenditure is £750 whereas the Cost of repair was £800; however due to the need to expedite this repair members were agreeable to the proposed approach. The Chair of the relevant committee and the Chair of the council were also consulted to authorise the repair and agreed that the matter be reported retrospectively to Full Council. The Clerk informed Members that the repair had now been completed. Members noted the update

PC18/123 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

The Chair reminded Members that the next council meeting is scheduled for the 14th May and will be preceded at 7pm by the Annual parish meeting where reports will be received with respect of the work undertaken by the respective Committees /working groups in the last year. Reports were required to be submitted by around the 3rd May 2019.

PC18/124 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 14th May 2019 at 7.30pm** which will follow the **Annual Parish meeting at 7pm**.