

HAILSHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

1 MINUTES AND REPORTS of the Hailsham Annual Town Meeting, held at Hailsham Civic and Community Hall on Tuesday 19th April 2016 at 7.30 pm

2 PRESENT: 22 Hailsham Town councillors; 120 Hailsham electors; 8 officers of Hailsham Town Council.

The Town Mayor/Chairman of Hailsham Town Council, Councillor N. S. Coltman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and councillors.

The Chairman introduced and thanked representatives from the various stakeholders who were in attendance and had stalls providing information on their services.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received Councillor Mrs. A Triandafllou.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18th March 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate recording.

5 MATTERS ARISING

None.

6 Hailsham Hero Award

The Chairman said that Hailsham could, quite rightly, be proud of its facilities but it was the people who made the town what it is. That it is why he decided to set up the Hailsham Hero Award for someone in the town who had undertaken an act of bravery or someone who had undertaken some work for the community.

He was delighted that in the inaugural year of the award there had been ten nominations. The Award Panel had come up with the winner. He was delighted to announce that Mr Mike Weller of the Royal British Legion was the inaugural winner of the Hailsham Hero award for his many years of arranging and attending memorial services in Hailsham. Mr Weller was given a trophy and received a round of applause.

7 HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman said that copies of the report had been made available prior to the meeting and asked for questions from the public.

A member of the public said the public were anti-development but councillors were not. He also said that the Council's mission statement in the Annual Report was meaningless "gobbledegook".

A member of the public requested that councillors' attendance at meetings be published and added to the Annual Report. The Chairman said this was a good idea and would arrange for this to be done next year.

8 Electors' Written Questions

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk to read out the written questions received.

8.1 The first question was from Mr Nick Waters.

What steps are being taken by the town council to block plans regarding the overwhelming amount of houses proposed by WDC in and around Hailsham? The percentage was absolutely ridiculous and the great majority of residents thought the same.

The Chairman said that Hailsham Town Council does not have any influence over the number of houses and introduced Nigel Hannam, Marina Brigginsshaw and Cllr Anne Newton from Wealden District Council.

Mr Hannam said the number of houses for each district was determined by central government and laid out in the Local Plan.

A member of the public said that this may be the case but the number of houses proposed for Hailsham was disproportionate and excessive.

Mr Hannam said that Wealden District Council had looked at all the viable options and had decided the best way to get the necessary infrastructure needed was this option.

A member of the public requested that all options be published. Mr Hannam responded that they were all on the Wealden District Council website.

8.2 The second question was from Mr Ian Cunningham

Wealden District Council propose the building of 14365 new houses to be built across the district. Hailsham has been allocated for 9380 houses:

Q1 Why such a high percentage of houses in Hailsham?

Q2 Who are the houses being built for?

Mr Hannam said that building could not take place on Ashdown Forest, because it was an area of outstanding natural beauty or Pevensey Levels, because it was marshlands, therefore areas in the district were limited.

8.3 Question three was from Mr Ralph Latter

I think there is some confusion in many members of the public about the distinction between, the Wealden Local Plan, The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and the Hailsham Area Action Plan.

Therefore can the representatives of Wealden District Council present at the Annual Town Council Meeting clarify and confirm clearly:

- The intended scope of the AAP – is it to be a more detailed plan ie a local plan with a Hailsham focus
- The intended area covered – ie restricted to the existing parish of Hailsham or be based on a wider area to become enlarged Hailsham

- Whether the AAP will include all development allocations and policies affecting the parish of Hailsham or only commercial allocations/policies for the Town Centre?

Mr Hannam said the HAAP would be more detailed than the Neighbourhood Plan. It would include Hailsham and the surrounding areas, such as Arlington and not just the town centre.

8.4 The fourth question was from Mr Peter Deacon

I have one big question for you and this is it. With the possibility of more houses in the South Wealden area, we really should look and seriously consider and reconsider the needs of Hailsham, Polegate and the surrounding area. I.e. a reintroduced railway link from Polegate at least via Hailsham in some way back to Hailsham and on at least as far as Hellingly thus bringing back something lost to everyone for too long. Please think very seriously about the overwhelming congestion which will not go away. Surely you could take my idea on board?

Mrs. Brigginsaw said that Wealden District Council was looking at all transport need. As part of this they were talking to Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council and Network Rail.

8.5 Question five was from Mr Frank Catt

Can the Town Council be assured by Wealden District Council that ALL monies received as Section 106 or CIL payments from developers of sites within the Hailsham boundaries are expended on infrastructure improvements within those boundaries for the benefit of the town and its residents?

Councillor Newton responded that Wealden District Council would do its utmost to ensure that all CIL payments from Hailsham developers would stay within Hailsham.

8.6 Question six was from Mr John Pilgrim

With the Royal college of physicians recording 40,000 deaths a year plus, thousands of cases of children developing Asthma, numerous older people having breathing difficulties due to rates of pollution higher than the E.U. directive for safe air quality especially so in the South East of England. Who is responsible for monitoring the quality of air in and around Hailsham? What is being undertaken to reduce the level of pollution? Why does this aspect take such low priority in the Planning Officers assessment of new planning applications, More Houses. More cars. More pollution. If we carry on as we are, future generations face a life as fish without water.

Mrs Brigginsaw said that air quality is regularly and routinely monitored.

8.7 Question seven was from Mr David Phillips

My question is

Please can you say when the long awaited, and widely supported MASHH improvements to the Town Centre will commence?

These long needed and long awaited works will be a huge benefit for residents,

pedestrians and drivers - as well as for visitors to Hailsham. The proposals were very well received and supported following lengthy consultation by East Sussex and Wealden District Councils and I would welcome assurance that they will be started this Spring.

They will once implemented increase safety for residents, pedestrians and drivers as well as providing a street scene and public realm that enhances the appearance of the Town and its Conservation Area

Mr. Hannam said that the scheme was progressing and the approved contractor formally starts at the beginning of May with the work commencing in late spring.

8.8 The eighth question was from Mr Ralph Olesen

In view of the major road works due to take place this year in and around the town centre, what absolute assurance can be given that enforcement of the new traffic and parking regulations will be effectively and persistently undertaken, and by whom?

Also related to this vital matter...concerning the long standing 'joke' of continued inaction, particularly in the High Street, will such enforcement also apply to the existing traffic regulations outside of the area scheduled for the Improvements, such as in Market Street and London Road?

Mr. Hannam said it was the responsibility of the police to monitor and enforce on-street parking, and Wealden District Council was working with them on this. WDC was also looking into the possibility of other agencies enforcing parking restrictions such as the Council and community wardens.

8.9 The final question was from Mrs Christine Berry.

Having looked at the Hailsham Forward website on the internet, I cannot see that they have done much since 2012 - where are the specialised markets as stated on the web?

The article in the Sussex Express dated Friday 15th April 2016 "Search on for more Market Traders" I asked this question in December 2015 about more stalls – so why has it taken until now to do something about it? How can it be a resounding success where there are only a few stalls? If the stalls are free on a Thursday why are there not more people taking up the offer?

Can you tell me what has the £10,000 of funding been spent on?

As for the formalising Hailsham Forward, it states that there is a need for a constitution, why was this not written on the formation of Hailsham Forward?

I would appreciate a reply in writing as I am unable to attend this meeting due to illness.

The Chairman said that Mrs Berry would receive a reply in writing, as requested which would be published on the Council's website.

Other Questions

- 9.1** A member of the public who was also a stall holder at the market said that the market was not working well. Stallholders were leaving the market at 1.00pm when the agreed leaving time was 3.00pm. She also said that the Thursday market, that was free to stallholders, was very badly attended, with sometimes on 3 or 4 stalls.

She also criticised the Town Council for putting out a press release saying that empty units in the town centre were decreasing. There were empty units and many were cafes and charity shops.

Mr Hannam said that the planning process did not allow for the planning authority to put conditions on the type and numbers of shops.

- 9.2** Mrs M Kitcher from the Hailsham Historical Society said that she was aware the conservation area was being revised and asked for confirmation that no buildings currently in the area would be demolished.

Mrs Briginshaw responded that she would raise this concern with Wealden District Council's Conservation Officers.

- 9.3** A member of the public asked that following the restructuring of the Police Service would there be a reduction in council tax.

Mr Hannam said this was a matter for the Police.

- 10** The Chairman thanked members of the public for attending. He thanked councillors and Council staff for all their hard work throughout the year.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.25pm.