

## **HAILSHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

- 1 MINUTES AND REPORTS** of the Hailsham Annual Town Meeting held at Hailsham Civic and Community Hall on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 at 7.30 pm.
- 2 PRESENT:** 10 Hailsham Town councillors; 40 Hailsham electors; 7 officers of Hailsham Town Council.
- 3** The Town Mayor/Chairman of Hailsham Town Council, Councillor P. S. Holbrook opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and councillors. He introduced the councillors sitting on the stage; these were the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the standing committees.

The Chairman introduced and thanked representatives from the various stakeholders who were in attendance and had stalls providing information on their services. These were Wealden District Council, Hailsham Twinning Association, Sussex Police, South-East Water, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Lightening Fibre.

The Chairman said how pleased he was to welcome members of the public back, as this was the first Annual Town Meeting to be held since 2019. The Covid pandemic had been a very difficult time for all people. He thanked the staff of Hailsham Town Council for keeping the council operating and continuing to provide services to the people of Hailsham.

He said he was not particularly computer literate and found having Zoom meetings a challenge. He wanted to place on record his thanks to his daughter and the Town Clerk for helping him to be able to attend these meetings.

He said that he was proud of how clean and tidy the town was. He thanked the Hailsham Town Council. Mr P. Miller and the Wealden District Council street cleaner for their often unrecognised work.

The Chairman thanked his predecessor, Councillor Nigel Coltman for all his work and congratulated him on his achievements whilst he was Mayor.

- 4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies had been received from Councillors G. Blake-Coggins, N. Coltman, J. Crittenden, R. Grocock, S. Keogh, K. Lawrence, J. Puttick and A. M. Ricketts.

### **5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **6 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **7 HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman said that copies of the report had been made available prior to the

meeting.

He asked those present if there were any questions or comments on the contents of the annual report. There were none.

## **8 Electors Questions**

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk to read out the written questions received. The Town Clerk said that he had received one written question from a member of the public. It read:

*Why has the level of precept levied by Hailsham Town Council of an 8% increase significantly higher than the increase in Council Tax by Wealden District Council.*

The Responsible Finance Officer, Mrs M Webber explained that an increase of in the Hailsham Town Council precept equated to 10 pence per household per week. The increase in the precept was largely due to the Post Office, which Hailsham Town Council had taken over the franchise of before the pandemic lockdown and had still not recovered enough to make a profit, this was still being underwritten by the Town Council. Royal Mail had also introduced a parcel collection service which has had an impact on the number of people attending the post office.

The Chairman then invited members of the public in the audience to ask questions.

A questioned was asked about the access to the James West Centre in Brunel Drive. Local residents were concerned that the road was busy, and some users of the Centre were parking in the street and not in the allotted car park. This meant that the area became dangerous for drivers and pedestrians alike. The Chairman said that the Council would look into the parking issues at the Centre and put up notices and inform hirers to use the car park wherever possible and certainly to park responsibly and safely.

Another member of the public raised concerns about the lack of parking enforcement in Hailsham. On occasions bus drivers were unable to use bus stops as cars were parked in the bus laybys. The Council was asked to employ a traffic warden. Councillor Laxton replied that the Council was not able to justify the cost of employing this person. Wealden District Council had taken the decision not to decriminalise parking in the whole of the district. This meant that the responsibility for issuing parking fines laid with the police and not the Council.

County Councillor Bentley suggested that thought be given, possibly in conjunction with other councils, to the provision of charging points for electric cars.

A member of the public asked if thought had been given to limiting the speed of traffic in High Street to 20 miles an hour. The reply was that this was not a matter for Hailsham Town Council.

A member of the public asked what the situation was with the adding of an additional name on the War Memorial. The Town Clerk replied that he would arrange for this to be done as soon as possible.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions. As there were none, he closed the meeting at 8.33pm.

