



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF a meeting of Hailsham Town Council to be held at the Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, BN27 1BH on

Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

1. **Public Forum**
(No more than 15 Minutes)
2. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for absence from Council members.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive notice of declarations of personal or prejudicial interest in respect of items on this agenda.
4. **Confirmation of Minutes**
To resolve that the minutes of:
The meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 12th July 2023, and the Extraordinary Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 31st July 2023, are confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.
5. **Chairman's Update**
To receive a verbal update from the Chairman of Hailsham Town Council
6. **East Sussex County Council Update**
To receive an update from the East Sussex County Councillors for Hailsham
7. **Civility and Respect Pledge**
To pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge
8. **Committee Membership**
To consider any changes to committee membership for the remainder of the council year
9. **Adoption Of Communications Strategy and Revised Media Relations and Social Media Protocols**
To submit the Communications Strategy & Action Plan, Media Relations Protocol and Social Media Protocol for adoption.
10. **Costed Report for Events**

To receive and consider the Costed Report for Events from the Communities Committee

11. **Notice of Completion of Audit**

To Note the Completion of Audit

12. **Confidential Business**

To resolve that the press and public are excluded during the discussion on the next items of the agenda (13 - 16) as they concern: The beginning of legal proceedings and the terms of tenders for contracts or negotiations (In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No. 1E).

13. **Committee Recommendations to Council**

To consider recommendations made by committees, which are outside of their terms of reference or otherwise were resolved as recommendations to full council

13.1. Assets Management Committee 19.07.2023 – CCTV (CONFIDENTIAL)

13.2. Assets Management Committee 19.07.2023 – Common Pond Pathways (CONFIDENTIAL)

13.3. Assets Management Committee 19.07.2023 – Battle Road Play Area (CONFIDENTIAL)

13.4. Assets Management Committee 05.09.2023 – Sports Pitches and Facilities (CONFIDENTIAL)

14. **Hailsham Health and Wellbeing Hub - CONFIDENTIAL**

To further consider a request from Wealden District Council

15. **Public Toilet and Changing Places - CONFIDENTIAL**

To receive an update on negotiations regarding the provision of public toilets and A Changing Places facility at Vicarage Field.

To Resolve to agree to progress the project to install the facility.

16. **Blackman's Yard and Inglenook Electrical Surveys -CONFIDENTIAL**

To receive an update on the findings of recent electrical surveys and consider the necessary steps required.



John Harrison, Town Clerk
7th September 2023

My apologies for not being with you, but I have an afternoon appointment in London and will not be back in time for the meeting.

Road Maintenance Spending in East Sussex

There was some confusion at the last meeting of the Town Council when one member suggested that the only reason that highways spending had increased this financial year was because it had been cut by a similar amount in the prior year. This is definitively not the case. With the modest hiccup associated with COVID/Lockdown period excepted, road maintenance spending has been on a significantly rising trend. The substantial rise in spending (which follows a report commissioned by the ESCC Cabinet at the beginning of 2023) that we have budgeted for this 2023/24 financial year combined with the introduction of a new Highways contractor leave me confident that things will improve markedly over the coming years.

I am really pleased to see the promised works in South Road and Ersham Road delivered in July and looking forward to seeing Diplocks Way resurfaced.

I enclose a table of Highways Structural Maintenance/Investment spending by East Sussex County Council prepared by County Officers to clarify the position. The local challenge is therefore now to make sure that we get every significantly damaged road/pavement which meets the intervention criteria reported on the Highways website and in front of our Highways Steward. Your recent efforts on this front are very much appreciated.

Summary of Highways Structural Investment: Capital Programme and One Off Investment

Highways: Structural Maintenance Budgets

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Programme						
Structural Maintenance	17,969	23,067	18,476	16,824	20,921	30,747
Maintenance Additional			1,000			
Expenditure on Bridges	1,481	1,300	1,300	1,212	3,026	4,749
Street Lighting	980	1,019	2,390	3,351	3,745	4,542
Total Structural Maintenance	20,430	25,386	23,166	21,387	27,692	40,038
Additional One Off Investment				5,800		5,600
Total	20,430	25,386	23,166	27,187	27,692	45,638

Town Councillor Road Surveys

Councillor Potts (Hailsham West) shared the exchange between Hailsham Town Council and County Highways over the state of our local roads. I had several exchanges with Highways regarding the local surveys conducted by Town Councillors and what possible next steps might follow. As a result of my conversations with them on Friday, they have said that they are more than happy to inspect the damages to the roads highlighted, but they would like a bit more information (as it is a long list) to assist with the efficient execution of this exercise. They will be writing to you as a council imminently seeking some clarification and to agree a way forward.

Anti-Social-Behaviour & Car Fires

I reached out again to the office of PCC Katie Bourne again two weeks ago for an update on arson and ASB in the Town. Subsequently, I had a conversation with Chief Inspector Andy Nicklin responsible for this area. The takeaways were that the police are confident that the string of car fires has abated. With respect to local ASB, their targeted work, supported by increased resourcing and focus on key offenders, is having some success in reducing offending from the most prolific youths. Chief Inspector Nicklin reiterated that they are heavily reliant on the public reporting ASB incidents either online (link below) or via the 101-telephone line. This assists them in mapping the ASB hotspots in the Town and helps them to direct police resourcing.

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/report-online>

East Sussex welcomes £10.5 million bus service improvements.

As part of the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), £10.5 million of Government funding has been invested into improving bus services across the county. Every district and borough has benefitted from the enhanced services, with new hourly daily services in some areas, frequency enhancements, and additional evening and weekend services.

As well as the service enhancements, the ambitious plan has resulted in reduced fares and the successful introduction of an on-demand bus service, FlexiBus, in rural areas of the county.

More information about this story can be found [here](#). A full list of improvements is available on the [East Sussex County Council website](#).

Creative business investment programme launched in East Sussex

A scheme to help companies become investment ready is available to creative industries in East Sussex. The 'Create Southeast' programme aims to support local creative businesses to develop the skills needed to secure investment and facilitate access to additional funding. The initiative is part of the government's national 'Create Growth' programme to help grow creative industries nationwide. The programme will run until 2025.

Events celebrate Older People's Day

A programme of activities will take place across September and October to mark International Older People's Day 2023. The 'Full of Life' events programme has been unveiled by East Sussex County Council and East Sussex Senior's Association (ESSA) and features over 40 free and paid for activities open to the 50+ age group.

Solar panels to contribute to county's environmental efforts.

Efforts to reduce carbon emissions from council buildings across the county have been boosted by the latest installation of solar panels. The Keep in Moulsecoomb became the 13th building to have panels fitted as part of East Sussex County Council's climate emergency plan. Within 12 months, the new installation is expected to save 23 tonnes of CO2 and save around £45,000 in energy bills.

As well as the 13 solar panel installations, East Sussex County Council has completed 20 LED lighting projects and installed low carbon heating in two of its buildings in the last two years.

Gerard Fox
County Councillor
Hailsham New Town

11 September 2023

ESCC councillors report for Hailsham Town council 13 September 2023

The Artists bridge project

What a wonderful day it was at the official opening of the bridge on Saturday, there was over 120 people there. Hailsham should be rightly proud of this bridge and it was an honour and a privilege to speak to some of the Artists whose work is displayed. It took many hours and a lot of people to make this project come to life and thanks you to HTC for the CIL donation which definitely helped to lever further funds out of other sponsors and WDC. I spoke to the artist who painted the woman soldier and it is hoped that the women in the painting will come to Hailsham sometime in the next year to see it in place. We had Artist ranging from a 3 year old to an 80 year old . There were over 190 positive comments on the local new and talk facebook pages. Thank you, the mayor for officially opening the bridge.

Lansdowne Childrens centre

The management team is now in place and now domestic staff are being recruited. ESCC are now working with the Home office to get the centre opened later in the Autumn.

Phoenix and Burfield's academy site sharing

Both schools are now sharing the same site as a result of the works need at Burfield academy. I am informed that there are no issues to report on this temporary measure and I have had no comments from parents of either school as yet.

Highways issues

1. I'm informed that Diplock's way resurfacing is scheduled to take place within the next 6-8 weeks.

2. South road and Ersham road have been resurfaced to a good standard and let's hope that we have many years before there will be any road works along these two roads. Having said that I have reported two latent defects on both Sout road and Ersham road. There are 4 places where the drain is actually higher that the road and this is causing ponding. This is most acute at the zebra crossing on South road whare the puddle is so large that you cannot cross the road here properly , there is a drain within 5 m but it is higher that the puddle. This is really disheartening to report such defects given the amount of time the works took to get completed. ESCC highways are looking onto the issues I have raised.

3 Potholes. Recently HTC submitted a report to highways , I think it was unfortunate that each councillor who submitted their concerns reported in a different manner. There are a set criteria for assessing potholes and is clearly laid out. So the impact of the work by councillors was diluted. The correct forum for these issues to be raised is MASHH committee in the first instance, though it is my understanding the WDC have they to appoint a representative to this body. As a result, this has not met for some time.

General information

I am going to visit the Sewage treatment works in Station road in the next two weeks as a result of the ESCC place scrutiny committee asking questions of Southern Water and the sewage issues there are in our part of the world and I will report about the visit at the next council meeting.

I am not now on the Sussex Police and Crime panel due to political balances on the body as a result of the local elections in May of this year I have been replaced by a Green councillor from Brighton. The Wealden rep is now Cllr Kelvin Willaims.



Cllr Steve Murphy
Hailsham Market



Report to: Hailsham Town Council

Date: 13th September 2023

By: John Harrison, Town Clerk

Title of Report: Civility and Respect Pledge

1. PURPOSE:

To pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

2. Document as suggested for agenda item by NALC and SLCC

Definition of Civility and Respect
Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word.
Examples of ways in which you can show respect are by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

By our council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that our council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.

Signing up is a simple process, which requires councils to register and agree to the following statements:

Statement	Tick to agree
Our council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.	
Our council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff	
Our council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors	

Our council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.	
Our council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.	
Our council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when it happens.	
Our council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme	
Our council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.	

3. Background:

Text from NALC Website <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/civility-and-respect-project>

CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT

ABOUT

Throughout the sector, there are growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment, and intimidation are having on local (parish and town) councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the resulting effectiveness of local councils.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations have responded to this by setting up a Civility and Respect Working Group to oversee the Civility and Respect Project.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

NALC, SLCC, and OVW believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced because there is no place for bullying, harassment and intimidation within our sector. The pledge is easy for councils to sign up for and it will enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across our sector and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.

We invite all councils to take the Civility and Respect Pledge.

By signing the Pledge, your council is agreeing that the council will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

- Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors
- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the local [Local Council Award Scheme](#)
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

Please complete the form to sign up your council to the pledge. Once completed, you'll receive a certificate by email, and your council will be listed alongside others a national map, showing the councils that have signed up.

By signing the Pledge, your council is agreeing that the council will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors
Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy
Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the local Local Council Award Scheme
Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

MISSION STATEMENT

Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life, and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, clerks and council staff, in person or online, is unacceptable, whether by councillors, clerks, council staff, or public members.

This can prevent councils from functioning effectively, councillors from representing local people, discourage people from getting involved, including standing for election, and undermine public confidence and trust in local democracy.

NALC, county associations and OVW, as the membership organisations representing the first tier of local government in England and Wales, and the SLCC, as the professional body for clerks, are committed to working together to promote civility and respect in public life, good governance, positive debate and supporting the well-being of councillors, professional officers and staff.

To that end, the Civility and Respect Working Group will be working to deliver tangible resources, actions and interventions in four main areas: providing councils with the tools to support good governance; lobbying to strengthen the standards regime and encouraging more people to get involved; training; and processes to intervene to provide support to struggling councils.

PROJECT WORKSTREAMS

The group has identified a significant number of changes and improvements considered vital to provide support to help reduce and manage the issues related to bullying and harassment in the sector. These factors have been organised into six project workstreams that will deliver on the mission statement.

- Training
- Governance
- Intervention
- Legislative
- Collaboration
- Enabling
- E-LEARNING

One of the key aims of the civility and respect project has been to deliver training support for councillors, clerks, and employees who experience difficulties with bullying and harassment and to start to address some of the causes of poor behaviour. NALC recognise that times and dates for webinars and training courses do not always suit the busy schedules of local council members and employees and that a blended approach is often needed to share vital information.

E-learning enables councils to respond quickly to learners' needs, with flexibility and without having to organise physical training with fixed times and dates. Several county associations already offer a comprehensive range of e-learning options for clerks and councillors, and NALC is now pleased to be able to extend this further.

NALC is working with Nimble, online learning specialists, to enable councils access to a suite of engaging online learning at affordable prices available to everyone across our sector. Clerks and councillors in most areas can enrol and pay for courses online. If you are in South West, East of England, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, you should enrol via your county association.

NALC welcomes any feedback on the e-learning modules and will use this to improve or update the modules to ensure they best meet the needs of our members.

To access the training, please visit the Nimble e-learning website. If you are in South West, East of England, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, you should enrol via your county association.

*If your council is paying for the training, please ensure you have their permission to pay for the training before registering *

- Standards in public life
- Respectful and positive social media for councils and councillors
- Leadership in challenging situations for councils and councillors
- Personal resilience for councils and councillors



Sue Baxter

Vice President of NALC

Linda Larter

Former President of SLCC

What do we mean by Civility & Respect?



- **Definition of Civility & Respect:**
Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and in the written word.
- **Examples of ways in which you can show respect:**
By listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.



The Civility and Respect Project

NALC, SLCC and OVW believe now is the time to put Civility and Respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.

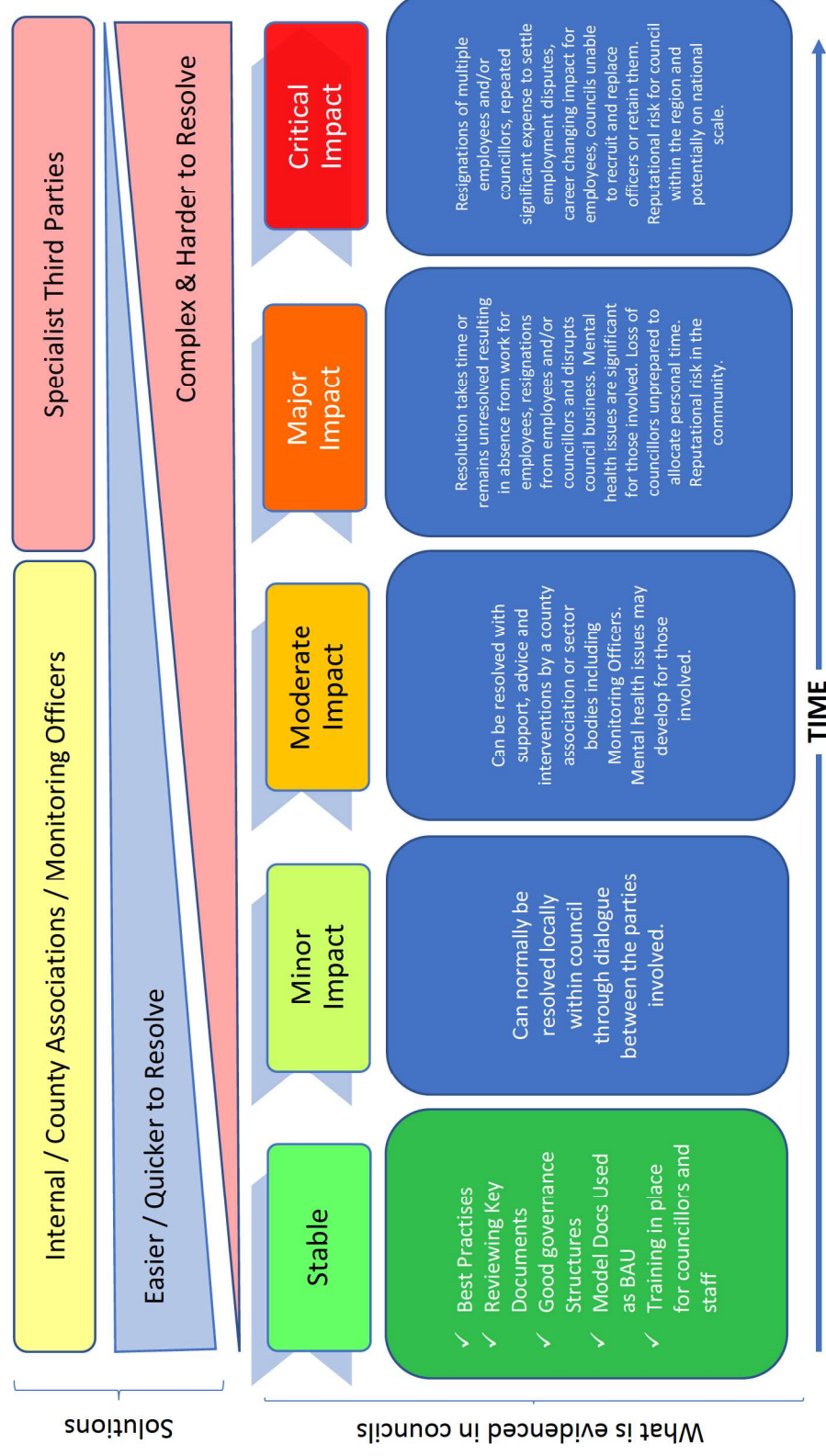


Project Aim



- The Civility and Respect Project is a joint venture between NALC, SLCC, OVW and County Secretaries and has the primary aim of supporting Town and Parish Councils to offer support and avoid Councils getting to the critical stage where issues become unresolvable.
- This Project has identified five categories of councils from Stable, to needing support of various levels, to Critical needs and will be introducing a new programme to support a much-needed Culture Change and thereby improve Civility and Respect in our Sector.
- The Civility and Respect project will support local councils with the availability of training, best practice, examples etc.
- And to signpost professional support and intervention when things go wrong

Scale of issues



Project Team Deliverables



The Civility & Respect Project Team have been putting in place ‘deliverables’, including: support for struggling councils, lobbying to strengthen the standards regime, training for Clerks and Councillors, tools to support good governance.





Call to Action

Call to Action - The Civility Pledge

- SLCC, NALC and OVW are committed to working within their organisations to change the Civility & Respect culture
- The Civility and Respect Project will provide a framework for the culture change needed across our sector
- We are ALL responsible for delivering it.
- We can show our commitment to change by signing up to the Civility & Respect Pledge.

The Pledge:

How WE will make the culture change across our sector



When signing the pledge the Council must agree the following statements.

That the Council:

- ✓has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- ✓has signed up to the Code of Conduct for Councillors
- ✓has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts
- ✓will Seek professional help at early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- ✓will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when it happens
- ✓will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to Being a Role Model / Champion Council e.g., via Local Council Award Scheme
- ✓supports the continued Lobbying for change in Legislation to support the Civility and Respect pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

Is your Council ready to sign the pledge?

- ✓ Is your council ready to sign the pledge now?
- ✓ What changes do you need to make to be able to sign up to the pledge?
- ✓ What help do you need?
- ✓ And most importantly, are you ready for change?



You can sign up to the pledge here:

- www.slcc.co.uk/news-publications/civility-respect-project/
- www.nalc.gov.uk/respect

Thank you! Any Questions?

Further information is available at:

- www.slcc.co.uk/news-publications/civility-respect-project/
- www.nalc.gov.uk/respect



Report to: Hailsham Town Council

Date: 13th September 2023

By: John Harrison, Town Clerk

Title of Report: Committee Membership

PURPOSE:

To consider any appointments to the council's committees

Previous resolutions:

Annual Council Meeting; 17/05/2023

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order No. 5, the following Committees be appointed:

- (a) Planning and Development Committee
- (b) Finance, Budget, Resources and Staffing Committee
- (c) Assets Management Committee
- (d) Communities Committee
- (e) Neighbourhood Plan Committee
- (f) Staff Committee
- (g) Strategy Committee

RESOLVED that each committee is appointed proportionately according to political or other group membership, where possible.

Terms of Reference for Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups

RESOLVED to adopt the Terms of Reference for Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups, including:

The number on each committee should be seven members.

Councillor Bryant proposed to rescind the previous resolution, but it did not receive the two thirds majority needed.

It was agreed to suspend the meeting for five minutes.

RESOLVED that the numbers of councillors on each committee be set at seven, except for the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, which would only have three.

Planning and Development Committee
Finance, Budget, Resources and Staffing Committee
Assets Management Committee
Communities Committee
Neighbourhood Plan Committee
Staff Committee
Strategy Committee

(b) the allocation on each of the following:

(a) Planning and Development Committee

Councillors Crittenden, Ricketts, Bryant, Hayes, Nicholls, P Holbrook and A Blake-Coggins

Substitutes: Councillors Laxton, B Holbrook, Potts and Rusu

(b) Finance, Budget, Resources and Staffing Committee

Councillors Mitchell, Ricketts, Rusu, Potts, G Bake-Coggins, White and F Clarke

Substitutes: Councillors P Holbrook, Rusu, Bryant, Hayes and Blundell

(c) Assets Management Committee

Councillors Laxton, Mitchell, P Holbrook, Bryant, Hayes, Blundell and A Blake-Coggin

Substitutes: Councillors A Clarke, Potts, B Holbrook and Rusu

(d) Communities Committee

Councillors Ricketts, Bryant, Nicholls, A Clarke, F Clarke, Blundell and Hayes

Substitutes: Councillors White, B Holbrook, Rusu, Hayes and Potts

(e) Neighbourhood Plan Committee

Councillors, Laxton, White and Potts

Substitutes: Councillors A Blake Coggins, Mitchell and Bryant

(f) Staffing Committee

Councillors Ricketts, Nichols, G Blake-Coggins, B Holbrook, P Holbrook, Potts and Rusu

Considerations

- Cllr Glynn White has resigned his place on the Neighbourhood Plan Committee
- Newly elected Cllr Dave Chapman has requested that he be appointed to the Assets Management and Communities Committees.
- Council should consider whether to appoint a full membership to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.
- Council should note that any changes to the resolutions made at the Annual Council meeting as above would be a 'rescinding' of previous resolutions and require a two thirds majority of those present and voting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP for 2023-2024

	STANDING COMMITTEES					
	Finance, Budget & Resources (7)	Planning & Development (7)	Communities (7)	Assets Management (7)	Neighbourhood Planning (3)	Staffing (7)
1	Colin Mitchell	Anne-Marie Ricketts	Karen Nicholls	Colin Mitchell	Mary Laxton	Karen Nicholls
2	Anne-Marie Ricketts	Karen Nicholls	Anne-Marie Ricketts	Mary Laxton	Steve Potts	Anne-Marie Ricketts
3	Doina Rusu	Chris Bryant	Chris Bryant	Chris Bryant		Steve Potts
4	Steve Potts	Nathalie Hayes	Nathalie Hayes	Nathalie Hayes		Doina Rusu
5	Gavin Blake-Coggins	Paul Holbrook	Alexa Clarke	Kelly-Marie Blundell		Gavin Blake-Coggins
6	Glynn White	Anne Blake-Coggins	Kelly-Marie Blundell	Anne Blake-Coggins		Barbara Holbrook
7	Frankie Clarke	Jo Crittenden	Frankie Clarke	Paul Holbrook		Paul Holbrook

	Substitutes					
1	Paul Holbrook	Barbara Holbrook	Glynn White	Alexa Clarke	Anne Blake-Coggins	Alexa Clarke
2	Kelly-Marie Blundell	Doina Rusu	Barbara Holbrook	Barbara Holbrook	Colin Mitchell	Kelly-Marie Blundell
3	Nathalie Hayes	Steve Potts	Doina Rusu	Steve Potts	Chris Bryant	Chris Bryant
4	Chris Bryant	Mary Laxton	Steve Potts	Doina Rusu		Nathalie Hayes
5						
6						
7						

Total Posts (5X7)+3 = 38)*	38	% of Council	Committee Seats Per Group	Seats Occupied	Seats Left	Committee Seats per Group (with full 7 on NPC) = 42
Council Make Up	18 Seats	100.00%	38	37	1	
Liberal Democrat	9	50.00%	19	15	4	21
Conservative	4	22.22%	8	11	-3	9
M. Laxton	1	5.56%	2	2	0	2
K. Nicholls	1	5.56%	2	3	-1	2
C. Mitchell	1	5.56%	2	2	0	2
A-M Ricketts	1	5.56%	2	4	-2	2
D. Chapman	1	5.56%	2	0	2	2
	18	100.00%	38	37	1	42

*current Terms of Reference state committee memberships are 'seven, unless council resolves otherwise'. With full complement appointed to NPC this total = 42 (6 X 7)

Strategy Committee has recommended minimum appointment of three members to Neighbourhood Plan Committee until needed.

MEETING: **Hailsham Town Council**

DATE: **13 September 2023**

REPORT BY: **Terry Hall (Communications Officer)**

TITLE: **ADOPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND REVISED
MEDIA RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOLS**

1. PURPOSE:

To submit the Communications Strategy & Action Plan, Media Relations Protocol and Social Media Protocol for adoption.

2. INFORMATION:

Communications Strategy & Action Plan:2023-2027 (New policy document)

2.1 The new Communications Strategy & Action Plan sets out the aims and approach for how the Town Council should communicate with stakeholders, members of the public and the wider community.

2.2 Context: Communication is a vital part of running the Town Council and allows the organisation to both give out and receive information from a range of stakeholders that it regularly interacts with or is accountable to. Within the context of a local council, communicating to the public is intrinsic to the Town Council's function and purpose as a democratic body. Such communication should operate to professional standards and be consistent in terms of production, quality, relevance and frequency.

2.3 Accountability: The Town Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to share its projects, activities, decisions and actions to the public through various media channels. Additionally, all communication and public information will be conveyed in an open and transparent manner.

2.4 Methods and Actions: The Strategy highlights what has been achieved so far in terms of communications methods and what the Town Council will focus on over the next 4-year period.

Media Relations Protocol (Revised/updated policy document)

2.5 The revised/updated Media Relations Protocol has been drawn up to provide clear and consistent guidance to members and officers on how the Town Council communicates both effectively and impartially with the public via the press and other media.

2.6 Context: For the purpose of understanding the Media Relations Protocol, the term 'media relations' refers to media/press/news releases, press statements and press/media

enquiries specifically. Media releases are one of the key techniques for publicising Town Council activities, decisions and achievements.

2.7 Principles: All media relations activity should reflect the principles of confidentiality, data protection, freedom of information and copyright, in addition to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011, with reference to the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988.

Social Media Protocol (Revised/updated policy document)

2.8 The revised/updated Social Media Protocol aims to establish the principles of use of social media by members, officers and representatives of the Town Council.

2.9 Context: The Town Council currently manages pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms. The format and levels of interaction of social media vary greatly from one to another. Whenever Town Council representatives use social media platforms, they should familiarise themselves with the guidance that is set out in the protocol.

2.10 Principles: Social media pages can be used by the Town Council as an effective and measurable way to achieve engagement from the local community and attract publicity. The aim of this protocol is to ensure engagement with residents and community groups, and the promotion of Town Council-based services, facilities, events and activities through the use of social media.

3. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The policies have no resource implications and officer time is already accounted for with the management of communications activities.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:

Online and digital communication is preferred where possible as the method of communication with least environmental impact.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The Communications Strategy & Action Plan, Media Relations Protocol and Social Media Protocol support the Town Council's corporate plan, in terms of organisational effectiveness.

5.2 The Town Council will set out to explain what it is seeking to do (and why), and will listen to what local people have to say concerning their needs and aspirations.

5.3 The Town Council, its members and its staff will show respect to each other, to partner organisations and will support local people within its means to do so as a constructive partner.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Town Council is recommended to adopt the attached Communications Strategy & Action Plan, Member Officer Relations Protocol and Social Media Protocol.



Hailsham
TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

2023-2027

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Communications Strategy aims to establish a protocol and general objectives for effective communication of the Town Council's activities and other relevant information to members of the public.

The policy applies in conjunction with the Town Council's Media Relations Protocol and Social Media Protocol for Members and Staff.

1.1 CONTEXT

Communication is a vital part of running the Town Council and allows the organisation to both give out and receive information from a range of stakeholders that it regularly interacts with or is accountable to. Within the context of a local council, communicating to the public is intrinsic to the Town Council's function and purpose as a democratic body.

Such communication should operate to professional standards and be consistent in terms of production, quality, relevance and frequency.

1.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Town Council is accountable to members of the public and has a duty to share its projects, activities, decisions and actions to the public through various media channels. Additionally, all communication and public information will be conveyed in an open and transparent manner.

2.0 ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Council currently promotes its activities via various means/channels.

2.1 HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Digital and Telecommunications

- Websites

- Hailsham Town Council website: hailsham-tc.gov.uk

This is an easily accessible platform that covers most of the Town Council's operations, activities, documents, important dates/times and relevant contact information. The website is updated regularly and, although it serves for the provision of information and one-way communication, a facility exists for the public to comment on all pages (via an approval/checking process).

- Subsidiary websites: hailshamyouthservice.org / hailshamstreetmarket.org / jameswestcommunitycentre.org / hailshamneighbourhoodplan.co.uk

Additional websites providing further information on some of the Town Council's activities. A requirement exists for regular updating of the Hailsham Youth Service website due to frequent activity programme changes. The Hailsham Street Market, James West Community Centre and Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan websites require only occasional updating.

- *E-mail*
 - Members of staff and town councillors are accessible via e-mail to discuss issues or obtain information about a policy or service. Email is a two-way channel allowing for direct interaction with the public and are accessed/viewed daily.
- *Telephone*
 - Members of staff and town councillors are accessible either via landline or mobile phone to raise an issue, discuss specific services or request information. Again, this is a two-way channel allowing for direct communication with the public.
 - The office switchboard telephone number is available to town councillors and the public during office hours (9am-4pm, Monday to Friday - except bank holidays and an out-of-hours emergency (mobile) contact number is available for the public to report damage or necessary repairs to Town Council-maintained property. The emergency number is advertised on the Town Council website, noticeboards and social media pages.

Social Media

- *facebook.com/hailsham.towncouncil.3 / twitter.com/HailshamTC*
 - Our social media channels are easily accessible platforms which promote much of the Town Council's operations, services, facilities, activities, documents, important dates/times and relevant contact information to the public, as well as Town Council and community events, emergency public information and mayoral engagements.
 - Our social media pages are updated as frequently as necessary. Both serve as two-way communication channels allowing for direct interaction with the public, the opportunity for the public to post their opinions, like or share posts and the facility to direct message.

Printed Publications

- *Town Council Residents' Newsletter (Our Hailsham)*
 - 'Our Hailsham', which is currently published three times a year (February, June and October), includes articles of interest to residents such as information on the Town Council's activities, service updates, upcoming community projects and town events. It is currently distributed to a small number of public outlets for display/collection by residents, as opposed to being delivered to households in the town as was the case in previous years.

- Residents can access the newsletter online as a downloadable Portable Document Format file via the Hailsham Town Council website and social media page links. Readers are invited to subscribe to receive a link to the latest newsletter as and when it is published.
- The newsletter is a one-way channel that provides information to all residents, whether they have access to the internet or not, and has the broadest scope of all communication channels.
- Whilst the newsletter is published three times a year, the collection of information occurs continuously.
- *Partner Authority/Stakeholder Newsletters*
 - Where requests are made for information from Hailsham Town Council
- *Parish/Town Notice Boards*
 - These are located at various locations in Hailsham and contain relevant information, such as public notices of meetings and consultations, local events, office hours and town councillor contact information.
- *Leaflets, posters and marketing materials*
 - The Town Council endeavours to distribute and/or publish posters, public notices, leaflets and other marketing/promotional material to advertise its activities, services, facilities, projects and events. Printed copies are placed in the Town Council noticeboards and digital versions published online via the Town Council's website and social media pages or partner premises.

Weekly Local Media and Newspapers

- *'Hailsham Herald', 'Sussex Express' (and other weeklies where applicable)*
 - Weekly print publications that also have daily articles on their website ('Sussex World' - sussexexpress.co.uk), covering news items throughout the town, district and county.
 - Media/press release are regularly sent to local newspapers to promote the Town Council's services, facilities, new and ongoing projects, activities, event and public meetings/democracy.
 - Journalists or other printed publication representatives may contact the Town Council to cover a developing story/news item.

Monthly/Other Local Media and News Publications

- *Hailsham News, Hailsham Eye*
 - The Town Council also publishes articles, advertisements and other promotional items in 'Hailsham News' (printed monthly, in addition to the Hailsham News website and social media page) and Hailsham Eye (formerly Wealden Eye) which also covers Town Council activities.

Local/Regional TV and Radio

- *Hailsham FM, BBC Radio Sussex, BBC Southeast Today, Meridian Tonight*
 - The Town Council participates in interviews on the radio to promote its activities, in particular local community radio station 'Hailsham FM' but also other BBC Radio Sussex on more salient issues or news items of region/countywide appeal. Coverage on local TV news outlets occurs occasionally, predominantly relating to larger-scale community events and environmental projects.

Face to Face

- *Exhibitions and Public Engagement Events*
 - Often linked with consultations below, an exhibition allows the Town Council to present ideas and proposals to interested members of the public and partners/stakeholders who attend the event. Members of the Town Council and staff are available to provide information and answer questions from the public.
 - Exhibitions and public engagement events are two-way channels that allow for direct communication with the public and responses provided in person.
 - Such events take place on an ad hoc basis and are generally infrequent.
- *Public Speaking at Meetings*
 - During the first part of all Full Council and Committee meetings, members of the public, stakeholders and elected members of local authorities can raise matters to the Town Council and are invited to address members during the 15 minutes set aside for this purpose.
 - Members of the public are welcome to stay for the duration of a meeting after the public session as observers but will not be able to join in the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the Council or Committee. The public and press/media may be excluded by a resolution of the meeting for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence (e.g. tenders for contracts, staffing matters, some legal issues).
 - Full Council and Committee meetings are two-way channels that allow for direct communication with the public and responses provided in person.
- *Surveys and Polls*
 - Surveys are conducted to get a broad opinion of public or user group opinion on a myriad of issues, including their experiences, concerns or issues relating to the Town Council's reputation. All data collected then potentially forms the basis of policy creation and action plans to ensure the proper running, functioning and overall efficiency of the Town Council.
 - Surveys are a one-way channel that allows participants to provide information to the Town Council.
 - Surveys (including snapshot polls), although held infrequently, help considerably in terms of formulating documents, action plans and strategies.

- *Public Consultations*

- Often held in conjunction with an exhibition or public engagement event, consultations allow for the public, partners and stakeholders to provide their opinions, view, ideas and proposals to the Town Council on a specific issue under consideration. Additionally, such practices can help to support one or more grant funding proposals.
- Public consultations are one-way channels that allow those consulted to provide information to the Town Council.
- Consultations, although held infrequently, help formulate policy or provide evidence of community support for a development project or grant funding application.

- *Town Council Reception, Information and Enquiries*

The Town Council continues to house its resident and visitor information point situated in the front reception. Visitors to the town and residents have one-stop pick-up point for all enquiries and a wide range of locally produced leaflets, brochures and other information is readily available.

The reception/public information point is staffed to offer free help and advice for day visitors and group travel organisers on nearby attractions, accommodation and events in the locality.

Free information is also available to residents on local facilities and council services, community safety, general consumer advice and public transport - including timetables for local buses.

- *Hailsham Town Council Annual Report*

Every year, the Town Council produces an annual report which describes its activities over the preceding 12 months. The document is circulated to residents at the Annual Town Electors' Meeting and posted on the Town Council website.

2.2 WHAT WE COMMUNICATE

One of the communication principles of this document is the requirement of relevant information for the public and partners. Relevancy is determined by the needs of specific stakeholders and information they may need to receive from us could include:

- *The Public and Local Groups*

- Parish Council office opening hours and closures.
- Staff changes and recruitment opportunities.
- How the Town Council operates.
- Hailsham parish information/data.
- Town Council financial documents, such as completion of an audit.
- Full Council and Committee meeting times and dates.
- Full Council and Committee meeting agendas and minutes.
- Data Transparency documents.
- Financial regulations, standing orders and various policy documents.

- Local events of interest to the public.
 - Who to contact about certain services the Town Council provides.
 - How to submit feedback, such as raising an issue or complaint.
 - Contact information of Town Council staff and elected members.
 - The roles and powers of newly enacted Town Council decisions.
 - Policy proposals.
 - Information on accessing and using Town Council services.
 - Costs of using services where applicable.
 - How to access and apply for grants from the Town Council.
- *Partner Councils and Organisations*
 - Newly enacted Town Council decisions.
 - Changes to Town Council services.
 - Contact information for the Town Council office and council members.
 - Legally required notifications, e.g. Building Control Plans following a project.
- *Local and Regional Media*
 - Media releases of interesting and informative topics/stories.
 - Advertise local community events.
 - Interact with journalists on a breaking story affecting Hailsham.

2.3 WHO WE COMMUNICATE WITH

A stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has an interest in the workings and/or success of the Town Council - or can be partly or wholly affected by the organisation's policies, actions and objectives. The Town Council works with several employees, individuals, partner organisations, businesses and local community groups to achieve its vision for the town and its environs. Stakeholders include:

- *Internal Stakeholders*
 - Hailsham Town Council office staff.
 - Hailsham Town Council outdoor/works staff.
 - Hailsham Youth Service staff.
 - Hailsham Post Office staff.
 - Hailsham Town Council retained staff, e.g. Water Bailiffs.
 - Hailsham Town Council elected or co-opted members.
- *External Stakeholders*
 - Residents who live in the parish of Hailsham.
 - People or organisations that use the Town Council's services.
 - Non-resident users of the cemetery and other Town Council-maintained property such as play areas, outdoor seating, rubbish bins, etc.
 - Visitors to Hailsham.
 - Emergency services.
 - Schools in Hailsham.
 - Users of the Town Council's community halls and meeting rooms.
 - Local community groups and voluntary associations in the town.
 - Residents' associations.

- County, District and other local parish councils.
- Constituency Member of Parliament.
- Business suppliers and the business community in Hailsham.
- Local and regional media.
- External funders that have provided funds.
- External scrutineers.
- Wealden District Association of Local Councils.
- Hailsham Aspires Board.
- Cuckmere Buses Stakeholder Group.
- Environment Hailsham Board.
- Wealden & District Citizens' Advice Bureau Board.
- Hailsham Active (formerly Hailsham & District Sports Alliance).
- Wealden Dementia Action Alliance.
- Movement and Access Strategy for Hailsham & Hellingly Steering Group.
- Hailsham Community Safety Action Group.
- Police & Crime Commissioner Liaison Focus Group.
- Save The DGH Campaign Group.

2.4 COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNANCE

Day to day Information arising from within Town Council, such as changes to office hours/closures, staff changes, advertising of meetings/cancellations, policy announcements, town and community events, etc, can be approved and uploaded at the discretion of the Town Clerk and/or Communications Officer.

Where news items cover the activities of a particular Committee, any information, including media releases and newsletter items will need the additional approval of the Chair of the relevant Committee (or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair). The same applies to any other town councillor, member of staff or stakeholder who has a quote attributed to them in any media item.

The Town Council has adopted a separate Media Relations Protocol, which provides more details regarding communications governance procedures.

However, a general outline is included in the table below.

METHOD:	CARRIED OUT BY:	CONTENT APPROVED BY:
Media releases	Communications Officer	Town Clerk, relevant Committee Chair (if applicable) and anyone who has a quote attributed to them
Social media	Communications Officer	Communications Officer
Websites	Communications Officer	Communications Officer
Public engagement/consultation events	Town councillors, Town Clerk, Communications Officer and stakeholders	All relevant stakeholders
Promotional literature	Communications Officer	Town Clerk and relevant Committee Chair (if applicable)

Residents' newsletter	Communications Officer	Town Clerk, Chair of Council and Vice-Chair of Council
Public information signage	Various staff members	Town Clerk and relevant Committee Chair and/or Chair and Vice-Chair of Council (if applicable)
Events and displays	Various staff members	All stakeholders
Radio/TV interviews	Town councillors	Town Clerk and/or Communications Officer

2.5 COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY

It is now a requirement for all websites containing the .gov.uk suffix to provide reasonable adjustments and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This involves making the website accessible for people with a range of disabilities, such as with visual impairments.

The Hailsham Town Council website and subsidiary websites provide reasonable accessibility for users and audits should be carried out by an external body every 4-5 years to ensure that any requirements or necessary updates are fulfilled. The next website(s) accessibility audit will be undertaken in 2024/2025.

A full Accessibility Statement is available to download from the Hailsham Town Council website: hailsham-tc.gov.uk/legal-information/accessibility/

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN: 2023-2027

The above section outlines the Town Council's approach to communication with internal and external stakeholders, which is a crucial part of achieving the Town Council's objectives of transparency and accountability.

Communication should be clear and disseminate relevant information to the public, with the aim of informing residents and maintaining the reputation of the Town Council.

This strategy will look at how the Town Council can develop its communications over the course of the next 4 years.

3.1 VISION FOR 2023-2027

Our vision is that the people of Hailsham have a clear understanding of the Town Council's priorities, operations and activities - and that they recognise the Town Council as a reputable and forward-looking council, aiming to promote the town of Hailsham as a good place to live, work and visit.

3.2 COMMITMENTS FOR 2023-2027

We will achieve the above vision by communicating with the public we serve, the people we employ and the local authorities, community groups, voluntary organisations and businesses that we work with. This will be achieved by regular two-way communication with relevant stakeholders.

3.2 PRINCIPLES FOR 2023-2027

All Town Council communications should be consistent and uphold good standards of writing, production and dissemination. This reflects the culture at the Town Council and the aims and aspirations it has. Communication should encourage and enable a two-way flow of information, which involves acknowledging stakeholders' views and in turn, informing them of ours.

All communications should:

- Be lawful.
- Be objective and even-handed.
- Clear and concise.
- Be cost-effective.
- Have regard to equality and diversity.
- Be accurate at the time of production, with updates and corrections made where errors have occurred.
- Deliver key messages relating primarily to council matters, but also those of our partners where applicable.
- Be accessible to all.
- Be timed appropriately.
- Be monitored periodically to gauge what is or is not successful.

3.4 COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2023-2025

Some improvements to communications should be carried out over the course of the next four years and additional objectives set out for effective communication of the Town Council's activities and other relevant information to members of the public. These include:

- *Production of Quarterly Communications Data Output Reports*

The Communications Officer should produce a quarterly report listing the subject, dates and media output for news items published during each period, in addition to information regarding social media performance (data readily available via Facebook's 'Professional Dashboard'). The report will be fed into any relevant strategic plan documents produced by the Town Council.

- *Installation of External Hard-Standing Communications*

The Town Council should, over the course of the next 4 years, produce and install a series of exterior entrance/informational signage on additional Town Council-maintained sites across the town, to effectively promote the Town Council's facilities,

parks and open spaces and in turn make residents more aware of the Town Council's responsibilities.

- *Installation of additional public noticeboards*

The Town Council currently has public noticeboards in Vicarage Field, at the south entrance to Hailsham Country Park, inside the foyer at the James West Community Centre and at the front of the Town Council office building.

However, there is a need for additional noticeboards to be installed on other areas of Town Council-maintained land. Further noticeboards across the town are essential to maximise outdoor communications and further promote relevant information on Town Council facilities, services and events, in addition to public notices of meetings and consultations and town councillor contact information.

3.5 SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

This Communications Strategy aims to establish a protocol and general objectives for effective communication of the Town Council's activities and other relevant information to members of the public.

Throughout the course of the current administration (2023-2027), the Town Council will continue to provide effective communications to the public as outlined in this document and will fulfil the communications improvement requirements and objectives as included in Section 3.4 of this document.

3.6 CONTACT INFORMATION

Town Clerk: John Harrison 01323 841702 / john.harrison@hailsham-tc.gov.uk
Communications Officer: Terry Hall 01323 841702 / terry.hall@hailsham-tc.gov.uk



MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This protocol has been drawn up to provide clear and consistent guidance to Council Members and Officers on how the Council communicates effectively and impartially with the public via the press/media.

1.1 PURPOSE

The Media Relations Protocol supports the work of the Town Council to increase public awareness of its services provided and the functions it performs; to allow local people to have a real and informed say about issues that affect them; to explain the reasons to electors and council tax payers for particular policies and priorities; and in general to improve local accountability.

1.2 CONTEXT

For the purpose of understanding the Media Relations Protocol, the term 'media relations' refers to media/press/news releases, press statements and press/media enquiries.

Media releases are one of the key techniques for publicising Town Council activities, decisions and achievements.

1.3 PRINCIPLES

All media relations activity should reflect the principles of confidentiality, data protection, freedom of information and copyright, in addition to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011, with reference to the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988.

- The overriding principle of this protocol is that all elements of the media will be treated equally.
- It is important that all Members and Officers who might contact the media understand the implications of the Media Relations Protocol. The Council's code explains this within a local context. Without proper co-ordination it would be difficult to ensure that the media releases and public communication messages issued by the Town Council are consistent and accurate.

2.0 RESPONDING TO MEDIA ENQUIRIES

- **2.1** The Town Council respects the press/media's role in delivering information to the public and responses will be given in recognition of deadlines, which are crucial to effective media relations.
- **2.2** The press/media are very important in conveying information to the community, so the Town Council must maintain positive, constructive media relations at all times.

- **2.3** The press/media work on behalf of the local community to hold the Town Council to account for its policies and actions, and it is therefore important that they have access to Officers and Members (and to background information to help them in this role).
- **2.4** Requests for interviews, information or photographs from the press/media should be referred initially to the Communications Officer and Town Clerk (or Deputy Town Clerk if absent). Any response will be collated in conjunction with the Town Clerk (or Deputy Town Clerk) and Communications Officer.
- **2.5** Where possible, responses will be given by the relevant Committee Chair (or in their absence, Committee Vice-Chair).
- **2.6** All responses will be signed off/approved by the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk) prior to transmission to the press/media.
- **2.7** The Town Council recognises that Members have private lives and may be approached directly by the press/media in relation to their roles outside of the Council. In this instance, Members should make it clear they are not commenting as an elected Member or on behalf of the Town Council and that the views given are their own and not necessarily those of the Town Council or its subsidiary structures.
- **2.8** Requests to take photographs of Members or Officers in relation to Town Council business must be agreed by the individual and in the case of staff, by the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk).
- **2.9** There is no out-of-hours media relations service, although Members can be contacted outside of normal office hours as their contact details are available in the public domain.
- **2.10** The Council is open and accountable and should always explain if there is a reason why it cannot answer a specific enquiry from the press/media.

3.0 MEDIA RELEASES: PRINCIPLES

- **3.1** In addition to responding to requests from the press/media, the Town Council will proactively issue media releases and distribute them to the relevant press/media outlets.
- **3.2** Media releases will be fair, honest, informed, balanced, accurate and non-party political.

- **3.3** Media releases must “not be a prejudiced, unreasoning or political attack on the policies or proposals in question or on those putting them forward.” They must not criticise another part of the Town Council or other local authorities or organisations, but may question, query or scrutinise.
- **3.4** Media releases issued in the name of the Town Council will not persuade members of the public to hold a particular view, political or otherwise. Media releases must reflect the Town Council's stated policy and not views of groups of members.
- **3.5** Officers and Members have a responsibility to identify newsworthy items and proactively seek opportunities where it may be beneficial to issue a news release.

4.0 MEDIA RELEASES: PROACTIVITY

- **4.1** The Communications Officer is encouraged to think about the activities and services provided by the Town Council, how it can achieve effective publicity and to proactively promote news items/stories. This relates to possible news items/stories that can be used in newsletter articles, on social media and in feature articles, as well as media releases issued by the Town Council.
- **4.2** The Town Council may proactively issue media releases in a range of circumstances and in conjunction with other agencies. For example:
 - To inform about a decision by the Town Council or one of its committees.
 - To publicise changes to one or more Town Council services.
 - To promote a Town Council or community event.
 - To publicise a campaign or raise awareness of a topic of local interest.
 - To disseminate good news for Hailsham.
 - To publicise the Town Council's good practice.
 - To raise Hailsham's profile in support of the Town Council's core objectives.
 - To announce an appointment on the Town Council or an upcoming election.
 - To promote the activities of the Town Mayor, including civic engagements.
- **4.3** The content of proactive media releases is drawn up in consultation with relevant officers to ensure factual accuracy.

5.0 PUBLICITY REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS

- **5.1** Requests by Members for media releases to be drafted and issued can be made at any time to help the Town Council maintain a strong identity with residents and to communicate good stories. Occasionally, Members ask for media releases to be drafted and issued to publicise issues or events in the ward or relevant to the Committee in which they sit, which accord with council policy. In such circumstances, requests for news releases for planned campaigns and projects must be passed on by the said Member to the relevant Town Council committee for approval at the next formal meeting of that Committee.
- **5.2** Once a request for the drafting and issuing of a media release has been presented to and approved by the relevant committee, Communications Officer will begin producing the media release as early as possible thereafter.

6.0 MEDIA RELEASES: GOVERNANCE

- **6.1** The content of all media releases should be shared with and approved by the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk) prior to distribution to the local press and media.
- **6.2** Media release drafts should also be sent to the appropriate Committee Chair with responsibility for the issue concerned (if applicable) for approval prior to distribution of the media release to the press/media. Additionally, any (other) person who has a quote attributed to them in any media release should be approached for approval of their quote (if drafted by the Communications Officer).
- **6.3** Preparation and approval of Town Council media releases is a priority for Officers and Members. Where possible, media releases should be drafted and circulated for approval in advance of a newsworthy event, activity or committee meeting.
- **6.4** News stories and announcements are often time-sensitive, with many needing to be sent out promptly to meet media deadlines. In these instances, if the Communications Officer has attempted contacting any Member quoted in and/or who is Chair of the Committee relevant to the subject nature of the media release for approval, but a response hasn't been received, the quote will be attributed to the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk) and the media release will be issued to the press/media as approved without further delay.

7.0 MEDIA RELEASES: ELECTIONS

- **7.1** In the period between the notice of an election and the election itself (purdah), the Town Council is subject to rules which impact on how it can communicate with the public. Prior to local elections, media releases will not contain a quote from any Member. In these circumstances, where a quote is required, the relevant Officer may be quoted. Once a general election is declared a comparable embargo applies.
- **7.2** During an election period, Town Council media releases should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals or recommendations in a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members. This ensures that no individual Member gains an unfair advantage by appearing in official publicity.

8.0 MEDIA RELEASES: DISTRIBUTION

- **8.1** Media releases will be transmitted either by email to the relevant press/media outlets or submitted by other means online after approval.
- **8.2** Media releases will also be posted on the Town Council website and social media pages as early as possible after transmission to the press/media.
- **8.3** Members with certain responsibilities for or interest in subject areas will be canvassed annually or on a pre-determined regular basis for their requirements in respect of the public communications (media releases) they wish to receive as a matter of routine.

9.0 ACCURACY AND NEGATIVE ISSUES

- **9.1** From time to time, the Town Council will need to respond to negative issues. It is important that these situations are managed carefully to limit the potential for unconstructive, harmful or negative publicity. Members and Officers must alert the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk) as soon as a potentially negative issue which may attract press/media interest comes to light. They should not wait until contact is made by the press/media.
- **9.2** Officers must be prepared to work together with Members to prepare holding statements, media releases or other information and carry out research even if no press/media have contacted the Town Council about an issue.

- **9.3** Should the press/media publish or broadcast something inaccurate about the Town Council or its services, a quick decision needs to be taken on any action necessary to correct it. The issue should be discussed with the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town clerk) to decide what action is appropriate. This could be a personal letter to the editor(s), media release, discussion with the relevant journalist or - in mitigating circumstances - legal advice.
- **9.4** It should be noted that in the case of minor inaccuracies which have little or no impact on the message being conveyed, it can sometimes be counter-productive to object or make a complaint. Each case must of course be judged individually.
- **9.5** Occasionally the Town Council will make errors and get something wrong. In such cases, damage limitation is important.

10.0 INFORMATION EMBARGOES

- **10.1** Embargoed media releases are issued when the Town Council doesn't want the details published before a particular event. This can be done by simply including the word 'Embargo' at the top of the media release and the inclusion of the phrase "Not for publication prior to XX/XX/XXXX [date]." Generally, most journalists and media representatives will respect this - unless a request is considered unreasonable.



SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL

1.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This protocol aims to establish the principles of use of social media by Town Council Members, Officers and representatives of the Town Council.

2.0 SOCIAL MEDIA: PRINCIPLES

2.1 'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online platforms which allow users to interact with each other in some way - that is, by sharing information, opinions, activities and interests. Examples of social media websites include social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook), micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Twitter), professional networking websites (e.g. LinkedIn), photo sharing websites (e.g. Instagram) and video sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube).

2.2 The format and levels of interaction of social media vary greatly from one to another. Whenever Town Council representatives use such websites, they should familiarise themselves with the guidance that is set out in this protocol.

2.3 It is important that social media websites are used effectively as part of a wider communications mix and that their use does not expose the Town Council to security risks or reputational damage. Social media offers great potential for building relationships and improving the communication of services and facilities that the Town Council provides.

2.4 This protocol will clearly set out how social media can be managed effectively and how any risks or pitfalls can be avoided or mitigated.

3.0 SOCIAL MEDIA: OBJECTIVES

3.1 Social media pages can be used by the Town Council as an effective and measurable way to achieve engagement from the local community and attract publicity. The aim of this protocol is to ensure:

- Engagement with residents and community groups and promotion of Town Council-based services, facilities, events and activities through the use of social media
- A consistent approach is established and maintained in the use of social media pages.
- That the Town Council's reputation is upheld and enhanced rather than adversely affected.
- That communication by use of social media is timely, appropriate, useful and engages with the local community.

- Social media activity should not be the sole means of communication of Town Council services, facilities, activities and events, but a means to effectively be implemented as part of the general communications mix, which includes the issuing of media releases, website news articles, newsletter content, advertising promotion and other forms of publicity material. Any planned and approved campaigns or activities can be further enhanced by using of social media platforms, to increase reach and exposure.

4.0 SOCIAL MEDIA: ACCOUNTS

4.1 Currently, the Town Council uses the following social media websites to communicate its services, facilities, activities, meetings and events:

- Facebook (individual pages for Hailsham Town Council, Hailsham Youth Service and Hailsham Street Market)
- Twitter (individual pages for Hailsham Town Council and Hailsham Youth Service).
- Instagram (individual page for Hailsham Youth Service)
The Council may look to expand its use of social media platforms in the future.

5.0 SOCIAL MEDIA: USES

5.1 Social media pages may be used to:

- Distribute Town Council and committee meeting agendas.
- Promote Town Council services and facilities.
- Advertise Town Council activities and events.
- Publish good news stories which are of interest to the local community.
- Promote any staff or member vacancies.
- Publicise public consultation documents and/or engagement events.
- Promote the activities of the Town Mayor and mayoral engagements.
- Share or retweet information from partner agencies such as local authorities and emergency services.
- Post or share information from local community groups and voluntary organisations.
- Refer resident enquiries to the Town Clerk or relevant Officer or Member where required.

6.0 SOCIAL MEDIA: POLICY/PROTOCOL

6.1 Guidance for Officers on the use of Town Council social media pages:

- Officers should be familiar with the terms of use on third party websites (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) and adhere to these at all times.
- No information should be published on social media that is not already known to be in the public domain, i.e. available to view on the Town Council's website, contained in public minutes of meetings, stated in Town Council publicised policies and procedures, publicly available on third party websites or hard copy published material, or approved by the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk).
- Information that is published on social media should be factual and fair.
- Do not publish anything on social media that would be regarded in the workplace as unacceptable.
- Officers using Town Council social media accounts should bear in mind that they will be seen as ambassadors for the Town Council and should always act in a responsible and socially aware manner.

6.2 Guidance for Members on the use of Town Council social media pages:

- Members should take into consideration whether they are acting in a private capacity and as a private individual, or whether any impression might be conveyed that they are acting for and on behalf of the Town Council. In all cases, at such times where members contribute to discussion on social media posts issued by the Town Council, or where you use your personal social media accounts in your official capacity as a councillor, you should always be mindful of the principles applicable to holding public office – integrity, objectivity, accountability, professionalism, honesty and openness.
- **When representing the Town Council on social media, Members SHOULD:**
 - Be vigilant and look out for defamatory, discriminatory, abusive or obscene posts or comments from others on the Town Council's social media pages and report them immediately to the Town Clerk (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk).
 - Be aware that, because of your public profile as a Town Council member, you could be regarded as acting in an official capacity when you post any content on Town Council social media pages or personal social media accounts. Therefore, you should ensure that any comments posted on behalf of the Town Council are appropriate and information in such comments or posts is correct.
 - Be careful if making points which could be deemed 'political' on Town Council social media pages or personal social media accounts, and avoid

being specific or personal about individuals, including other Town Council members.

- **When representing the Town Council on social media, Members *SHOULD NOT*:**
 - Bring the Town Council into disrepute.
 - Reveal any confidential or potentially sensitive information about the Town Council that you may have accessed in your capacity as a councillor.
 - Include contact details or photographs of service users or Town Council officers.
 - Post offensive comments about the Town Council or its Members and Officers, in addition to colleagues, representatives of partner agencies or members of the public.
 - Upload, publish or forward links on the Town Council's social media pages to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, derogatory or defamatory content. Any Council Member or Officer who feel that they have been intimidated, bullied or harassed, or are offended by material posted or uploaded should inform the Town Clerk immediately (or if absent, the Deputy Town Clerk).
 - Escalate heated discussions and should, alternatively, attempt to be conciliatory, respectful and state facts to calm the situation and correct any misrepresentations.
 - Discuss colleagues without their prior approval.
 - Discuss topics that may be inflammatory, e.g. politics and religion. Town Council members should be mindful that, although it is acceptable to make political points or canvass votes via Town Council Members' personal social media accounts, this will not be permissible if commenting on behalf of the Town Council.

7.0 RULES & GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC

7.1 The Town Council has published rules and guidance for members of the public using the Town Council's social media pages. The rules and guidance are available to view on the Town Council website and 'About' information section on its Facebook page, and are as follows:

7.2 Replying and responding to messages and comments:

- Our social media accounts are generally monitored during office hours (9am-4pm, Monday to Friday), except on public holidays.
- If your query is urgent or involves personal details, please contact us using an alternative method.

- We will endeavour to answer simple queries as quickly as possible on social media. However, if the matter of concern is intricate or requires a detailed response, you may be directed to a relevant officer or department to discuss the matter further or asked to submit a Freedom of Information request.
- Our aim is to respond to as many questions on our social media posts as we can, but this is not always possible and sometimes we can miss posts, questions or comments.
- Please feel free to talk to your local councillor about local matters too.

7.3 Moderation and behaviour:

- We will not tolerate offensive or abusive language or images on our social media channels and will remove any such comments or images.
- Please do not post any comments that are unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually explicit or discriminatory in any way. We will remove any statement or comment that we consider could be fall into any of the above categories and may report them to the relevant platform administrators.
- Do not 'troll', i.e. create conflict on our social media sites by posting comments or statements that are particularly controversial or inflammatory, extraneous or off-topic, with the intent of provoking a response from other social media users or disrupting normal, on-topic discussion. Any such comments may be removed.
- Do not bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation using our social media pages.
- Do not post content copied from elsewhere without consent from the original author, i.e. content for which you do not own the copyright.
- Do not post the same comment, message or statement (or very similar messages) repeatedly. Any such comments may be removed.
- Do not advertise products or services on our social media pages. Any such advertisements will be removed.

7.4 Blocking and breach of rules:

- If we block your account from one or more of our social media pages, this will probably be because you have breached our rules and guidelines concerning appropriate commenting, or you have followed or liked our social media pages solely to promote products or services.

7.5 Sharing and retweeting:

- We try our best to share or retweet information that we think will be of relevance or interest to our followers, or of use to people, businesses and organisations in the Hailsham area. However, please do not be offended if we do not share or retweet something you ask us to.
- Please remember that, while we may like or follow an individual or organisation and retweet or share their posts/information, it does not necessarily mean that we endorse them.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOL

The Town Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of its Social Media Protocol.

The Town Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for amendments and updates, so as to minimise risks to the operation of the Town Council.

All Council Members and Officers should ensure that they take the time to read and understand this policy. Any violation of this policy or questions regarding its content or application should be directed to the Town Clerk.

Report to: Hailsham Town Council

Date: 13 September 2022

By: K. Giddings

Title of Report: PLAN FOR FESTIVITIES AND EVENTS 2023

Costed Plan for Festivities and Events for 2024

Bunting

Bunting will be put up at the beginning of May, and taken down at the end of September, after the Hailsham Festival week.

Bunting (to include put up and take down of bunting and any new bunting required)
£1500

Licence for Cherry picker for bunting £250
ESCC licence for bunting £180
TOTAL £1930

1k, 5k, 10k Run – May 2024

The Hailsham Run organised by Sports Systems will take place on May 21st 2024
HTC funding will contribute to the organisational elements required for the event
This Run was held in 2023 and was very popular and well attended

Sponsorship £5000

The sponsorship will pay for: Medals, Toilets, Publicity, Licences and an element of Sports Systems planning costs

Bonfire Event

The Bonfire Society held a Fun Day in May 2023 on Western Road Recreation Ground and are organising a similar event again on the Recreation Ground, on Sunday 30th June
Sponsorship: £3300

The sponsorship will pay for:

£350 Posters/fliers and banners for promotion
£600 singer/bands (singer £200, band £400)
£800 Toilet hire
£700 First aid
£850 security/stage costs

Stand Proud

This is a new event, with the aim of recognising and celebrating diversity and equality in the community. A day of activities will be held at the HMI Club in Western Road from 1.00 pm to 11.30 pm

The requested sponsorship will pay for:

3 Acts Prizes for children (book vouchers) 2 Rainbow flags 2 Banners Rainbow Trophy for shop competition

Sponsorship: £1000

Reception/Town Activities

Kaylee Butcher has organised a variety of fun activities and competitions in the Town such as an Easter bunny themed hunt, Halloween hunt and Christmas competitions for children, and she is building on this over the year. Kaylee also creates “themes” in reception and decorates the window. The cost will cover for prizes and decorations and costs for printing

Amount: £200

Remembrance Sunday

4 x 4 vehicles for road closure £150

1066 Marching Band £250

Wooden crosses £100

Total: £500

Hailsham Festival

Singers £275

Dancers £125

Children’s arts and crafts £160

Contribution towards £250 licence fee (Wealden council) £190

Sponsorship: £750

Summer Events

There are a number of summer events arranged for 2024, such as the Run in May, the Bonfire Society Fun Day event in June, the 999 Day (to be confirmed) and the “Stand Proud” event in June as well as a possible second “Streets of Wealden” event in March

Due to this, it is proposed the Town Council does not hold a summer market, but instead puts the funding aside to support the 10k Run, Stand Proud event, Hailsham Festival and the Bonfire Fun Day. This will keep costs down as the funding is not required for an additional summer event organised by the Council

Christmas Events 2024

Christmas Market 2024

It is planned to hold a Christmas Market in 2024 with local stalls, the Rotary’s Father Christmas, carol singing and live music, and again working alongside the Farmers’ Market.

The event will be held from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm

A “Best Dressed Elf” competition, Best Dressed Dog competition and “Find the Elf” Competition will be organised in the Town

Christmas Light Switch on 2024

The Christmas light switch on will be held on the last Friday in November. Local shops will be encouraged to open late.

The Rotary’s Father Christmas will be in attendance, along with Hailsham FM, the Lions selling candy floss, and carol singing **from Hailsham Community College and their Primary School pupils**

Local street market traders will also be in attendance

Christmas switch on/late night shopping event	
ESCC licence for festoons	£165
Sweets for Father Christmas	£60
Advertising	£500
Wealden Licence for Vicarage Field	£250
TENS	£25
TOTAL	£1000
Christmas market	
St Johns Ambulance	£180
Live band	£450
Santa gifts	£60
Licence for Cherry Picker for Christmas lights	£250
Advertising	£500
TENS	£25
Prizes for Best Dressed Elf competition	£100
WDC Licence for Vicarage Field	£250
TOTAL	£1815

HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF THE AUDIT AND RIGHT TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023 AS PUBLISHED ALONGSIDE THIS NOTICE

Section 14 of the Audit Commission Act 1998

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/817)

The audit of accounts by PKF Littlejohn LLP of 1 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4HD for Hailsham Town Council for the year ending 31st March 2023 has been concluded.

In their opinion the Annual Return presents fairly the financial position of Hailsham Town Council at 31st March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended and in their opinion the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern.

The Annual Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the Parish of Hailsham on application to Mrs. Michelle Webber, Responsible Finance Officer at the Town Council Offices, Market Square, Hailsham from Monday to Friday between the hours of 09.00 am and 4.00 pm when any local government elector may make copies of the Annual Return.

Copies will be provided to any local government elector on payment of £5 for each copy of the Annual Return.

This announcement is made by Michelle Webber, Responsible Finance Officer on 9th August 2023.

Michelle Webber
Responsible Finance Officer
9th August 2023

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		*Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

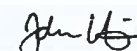
17/05/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

HTC/AM/23/115

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman 

Clerk 

www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,291,262	1,123,606	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,146,274	1,252,856	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	177,494	857,898	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	700,117	792,279	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	791,307	748,974	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,123,606	1,693,107	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,097,440	1,657,248	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,676,459	2,740,631	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

M. Webb

Date

10/05/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

17/05/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

HTC/AM/23/117

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Hailsham Town Council – ES0044

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

 SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

05/08/2023