Hailsham Town Council
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Town Clerk: John Harrison

HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Strategy Committee,
held at the Fleur-De-Lys Meeting Room, Market Street, Hailsham
On Monday 28th July 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

StC/25/03/01 **Public Forum**
None presented

02 **Present:** Cllrs; C. Bryant (Chair), P. Holbrook, M. Laxton, C. Mitchell, K. Nicholls, A-M Ricketts, G. White

03 **Officers Present:** J. Harrison (Town Clerk)

04 **Apologies For Absence:** received and accepted from Cllrs K-M Blundell-Smith and D. Chapman.

05 **Declarations of Interest:**
None given

06 **Confirmation of Minutes**
RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on Monday the 27th January 2025 as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.

07 **Progress against the Town Council's Strategic Plan**
J. Harrison explained that a lot of the plan is now out of date as anew plan was being worked on. For that reason, there were not many entries with regard to Assets Management targets, as priorities had changed over the life of the plan and into the new plan.

The committee received and noted the report on progress against the plan and J. Harrison highlighted areas of the report by exception, as follows:

07.01 **Specialist Markets**
VE Day event went really well, the road closure supported by HBS was a massive help the entertainment fitted the event well. Sussex Day being the first this year went well, it was well attended considering it was the hottest day of the year will look at expanding this for next years event trying to have a more 'Sussexy vibe'.

07.02 **Hailsham Market**
HTS is currently in the middle of a trial during July and August in the council yard. The first two markets were not successful the first one due to planning concerns and the second the traders decided the space wasn't for them and left before the market started. The next market on 1st August currently has seven traders booked in.

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Cllr Holbrook raised questions about the Hailsham Street Market – they would be free for the next two markets to trial. Issues had been discussed during the planning for the trial markets at the Communities Committee.

Cllr Nicholls stated that it would be very helpful for the Communities Committee to have access to more detailed data about running costs and measures of success such as attendance, to allow the committee to be more conclusive about the value of the market and other market events.

Any such report should be considered by the Communities Committee in the first instance as they have authority to draw up the costed plan for events but should also be fed into the Finance and Governance Committee for budget considerations. The Costed Programme of events Report does not include costs for staff time etc. For some events the council can expect to make a 'loss' in terms of time and costings, such as the Christmas Lights switch on.

A previous report commissioned by the Sub-committee had looked into costs for events, but it was felt that this could be an ongoing report that would help the council's decision making.

07.03 **Assets Management**

The HTC Facilities and Operations Manager had given a separate update at the last Assets Management committee on all of the major ongoing projects and developments.

- Public Toilets on Vicarage Field – doors have now arrived and currently waiting for an installation date.
- Skate Park extension has been completed.
- A few remaining issues with the Fleur-De-Lys: the gates are now installed, CCTV is installed inside. Outside of the building to be considered – remaining budget should cover the costs.
- Maurice Thornton Gate – now have quotes in and waiting for start date.
- Bus stop in Vicarage Field has now been installed.
- Union Corner Hall toilets - currently waiting for a quote.
- Grounds Maintenance tender has been published.
- Common Pond Paths are due to be finished.
- Battle Road fence and now the Harold Avenue allotment gates due to be started.

07.04 **James West Community Centre Hall and Land**

Council has resolved to adopt the land according to suggested offer from TW, with a three-month deadline and WDC have been advised of this. This is therefore pending receipt of Land Transfer and S106 documents.

07.05 **Youth Services**

The Station continues to attract good numbers of Young People and is running sessions five days a week. On Monday HYC hosts The Lounge and Fusion, Tuesday and Thursday sees 'the underground' drop in sessions afternoon and evening, Wednesday HYC hosts On-Track Hailsham and Friday afternoon is a drop-in session with either FNP or The Network in the evening.

Hailsham Youth Service has been visited 1960 times by young people in this period, the numbers continuing to increase through this quarter

The 'Amber Mark' Project continues to run, seeking to support the SVD work in the area and working to gather and share young people's views. HYS has been invited to contribute to the 'Safer Hailsham' project being run by Wealden police and met to discuss this.

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HYS has been working with East Sussex Youth Work provision to plan and deliver a conference for youth workers in March.

Safeguarding meetings with Hailsham Community College take place every term and have been a good opportunity to share information, concerns, build relationship and share professional expertise. New opportunities are always being sought to expand networks.

Cllr Bryant noted that since HTC has 'moved' oversight of HYS activities form the from Assets Management to the Communities committee, we have not had quarterly reports as HYS management staff have not been able to attend.

J. Harrison to raise with HYS Management staff and ask for representative to attend Communities meeting to give detail on the HYC Activities.

The Committee discussed the detail of data in the report and clarity needed to confirm the period of the data covered. The Operation of the Manse would need to be covered in the be Strategic Plan.

07.06 **Corporate Services**

The Council's SMT is working to help 'bed-in' the new Mayoralty team, surgeries to be begun very soon.

Appraisal, Supervision and Training Development Policy approved by Staffing Committee 10.07.2025. Now pending final approval by Finance and Governance Committee and to be implemented Autumn 2025.

Line management meetings with Town Clerk arranged and informal appraisal meeting held.

07.07 From the Autumn 2025 edition onwards, the newsletter will be produced in-house and no longer mass-printed and distributed to public collection points. Printed copies will be run off in-house at the request of members of the public, incurring a nominal charge per page. The newsletter will still be available to download online, and the newsletter subscriber list will continue to operate.

07.08 **Post Office**
Banking Hub operational in temporary location since March 2025. May look to extend temporary arrangements while permanent solution is sought by Cash Access UK Ltd. Banking Hub processes fully embedded into PO operations. A meeting with Cash Access to discuss the implications of that is currently being arranged.

07.09 **Neighbourhood Plan**
Revised NHP and Design Code completed and adopted by HTC. Submitted to WDC for checks - feedback received from WDC advising of some changes. Have received feedback and suggested changes form WDC, to be addressed at the next NHP Committee meeting.

8. **Confidential Business**
RESOLVED that the press and public are excluded during the discussion on the next item of the agenda as it concerns employment issues and the terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts, or are otherwise confidential information.to go into confidential business.

9. **Progress against the Town Council's Strategic Plan (Confidential Items)**

Outcomes had been agreed including SLA's to be drawn up in areas of shared services. The Local Government re-organisation agenda would have an obvious effect on any future planning for collaborative working.

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The question of the capacity of Hailsham cemetery was raised. J. Harrison advised he would like to be able to assess this more carefully. The only viable option for 'expansion' would be to have a shared arrangement with Hellingly Parish. The land around Hailsham cemetery had been taken up be developments in recent years.

The joint committee was continuing to work with the consultants on other aspects. Again, the project needed to be mindful of the potential effect of devolution. Parish and Town Councils need to be ready to adapt to any changes emerging.

10 **Maintenance Plan**

HTC Operations and Facilities Manager, T. Lee, was still working on a more detailed maintenance plan and putting figures together to bring to finance with future projected costings. The draft plan has been previously presented to the council. This will hopefully be ready for the October Assets Management meeting and feed into the budget setting process.

11 **Strategic Plan**

Cllr Mitchell had noted that a lot of aspects in the current Strategic Plan should be carried over into the new plan, even though a lot of it was also now out of date.

The committee had been presented with the draft plan so far, although there was still some work to do on completing it.

11.1 Outstanding parts to be completed:

Delivering effective external Communications: To be worked up by J. Harrison, E. Hastings and T. Hall.

Post Office – to be discussed in more detail at next Post office committee meeting.

Youth Service – to be discussed at meeting with A. Joyes (HYS Manager), J. Cottingham (Deputy Manager).

Devolution & Local Government Re-organisation – there is a need to work out how best to reflect that in the plan without full knowledge of what it entails. The Devolution Working Group (Cllrs Chris Bryant, Barry Carpenter and Paul Holbrook) will report back to the Strategy Committee, and therefore should be an agenda item for the next and future meetings.

J. Harrison to ensure a report from the Devolution Working Group is added as a Standing Item for future Strategy Committee meetings

The committee discussed and agreed that HTC needs to be 'ready' and as aware as possible of what may come from the devolution and Local Government Re-organisation agenda. HTC is in a strong position as we have several 'dual hatted' District and Town Council members who could be invited to the Working Group meetings to share what they do know.

It was agreed that these issues need to be integrated into the new HTC Strategic Plan as much as possible. Some communication by WDC on the LGR agenda has been held via WDALC and the Wealden Clerks meetings.

Events and Partnership Working – to be put on the agenda for future Communities Committee meetings.

11.2 **Neighbourhood Plan** - as above for future Neighbourhood Plan committee meetings.

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Hope to have completed the plan by October.

11.3 Cllr Laxton raised questions and issues; - at the 'Visioning Day', council had discussed the council's legal representation and looking into whether a framework agreement for legal advice and work can be put into place.

11.4 The committee also discussed whether there was now a need for qualified Human Resource support in the staff structure. The committee felt that the lack of directly engaged support and expertise in this field could put the council at risk as the workforce had grown so much over the recent years.

11.5 The committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to council that a part-time qualified Human Resource Professional/Manager is built into the Town Council's Staffing Structure (for 16 Hrs per week), subject to budget being available.

11.6 The committee also discussed the HTC position on providing support for Hailsham Forward. This has previously been discussed by the Communities Committee, and the resolution had been made to maintain support, as Hailsham Forward was in the process of transitioning to 'Wealden Forward', with an expanded remit, and had discussed reducing the staffing burden on HTC.

The committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Communities Committee that it reconsiders this matter, and that HTC no longer offers Hailsham Forward administrative support, but maintains a role on the relevant committees to ensure the town council is represented.

11.7 The committee noted that there was still some considerable work to do to complete the Strategic Plan and also that an element of public consultation should be built into the process.

12 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.13pm

CHAIRMAN

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