



# HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held at the Hailsham Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.00pm.

## **Public Question Time**

HTC/22/  
04/175 Members of the Hailsham & District Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation to the meeting about the Hailsham BID.

176 **Present:** Councillors: G. Blake-Coggins, C. Bryant, N. Coltman, D. Cottingham, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, S Keogh, K. Lawrence, M. Laxton, R. Newark, K. Nicholls, T. Powis, J. Puttick and A M Ricketts.

Councillor S. Murphy (East Sussex County Council) and Councillor N. Cleaver (Wealden District Council) were also in attendance.

## 177 **Officers in Attendance**

Mr J Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr M Caira (Deputy Town Clerk & Business Enterprise Manager), Mrs M Webber (Responsible Finance Officer), Mrs K Giddings, Mr D Saxby and Mr T Hall.

## 178 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Councillors A. Clarke, J. Cook, J Crittenden and R. Grocock.

## 179 **Declarations of Interest**

None presented.

## 180 **Confirmation of Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 181 **Chairman's Update**

The Chairman said that The Pavilion would be showing adverts for the Hailsham Card.

He had unveiled a plaque for the late Glenn Moore at Vines Barn. He was pleased that members of Mr Moore's family had been able to be present.

The Chairman thanked staff and councillors for their efforts for the mayor's event in aid the Community Food Hub. It had raised £765.

## 182 **East Sussex County Council Update**

Councillor Murphy gave a verbal report.

He had organised a Christmas lunch for some residents who would otherwise have been on their own on Christmas day. 14 diners had attended.

Lansdowne Children's Unit would be closing until September.

Burfield Academy would be closing for a year because of construction problems. Pupils would be attending Phoenix Academy.

Council tax for the police Fire Service would be rising by just under 4%

There were 19 gangs working to fill in potholes throughout the county.

There would be a candlelight vigil for Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Councillor Puttick read an email from Councillor Fox. He apologised for being unable to attend the meeting and providing an update on recent activity.

### **Report of the Independent Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel 2023/24**

- 183.1 A copy of the report of the Independent Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel for 2023/24 had been circulated with the agenda. Members were asked to consider whether to accept the increase in members' allowances as recommended by the Panel.

The recommendation was to increase the basic allowance and the Chairman's allowance by 3%.

- 183.2 **RESOLVED** not to accept the recommendation of a 3% increase in allowances as recommended by the Independent Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel 2023/24.

The resolution was carried by 10 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

### **Motion 180 - Changing Places**

- 184.1 The following motion was proposed by Councillor Blake-Coggins and seconded by Councillor Laxton:

*We call upon Council to reconsider its latest decision NOT to provide a "Full Changing Places" pod on Western Road Recreation based on accurate information acquired from WDC and reaffirming the requirement in our community for this much needed provision.*

In moving the motion, Councillor Blake-Coggins said that four years ago, this Council agreed to install a Changing Places pod in the town. Wealden District Council had now confirmed that it had no intention of providing this facility in Hailsham. In the coming years there would be an extra 3,000 homes in the area, therefore there would be a significant number of individuals requiring this facility. All the finance needed for this facility would come from CIL payments. To vote against this would be discriminatory against disabled people.

The Town Clerk advised that the running costs for this scheme could not come from CIL money. These would be a revenue cost.

Councillor Laxton said that after six years this Council should stop playing political ping pong with this matter. Many people could not use the new recreational facilities provided by Hailsham Town Council; they could not play sports because there wasn't a facility with a hoist for them to go to the toilet.

Councillor Keogh said that he nor, as far as he knew, any other councillor was against the principle of this facility. To accuse this Council of being discriminatory against disabled people was a disgraceful statement. What he wanted was to ensure that council tax-payers money was spent correctly, with due diligence and financial rigour. A feasibility study was needed which was fundamental to any scheme of this size and cost. Any figures provided now were a guesstimate. He suggested that the Assets Management Committee undertake a feasibility study.

Other councillors said that the only appropriate place for this facility was in the town centre.

Councillor Bryant said that it was important to consult the people who would be potential users of this facility along with their families.

The Town Clerk said that the figures provided were an underestimate. No allowance had been made for the on-costs of a cleaner which amounted to an extra 34%. An employee of the Council could not be paid minimum wage, as they legally would have to be employed on NJC conditions. No provision had been made for annual or sick leave. He reminded councillors that this motion rescinded a previous motion and, therefore, to be carried, it would need a two thirds majority. Any amendment to the existing motion could not negate it. If the will was to undertake a feasibility study, the existing motion would have to be withdrawn.

The mover and seconder of motion 108 agreed to withdraw it.

- 184.2     **RESOLVED** that this Council recognises the need for facilities for people with disabilities and to this end agrees to undertake a feasibility study on the possible provision of a Changing Places facility in the town.

This motion was carried unanimously.

185     **Confidential Business**

**RESOLVED** that the press and public are temporarily excluded during the discussion on agenda items 10 and 11 as they concern the terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts, terms and conditions of employment or are otherwise confidential information.

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

**Joint Working Project Resource**

- 186.1     The Town Clerk stated that talks with Hellingly Parish Council about how to work closer together were on-going. However, to progress matters effectively, it was the opinion of both councils that the services of a project manager would be needed.

Hellingly Parish Council had agreed to meet half the costs; as it was unlikely to get the services of anyone for at least another six months, the cost to Hailsham Town Council would be £12,500 for 2023/24.

- 186.2 **RESOLVED** to pay £12,500 from Contingency Funds for a project manager for six months in the 2023/24 financial year.

### **Land Transfer – Ersham Road Village Green**

- 187.1 Members were asked to consider whether to sign the Land Transfer documents from Wealden District Council.
- 187.2 **RESOLVED** in principle to sign the Land Transfer documents from Wealden District Council, subject to agreement from the Assets Management Committee.

### **Precept 2023/24**

- 188.1 The Responsible Finance Officer spoke in respect of the decisions taken and recommendations made by the Finance, Budget, Resources Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022, and their implications for the precept. She specifically highlighted the recommendation not to include a budget for grants to voluntary organisations for the 2023/24 financial year. It was agreed, however, to reinstate the grant to the Citizens' Advice Bureau. It was stressed that this was not part of the normal grant awards scheme.

The supporting documents from the Finance, Budget, Resources and Staffing Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were adopted.

- 188.2 **RESOLVED** to:
- a) Approve the budget of £1,281,529 as set out in the officers' report circulated with the agenda.
  - b) That Wealden District Council is requisitioned for a precept of £1,281,505 for the financial year 2023/24. This represents a 2.1% increase in the Band D Tax rate.

- 188.3 Councillor P Holbrook requested that abstention from voting be recorded.

- 188.4 In his capacity as Chairman of the Finance, Budget and Resources Committee, Councillor Keogh thanked Mrs Webber for her hard work on preparing the budget.

### 185 **Risk Assessments Policy**

**RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Risk Assessment.

### **Annual Town Meeting**

- 186.1 The Town Clerk reminded members that the date of the Annual Town Meeting was 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The Civic Community Hall had been booked.
- 186.2 **RESOLVED** that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on 8<sup>th</sup> March in the Civic Community Hall and the layout be the same as in previous years.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.18pm.

