

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE** meeting held on **Tuesday 15 October 2019 at 7.30 pm**

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Frances Gaudencio, Kate Bailey, Ian Weir and Peter Gibbons.

Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

PRC19/39 APOLOGIES: Cllrs David Hammond, Georgia Cheshire, Frank Rylance and Sue Hatton.

PRC19/40 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS: None declared.

PRC19/41 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th September 2019 as previously circulated were accepted.

PRC19/42 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

There were no members of the public present.

PRC19/43 CLERKS REPORT

19/43.1 Policy Resources & Communications budget initiatives 2020/21

Members were invited to consider in the first instance potential initiatives falling under the responsibility of the Committee for 2020/21. Members discussed a number of options and sought clarification on the level of allocated funds held for specific initiatives falling within the remit of the Committee such as Parish Acoustics and Legal Land Transfers. Members were content that these initiatives and the sums allocated should be retained.

Members then went on to consider the wider initiatives in turn currently identified in support of the Councils priorities. Member's general consensus was that the other identified priorities with funds allocated should remain however it was felt that it might be timely to revisit some of the elements to expand the descriptor of how the funds might be utilised such as the village sign and Bus Shelter replacements.

Members were advised that the initiatives will also be considered by Grounds & Environment Committee and will be fed into the budget setting process.

19/43.2 Communication – Members were invited to review the Communications Policy as part of its ongoing work programme. Prior to considering the policy in detail members debated a number of areas that had worked well and others that had not worked so well during the year to date. Although members acknowledged that all press releases had passed through the appropriate 'sign off' arrangements it was felt there should be more consistency in that any press release should go out in the Clerks name.

A number of examples were cited where this had not always occurred some due to the discretion of the Clerk and others as a result of some publications using the named individual who had forwarded the item on for publication. The current policy did allow discretion but members felt that going forward this should be strengthened so that all press releases go out in the Clerks name to provide a consistent approach.

Members also discussed whether Cllrs should be acknowledged within press release articles where they had been instrumental in progressing the initiative or drafting the item. Members felt this would be appropriate and a suggested approach was agreed to be incorporated into the policy document.

Members then proceeded to go through the policy document in detail and made a number of changes to reflect member's views and to clarify some of the elements already detailed in the document and to clarify the roles of the respective parties to ensure a consistent approach was applied to all future press releases.

It is proposed that the amended policy will come back to the next meeting for final sign off once all amendments have been incorporated so that members can view the revised version.

PRC19/43.3 Meeting Calendar 2019/20-The Clerk updated Members that having reviewed the current calendar and taking into consideration the pending workload of the Committees and the uncertainty regarding the future frequency of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meetings it would be difficult to accommodate the changeover to six weekly meeting cycles for the Policy Resources & Communications Committee and the Grounds & Environment Committee midway through in this municipal year. The Clerk advised members that if there were instances where insufficient items are to be considered on forthcoming agendas the meeting could be cancelled however with the pending budget setting period and the various ongoing initiatives this is unlikely to occur. The Clerk therefore advised members that it would be proposed to introduce the six weekly meeting cycle for Policy Resources & Communications and Grounds & Environment Committees at the start of the next municipal year. Members duly noted the Clerks comments.

PRC19/43.4 Induction pack Members were advised that work is still ongoing regarding the extended pack although it should be noted that new members currently do receive a range of information including terms of reference for each Committee added to which the Clerk operates an open-door policy for any member seeking advice/guidance. Members were also advised that as part of this process the Clerk is currently exploring IT solutions to provide a more stable email account solution for members which will result in .gov.uk accounts being established for all members.

The Clerk informed members that some of the newer Councillors were still to indicate the Committees they would wish to sit on due to a number of reasons. Some members had taken the opportunity to attend a number of meetings to gain a wider understanding of the work of specific committees prior to making their choices. Therefore at present those members that had not been appointed to specific Committees are able to attend meetings and participate but are not able to vote until they have formally been approved by Council to sit on the respective Committees. Consequently until those Committees are known they are only able to vote at Council meetings.

Members noted the Clerks comments. Members raised the issue that as part of the induction process other Councillors should act as mentors to support and guide new members on how the Council operates. Members felt that this was an important initiative and wished to reinstate a consistent approach to this arrangement to support new members. All members were fully supportive of this.

Members AGREED that the new members will be invited to a meet with the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Policy Resources & Communications with a view to supporting the new members induction and identify what support framework they would like including the use of mentors. The Clerk was requested to organise this.

PRC19/44 Urgent Matters. There were no urgent matters.

PRC19/45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. 19 November 2019

PRC19/46 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors will be referred to the confidential agenda. If any members of the public or press are present they will be requested to withdraw from the meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

PRC19/47 The Clerk provided a brief update on staffing matters. He informed Members that a number of the team are scheduled to be on leave over the coming weeks.