



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Hailsham Town Council, held in the Fleur de Lys Meeting Rooms, Hailsham Town Council on Wednesday 29th January 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

HTC/20/4 /212 A member of the public spoke about housing development and asked if it was necessary for the Council to sell greenfield land to developers.

A member of the public asked what the Council's position was on the Wealden Climate Emergency.

Steve Wennington of Hailsham Active spoke about the lack of open space in Hailsham, which contributed to health problems. It was important that residents got healthier and fitter. Walking made a great contribution to this; hence he was pursuing the path around the perimeter of the Western Road Recreation Ground.

213 **Present:** Councillors: G. Blake-Coggins, C. Bryant, N Coltman, D. Cottingham, B Granville, R. Grocock, K. Hinton, B. Holbrook, P.S. Holbrook (Chairman), M. Laxton, K. Nicholls, T Powis, J. Puttick and A M. Ricketts.

214 **Officers in Attendance**

J. Harrison (Town Clerk), M. Caira (Deputy Town Clerk and Business Enterprise Manager), M. Foster (Finance Officer), K. Giddings and D. Saxby.

215 **Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors A. Clarke, A. O'Rawe and C. Tasane.

216 **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

217 **Chairman's Update**

The Chairman listed his engagements since the last meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes

218.1 The Town Clerk said that Councillor Hinton had queried the minutes of the 20th November 2019 by email.

He said that Minute 192.2 – Motion 170 Hailsham Forward should read:

218.2 **RESOLVED** to agree the following motion as amended:

Given Hailsham Forward is now established as a Community Interest Company (CIC) and in the light of there being no formal or written agreement in place regarding the relationship between the Town Council and Hailsham Forward this

Motion proposes that the Town Council, through its Strategy Committee, undertake an urgent review to: establish if the Town Council wishes to continue a relationship and if so what form this should take.

The Review should include consideration of any continued Town Council support in the form of financial and human (staffing) resources.

The Review should take place to a timescale that enables recommendations to be presented to Full Council and decisions made before 1st April 2020.

Any formal agreement put in place as a result of the Review should be reconsidered.

This was agreed.

218.3 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Reports of the meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 20th November 2019, as amended and printed and circulated, may be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

219 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes and Reports of the meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 27th November 2019 as printed and circulated, may be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

Neighbourhood Plan Committee

220.1 Councillor Laxton updated the meeting on the latest developments in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan:

She, along with Councillor Hinton, had attended the inspectorate hearing in December into the Wealden Local Plan.

The Town Council had queried Neighbourhood Plan inspector's advice to wait for the outcome of the inspection of the local plan. Therefore a meeting had been held between the Town Council, District Council and Inspector in late December. At that meeting a way forward had been agreed with some amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Laxton noted that at present it was still planned for the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed before the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May.

220.2 **RESOLVED** to:

a) note the Neighbourhood Plan update, and

b) approve the Neighbourhood Plan Committee's delegated authority up to the next Town Council meeting.

Report of the Independent Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel 2020/21

221.1 The Town Clerk referred members to the report and recommendations of the Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel that had been circulated with the agenda. Hailsham Town Council continued to be in level 3. The recommendation was that there be an increase of 2.5% in the basic allowance, taking it up to £1,318.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommended increase is not taken. On being put to the vote there were 7 in favour and 7 against. The Chairman exercised his casting vote against the proposal, which was therefore lost.

- 221.2 Councillor Puttick requested that his vote in favour of the proposal be recorded.
- 221.3 It was proposed and seconded that the recommended increase be accepted and taken. On being put to the vote there were 7 in favour and 7 against. The Chairman exercised his casting vote for the proposal, which was therefore carried.
- 221.4 Councillors Nicholls, Hinton, Powis, Laxton, Puttick and Ricketts requested that their votes against the proposal be recorded.
- 221.5 **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Independent Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel 2020/21.

Western Road Recreation Ground – All Weather Perimeter Path

- 222.1 The Chairman asked that Mr S Wennington from Hailsham Active to address the meeting.

Mr Wennington said that he and Mr R Oleson had prepared a draft specification for building an all-weather perimeter path at Western Road Recreation Ground based on resolutions at previous Council meetings. This would allow leisure pursuits such as walking, running and cycling. It would also act as a thoroughfare to The Diplocks Industrial Estate. The indicative price for the project (without the additional electrical lighting scheme or the hard-standing exercise area is £137,511. This sum could be allocated from paid Section 106 monies.

Members were concerned that the Council would be liable for maintenance costs and other unidentified on-costs that would have to be taken from future revenue income. Mr Oleson said that the path would be made from materials that would be maintenance free for around 15 years.

- 222.2 **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations in the report and allocate £137,511, from S106 payments previously received from Wealden district Council for 'leisure facilities in Hailsham, to the scheme to build an all-weather perimeter path (without lighting) around the Western Road Recreation Ground and requested that Hailsham Active take this project forward, working with the Town Council to procure the installation, whilst staying within budget; and to thank Mr Wennington, Mr Oleson and the Deputy Town Clerk for their work on this project.

Precept 2020/21

- 223.1 The Chairman introduced Mr B Thompson the Chief Finance Officer of Wealden District Council.

Mr Thompson addressed the meeting about an error that occurred in the tax base calculation in 2019/20. The tax base for that year had been overstated by about 3 per cent. This would have to be corrected for 2020/21 and there was legally no possibility of Wealden District Council covering the losses to Hailsham Town Council. Mr Thompson apologised for this error which had happened before his appointment.

- 223.2 Members were asked to consider the recommendations of the Finance, Budget,

Resources and Staffing Committee held on 8th January 2020. The following were agreed as adjustments:

Not to add an additional £5,000 to the Neighbourhood Plan Budget.

To take out an additional £5,000 for festive lighting (keeping the budget at £11,000).

To reduce the Grants allocation by £5,000.

To remove £6,000 of additional money to Wealden Works.

To defer installation of the changing spaces pod by six months or more to reduce/remove the costs of maintenance and cleaning by £13,000 (a £6,500 saving).

- 223.3 Councillor Laxton spoke in opposition to the deferment of the changing spaces pod.
- 223.4 On being put to the vote, the deferment of the provision of a changing spaces pod was carried by 11 votes to 3.
- 223.4 Councillors Laxton, Nicholls and Ricketts requested that their votes against the deferment be recorded.
- 223.5 **RESOLVED** that the changing spaces pod is deferred to financial year 2021/22, considering the district wide review to be undertaken by Wealden District Council.
- 223.6 **RESOLVED** to ringfence any underspend from 2019/20 for replacement of solo dog bins for litter bins; all bins to be labelled for dual use of general waste and dog waste and marketing to start educating the public on dog waste disposal.
- 223.7 **RESOLVED** that there is a moratorium on additional projects being undertaken in 2020/21, other than the projects the Council has resolved to undertake.
- 223.8 **RESOLVED** that a workshop for all councillors to attend to cover full understanding of the budgets and its constraints. One day meeting and one evening meeting.
- 223.9 **RESOLVED** to:
- a) Approve the budget of £1,094,327 as set out in the officers' report circulated with the agenda.
 - b) That Wealden District Council is requisitioned for a precept of £1,092,827 for the financial year 2020/21. This represents a 5.5% increase in the Band D Tax rate. The shortfall of £1,499.80 to be drawn from the Council's reserves.

Members' Code of Conduct

224.1 The Town Clerk referred members to the report circulated with the agenda which was asking that consideration was given to adopting the amended Code of Conduct in line with East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council.

224.2 **RESOLVED** that the amended Code of Conduct is adopted by Hailsham Town Council.

Wealden District Council Local Plan

225.1 The Town Clerk referred members to the report from the Planning Inspector on the Wealden District Council Local Plan who had decided that WDC could not proceed with its current draft Local Plan. The Inspector had found that there had been too great an emphasis on protecting the environment and that it needed to do more to build in Wealden which neighbouring councils, such as Eastbourne could not accommodate.

Councillor Blake-Coggins expressed his extreme disappointment with the presentation of the Plan which he suggested was full of holes. He suggested that Wealden District Council looks elsewhere for extra housing.

225.2 Councillor Hinton declared an interest as he was a planning officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

225.3 **RESOLVED** to summons the Chief Executive, Senior Planning Officers and the leader of Wealden District Council to attend a meeting with the council before the WDC council meeting on 19th February. The letter of summons to be sent by the Chairman of the Council.

Annual Town Meeting

226.1 The Town Clerk asked members what format they wanted the Annual Town Meeting to take. In previous years local stakeholders were invited to have information stalls for an hour before the meeting officially opened and were asked to stay to answer questions on the services they provided.

Councillor Laxton said that she would like Inspector Gross of Sussex Police to be present to allay the fears of residents who were concerned about the increase in anti-social behaviour.

She also wanted chairs of committees to have a five-minute speaking slot to address the meeting on the work of their individual committee. If this was not permissible Councillor Laxton said that they should not be sitting at the top table.

226.2 **RESOLVED** that the format of the Annual Town Meeting would follow the format of recent meetings, and have stakeholder stands before the meeting and invite stakeholders to stay for the meeting.

Motion 173 – Name Badges

227.1 The following motion had been received by the Town Clerk:

That the council introduce the wearing of name badges/lanyards, to be worn at all council meetings and council sponsored events.

This would assist in the recognition of councillors to members of the public and currently only happens at the Annual Town Meeting.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Tasane and seconded by Councillor Ricketts.

In the absence of Councillor Tasane, Councillor Ricketts moved the motion.

227.2 **RESOLVED** that Hailsham Town Council introduce the wearing of name badges/lanyards to be worn at all council meetings and council sponsored events.

228 **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public are excluded during the discussion on the next item of the agenda (15) as it concerns: The terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts and/or the preparation of cases in legal proceedings.

(In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No. 1E).

Hailsham Aspires

229.1 The Town Clerk updated the meeting on the latest developments on the Hailsham Aspires project, including the meeting of the Town Council's Hailsham Aspires Working Group with Kelvin Williams on 21st January. They spoke about the implications of the inspector's rejection of the Wealden Local Plan on the Hailsham Aspires project.

Wealden District Council had advised Hailsham Town Council that it had engaged solicitors to help in land transfer negotiations. They suggested that Hailsham Town Council do likewise with WDC meeting the cost.

229.2 **RESOLVED** to employ Solicitors for land transfer issues with Wealden District Council.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.59pm

CHAIRMAN