

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 11th June 2019
at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ian Weir (Chair), Jane Baker, Peter Gibbons, Bill Hatton, Leslie Campbell, David Hammond, Georgia Cheshire, Frances Gaudencio, Kate Bailey, Bob Booker and Nick Owens.

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member: Cllr Kirsty Lord (County Councillor)

MINUTES

PC19/43 APOLOGIES

Cllr Sue Hatton
Cllr Frank Rylance
District Councillors Benedict Dempsey and Alexander Sparasci

PC19/44 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.

Cllr Bob Booker disclosed an interest in land North of Shepherds Walk.

PC19/45 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th May 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC19/46 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were two members of the public present who observed proceedings but did not wish to speak.

PC19/47 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes:

To accept the Planning Committee minutes for the 20th May 2019.

To note the minutes of the Policy Resources & Communications Committee for the 21st May 2019.

To note the minutes of the Grounds & Environment Committee for the 30th May 2019.

To agree the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group for 25th April 2019 and to note and agree the minutes for the 23rd May 2019.

PC19/48 FINANCE

Members considered the finance reports and the supporting bank statements and reviewed the payment list. The Finance report and payments totalling **£20,877.50** for the period ending 30th April 2019 were considered and approved.

PC19/49 Annual Governance Statement - The Clerk requested Members review the Annual Governance statement set out in Appendix 2.

The paper detailed how the parish council had discharged its responsibilities in respect of the 9 elements required as part of the governance framework.

The report incorporated the Annual Governance statement return that was required to be agreed by Council and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

Members were invited to consider the detailed responses in the report and agree that they reflected the governance framework in operation within the Council.

If this was agreed members are recommended to approve the statement and authorise the signing of the return.

Members indicated they were satisfied with the governance report and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that the Annual Governance statement be signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

The return was duly signed.

PC19/50 Internal Auditors Report - This Clerk introduced the internal auditor's final report which was set out in appendix 3 together with a signed statement of the internal auditor in appendix 4 confirming that appropriate control objectives were in place and being met.

Overall the internal auditors report was positive and reported that the overall systems and procedures in place were fit for purpose and are a model of good practice.

Members were requested to note the contents of the auditor's report and his signed audit statement.

Members duly **noted** the contents of the internal auditor's report and his signed statement in support of the overall governance framework.

PC19/51 Accounting Statements - Members were invited to consider the Accounting Statements for 2018/19 together with the supporting detail report set out in appendix 5. Members were informed that the document had been reviewed as part of the audit process and agreed by the Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk). Council were informed that they

were required to formally consider and agree the document and approve the signing of the statement by the Chair of the Council on behalf of the Council.

Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the signing of the 2018/19 Accounting Statement by the Chair.

The form was duly signed by the Chair.

PC19/52 Risk management The Clerk introduced a report setting out the review of the councils' risks which is required to be formally considered annually. The report set out in Appendix 6 addressed:-

- Financial & management risks
- Physical risks

Members were invited to ask questions about any specific risks. Cllr Gaudencio sought clarification on document retention arrangements in operation in respect of legal documents etc. The Clerk informed members that some key documents had been scanned electronically and further work is planned later during the year.

Cllr Owens sought clarification on the risk of the Council being unable to satisfy the demand for allotment plots as it is one of the Parishes legal responsibilities.

Members were informed that the Council is currently discharging its responsibilities with the provision of an allotment site. The Clerk went on to say that the Council do maintain a waiting list and had been contacted by a neighbouring village last year who had a large number of vacancies on their allotments and invited those on Hassocks list to occupy these vacant plots.

The Council wrote to those on the waiting list inviting them to contact the Allotment site directly; it is understood no people on the Councils list took up this opportunity. Anecdotally it would appear that although people are keen to have allotments the location needs to be in close proximity to the village and residential property which will provide a challenge to the council with regard to identifying future potential sites.

Members had no further questions and were content with the risk management arrangements in operation by the Council. Members therefore **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the contents of the Risk review and confirm that it accurately reflected the risk profile of the Council.

PC19/53 Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Weir invited the Chair of the Neighbourhood Working Group Cllr Bill Hatton to introduce the report. Cllr Hatton in turn invited the Councils Planning Consultant Dale Mayhew (DM) who was in attendance to take members through some of the processes that have been undertaken to reach this point.

DM informed members that the current Regulation 14 plan had been subject to a six-week consultation in January/February this year where approximately sixty representations/comments were received which

represents a scaled back number of responders from the original Neighbourhood plan in 2016.

Of the responses received earlier this year approximately 50% were from local residents who expressed support for the housing numbers and proposed local green spaces and in particular land at Shepherds Walk.

Other responders were made up of a mix of statutory consultees, landowners, agents and developers some of whom were advocating the parish should increase housing numbers and provide alternative sites for housing.

Mid Sussex District Council raised comments regarding the Local gap and some green spaces.

The NPWG therefore considered the responses and determined whether it was necessary to revise the Regulation 14 draft plan.

The NPWG felt strongly that the section on Housing should remain unchanged as a settlement the number of properties required has already been met therefore there was no need to identify further sites. However, it was acknowledged that further sites will come forward naturally by way of windfall development.

In respect of the Gaps policy the group did revisit these and amend some of the original gaps as it was felt they did not fully meet the criteria. With respect to green spaces further work was undertaken on these by the group who acknowledged MSDC comments but determined that they should be retained.

DM advised that after the last NPWG meeting 23rd May 2019 the draft plan was forwarded to MSDC for further informal comment. MSDC reiterated their earlier points raised during the consultation in respect of the gaps and green spaces.

Cllr B Hatton indicated that this was expected but suggested that the Council should support that the proposed Draft Regulation 16 Plan be passed onto MSDC for progression.

DM confirmed that if Members approved this approach it is likely the Regulation 16 plan would progress to the next phase in July when it will pass to MSDC to take forward.

Cllr Georgia Cheshire said that she would like to place on record the Council's thanks for all the work undertaken by the co-opted members on the NPWG, David Withycombe and Virginia Pullen particularly in respect on the Gaps and green/open spaces. All Members agreed and wished to express their thanks.

Cllr Leslie Campbell also wished to place on record his thanks to all the representatives of the NPWG and they should be commended for all its hard work and professional advice.

Members expressed a wish for the Council to formally write to the Co-opted members thanking them for their assistance/expertise and support throughout this process. It was agreed that the Chair and the Clerk will draft a letter of thanks.

Cllr B Hatton set out the next steps. He reaffirmed that the parish had tried to address the comments provided by MSDC in respect of the Regulation 14 plan and in particular with regard to the gaps and green spaces. He indicated that the plan reflects the views of the public and if localism meant anything we should proceed with this plan. The informal advice provided recently by MSDC was similar to that previously expressed by them in the consultation, however the group had felt that the boundaries are essential green spaces. The Housing paper was revised, and the gaps and green spaces were reviewed and re-visited. HPC view is that there is evidence that inspectors have allowed large green spaces, and these are open to interpretation by examiners. The test of this is to get this in front of an inspector and let them determine the merits of the Councils proposals set out within the plan. BH stated that the NPWG believe sufficient evidence has been provided and it is the strong will of the people of Hassocks and in the spirit of localism we should be seeking to progress the plan.

With regard to Housing (Dale Mayhew) confirmed that the District Plan stated the required housing for the settlement of Hassocks was 882 dwellings to be delivered over the life of the plan, and that with existing commitments and permissions this has already been delivered added to which further numbers will come forward by way of windfall which will add to this. More recent comments received from MSDC have indicated that as part of the 2021 District Plan review this may impact on these numbers therefore they suggested a statement to reflect this could be incorporated into the NP. However, it was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan factually identifies that the need has been met therefore should be retained in its current form.

Cllr Weir (IW) reiterated that Hassocks has delivered substantially higher numbers of dwellings than any other category 2 settlement therefore would suggest that MSDC should look elsewhere in the first instance.

Cllr Weir invited members to ask any further questions of (DM). No members wished to ask any further questions.

It was therefore **PROPOSED** that the Council **APPROVE** the submission of Regulation 16 Plan.

Members **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and **APPROVE** the submission of the plan to MSDC to progress to the next stage.

All members voted in favour of the decision.

PC19/54 Reports

54.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Sue Hatton had submitted her apologies but provided a brief update on District Council business post elections. The Clerk informed members that Cllr (S) Hatton had advised that district members have now been allocated committee responsibilities and where necessary Members have undertaken training prior to them formally sitting on these Committees. At present limited meetings have been held.

54.2 **County Councillor report** – Kirsty Lord (KL) informed members that she was scheduled to meet with the police later this month to discuss a number of issues.

KL attended a recent meeting at Adastra Hall together with a number of parish councillors (3) to explore options available to establish a Youth club within the village. The meeting was generally positive and further work is being undertaken to explore its viability.

Highways – Woodlands Road – resurfacing has now been completed and contractors are scheduled to return to unblock some of the drains that have been effected by the resurfacing work.

A meeting has been arranged with highways to discuss pedestrian safety at Clayton (A273)

Stonepound Crossroads - (KL) confirmed that ongoing discussions are being held regarding the potential closure of Stonepound Crossroads. The original proposal was for a 3 month closure which has now been reduced to 6 weeks. However further work is being done to see if any other traffic management alternatives can be considered. It is likely any work will be deferred until the school holidays, but the works may also provide opportunities to ‘future proof’ improvements. This closure is likely to have a significant impact on the movement of traffic and public transport. The required works are linked to planning conditions associated with the Saxon Mills site. KL id to also raise the issue regarding AQMA at the site

KL advised members the biggest challenge for County recently has been the critical Ofsted report on children’s services

54.3 Rail matters – Cllr Gibbons (PG) indicated that the level of cancellations in May was the worst this year however it remained an improvement on last year. It was reported that there were 243 cancellations in May of which 183 were cancelled outright and 60 ran but failed to stop.

54.4 Youth Initiatives - this area was covered earlier in the agenda regarding the meeting in Adastra Hall.

54.5 Police matters – The Clerk advised Members that he is in ongoing discussion with the police with a view to establishing a group of

representatives within the village. This is a police led initiative and it's proposed they will invite designated representatives which will include the Parish Council.

- 54.6 Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented – Cllr Owens and Cllr Gaudencio attended a meeting in Bolney on Community Land Trusts to ascertain the viability of whether HPC could form one and whether this would achieve a good standard of housing. It was established that there may be some government funding available, however the key challenge is to secure land. The objective of these types of scheme is to provide affordable housing and housing of a good standard. Any housing realised through this type of initiative would primarily focus on provision of those on the housing waiting list. The purpose of attending this meeting was information gathering. Any built properties through this type of initiative would be managed through a Housing Association such as the English Rural Housing Association

PC19/55 CHAIRMANS REPORT –

Cllr Weir informed members that he had attended a meeting with a number of other Parish Councillors and Tim Boxall (WSCC) at the footpath linking Woodlands Road and Little Copse Road to discuss issues regarding footpath improvements and other problems that had been caused by building works in the vicinity. Some of the footpath had also previously been damaged by tree roots. Constructive discussions were held with the owner where the building works were being undertaken.

Members felt that this was a busy footpath and the Council would support any improvements being undertaken. It was suggested that the Parish Council should make representations to County to reflect this. In addition, County Councillor Kirsty Lord agreed to also take the matter up. Further discussions with County will establish the most effective way the Parish could support this initiative.

PC19/56 CLERK'S REPORT

- 56.1 Letter regarding Community Infrastructure Levy – Members were advised that a letter had been sent to MSDC Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council raising the Parishes concerns regarding the delay in adopting the CIL regime. An acknowledgement had been received from MSDC indicating that a response to each point raised will be provided.

PC19/57 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda. - none

PC19/58 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 9th July 2019 at 7.30pm.**