

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**



HIGH STREET TOILET REFURBISHMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the High Street Toilet Refurbishment Committee meeting held on Friday 17th July 2015 at 10.00 am Council Chambers, 49 High Street, Polegate, BN26 6AL

Present: D Watts, S Shing, M Falkner, B Goodwin, Mrs M Piper, T Bennett

Not present: Cllrs Ms A Snell, D Dunbar

No members of public

Minute No.	Subject/Resolution	Action
11410	Opportunity for Public Comment None	
11411	Apologies for absence Cllrs Ms A Snell, D Dunbar (work)	
11412	Declarations of Interest in any items on the agenda None	
11413	Minutes of the High street Toilet Refurbishment Committee 29th October 2014. The chair commented that most of the committee were not present at that meeting and asked Cllr Shing and Cllr Mrs M Pier if they could confirm that these were accurate. They confirmed that they were accurate. It was resolved to accept the minutes of the 29th October as a true record and they were signed by the chair. VOTE All in favour Cllrs D Watts, S Shing, M Falkner, B Goodwin, Mrs M piper, T Bennett	
11414	To discuss the way forward with the High Street toilet refurbishment and to make recommendations to Council. <i>All councillors had been invited to come and look at the full documentation that had been discussed at previous meetings (open and confidential) in order that they may understand what stage the process had reached and why it had halted.</i> The chair started the meeting by explaining that there were no new papers or quotes since the dissolution of the council and the main reason for meeting was to discuss when where and what is to be done with the toilets. Councillors discussed the condition of the building and what they may or may not prefer to have. Comments on the age and infrastructure of the building were discussed. Its location was discussed. Other public toilets were discussed and the High Street toilets compared to those. Usually unfavourably. The party wall between the Chinese takeaway and the toilets was discussed. The chair discussed the areas of land which belong to the Town Council. He mentioned that the toilet at the triangle was quite good and the one in the car park at Hailsham, but it was understood that had a lot of vandalism. The chair stated that it appeared that everyone was keen to have a public toilet and particularly in the centre of town. He commented that the refurbishment of the toilets had to be looked at	

	to see whether it was sustainable long term as the council had previously purchased the toilets at £20,000 with the liability of the refurbishment could cost more than that and the previous council had also looked at another option of not having the High Street toilets but look at providing new toilets elsewhere. He suggested that if Network/Southern Rail were in agreement there may be a possibility of having a more centralised block of toilets on the co op side of the wall. He discussed the manhole covers and the possibility of having something over there. (Build those first and then sell the other toilets and recoup the expenditure on the toilets (any profit would be partly payable to Wealden under the terms of the sale.), without any refurbishment. A councillor commented that if the town council sold those they would have to pay back a percentage of the profit, the clerk confirmed this. He also stated that if they sold them the costs to rebuild new ones would be greater than any money that was obtained from the sale. The chair explained that if the council purchases eco friendly block toilets this may cover the cost. There may also be a possibility of some part funding. A councillor commented about the potential to build new toilets elsewhere would potentially cost a lot of money. But Also that if the way it was done was lower cost, there was still the risk of not being able to sell the old ones to recover the capital invested in the toilets. Although the pub potentially may wish to purchase them for a garden or parking. A councillor commented that the toilets on the station had been sponsored in some way by East Sussex County Council. One of the councillors present stated that he would try to find out how this had been done. It was also discussed whether the taxi firm could be approached possibly for funding support or a possible partnership and whether they could have a radar key for their drivers. The Mayor stated that there were eco toilets that used less water. A councillor stated that he had been in the Rockanore area and the toilets there were extremely good. The chair stated that all of these possibilities would need to be explored if the committee recommended alternative toilets. A councillor asked if the council would be able to obtain grants form outside bodies. The chair stated that some of the toilets were not brick built and these would be a lot cheaper options. The chair stated that the council would need to investigate whether the building could be sited at the central location and if it could whether the drainage facilities would be accessible. If the old building was able to be sold then the capital that would be regained may go towards some of the costs of the new provision. A councillor commented on the controversial decision when Wealden has offered the toilets to the Town Council. She stated that at the time of the first decisions she had commented that she though the centre was an ideal area and much more suitable for public toilets. A councillor suggested that the Town Council pursue asking the railway whether this is possible. A councillor asked if the co op may be able to contribute. <u>A councillor proposed a recommendation to full council that council continue to seek clarification if there is a possibility of having the public toilets over near the railway on Network Rail/Southern land. VOTE All in favour D Watts, S Shing, M Falkner, B Goodwin, Mrs M Piper, T Bennett</u> A councillor commented that the committee should have a plan B so that if the railway couldn't accommodate that option then the toilets could be deep cleaned and the surrounding area cleared. The clerk confirmed that the toilets had already been deep cleaned and the surrounding area was being cleared by the maintenance person as	
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and when time permitted and that she had been up to have a look at the back of the building to see what other things could be done. She also confirmed that the loose bricks had been removed and the area made safe and the broken bollard has also been removed and the area at the front tidied up somewhat. The councillor commented about the lighting. The clerk confirmed that there had been a report by Wealden that there was asbestos in the building and therefore she had instructed the maintenance person not to do any repairs inside as it may not be safe to do so. (This had been left pending the refurbishment discussions).

A councillor mentioned the lack of clear signage to the toilets. A councillor also commented that there was no legal obligation to provide toilets at all, although it was obvious that most councillors would want to have a set of toilets in the town. He stated that the committee had to consider whether it would be a waste of money to refurbish the toilets at this stage. A councillor stated that he thought it was better to have something modern. A councillor stated that the committee could look at doing the toilets and the start looking further for partnerships with local businesses to support the running of the toilets. A discussion took place on the location of the toilets and the cost of the purchase (£20,000) and the potential costs of a full refurbishment (say £20,000) plus the running costs each year (£10,000) and it may be better to lease some toilets. He commented that the other thing that the committee must be mindful of it that if toilets were placed on that land near the railway then there would need to be a caveat in any agreement that if the toilets were purchased then the landowners would need to find and replace the toilets elsewhere at their cost if they ever developed the land and the toilets had to be removed. A councillor commented that the last council had been out in a very awkward position, when Wealden had said that unless the town council buy (or lease) them they would close them down. A discussion took place on what could happen if the old toilets were sold; a councillor mentioned the house in Pevensey.

A councillor stated that if the council could put new and modern toilets it would be seen as a big asset to the town. The issue was whether the old ones could be sold (as well as whether the railway would allow anything on its land.)

A discussion took place over the potential of having the site surveyed and assessed for approximate value?

It was recommended that the council carry out a deep clean on the current toilets. VOTE All in favour D Watts, S Shing, M Falkner, B Goodwin, Mrs M Piper, T Bennett

The clerk was asked if better signage to the area could be provided, for example a laminated sign in the shop windows to say public toilets this way and an arrow. The clerk stated that this could be done fairly easily.

It was recommended that the office produce a number of laminated signs saying public toilets this way (and an arrow showing the direction) and ask shop proprietors to put them in their shop window. VOTE All in favour D Watts, S Shing, M Falkner, B Goodwin, Mrs M Piper, T Bennett

Issues about asbestos reports was discussed and whether this would be costly to remove and whether it would be an issue that would prevent further maintenance being carried out on the building.

A councillor commented that he thought all eating facilities café and

	restaurants had to supply a toilet for customers. The clerk stated that they do but they did not have to offer out the service to non patrons. A councillor stated that the shops had been asked (re community toilet scheme) where they were paid to make their toilets available to the public, but none were interested in doing this. A discussion took place on security of toilets within shops and whether supermarkets were obliged to have toilets.	
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	<u>It was suggested that in the long term partnership agreements should be sought for funding and support. No vote was taken at this stage.</u>	
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Meeting closed at 11.00 am