

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 15th May 2007 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. G Carter (Town Mayor), Mrs C Berry, Mrs J Bigsby, M Cunningham, J Harmer, Mrs D Joy, R Martin, Mrs M Piper, Mrs I Scarborough, Mrs J Voyce, T Voyce, T Wright.

1 member of the public

1 member of the press

7537 Election of Town Mayor

The outgoing Mayor called for nominations for Town Mayor for the forthcoming year. It was proposed that Cllr. Mrs Scarborough be elected to the position. This was seconded and there being no other nominations, it was resolved unanimously to elect Cllr. Mrs. Scarborough as Town Mayor. The outgoing Mayor thanked members of the Council and staff for their support during his period in office and congratulated all newly elected members.

7538 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office of Town Mayor which was countersigned by the Town Clerk. The Mayor asked Council if they were prepared to accept an additional item on the agenda (Polegate Grasshoppers training at Wannock Road recreation ground). It was proposed, seconded and agreed that this item would be included under item 23 of the agenda (Correspondence).

7539 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Barber, Rogers and Shing

7540 Declarations of interest

Cllr. Mrs J Voyce and Cllr. Voyce declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 7 (a) arising from the minutes of the previous meeting – 7520 - B2247 waiting restrictions

7541 Election of Deputy Town Mayor

The Town Mayor called for nominations for the office of Deputy Town Mayor. It was proposed that Cllr. Harmer be elected for the ensuing year. This was seconded and there being no other nominations, it was resolved unanimously to elect Cllr. Harmer as Deputy Town Mayor.

7542 Report back from the Annual Meeting of Electors

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak regarding this item.

Standing Orders Suspended

A member of the public addressed the Council and raised a number of issues relating to the recent Annual Town meeting which had been held on 23rd April 2007.

In particular the individual questioned why there had been a relatively low turn-out of Councillors at the meeting although it was accepted that this was probably due to the proximity of the local elections. The individual wondered why the meeting had been scheduled at this particular time when there were other issues demanding Councillors' attention. Would it be possible to schedule another Town Meeting so that more Councillors could attend?

The member of the public was asked to summarise the points that he wished to draw to Council's attention. There were three main issues:

- 1) The land owned by Network Rail adjacent to Blackpath – this area is not being properly cleaned and rubbish has begun to accumulate there
- 2) Money being spent on street lighting – The individual questioned the policy whereby individual parish and town councils contract for their own supplies of electricity and suggested that savings could be made if these arrangements were 'pooled' or simply handled centrally by the County Council. It was also suggested that time-switches and residual current devices were unnecessary and a waste of money and that the Council should do more in the area of energy conservation.
- 3) New housing developments in the Town – The individual suggested that in the past planning applications for developments in Polegate had been handled reactively rather than pro-actively with no clear strategy emerging for the Town's development.

The Mayor thanked the member of the public for his input and reinstated Standing Orders

Standing Orders reinstated

With regard to holding an additional Town Meeting members were advised that it is a legal requirement that the Annual Town Meeting should be held between 1 March and 1 June inclusive.

The Mayor proposed that to avoid a conflict in future election years the date of the Annual Town Meeting should be scheduled to take place towards the end of May. This suggestion was seconded and agreed and it was therefore resolved to move the date of the Annual Town Meeting towards the end of May in future years.

With regard to the fitting of residual current devices members were advised that this had been done under advice from the council's festive light installer. It was suggested that a definitive answer on this issue should be sought from County Council.

With regard to the rubbish on the land adjacent to Blackpath, it was noted that attempts to get Network Rail to clear this area had been made on several occasions in the past and despite the intervention of Mr Norman Baker MP the problem does not seem to feature prominently on Network Rail's agenda. Members were advised that following the Annual Town Meeting a letter had been sent to Network Rail's Community Relations Department drawing their attention to the rubbish and the poor state of repair of the boundary railings with appropriate photographs enclosed to highlight the problem.

With regard to new housing developments, members were advised that it was intended to circulate a questionnaire to all residents in Polegate in order to gauge local opinion with regard to the future of the town and any major developments.

The Mayor concluded that it would be helpful in future if members of the public could submit in writing any issues they wished to be considered by Council so that the relevant facts could be available at the appropriate meeting.

7543 Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 16th April 2007

Four queries were raised on the minutes previously circulated:

Minute 7511 c) street lighting maintenance charges 2007/2008 – A member asked whether any progress had been made in resolving the query over charges raised at the meeting. The Assistant Town Clerk replied that the information was still being collected.

Minute 7511 d) street lighting and maintenance inspection – remedial works – Cllr. Harmer declared a personal interest and enquired whether it would be possible to repair the broken street light in Sayerland Road now, rather than wait until the end of year figures are available.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the street light be repaired as soon as possible.

Minute 7513 Town Action Plan – A member enquired what progress had been made in forming a working party to complete the town action plan. Members were advised that this was very much a 'live' issue and would certainly go ahead.

Minute 7525 a) – Wannock Centre – This query was referred to the confidential section of the minutes

There being no other questions regarding the minutes they were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

7544 Matters arising from the minutes

Minute no. 7520 B2247 waiting restrictions meeting update – Cllr. Mrs Bigsby declared a personal interest. Members were given a short update on the recommendations that had been discussed at the recent meeting with representatives from the County Council and the Highways

Agency. Cllr. The latest proposals were explained and, in addition, the public consultation process that will be followed before any decisions are taken. A view was expressed that the lifting of parking restrictions may lead to an increased incidence of traffic speeding and suggested that some thought be given to the installation of a safety camera. It was also suggested that any decisions that involve this stretch of road should not be viewed in isolation, particularly in light of the major planning application for 260 houses to the east of Shepham Lane. Councillors noted that one of the biggest issues with Traffic Orders is the length of time taken for them to be implemented.

Minute no. 7522 (e) lease of land at Polegate CP School – fencing -

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough and Cllr. Martin declared a personal interest. Members were given an update with regard to the fencing. It had been agreed in principle that County Council would provide fencing to a height of 8ft. around the front of the site and to the side of Oakleaf Drive. There is also a possibility that the County Council might pay for some new gates although this has yet to be confirmed.

7545 Appointment of members to Standing Committees, appointment of Chairpersons to Standing Committees, Appointment of Lead Councillors and appointment of the Accounts Panel

It was proposed, seconded and resolved, that appointments be made as follows:

Planning Committee

Cllrs. Voyce (Chair), Barber, Mrs Berry, Carter, Mrs Piper, Rogers, Mrs Voyce and Wright

Personnel Committee

Cllrs. Rogers (Chair), Mrs Bigsby, Carter, Mrs Joy, Martin, Mrs Voyce and Wright

Leisure Allotments & General Purposes Group

Cllrs. Mrs Piper (Lead Councillor Leisure), Barber, Mrs Bigsby, Mrs Joy and Voyce

Accounts Panel

Cllrs Cunningham (Lead Councillor Finance) and Martin

Police Liaison

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough

Buildings Working Group

Cllrs. Barber (Leader), Carter, Martin, Voyce and Wright

Christmas Lights Working Group

Cllrs. Mrs Joy (Leader), Carter, Martin, Rogers and Wright

Youth Working Group

Cllrs. Mrs Bigsby (Leader), Cunningham, Mrs Joy, Martin and Shing

Quality Council Working Group, Newsletter Editorial and Website

Cllrs. Cunningham (Leader), Mrs Berry, Mrs Bigsby and Mrs Joy

Parking Working Group

Cllrs. Barber (Leader), Mrs Piper, Martin, Voyce and Wright

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

7546 Appointment of Tree Warden

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to confirm the appointment of Mr Doug Hammond as the Tree Warden to Polegate.

Mr Hammond will have his appointment confirmed in writing and will be invited to attend the next full meeting of Council on the 11th June.

7547 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Organisations

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to make appointments as follows:

Citizens Advice Bureau

Cllr. Harmer

Civil Protection

Cllrs. Cunningham and Martin

Children/Playgroups

Cllrs. Mrs Bigsby

Community Association

Cllr. Rogers

Community Bus

Cllr. Mrs Joy

Crime Prevention/Neighbourhood Watch

Cllrs. Mrs Berry and Mrs Bigsby

Eastbourne Area Transport Forum

Cllrs. Martin, Barber and Cunningham

Polegate School Governor

Cllr. Mrs Joy

Polegate Windmill

Cllr. Mrs Berry and Harmer

South Wealden Assoc. Local Councils

Cllrs. Carter and Mrs Scarborough

Twinning Association

Cllr. Mrs Joy

7548 Appointment of Internal Auditor

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to re-appoint Mr Graham Parish as Internal Auditor for the ensuing year on the same terms and conditions as previously agreed. The Mayor asked that Council's sincere thanks be passed to Mr Parish for all his hard work during the past year.

7549 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. Members were advised that copies of the relevant documents were held in the office and could be

inspected at any time. A question was raised regarding item 9 – Two agreements with Seeboard (EDF) re street lighting.

Members were advised that there were two separate agreements – one for the electricity supply and one for maintenance – to be confirmed at the next meeting of Council.

7550 Financial matters - accounts for payment –There being no queries, the accounts were approved for payment.

7551 Adoption of minutes of standing committees

Planning of 1st May 2007 - the Chair of Planning presented the minutes for perusal and, there being no matters raised, proposed that they be adopted. This was resolved unanimously.

7552 Adoption of Model Code of Conduct

The Town Clerk read aloud a proposal that Council should adopt a new Model Code of Conduct for Polegate Town Council pursuant to section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000, following the Standard Board's recent revision to the existing code. In response to a question from Cllr. Carter the Town Clerk explained that the new code incorporates two optional paragraphs that Wealden District Council's Legal Services Team has advised should be included. Paragraph (7) requires Council to give written reasons if they reach a decision that contravenes advice given by the authority's monitoring office and paragraph 12 (2) confirms that any councillor declaring a prejudicial interest has the right to make representations with regard to the item but must leave the chamber whilst the item is debated.

There being no further questions it was proposed, seconded and resolved to adopt the new Model Code of Conduct with immediate effect.

7553 New Councillor Training

New councillors had previously received details of training courses being organised by the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC). In response to a query raised by a councillor the town clerk agreed to investigate the various options for training and to report back.

7554 PCSO Surgery – request for facilities

Councillors considered a letter received from Sgt. Price of Sussex Police enquiring whether it would be possible for the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) to hold a regular 'surgery' at the council offices once a month.

After some debate it was proposed, seconded and agreed to offer the use of the Reg Shingleton Room on a trial basis for 6 months and to re-evaluate the service later in the year. It was agreed that there would be no charge for the hire for the room.

Cllr. Cunningham left the meeting at 08:41

7555 Town Clerk's Report

a) vandalism log – members were circulated with an updated log as there had been a recent upturn in vandalism to Council property. Following discussions regarding the recent damage to the garage roof at Wannock Road there was some debate as to the merits of replacing the existing roof with a pitched roof. It was decided to refer this to the Buildings Group to investigate the feasibility of the suggestion. Council then discussed various problems relating to damage within the pavilion itself, in particular the holes in the ceiling caused by snooker cues.

It was agreed that the Buildings Group would arrange a site visit to the pavilion to review the damage and to suggest ways to prevent further occurrences.

Members were advised that they could visit the youth club to familiarise themselves with the activities – the youth club is open between 19:00 and 21:00 each Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Mayor suggested that it would be beneficial to speak with the youth group leaders to try and resolve some of the issues; it was agreed to invite the leaders to a meeting with the youth working group.

b) others as appropriate for noting only – A newsletter from the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was circulated for information detailing dates at which evidence gathering meetings will be held in Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes.

7556 Correspondence

a) changes to bus services – Details of proposed changes to the bus services in Eastbourne and Wealden were noted.

A member asked for confirmation that the Taxi Rider service was still operating in the town. This was confirmed.

b) temporary road closure – A temporary road closure outside numbers 58-60 Dover Road for 5 days commencing 21st May 2007 was noted.

c) Smoke free Law – guidance document – New legislation concerning smoking in public places comes into effect from 1st July – the necessary changes will be made to bring all council properties in line with the law.

d) Polegate Grasshoppers use of Wannock Road recreation ground –

Council considered a request that Polegate Grasshoppers Under 11 team be allowed to train at Wannock Road recreation ground on Monday evenings. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to allow the team use of the facility for a fee of £5 per session.

7557 Dates of next cycle of meetings

Full Council – The date of the next Full meeting of the Council will be Monday 11th June 2007

Planning as and when necessary

7558 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.