

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Parish Council** held on 7th January 2020
at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Attendees: Parish Councillors Jane Baker (Chair), Peter Gibbons, Leslie Campbell, Frances Gaudencio, Sue Hatton, Bill Hatton, Bob Brewer, David Hammond, Kristian Berggreen. Alex Simmonds, Frank Rylance, Kate Bailey and Nick Owens

Parish Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

Visiting Member(s): none
Dale Mayhew (Planning Consultant)

MINUTES

PC19/119 APOLOGIES

Cllrs Ian Weir and Georgia Cheshire

PC19/120 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

PC19/121 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th December 2019 were considered. Cllr Hammond requested that under 114.2 in 6th para insert '*no safe pedestrian crossing from Station approach/Northbank south side across Keymer Road.*' Cllr Gaudencio requested that in para 114.6 at end of sentence 4th line insert '*Local Enterprise Partnership*' Subject to these two amendments being made the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PC19/122 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

PC19/123 MINUTES

To accept the following Minutes.

To note the minutes of the Planning Committee for 16th December 2019.

PC19/124 FINANCE

The Finance report and payments totalling £26,698.58 for the period ending 30th November 2019 were approved.

PC19/125 Neighbourhood Plan Examiners Report

Cllr Baker introduced the report and thanked all those involved in drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan which had been a long and drawn out task and emphasised the significance of this item for the Parish. Cllr Baker then invited the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Cllr Bill Hatton (BH) to take members through some of the key elements of the report.

BH indicated that this was an important point for the Council and he would like to take members through some of the main points of the Examiners report.

BH indicated that his view was that the Examiner had been very supportive of the plan and overall it represented a good outcome for the parish, however he acknowledged that some elements may require clarification but with the exception of Policy 5 these were textural rather than substantive.

Policy 1 Local Gap Policy – this has remained an important aspect of the plan for the Council and has involved extensive discussion with MSDC on the matter. The Examiner has supported the Parish Council approach bar Friars Oak field where planning permission has been granted twice therefore this is force majeure. Overall this policy has received a positive outcome.

Policy 2 Local Greenspace – the parish has lost the Friars Oak site which now has the benefit of planning permission. Two other sites were rejected by the Examiner as they failed to meet the basic conditions, these were.

- LGS 2 Land South of Hurst Road
- LGS 4 Land East of Ockley Lane

However five other spaces have been retained as Local Green spaces.

- LGS 3 Land to the south of Clayton Mills
- LGS 5 Land south of Downlands
- LGS 6 Land to the west of the railway field
- LGS 7 Land at Pheasant Field
- LGS 8 Land at Clayton Mills

Therefore five out of eight local greenspace site represents a positive outcome from the Examiner.

With regard to Policy 5: Enabling Zero Carbon, although there is strong support within the Parish Council this policy is in advance of MSDC current requirements therefore the Council will need to consider how it responds to this recommendation.

The Examiner indicated that of the five elements set out within this policy two elements should be deleted:-

The elements were:

- The inclusion of Energy Assessments with applications for new dwellings, the Examiner expressed the view that he felt this was a process rather than a land use policy and as such should be deleted.
- The specification of heat energy requirements was recommended to be deleted as he felt that the Written Ministerial Statement (2015) makes clear that neighbourhood plans should not set out any technical standards or requirements relating to construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings and secondly this element of the policy has not been tested for their potential impact on the viability of the proposed development.

MSDC have indicated that they intend to accept all recommendations from the Examiner which is to be considered by their Cabinet members on the 13th January 2020.

It is therefore probably not viable for HPC to continue to incorporate all 5 elements within policy 5 Enabling Carbon zero in our plan as MSDC will reject this proposal which could impact on the progression of the plan.

BH suggested that the Council should take this matter up separately at the time of the District Plan review. If the Parish Council were to persist with these components being incorporated do we wish to have a dispute which could ultimately impact on the timeframe to reach referendum to seek approval of the Councils Neighbourhood Plan?.

BH suggested that it may be more appropriate to raise this matter with MSDC when they review the current District Plan in 2022/23.

BH overall felt it was important to get Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan over the line to provide protection for the parish. Hassocks is likely to continue to come under pressure from developers due to its category 2 status and transport links and its likely in time pressure will also come from within the park (SDNP) to develop to the South of Hassocks therefore the Neighbourhood Plan will give us some support.

The Examiner had also indicated that modification was also required to comply with DP17 Affordable Housing regarding the monitoring of plan.

BH indicated overall he felt the Council should accept the proposed amendments to the plan. It would be expected that the Council would be required to draft a revised forward to provide some context to the neighbourhood plan and sought member's views as whether they were satisfied to delegate this responsibility for the drafting/finalisation and submission of this to the Clerk, Cllr B Hatton and Dale Mayhew (DM) (Planning Consultant).

Members were content with this approach.

Cllr Gibbons (PG) raised an issue regarding the map set out in Appendix 1 and land ownership which (DM) responded to. Members were satisfied with the explanation provided.

DM went onto to say that he believed the plan would be hugely beneficial to the Parish Council and provide a position of strength in matters going forward and he would be happy to take any questions Members may have.

DM was asked what the timeframe would be if the Parish were to proceed. DM indicated that if all Examiners recommendations were accepted a referendum would be scheduled for early March. If the Examiners proposals were challenged or not accepted it is likely the District Council would be required to publish a consultation for a further six weeks.

DM indicated that the Neighbourhood Plan should start from the premise that it sets out what the Parish wants and the Examiner sets out what he believes.

DM commented that from his knowledge approx. 95% Parish Council Neighbourhood plans are successfully examined to the satisfaction of the parishes.

Cllr Owens (NO) raised concerns over the proposed two amendments to Policy 5 Enabling Zero Carbon and felt this significantly weakened the value of the policy. (NO) went on to indicate that he felt that the Examiner had relied on information that has now been superseded therefore did not agree with the Examiners view. (NO) acknowledged that it is right that the Parish Council was not the Planning authority, however MSDC could chose to leave bullet 4 in the document.

The question was posed would this cause a delay if this element was to be challenged.

Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) indicated she felt that it would and MSDC would rely on the measures incorporated within the District plan which meet the current national standards which could therefore place Hassocks Neighbourhood plan at risk. Any delay in the interim period before the formal adoption of the plan could leave the parish more vulnerable added to which at present MSDC has not declared it recognises a Climate emergency at this point.

Cllr Gaudencio supported Cllr Owens feeling and passion for the principle but she felt the Parish Council needed to take a pragmatic approach and vote to support the plan this evening and to take forward the energy issues with MSDC in a different way.

Cllr Peter Gibbons (PG) sought clarification on the legal safeguards in place to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan was taken into account.

DM confirmed that in accordance with the made development plan (e.g. 5 year land supply) it would have the same standing as a District plan. If planning consents were granted where they were at odds with the development plan this could lead to a judicial review.

(SH) confirmed that MSDC Planning Committee would place limited weight to an unmade neighbourhood plan when considering development applications.

Cllr Alex Simmons (AS) expressed the view that with cost and time associated with getting the plan to this point that it was important to allow the plan to progress.

The Clerk indicated that one of the benefits of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is that it is currently in full compliance with both MSDC and SDNP recently adopted District plans.

Cllr Baker asked whether any Members had any further questions of DM, members indicated they did not wish to raise any other matters.

The Chair therefore proposed to take a vote.

Member's views were sought on the document and to determine whether they were content with the proposed amendments and recommendations being suggested by the Examiner.

A vote was taken 10 members voted in favour of acceptance.

1 member voted against and there was 1 abstention.

Members therefore **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the proposed amendments and RECOMMENDATIONS suggested to the plan by the Examiner and for the Clerk to inform MSDC of the Parish Councils position.

Members were also invited to approve the delegation of the final drafting of the Forward for inclusion in the Plan to the Clerk, Cllr Bill Hatton and Dale Mayhew (Planning consultant). Members were invited to vote on this proposal, 11 Members voted in favour and there was 1 abstention.

Therefore Members **RESOLVED** to approve the approach of delegating the finalising the draft forward for inclusion and submission into the Neighbourhood Plan to the Clerk, Cllr Bill Hatton and Dale Mayhew.

DM was thanked by Members for all his support and assistance throughout this process. Cllr Gaudencio suggested that the matter raised regarding energy efficiency should be taken forward at a later point. Cllr Owens (NO) indicated the Planning Committee were meeting the following day to discuss a Government Planning consultation where this matter could be raised further. It is understood that MSDC would also have been invited to respond to this same consultation.

Dale Mayhew left the meeting at 8.28

114.1 **District Councillors reports:** - Cllr Sue Hatton (SH) informed members that with the level of new Members from the last election (May) at MSDC various induction events were being held. The Car Parking working group of which SH is a representative is due to receive an interim report in January and at some point in the future any final report will be subject to public consultation in due course.

114.2 **County Councillor** – In Cllr Lords absence no report had been submitted.

114.3 **Rail matters** –Cllr Peter Gibbons (PG) informed members that in December there were 440 trains in total cancelled of which 352 never ran or passed through Hassocks while the remaining 88 trains scheduled to stop at Hassocks but failed to do so.

PG took the opportunity to provide some context to some of the reasons provided as to why the services have been cancelled.

Number	Reason
263	Late arrival inbound
179	Train cancelled
158	Signal failure
138	Planning issue (driver unavailability)
137	Hit (fatality)
126	Flooding
111	Electrified line fault

114.4 **Youth Initiatives** - Cllr Gaudencio indicated that a meeting was scheduled for later in the week to discuss the progression of a youth committee but it remained at early stages at this point.

114.5 **Police matters** – no report received.

114.6 **Report from Councillors on meetings of outside bodies where the Council is represented** - no matters to report

PC19/115 CHAIRMANS REPORT – Nothing to report.

PC19/116 CLERK'S REPORT –

116.1 **Adastra Park - Tree works.**

The Clerk advised Members that as the result of recently removing ivy from a number of trees located in the north field this had identified a number of issues with three Scots pine trees.

Two of three trees have large cavities up the main stem, in addition the third tree had a weak union at the crown of the tree.

The two trees with cavities up the main stem had been recommended to be felled by the council's tree surgeon which the council's tree officer concurred with this recommendation.

At present insufficient budget was available within the park tree cost centre in part due the level/cost of tree works required to be undertaken this financial year. Approval was therefore being sought from Members to approve the release of further funds from general reserves to fund these works.

Due to the nature of the work it had been necessary to schedule in the work in advance subject to funding approval for the 10th January 2020.

The proposed cost would be £1,000 if the two trunks were to be felled and left in the park or leaving the 2 trees as monoliths with the third trees crown lifted at the weak union.

From an operational perspective the Clerk indicated his favoured option would be to leave them as monolith which would continue to provide wildlife value.

Monolithic trees are widely accepted as being best industry practice as an alternative to felling, which in itself should be regarded as a last resort. The habitat created is of great conservational value.

If Members were minded to have all three tree cuttings removed from site this would attract the additional cost of £150 making the total cost of £1,150.

Member's views are sought.

After careful consideration Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the sum of £1,000 to be released from general reserves and that the two Scots pines to be left as monoliths to provide conservational value.

PC19/117 URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

There were none.

PC19/118 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 7.30pm.**