

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 15th May 2006 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. J Harmer (Town Mayor), Mrs C Berry, G. Carter, Mrs E Coleman, M Cunningham, M Fitzgerald, G Gibbs, Mrs D Joy, R Martin, Mrs M Piper, Mrs I Scarborough, Mrs J Voyce, T Voyce and B Winn.

PCSO Hollister and Neighbourhood Specialists PC Liz Keenan

4 members of the public

1 member of the press

7158 Election of Town Mayor

Cllr. Harmer called for nominations for Town Mayor. Cllr. Mrs Scarborough proposed that Cllr. Carter be elected for the ensuing year. This was seconded by Cllr. Martin and there being no other nominations, it was resolved unanimously to elect Cllr. Carter as Town Mayor.

Cllr. Harmer said that he had enjoyed his time as Mayor and thanked members of the Council and staff for their support over the last two years.

7159 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Town Mayor read out and signed his declaration of acceptance of office of Town Mayor which was countersigned by the Assistant Town Clerk.

The Mayor then asked Council if they were prepared to accept an additional item on the agenda (planters at junction A22/A27). As opinion was divided a vote then ensued as follows:

In favour of accepting an additional item 9

Against 5

The Mayor then advised that this item would be included under item 26 of the agenda.

7160 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Mrs Morson and County Cllr. Watkins

7161 Declarations of interest

Cllr. Barber declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 26(d) matters arising from Town Meeting

Cllr. Cunningham declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 26(d) matters arising from Town Meeting

Cllr. Harmer declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 26(d) matters arising from Town Meeting

Cllr. Winn declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 31(a) property matters

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 31(a) property matters

Cllr. Mrs Coleman declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 31(a) property matters

Cllr. Mrs Piper declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 31(a) property matters

7162 Election of Deputy Town Mayor

The Town Mayor called for nominations for the office of Deputy Town Mayor. Cllr. Harmer proposed that Cllr. Mrs Piper be elected to this office. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Mrs Joy and, there being no further nominations, was unanimously agreed.

Cllr. Mrs Piper then indicated her acceptance of office, thanked members and staff for their support over the past year and said that she looked forward to working with the new Mayor.

7163 Introduction of Neighbourhood Specialists PC Liz Keenan

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Scarborough and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow PCSO Hollister and PC Keenan to speak.

Standing Orders Suspended

PCSO Hollister introduced his colleague PC Liz Keenan who said that she was pleased to have the opportunity to meet councillors and gave a brief run down of her position within the Police. She had been serving for the past 7 years working as a PC in Eastbourne and Hailsham mainly responding to 999 calls. She was now operating as a Neighbourhood Specialist which is a newly created role designed to work in tandem with the PCSOs covering Polegate, Willingdon, Hailsham and East Dean. The role was to address local issues and to give help and advice to the community and asked if councillors had any questions they would like to raise.

The problem of taxis parking at the bottom of Gilda Crescent was raised. It was explained that this was becoming a dangerous practise especially since there had recently been a collision between a hearse and a highways lorry purely because of the amount of taxis parked.

PCSO said that he would investigate and make it clear to the taxi company that action would be taken against illegal and inconsiderate parking.

The Mayor thanked PCSO Hollister and PC Keenan for their input and reinstated Standing Orders

Standing Orders reinstated

7164 Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 10th April 2006

The minutes, having been previously circulated, were 'taken as read', confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

7165 Matters arising from the minutes

a). minute no. 7124(b) Kombi Line Marker – members were advised that WAFC were very pleased to accept the Council's offer and would work hard to ensure that things ran smoothly during next season. It was also clarified that owing to the increase in match fees for 2006/2007, the cost to WAFC per match would be £12.50 not £11.00 as previously advised – noted.

b). access onto Council owned land – now completed, appropriate letters having been sent to the residents concerned – noted.

c). first aid course – the Assistant Town Clerk advised that the first aid course was first class and that all attendees were now certificated. Certificates being valid for 3 years – noted.

d). civic service – confirmed as 28th May at 10.30 a.m. – noted.

e). **fencing alongside railway A27** – the fencing had been in a poor state for some time and was a potential hazard. It has been temporarily repaired with stakes and string. There has been some dispute as to whether the land belonged to ESCC or the Highways Agency but that had now been resolved and the Highways Agency had accepted responsibility for replacing the existing stakes with a more substantial mesh fence – noted.

f). **street lighting A22/A27 Cophall roundabout** – the lights have been out for some time in this location and the defect has now been tracked down to a feeder pillar which should be repaired within the next two weeks – noted.

7166 Appointment of members to Standing Committees, appointment of Chairpersons to Standing Committees, Appointment of Lead Councillors and appointment of the Accounts Panel

Cllrs. Mrs Voyce proposed, it was seconded by Cllr. Mrs Berry and resolved, that appointments be made as follows:

Planning Committee

Cllrs. Voyce (Chair), Barber, Mrs Berry, Fitzgerald, Gatrill, Gibbs, Harmer and Winn

Personnel Committee

Cllrs. Mrs Scarborough (Chair), Cunningham, Harmer, Martin, Mrs Voyce and T Voyce

Leisure Allotments & General Purposes Group

Cllrs. Mrs Scarborough (Lead Councillor Leisure) Gibbs (Lead Councillor Allotments) Gatrill, Mrs Joy, Martin, Mrs Morson, Mrs Piper, T Voyce and B Winn

Accounts Panel

Cllrs Cunningham (Lead Councillor Finance) and Martin

Police Liaison

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough

Buildings Working Group

Cllrs. Harmer (Leader), Fitzgerald (Deputy), Barber, Gatrill, Gibbs and Winn

Christmas Lights Working Group

Cllrs. Mrs Coleman (Leader), Carter, Mrs Joy, Mrs Morson and Martin

Website Working Group

Cllrs. Cunningham (Leader), Fitzgerald, Mrs Scarborough and Mrs Voyce

Youth Working Group

Cllrs. Martin (Leader), Mrs Morson (Deputy), Mrs Coleman, Cunningham, Gatrill, Mrs Joy and Mrs Scarborough

Quality Council Working Group & Newsletter Editorial

Cllrs. Mrs Berry (Leader), M Cunningham, G Gibbs and Mrs Joy

Parking Working Group

Cllrs. Barber (Leader), Cunningham, Gatrill, Martin and Winn

Note: the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor are members, ex-officio, of both Planning and Personnel committees.

7167 Appointment of Tree Warden

Mrs Lewis had previously indicated that she was prepared to continue in this role for the coming year but that the Council would need to find a willing person to take over from her next year.

The Mayor conveyed his thanks to Mrs Lewis for her hard work in this role and for agreeing to serve for the ensuing year.

7168 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Organisations

Cllr. Mrs Voyce proposed, it was seconded by Cllr. Gibbs and resolved to make appointments as follows:

Citizens Advice Bureau

Cllr. Harmer

Civil Protection

Cllrs. Martin and Gibbs

Children/Playgroups

Cllrs. Mrs Coleman and Mrs Morson

Community Association

Cllr. Mrs Coleman

Community Bus

Cllr. Mrs Joy

CPRE

Cllrs. Mrs Joy and Mrs Piper

Crime Prevention/Neighbourhood Watch

Cllrs. Gibb and Mrs Berry

Eastbourne Area Transport Forum

Cllrs. Martin, Barber and Cunningham

Polegate Partnership

Cllr. Mrs Voyce

Polegate School Governor

Cllr. Winn

Polegate Windmill

Cllr. Mrs Berry

South Wealden Assoc. Local Councils

Cllrs. Carter and Mrs Scarborough

Twinning Association

Cllr. Harmer

7169 Appointment of Internal Auditor

Members were advised that it was agreed with Mr Graham Parish when he accepted the position that it would be reviewed prior to each Annual Statutory Meeting and re-appointment confirmed at that meeting. It was therefore unanimously agreed to re-appoint Mr Graham Parish as Internal Auditor for the ensuing year on the same terms and conditions as previously agreed.

7170 Inspection of deeds and documents

Members were in receipt of a letter from the Council's solicitors listing the deeds and documents held on Council's behalf. A query was raised as to whether the office held copies of all these documents. Members were advised that it was believed copies of these documents were held in the office but that a check would be made to ensure this was the case.

It was then proposed by Cllr. Mrs Scarborough, seconded by Cllr. Carter and agreed by all that the Buildings Working Group (or a member of) should be responsible for a visual sight of the documents listed in the letter. This exercise to be carried out before the next Full Council meeting.

7171 Financial matters

a). accounts for payment – a query was raised as to why the flower beds along the Hailsham Road had been paid for by the Council. It was explained that in this instance the Council had acted as facilitator for the project which was actually carried out by the Polegate Partnership. The Partnership had repaid the Council from grant monies received. There being no other queries, the accounts were all approved for payment.

b). renewal of membership to WFVO – agreed

c). request for grant aid – Twinning Association – Cllr. Mrs Joy declared a prejudicial interest and Cllrs. Harmer and Martin declared a non-prejudicial interest. Considerable discussion took place on this item with the arguments for and against financial assistance being considered. It was pointed out that the Association was more than just a 'pals club' and constituted a link between this country and the continent. In addition the connection was important as grant aid and funding was available from the EC to assist with projects in Sussex.

An observation was made that the members' subscription was considerably less than the grant and begged the question as to whether consideration had been given to increasing the membership subscription. Members were then advised that in the past subscriptions had been collected on a lifetime basis and the Association did not generally feel justified in raising the subscription. There were currently 65 paying members and an additional 10 – 15 life members. Membership was open to anyone and new members were always welcome.

It was also commented that it would be nice to see the visitors being taken to more local places of interest rather than to Hastings and Wakefield Place. This is apparently because funding from Europe and various joint projects had been carried out in other locations in Sussex and there was therefore an expectation from the Appeners that a visit to these sites would be included.

Whilst the Twinning Association is a separate entity from the Council, in France and Germany a different policy prevailed where the two were interlinked. It is therefore difficult for the French and Germans to understand how Twinning works in this country. To resolve the matter the Mayor called for a vote as follows:

In favour of grant aid 3

Against 5

Therefore Council declined the request for grand aid on this occasion.

7172 Adoption of minutes of standing committees

Planning of 9th May 2006 - the Chair of Planning presented the minutes for perusal and, there being no matters raised, proposed that they be adopted. This was resolved unanimously.

The Chair then referred members to **minute nos. 7154 and 7156** and enquired whether any other councillors, in addition to the planning committee, would like to take part in the training session or join the working group for the South East Plan. The training option was taken up by Cllrs. Mrs Voyce and Martin and Cllrs. Cunningham, Mrs Joy and Mrs Voyce indicated their willingness to join the working group.

Personnel of 9th May 2006 – it was proposed by the Chair of Personnel that this item be taken into confidential session and that the minutes be taken as a draft copy. This was seconded by the Mayor and agreed by all.

7173 Reports from working groups and lead councillors

a) Christmas lights – members were presented with the report of the Christmas lights group which recommended that the Council remain with their existing supplier and detailed two options for consideration. Attention was also drawn to the notes which highlighted the pros and cons of the scheme to which members were requested to give careful consideration.

After some deliberation it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to adopt option B which included lamp post motifs, decoration of four trees, a transverse across the High Street and a bespoke motif to be located on the front of the Council office. This motif to be the prize for a competition to be run at Polegate School, the idea being that children who entered would design a Christmas motif and the winning design would be made up into a motif to be displayed on the front of the Council office. Cllrs. Mrs Coleman and Mrs Morson volunteered to organise and run the competition. The possibility of a transverse across the road to be investigated further and costs obtained from structural engineers.

It was further proposed, seconded, and agreed by all to invite the Polegate Partnership to investigate whether any grants might be available to provide additional items for the lighting scheme. It was also suggested that as the planters and hanging baskets had been cancelled this year the money saved could be diverted to bolster the Christmas lighting scheme as the provision of a transverse was an additional expense. This suggestion was generally agreed in principle.

- 7174 b) Website** – members were advised that the working group was looking at ways to make the site more accessible and that the link to Barkweb had been taken out – noted.

7175 Change of keypad and fobs for alarm system

Councillors were shown a sample of the type of fob now available and all agreed that the suggested changeover should go ahead with the purchase of the new keypad and 6no. fobs.

7176 Offer of land at Heron Ridge

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow the donor to speak.

Standing Orders Suspended

The owner of the land explained that the area involved, some 42m in length, had become a little too much for him to cope with. On one occasion when he was unable to mow the grass for a while it grew to some 3/4ft in height and became home to a lot of rubbish. Council was therefore being asked to please consider adopting this piece of land or arranging for it to be included in the mowing schedule.

The resident was then asked why he chose to approach the Council via Cllr. Shing instead of dealing directly with the Council to which he responded that he delivered a publication for Cllr. Shing and the subject came up in conversation. He did not realise that he could deal direct.

The Mayor thanked the resident for his input and reinstated Standing Orders

Standing Orders reinstated

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough declared a non-pecuniary interest.

Some discussion then ensued and it was pointed out that if the Council were to take over this piece of land which is in private ownership it could end up with any number of requests for adoption of other pieces of land thus setting an unacceptable precedent.

A question was also raised with regard to responsibility for the fencing which would soon be in need of repair.

At this point it was proposed that the matter be discussed in confidential session. The proposal was seconded and agreed by all.

7177 Request for additional street light in St. John's Road

Members were advised that the Council had previously looked at this request and it had been rejected. One of the reasons why it is dark in that particular area was that the light nearest the house in question was shielded by a tree and the tree is on private land. The lamp itself is an add-on, not a full lamp standard. One option could be to move the lamp and bracket along to the next telegraph pole. Alternatively an additional arm could be provided on the next pole.

It was then proposed that Council responds to the effect that this request has already been considered and rejected and that that decision still stands. This was seconded and generally agreed.

It was also pointed out that there is no lighting for the bungalows of Joan Hughes Court and if the area is to be lit for the elderly there should be more lighting on or near the bungalows rather than on the highway.

It was then proposed, seconded and agreed by all to write to the operators of Joan Hughes Court asking for an improvement to the lighting for residents.

7178 Tower Mill sheltered housing scheme

Members were informed that the decision to close this facility, demolish it and sell the land had come from the Scrutiny Committee. This would involve moving the tenants, 18 of them. This was considered to be unfair on the tenants some of whom had lived there for 30 years and are very happy in that community. The decision for closure was being put forward to Full Council and Cabinet at Wealden in June. It is apparently not possible to refurbish part of the facility and accommodate residents in the other half while works are in progress and then move them back. Attention was also drawn to the petition to keep Tower Mill open and it was proposed that the Council write to Wealden in support of retaining this facility.

It was then suggested that the way forward should be to ask Wealden Officers to come and speak with the Council before any resolution is made and to hear directly from them how the decision for closure was arrived at as there may well be additional information that we are not aware of.

The comment was then made that people could only form an opinion on the information available to them.

It was subsequently proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed by all that Wealden Officers be contacted and asked to come and speak with Council at a Special Council Meeting to be held before Cabinet meets.

7179 SLR meeting

Cancelled owing to insufficient agenda items.

7180 Polegate windmill update

Cllr. Harmer advised that he had attended the AGM and that prior to 1939 the windmill had been known as Willingdon windmill but for the last 66 years had been called the Polegate windmill. Windmill members wished to retain the Polegate name and had agreed to write to the Boundary Commission asking why they had not been consulted. There are currently 20 members.

7181 Communications from the outgoing Mayor

a) St. George's Day parade – was a great success.

b) opening of Treacle Mine and Somerfields – another success and the management were very keen to donate either, all or part of, the cost of a defibrillator and staff training. Somerfields was opened by the Deputy Mayor.

c & d) matters arising from Annual Meeting – Somerfields lighting – currently under review by Somerfields and WDC planning dept.

Youth Development Service – it is understood that the Manager has now returned from sick leave and it is hoped to arrange an early meeting to discuss progress. Example Service Level Agreements have been received.

Mention was made of the poor state of the 'Centre' and in particular the planters.

Cllr. Mrs Berry declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item.

The additional item agreed was then discussed, Cllrs. Harmer, Mrs Voyce and T Voyce having declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item.

A request had been received for permission to plant up the Council's planters at the A27 Lewes Road junction and to add additional planters to the display. The maintenance, watering, upkeep and provision of the additional planters would be the responsibility of the donor with no costs whatsoever to the Council. Traffic visibility would need to be considered and permission obtained from the Highways Agency. It was then proposed and seconded to accept the proposal and a vote took place as follows:

In favour

13 with one abstention

It was further agreed that a working group be formed of Cllrs. Harmer, Martin and Mrs Joy to agree detail and oversee the project.

The Mayor then informed members that he would be receiving a contingent of cyclists from France at 5.00 p.m. on Friday 26th May and asked those members who were available to come along and give their support.

There was some dismay that notice was very short and that few councillors would be able to attend and that the visit should have been better co-ordinated to fit in with the visitors from Appen who would be in Hastings on that day. It was proposed and seconded that the Mayor offer his apologies as he could not be available on that day and at such short notice. However the Mayor said that this was not an option as the arrangements had already been made and that with some additional help from the Residents Association he would be able to manage and thanked those councillors who had offered to assist him.

7182 Town Clerk's Report

a) cctv training – members were advised that the change over from video to digital recording at the Wannock Centre had now been completed and that images could be viewed from the office. The appropriate software had been installed and staff trained in its use.

b) bus shelters – installation scheduled for w/c 22nd May 2006

c) bridge over bypass – awaiting report from Highways Agency structural engineer regarding the feasibility of enclosing the bridge with mesh panels.

d) vandalism log – members were circulated with an updated log as there had been a recent upturn in vandalism to Council property. Oakleaf play area had had to be closed for this reason with spare parts for repair on urgent order. The incident had been reported to the police. The bench in the skatepark was also being removed on a regular basis and the Assistant Town Clerk had instructed the handyman to store it in the garage for the time being. The handyman to see if there was a more secure method that could be used for installation and if problems still arose to refer the matter to Council again.

7183 Correspondence

a) East Sussex Disability Association – thank you letter – noted

b) South Downs Conservation Board Annual Review 2004/2005 – available in the office – noted

c) Brighton University Annual Report 2005 – available in the office – noted

d) LCAS Health & Safety Seminar – it was agreed that the Assistant Town Clerk and one other councillor should attend

e) Changes to bus services – members were pleased to see that the Taxi Rider Service would not be affected

7184 Dates of next cycle of meetings

Full Council – it was proposed, seconded and resolved to discuss this item under confidential session.

Planning as and when necessary

7185 Resolution

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that owing to the confidential nature of the next business to be transacted the press and public be excluded from the rest of the meeting.

7186 Confidential matters

- a) Property matters
- b) Administrative matters
- c) Standards Board and members interests
- d) Personnel matters

