

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Cllrs. G. Carter (Town Mayor), S. Barber, Mrs C. Berry, Mrs E. Coleman, M. Fitzgerald, J. Harmer (from 7.40 p.m.), Mrs D. Joy, R. Martin (from 7.50 p.m.), Mrs M. Piper, Mrs I. Scarborough, Mrs J. Voyce and T. Voyce.
3 members of the public 1 member of the press

Two additional items were agreed for inclusion on the agenda under correspondence; 18e lease of land at Polegate School - fencing and 18f lighting at Bernhard Gardens.

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Cunningham, Gibbs and Mrs Morson.

Cllr. Barber declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 18b.

7507 At this point the Chair recommended bringing forward item 17 on the agenda, boot fairs at Cophall Farm - traffic problems - and this was agreed.

It was considered that the traffic problems created by the boot fairs and in particular over the Easter weekend were completely unacceptable. The traffic was backed up on the roundabout and down the bypass with vehicles being unable to access the roundabout due to the congestion. In effect Polegate was gridlocked. A letter of complaint from a resident had also been received. It was suggested that traffic controls should be in place with a police presence and that there may be ways in which the operator could assist in easing the congestion. It was noted that a traffic jam was also created on Sunday 15 April and that this happened on a regular basis through the summer when the fairs were in progress.

It was then proposed, seconded and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow the boot fair operator to comment and answer queries.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED.

The operator commented that as Polegate is a community it would be nice if businesses were made aware of any complaints so that they could attend meetings and speak rather than the subject being discussed without their knowledge. It was pure chance that the operator happened to look at the agenda and noticed this item.

The operator apologised for the problems on Easter Sunday, however it was the first major boot fair of the year and the best weather forecast of the year which brought out a record number of people. There were no problems on Easter Monday and traffic flow was average.

It was also considered that there were no problems on Sunday 15 April as the road back to the roundabout is clearly visible from the gate and the operators would know if there were any problems. Cophall roundabout is a total nightmare throughout the week and access onto it is routinely difficult. Why is the Council not campaigning for improvements on the A27 which is notoriously dangerous and claims lives instead of getting hysterical about something which causes a problem on a Sunday morning 28 times a year?

The operators work closely with the police and have good communications, they are practised operators and work hard to minimise queuing and other traffic problems.

The Mayor then thanked the operator for her input and reinstated Standing Orders.

STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

It was commented that one of the problems was that drivers are parking on the verges and anywhere else that they can and the police should spend a few Sundays patrolling to address the problems.

Are the marshals actually on the road because they are certainly not very visible? A package should be put together for proper road management; it is just not acceptable for the town to be gridlocked. It was noted that private citizens do not have the power to step into the road to stop or direct traffic. Could the money be taken on the way out instead of on the way in? Box junctions could be installed on the roundabout so that traffic linking does not block access/exits.

It was then requested that Standing Orders be suspended again to allow the operator to answer these queries. This was seconded and agreed by all.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

The operator advised that they had already made a substantial contribution to the roundabout, which doesn't work! ESCC had quoted £800 per week for putting cones out which was not viable. However the suggestion for box junctions was very sensible. It would not work to have people paying on the way out. People will go to extreme lengths to avoid paying the entrance fee even though it is only 40p. They would be happy to meet with the police, Highways Agency, County Council etc. to see what could be achieved.

STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all that a meeting should be held between the boot fair operator, the police, the Highways Agency and the County Safety Officer to formulate an effective event management plan and that the Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk should also attend the meeting. A letter to be sent to the member of the public who raised the complaint to confirm the action being taken.

7508 Police report

As the PCSO was unable to attend a crime update was circulated as follows:

During February and March 313 calls were received from members of the public and 56 crimes were reported.

CRIME	FEBRUARY	MARCH	TOTAL
Thefts	8	13	21
Vehicle Crime	5	8	13
Burglary	5	1	6
Criminal Damage	7	2	9
Violence	2	2	4
Other	0	3	3
Total Crime	27	29	56

It was noted that only figures were supplied with no information regarding trends, number of crimes solved etc.

7509 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2007

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as correct and signed by the Mayor.

7510 Matters arising from the meeting held on 19 March 2007

Minute no. 7477 electric blanket testing - it was noted that St. John's Church hall will be a venue for electric blanket testing on 16 October.

Minute no. 7480 b - youth facilities - it was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Ruth Kelly MP and copies to the local MP and County Council. A supportive response had been received from the local MP but nothing yet from either Ruth Kelly or the County Council.

Minute no. 7475 - electrical inspections - quotes had been requested but were not yet to hand.

7511 Financial matters

a) accounts for payment - the payment for the stair lift was confirmed as a maintenance payment and the high cost of hospitality at recent interviews was queried. However, as this included provision of pump flasks for Council use the amount was accepted and all payments approved.

b) internal audit report - the financial planning and other recommendations in the report to be dealt with by the new Town Clerk. Meeting to be set up with the temporary RFO and internal auditor.

c) street lighting maintenance charges 2007/2008 - it was resolved to ask EDF for a breakdown of the increase in charges, why such a large increase is necessary and the savings that should be apparent with the loss of Watermill Ward.

d) street lighting and maintenance inspection - remedial works - it was resolved to wait until the end of year figures are available before the expenditure for remedial works is agreed. It was also resolved to query whether white or orange bulbs are preferable from a safety aspect and to use whichever colour is recommended.

e) CPRE annual membership subscription - following some discussion as to the merits of retaining membership a vote was taken as follows:

In favour of retaining membership 2

Against 8

Therefore the subscription would not be renewed.

7512 Adoption of minutes of Standing Committees

Planning of 3 April 2003 - the Chair of Planning presented the minutes and there being no matters raised, proposed that they be adopted. This was resolved unanimously.

The Chair then went on to say that at the recent Parish Planning Meeting members were advised that district councillors would be required to attend training sessions prior to sitting on planning committees, and it was suggested that prior training should also be a requirement at town council level. Suitable training would be made available by Wealden officers.

It was therefore resolved that following the elections, all councillors wishing to sit on the planning committee would be required to undergo relevant training.

7513 Town Action Plan

The Chair of Planning advised that at the Parish Planning Meeting it became apparent that a number of towns and parishes had completed action plans and that the priorities from those plans would be fed into the LDF process for consideration. It was therefore suggested that Council formulates an action plan and that the outcomes be put forward for inclusion in the consultation process with Wealden. It was felt that Council should consult with residents, particularly with regard to housing options, and one of the ways this could be achieved could be via a questionnaire to all households, with a tick box response, and the responses noted for the action plan and consultation with Wealden.

It was therefore resolved that a working party be formed to complete the town action plan and to carry out consultation with the public as appropriate.

7514 Communications from the Town Mayor

youth club - members were advised that the Sussex Clay Pigeon Shooting Association had kindly donated a pool table to the youth club and that he had attended a charity shoot at which the table had been formally presented. This was a very generous gesture and everyone was very grateful for the donation.

A letter of thanks to be sent to the Association's Chairman.

town meeting - as the county council currently had a policy of not allowing officers to attend public meetings until after the elections, it had been necessary to invite another organisation to provide a representative to sit on the panel. Mediation Plus had accepted the invitation and will be giving a short presentation on their services - noted.

7515 Matters dealt with as 'urgent'

There were none.

Cllr. Mrs Scarborough left the meeting at 8.50 p.m.

7516 Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr. Martin reported that the future of the County & District Councils is being considered by Government and East Sussex & Wealden have put forward proposals for a 'super three tier' amalgamating back room functions at County & District level and giving an enhanced role to Parish Councils. WDC is still continuing with arrangements to centralise at Hailsham.

County set the council tax this year at above the rate of inflation - an increase of 4.3% and band D taxpayers are now paying £1047.69 for the County Council alone. Cuts in local bus services are the consequence of the deregulation of bus services in the 1980's which means that bus operators only run commercially viable services unless they get a subsidy from the County Council. Cavendish has replaced some of the services cut by Eastbourne Buses and hopefully competition and higher passenger numbers will improve the service.

So far County has not extended the Polegate Tax Rider Service or included the service in the free travel scheme, although this is under discussion with County Officers.

Justified complaints about the roads, pavements and kerbstones continue and it seems that County Officers never have enough money allocated for all the work necessary. Nevertheless, some repairs and improvements have been done in the town in the last year.

7517 Town Clerk's Report

a) vandalism report - previously circulated. Two items noted, attempted fire at Oakleaf play area and discharging of fire extinguisher at Wannock Road.

b) youth club - attendance figures were consistent and improving with 10 youth registered in January and 16 by the end of March.

c) town map - unfortunately the artist assisting with this project had been forced to resign due to health problems.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to see if a replacement artist who was skilled in pen drawings could be found to move the project forward and to ask the press to make an appeal in the paper. The name of a local artist to contact was also put forward. The original artist to be requested to return any artwork.

Members were also advised that the swings at Wannock Road recreation ground had nearly reached the end of their useful life and would need replacing in the near future - noted.

Cllr. Mrs Berry left the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

7518 Watermill ward - conveyance of twitten - members were advised that Wealden had offered to draw up the necessary documentation to transfer Watermill Ward to Willingdon & Jevington, free of charge. Willingdon & Jevington PC had already indicated their acceptance of the proposal and it was therefore resolved to accept Wealden's offer so that the transfer can be completed.

7519 Eastbourne & Hastings consultation document - Option 5 Saving Lives - it was unanimously resolved to support the Option 5 proposals and to register the Council's support on the relevant website.

7520 B2247 waiting restrictions - Hailsham/Station/Pevensay Roads - Cllrs. Mrs J and T Voyce declared prejudicial interests.
It was resolved to request a site meeting with the County Council followed by a meeting to discuss the proposals prior to formally responding.

Cllrs. Barber, Carter, Harmer and Martin registered their willingness to attend the meeting, subject to availability on the agreed date.

7521 Towermill Place - update - 8 tenants are still remaining and will move to general purpose accommodation within Polegate at the end of April. 3 further moves have been identified as possibilities and residents are currently considering Maryan Court and Elizabeth Court in Hailsham and Joan Hughes Court in Polegate - noted.

7522 Correspondence

a) **request for dog bin junction Levett Road/Pevensey Road** - following discussion it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to defer a decision on this item pending an overall review of the dog bin provision within the town.

b) **request for additional street lighting - Southfield** - having subsequently discovered that the lighting in question is the responsibility of ESCC, this request has been passed to the relevant department for action - noted.

c) **annual LCAS seminar** - it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to reserve two places on this seminar.

d) **ESCC review of passenger transport evidence gathering day** - no members were available for attendance on this date.

e) **lease of land at Polegate CP school - fencing** - there were no objections to the proposal to erect a new fence approx. 1m beyond the 'logs' and it was also noted that there was room for negotiation to provide replacement fencing to the front of the play area. It was also generally agreed that an item of equipment should be provided to fill the gap between existing items of equipment to prevent football being played within the play equipment enclosure and that this could be a piece of equipment for dual use by both able and disabled children; for example a roundabout with wheelchair provision. An alternative informal football and kick-about area had possibly been located close to the cuckoo trail but ownership details were still being awaited from Wealden.

f) **request for additional lighting at Bernhard Gardens** - following discussion it was resolved to write to the Bernhard Gardens Residents' Association advising that the cost was prohibitive and Council was not therefore in a position to be of assistance. In addition there are a number of areas within the town that experience the same problems and that Council could not provide additional lighting in all areas.. It was also suggested that the householders could install their own passive infra red lighting.

7523 Dates of the next cycle of meetings

Electors' meeting	23 April 2007
Annual Statutory meeting	14 May 2007
Planning	as and when necessary

7524 Resolution

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all 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.