



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held at the Hailsham Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane on Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 7.00pm.

HTC/23/
01/129 **Present:** Councillors: A Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, K-M Blundell, C. Bryant, A Clarke, F Clarke, B. Holbrook, P.S. Holbrook, M. Laxton, C. Mitchell, K. Nicholls, S, Potts, A M Ricketts, D Rusu and G White.

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

Officers in Attendance

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

131 The Chairman explained that he proposed to change the order of business to enable officers from Wealden District Council to leave the meeting earlier.

Confidential Business

132 **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded during the discussion on the next item on the agenda – Hailsham Health and Wellbeing Hub – as concerns: The beginning of legal proceedings and terms of tenders for contracts or negotiations (in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders Number 1E).

Hailsham Health & Wellbeing Hub

133.1 The Chairman introduced Kristina Shaw-Hamilton, Gill Cameron-Waller, Kyle Simpson and Shane Carroll from Wealden District Council. They updated the meeting on the latest plans for a Health and Wellbeing Hub in Hailsham.

They had applied on two previous occasions for funds from the national Levelling Up programme but had been unsuccessful. They were applying again and asked for a letter of support from Hailsham Town Council.

Members asked questions and it was confirmed that a Changing Places hub would be included in the design.

The Chairman thanked the WDC officers for attending.

133.2 **RESOLVED** to note the presentation from Wealden District Council and to defer the decision on writing a letter of support to the next meeting of Hailsham Town Council.

Public Question Time

134 No members of the public wished to speak.

Apologies for Absence

135

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Councillors Crittenden and Hayes.

136 **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

Confirmation of Minutes

137.1 Councillor Laxton said that she had one amendment. Under the Public Forum item in the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th May, a member of the public had complained about the lack of grass cutting in the town. She wanted this included in the minutes.

137.2 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 17th May 2023, as amended be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

137.3 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the extraordinary Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held on 22nd May 2023, as amended be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

139 **Chairman's Update**

The Chairman updated the meeting on events he had attended since the last meeting.

He asked the Vice Chairman to read out letters of thanks received from organisations that had received a £100 grant from the Chairman's unspent allowance.

The Chairman stated that interviews for staff at the Post Office would be starting soon.

140 **East Sussex County Council Update**

County Councillors Fox and Murphy had provided written reports, which had been circulated to members with the agenda.

Committee Recommendations to Council

141.1 **Assets Management Committee – 28 June 2023 – Adult Gym**

At the meeting of the Assets Management Committee held on 28th June it was resolved to recommend to Council to allocate up to £30,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the repair and replacement of the adult gym equipment at the Western Road Recreation Ground. The contract would be advertised on the Government Procurement Gateway.

141.2 **RESOLVED** to allocate up to £30,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the repair and replacement of the adult gym equipment at the Western Road Recreation Ground. The contract would be advertised on the Government Procurement Gateway. The Assets Management Committee would make the final decision on the successful tender.

Motion 181 – Urban Grass Cutting

- 142.1 The following motion was put to Council by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Laxton.

That the Clerk be charged with obtaining suitable quotations without delay, for two additional grass cuts to be carried out in this financial year after ESCC's first cut scheduled for 20th July 2023 and timed to fit in with ESCC's scheduled second cut on 12th October 2023, sat mid-August and mid-September. Specification to be cut, trim and blow as ESCC's own specification. The Clerk to be given authority to approve the most suitable quotation to implement the work, to best serve the safety and aesthetics of the town and its residents.

- 142.2 **RESOLVED** to allocate £2,500 for each cut from Commuted Sums for two extra grass cuts for 2023.

Motion 182 – Road Repairs

- 143.1 The following motion was put to Council by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Bryant.

Following the recent Motion passed by Wealden District Council calling on East Sussex County Council to address problems with potholes across the district and the pledge made by WDC to lobby ESCC, Hailsham Town Council should pass a similar motion to ensure East Sussex County Council gives full consideration to the parlous state of Hailsham's roads.

The Chair and Town Clerk should write to East Sussex County Council to express our complete dissatisfaction with the level of management exercised by their Highways Department regarding road maintenance in and around Hailsham. This has resulted in far too many roads that can only be navigated by traffic weaving around potholes and this is becoming dangerous for motorists and other road users. It is noticeable that visitors to Hailsham comment on the exceptionally appalling condition of our roads and the appalling state of those repairs that have been carried out to date.

Far too frequently repairs have only been performed on partial areas of damage requiring repeat future visits to finish the job. These partial repairs often deteriorate rapidly increasing the future workload and the attendant cost.

ESCC should be invited to send Highways Department representatives to the next Town Council meeting to explain their plan of action and to give assurances that repairs will be carried out before more damage will be suffered by our roads during the next winter season.

To assist Highways in prioritising their work schedule around Hailsham, we should provide a list of locations that require immediate attention and this list should be compiled following a review by Councillors of the roads in their wards. This information should be provided to the Town Clerk within the next week.

- 143.2 Councillor G Blake-Coggins said that whilst in favour of the motion, it was not feasible for councillors to review all the roads in their respective wards within a week.

- 143.3 The proposer of the motion accepted an amendment to allow for two weeks for the

necessary information to reach the Town Clerk.

- 143.4 **RESOLVED** that the Chairman and Town Clerk write to East Sussex County Council to express our complete dissatisfaction with the level of management exercised by their Highways Department regarding road maintenance in and around Hailsham. This has resulted in far too many roads that can only be navigated by traffic weaving around potholes, and this is becoming dangerous for motorists and other road users

East Sussex County Council should be invited to send Highways Department representatives to the next Town Council meeting to explain their plan of action and to give assurances that repairs will be carried out before more damage will be suffered by our roads during the next winter season.

To assist Highways in prioritising their work schedule around Hailsham, we should provide a list of locations that require immediate attention, and this list should be compiled following a review by Councillors of the roads in their wards. This information should be provided to the Town Clerk within the next two weeks.

Motion 183 – Review of Governance Structures

- 144.1 The following motion was put to Council by Councillor Blundell and seconded by Councillor G Blake-Coggins.

Council notes that the Council has been supported by the Town Clerk in organising Standing Orders, Terms of Reference for Committees and the Committees system.

Council recognises that the balance of power of the Council has changed since the elections in May 2023 and as such, a review into the Council governance structures is due.

Council therefore resolves to:

- *Establish a Governance Working Group with the objective of reviewing Committee Terms of Reference, the Committee System as employed by Hailsham Town Council and Standing Orders.*
- *Elect seven members of Council, to reflect the political balance of the council.*
- *The Working Group shall meet not less than once per month and report back to the Full Council at the earliest possible point.*

Councillor Bryant raised a point of order, has he had not been given the opportunity to speak before the vote on the motion had been called.

RESOLVED to:

- Establish a Governance Working Group with the objective of reviewing Committee Terms of Reference, the Committee System as employed by Hailsham Town Council and Standing Orders.
- Elect seven members of Council, to reflect the political balance of the

council.

- The Working Group shall meet not less than once per month and report back to the Full Council at the earliest possible point.

145 **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public are temporarily excluded during the discussion on agenda items 14, 15, 16 and 17 as they concern the terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts, terms and conditions of employment or are otherwise confidential information.

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

146 **Motion 184 – To suspend Standing Order 11**

RESOLVED to withdraw this motion.

Motion 185 – 2 North Street

147.1 The following motion was put to Council by Councillor Blundell and seconded by Councillor Blake-Coggins.

Council resolves to consider the motion proposed at the meeting of the Assets Committee on 28th June 2023 which was as follows:

We propose to renew the lease for the premises known as 2 North Street at the renewed rent of [redacted] including a two year break clause.

Councillor Blundell said she had been in contact with the Lion's Bookshop who may be interested in leasing 2 North Street as they had to vacate their current premises.

The Town Clerk was asked if this motion was in order as the Assets Committee had resolved to surrender 2 North Street when the lease terminated on 11th August 2023. The Town Clerk responded that he had taken advice from ESALC and had been advised that on balance, the motion was in order as there was some new information.

Councillors Mitchell and Laxton said that there was no firm offer from The Lion's Bookshop and, therefore, the resolution made at the Assets Committee to close the facility should stand.

Councillor Blundell said that she would be meeting with representatives of the Lion's Bookshop the following week.

147.2 **RESOLVED** to defer a decision on this matter to an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held before 11th August when further information on the possible new tenants would be available.

Motion 186 – First Fields

148.1 The following motion was put to Council by Councillor Blundell and seconded by Councillor G Blake-Coggins.

Council notes that First Fields, London Road has been vacant for some time and

that the joint owners East Sussex County Council and SeacAmbs have put this property up for sale.

Council recognises the community value of the property as a resource for medical care which could provide more space and capacity for our growing town.

Council recognises the need for larger and better premises for activities run by the Council including youth activities and administration of the Town Council.

Council notes that First Fields has adequate parking, an array of rooms and facilities and could be fashioned into a purpose for the Town Council and Hailsham, either as a building for medical care or as an administration hub.

Council notes that the Assets Committee which met on Wednesday 28th June 2023 resolved to recommend the Council nominate First Fields as an Asset of Community Value.

Council notes that as an Asset of Community Value, the local community will have a period of 6 months in which to secure funds to purchase the site.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Recommend the site is nominated as an Asset of Community Value*
- Make this recommendation to Wealden District Council at the earliest opportunity.*
- Refer this motion to the Assets Committee to explore the possibility of purchasing the site and the feasibility of using this site for a variety of Town Council purposes.*

148.2 Councillor Mitchell said that he wanted to add a caveat about the future costs if this site was purchased by Hailsham Town Council, but that he was in favour of the motion.

148.3 **RESOLVED** to:

- Recommend the site is nominated as an Asset of Community Value
- Make this recommendation to Wealden District Council at the earliest opportunity.
- Refer this motion to the Assets Committee to explore the possibility of purchasing the site and the feasibility of using this site for a variety of Town Council purposes.

Hellingly and Hailsham Closer Working Group

149.1 Councillor Bryant declared an interest as he lives in Hellingly.

149.2 The Town Clerk said that there had been a joint working group made up of councillors and officers of Hellingly Parish Council and Hailsham Town Council. At

the last meeting of the working group both councils would ask their newly elected respective councils if they wished to continue with the meetings towards a closer working relationship.

- 149.3 **RESOLVED** to continue with the Hailsham and Hellingly Closer Working Group and that Hailsham Town Council's membership should be Councillors Blundell, Bryant, G Blake-Coggins and Laxton.

On a show of hands this motion was carried by 7 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.33 pm.

CHAIRMAN

Global/Minutes and Agendas/ DS/ Minutes 12.07.23