

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 10th April 2006 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. J. Harmer (Town Mayor), S. Barber, Mrs C. Berry, G. Carter, M. Fitzgerald, K. Gatrill, G. Gibbs, Mrs D. Joy, R. Martin, Mrs V. Morson, Mrs M. Piper, Mrs I. Scarborough, Mrs J. Voyce, T. Voyce and B. Winn.

Press: 1 Public: 1

7120 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs E. Coleman and M. Cunningham.

7121 Additional agenda items. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to include three additional urgent items on the agenda as follows.

1. Acceptance and adoption of new financial regulations
2. Acceptance and adoption of base budget
3. Lease of Council office to tenant – it was further proposed, seconded and agreed by all to take this item into confidential section.

7122 Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

Item 4(d) – Access onto Council owned land – Cllrs. Mrs Voyce, T. Voyce and Mrs Scarborough (non prejudicial).

Item 4(i) – Sellwood Planning – Cllrs. Mrs Berry and Mrs Scarborough (non prejudicial)

Item 15(b) – Twinning Association – Cllr. Mrs Joy (non prejudicial)

7123 Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th March 2006. The minutes were presented for perusal and subsequent adoption.

Minute no: 7094 A query was raised as to whether any feedback had been received from the PCSO regarding the incident at Dittons (caller knocking door late at night requesting money). Members were advised that no information had been received to date.

Post meeting note: It was confirmed by the PCSO that he had been unable to unearth any information or trace a report of this incident.

Minute no: 7109 (b) A query was raised as to whether the letter requested by Council had been sent off. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that it had been sent by Recorded Delivery.

The minutes were then agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

7124 Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda – to receive an update on the position of the following:

a). It was confirmed that the **white edging of the steps in the Council Office car park** had been completed.

b). **Kombi spray line marker** – members were advised that Willingdon A.F.C. had offered to take on this task for the whole of the next season (2006 – 2007) using their own line marker and materials. However they would still like access to the Council's line marking machine for occasions when only patching was necessary. Members were agreed that this was the best option and gave consent for WAFC to use the Council's lining machine when required.

It was also proposed, seconded and agreed that to assist WAFC to meet the cost of materials the match fee would be reduced by half to £11.00 per match. This arrangement to be reviewed at the end of next season. The Assistant Town Clerk to advise WAFC accordingly.

c). Grass cutting contract – completed.

d). Access onto Council owned land – boundary letters – members were advised that this task necessitated visits to the recreation ground to identify which properties had an access before the letters could be written. A site visit had been made which needed to be followed up but owing to the current staffing provision it had not yet been possible to complete this task. However the letters would be sent as soon as possible.

e) Insurance cover – members were advised that a review of the Council's insurance had been carried out, that Cornhill (Aon) had submitted the most favourable renewal premium and had agreed to hold cover for 14 days. . Members were further advised that some of the insurance valuations on the existing policy needed to be reviewed and as a result fresh valuations on the Council's freehold properties had been carried out by a qualified surveyor. It was therefore proposed that for the general insurance the Council change the Council's insurance company to Cornhill (Aon) with effect from 1st April 2006. However, with regard to engineering works, i.e. playground and stairlift inspections, Zurich were still the best option at a cost of £614.36 per annum to provide quarterly inspections and an annual safety briefing for Town Clerks. ROSPA would charge £100.00 less but only provide two annual visits. It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to change the Council's insurance provider to Cornhill (Aon) for general cover but retain the engineering section of cover with Zurich. It was also agreed to approve the invoice for the Zurich premium as a matter of urgency under section 6.4 of Financial Regulations. It was then proposed, seconded and agreed by all that a vote of thanks to Cllr. Carter be recorded for the excellent job he had done on reviewing the insurance cover.

f) First Aid Course – it was reported that invitations to participate had been extended to both Hailsham TC and Willingdon & Jevington PC. Hailsham TC declined as they had just completed their own in-house training but the Clerk at W&JPC had reserved a place subject to confirmation of cost. The Assistant Town Clerk then asked members if they would like to decide a cost to participants and she could then extend the invitation to include other local Parish Councils. It was proposed and seconded to charge a fee of £25.00 per person and put to the vote as follows: 12 in favour, 2 against. Therefore the fee was set at £25.00 per person.

g) Civic Service – dates of 11th, 18th or 25th June had been proposed but confirmation was still awaited from St. John's Church.

h) Deal for Devolution – the Chair said he was disappointed that only 3 councillors had responded to this document. However, members said that the questions linked to the document were ill-defined and difficult to respond to and in most cases councillors were unable to formulate a reply.

i) Sellwood Planning Meeting – members were advised that the meeting had been arranged for Monday 8th May at 7.00 p.m., and that this was a presentation for councillors only.

7125 Report of the Tree Warden

There was nothing to report.

7126 Financial Matters

a) Petty Cash Account – the Assistant Town Clerk requested the Council to allow her name to be added as a signatory to the Petty Cash Account to allow access to funds for housekeeping purposes. It was clarified that only one signature would be needed on cheques to this account and therefore the request was for both the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk to be able to sign independently. This proposal was accepted and agreed.

b) Accounts for Payment – the payment to Zurich Insurance for the engineering section of the insurance cover was included for approval and accepted under section 6.4 of the financial regulations. All accounts were approved for payment with the exception of the CCTV upgrade as members were of the opinion that this work had not yet been carried out.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Police Authority pointing this out and advising that the account would not be paid until such time as the work was completed.

c) Subscriptions – all approved but it was agreed to write to SALC stating Council's opinion that the scale of fees was extortionate.

d) Request for Grant Aid – as it is Council policy to support local charities members declined the request for assistance from the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

e) IT Support for the Office – it was agreed to retain Julian Perrott as IT support to the office as required at a cost of £35.00 per hour and to upgrade the computers' memory at a cost of £195.00. However whilst recognising the need to replace McAfee with another more suitable anti-virus protection, members felt that the recommended programme should be downloaded from the internet free of charge rather than purchasing the same programme with no additional benefit and also incurring the cost of a licence. It was therefore agreed to download the programme with the option to review this decision should any problems arise.

f) New Financial Regulations – copies having been previously circulated it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to accept and adopt the new Financial Regulations and to send a copy to the Internal Auditor.

g) Base Budget 2006/2007 – copies were circulated. Some concern was expressed that although the base budget had been accepted at the budget meeting in January it had not been formally adopted as the Council's working budget for the year. There were however some amendments and recommendations and it was proposed, seconded and agreed to discuss these in confidential session.

7127 Adoption of minutes of Standing Committees

a) Planning Committee of 20th March and 4th April 2006 – the minutes were presented for perusal, and, there being no matters raised, adoption of the minutes was agreed by all.

7128 Communications from the Town Mayor

There were none.

7129 Reports from District/County Councillors

Report from Cllr. Shing previously circulated. Members expressed concern that some of the statements made in Cllr. Shing's report were misleading and sought to clarify some aspects of the report.

1. Taxi Rider Service - It is stated that the taxi rider service cannot be extended to Polegate and Willingdon. However this service has long been established in Polegate. With regard to Willingdon, currently the service does not extend past Gorringe Valley Road. It is understood that for various reasons the taxi operator was not inclined to extend the current service any further into Willingdon but negotiations were still on-going between ESCC and the taxi operator to try and reach an agreement.

2. Information regarding the free bus travel scheme was available from the County Council and the Town Council Office. It was confirmed that bus travel was free within both East and West Sussex. However if a journey began inside either County but extended past either County boundary before returning back into either County then it would be necessary to purchase a return ticket to obtain free travel. As long as a return ticket was purchased within either East or West Sussex then free travel applied. Free bus travel was not available before 9.30 p.m.

It was agreed to include this information as an item in the next newsletter.

5. A2270 Eastbourne Road Tesco Express. There has only been one fatal accident at this site and this was caused by a driver suffering a heart attack. The accident rate on this road has not been high and the injuries sustained have been slight. There are several factors which raise the priority for the provision of pedestrian crossings – not just accidents. In this case the useage of the road has increased considerably which in turn puts it on a higher priority level.

6. Dropped kerbs – the provision of dropped kerbs has been an issue that has been on-going for some considerable time and has now come further up the priority list at County. Attention was drawn to a letter written by a Willingdon resident to the Eastbourne Herald asking why Cllr. Shing was involving himself in Polegate's affairs and not in Willingdon!

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to write and thank Cllr. Shing for his report and to ask him to make it factual next time.

It was also agreed to include an item in the next newsletter informing people on how and where to report street light failures.

Council was also advised by the Town's County Councillor that the most recent meeting that he had attended at ESCC had contained nothing of substance and therefore there was nothing to report on this occasion.

Finally, clarifying information had been received in response to a question posed by Cllr. Shing at a recent meeting at Wealden District and members were advised that this would be made available to them under confidential section.

7130 Updates from Lead Councillors/Working Groups

Two councillors reported very favourably on a Woodland Survey meeting that they had recently attended. This had been hosted by the District Council and involved the mapping of woodland and ancient woodland in the Weald to preserve its heritage. There are two sites in Polegate, Diplocks Wood and the copse behind Northfield. A report on the survey is available for viewing in the Council Office.

7131 Notification of matters dealt with as “Urgent”

a) Fencing alongside railway A27 – following urgent requests the Highways Agency had accepted responsibility for this piece of land and had instructed Interoute to replace the existing broken fencing with a much more substantial fence.

b) Wannock Road Recreation Ground – owing to the short time scale between the end of the football season and commencement of the cricket season and the prevailing weather conditions it had been necessary to instruct contractors to harrow and roll the football pitch area in readiness for the start of the cricket season. The groundsman had also been asked to reseed where necessary including the area around the informal goal mouths further down the field. It was also suggested that the goal mouths at Brightling Road and Oakleaf play area be infilled and reseeded if necessary. Reseeded areas to be taped off to give the seed a chance to ‘take’.

c) Street Lighting Maintenance and Energy Contract – it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to discuss this item in confidential section.

7132 Town Clerk’s Report

a) Vandalism report – there were no items.

7133 Youth Development Service

Members were advised that the YDS had received a £250.00 grant from Wealden District to fund sporting activities in Polegate. They were also able to put a youth worker into the town for two sessions a week and to carry out developmental work in the area. It was generally agreed that Council had in theory agreed to fund a youth worker but required a Service Level Agreement from the YDS setting out how they planned to utilise the services.

The youth working group comprising Cllrs. Mrs Coleman, Cunningham, Gatrill, Martin, Mrs Morson, Mrs Joy and Mrs Scarborough then settled on 20th April at 4.15 p.m. to meet with representatives from the YDS.

7134 Downgrading of Eastbourne District General and Hastings Conquest Hospitals

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that a letter be sent to the management board of the District General Hospital stating that the Council is mortified at the proposals to downgrade the hospital and that the residents of Polegate will be very badly affected particularly in view of the impending large scale housing development (a possible 2000 houses) planned for the town over the next five years. To expect people to travel to Hastings for treatment, particularly urgent treatment, is an unacceptable nonsense. It was also proposed, seconded and agreed by all to write to other local Councils and Norman Baker MP asking them to write in protest.

7135 Correspondence requiring some action

a) Policing Wealden District – Public Meeting – four members of the Council advised that they would be attending this meeting.

b) Twinning – Appen Visit – noted. It was also suggested and agreed that the date of the Civic Service be arranged to coincide with this event, if possible.

c) Town and Parish Clerks' Seminar – it was agreed that the Assistant Town Clerk could attend.

d) DEFRA Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act 2005 – it was agreed to obtain a copy of the guide and to bring this item back to Council with a synopsis of implementation.

e) Community website – it was agreed to ask the Council's IT technician to establish a link from the community website to the Town Council's website. It was also agreed to send a note to all councillors advising our website address.

7136 Correspondence for noting only

a) Changes to bus services – noted.

b) Easbourne on-street parking charges – it was agreed to write to ESCC in support of Wealden's comments and stressing the issues for Polegate especially for the High Street residents.

7137 Dates of the next cycle of meetings

Annual Meeting of Electors

24th April at 7.30 p.m.

(venue: United Reformed Church Hall)

Annual Statutory Meeting

15th May at 7.30 p.m.

Planning

as and when necessary

7138 Resolution to take next business in confidential session

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.

7139 Confidential Matters

a) Members allowances

b) Personnel matters

c) Administrative matters