



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the extraordinary meeting of Hailsham Town Council held remotely via the internet on Thursday 20th August at 10.00am.

HTC/20/2
124 **Public Question Time**

The Chairman welcomed Mr A Keer and Mr J Vaks from East Sussex County Council to the meeting and invited them to address it.

Mr Keer said he had received a request from Hailsham Town Council for clarification of the scheme and was happy to use this meeting as a means of doing so,

He said that this was a government initiative to provide towns that had been struggling since the Covid 19 lockdown to get a higher footfall to their shops whilst being mindful of social distancing and people's fears of going outside.

When traffic and parking measures were normally proposed there would normally be a wide-ranging consultation period with potentially affected stakeholders; there had not been an opportunity to do that in this case because of the timeframe.

Mr Keer said that this was not something being imposed on towns and if the scheme was not wanted, it would not go ahead.

The Chairman asked why Hailsham had been chosen for the scheme. Mr Keer responded that because of limited funds it was not possible to do everywhere.

Councillor Blake-Coggins said that there appeared to be very little thought given to the scheme. Had there, for instance been a risk assessment or a traffic study undertaken.

A member of the public who ran a business providing large white goods said that in his opinion the scheme was not needed and spoke of delivery problems and consequent traffic build up problems.

The Town Clerk asked for clarification. If Hailsham Town Council resolved to oppose the scheme would the proposal from East Sussex County Council be cancelled?

Mr Keer said that this was not something ESCC was seeking to impose but were genuinely trying to help towns following the problems that had arisen from Covid 19 and were trying to increase footfall in the High Street as lockdown restrictions were being lifted. ESCC would respect the decision of Hailsham Town Council.

Councillor Balsdon said that he understood the reasons behind the scheme but considered it to have flaws. In particular, he suggested that pedestrians would have difficulty knowing where the pavement finished and where the road began. Mr Vaks said that ESCC would place barriers in the areas where parking used to be allowed. These barriers would remain in situ for the entirety of the scheme.

Councillor Laxton asked where the equality impact risk assessment was and where were the data showing the footfall in the town. Mr Kerr responded that there had not been enough time to produce the data requested for this temporary scheme.

Mr Vaks added that an independent risk assessment had taken place.

The Town Clerk read a letter he had received from the administrator of Hailsham News who had asked all shopkeepers in the High Street for their views on the scheme. The feedback had been mixed but the majority were opposed to it. The overall theme was that this was not a time to experiment.

The Deputy Chairman of the Hailsham & District Chamber of Commerce said he was against the scheme.

The Chairman thanked Mr Keer and Mr Vaks who then left the meeting.

125 **Present:** Councillors: K. Balsdon, C. Bryant, G. Blake-Coggins, N. S. Coltman, R. Grocock, B. Holbrook, P.S. Holbrook, M. Laxton A. O’Rawe, K. Nicholls, T. Powis, A M Ricketts and C Tasane.

126 **Officers in Attendance**

Mr J Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr M Caira (Deputy Town Clerk and Business Enterprise Manager) and Mr. D Saxby.

127 **Also in Attendance**

County Councillor G Fox, Wealden District Councillor N Cleaver and Mr A Keer and Mr J Vaxs from East Sussex County Council.

128 **Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Councillors A Clarke, D Cottingham, B Granville, K Hinton, and J Puttick.

129 **Declarations of Interest**

None presented.

130 **Covid 19: Local Physical Distancing Measures. Traffic Restrictions on the High Street**

The Town Clerk reminded members of the resolution passed as the meeting on 11th August, which read:

RESOLVED to request, in line with the recommendation to delegate authority to Councillor Dowling, the Lead Member for Transport and the Environment at East Sussex County Council and the Director to finalise the list of schemes and take any action to finalise them; that any final decisions on the Hailsham scheme and its implementation are deferred to enable further discussions with key stakeholders, including ourselves. In the hope of arriving at an agreeable scheme.

He said that if members were minded to rescind this motion it would need a two thirds majority of those voting to overturn it. The other option was to suspend the

relevant standing order on the rescinding of previous resolutions.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 11A that required a two thirds majority to rescind a motion.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that Hailsham Town Council rejects in its entirety this ill-thought out scheme on behalf of the future of our town, its residents and traders.

This resolution was carried unanimously.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for all his efforts in arranging this meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.13pm.

CHAIRMAN