

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Special Full Council meeting held on Monday 18th July 2016
Council Chambers, 49 High Street, Polegate BN26 6AL at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs D Watts, D Dunbar, Ms A Snell, Mrs W Alexander, M Falkner, Mrs M Piper, E Board, D Murray, S Shing, D Shing (10)

Not Present: - Cllrs R Shing, T Bennett, Mrs C Berry, B Goodwin, S Dobson (5)

2 members of the public Mr D Carden

Minute	Subject/Resolution
11799	Opportunity for public comment Standing orders suspended A resident spoke on the documents and commented that 2.2 he agreed with the report that the Town Council should make sure it was deliverable and properly resourced. He said if it can't be then the council should not waste time on those items. 3.4 he said he felt the town council should be cautious about the development of the recreation ground and do not try to turn it into something that is not required or provided elsewhere. 4.2 he stated that he did not believe that the existing site of the town council office was suitable for a community hub as envisaged. A new purpose built facility to include a health centre, library and council office is certainly attractive, so is the proposal to work more closely with the county council, district council and health providers is essential. 5.3 He stated that he didn't agree that the resource review should take place after, and it should be reviewed in December and January when the budgets are prepared. 7.4 The table of projects is a list, to make it official you need to wait until resources are allocated. It would then form part of a business plan and not be a replacement for it. He felt that a business plan must include an analysis of resources over the course of the plan including the likely level of council tax over the term of the plan. He commented that the current band D was £104 and that only 340 councils had higher. 2.2 He stated that there were no costs associated with the proposal or where it would be funded from. He commented that he was disappointed that particular councillors had not attended. Standing order reinstated The Mayor stated that the recommendations were in principle only at this stage and the minutiae would be discussed at later meetings with the associated costs.
11800	Apologies for absence Cllrs R Shing, Mrs C Berry, Mrs S Dobson
11801	Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda None
11802	To consider the visioning report and associated actions and if this is approved will form the basis of the new business plan The report and recommendations were discussed at length by each councillor present. It was further clarified that the recommendations were at this stage a starting point and further details and costs would be gathered as required. All financial implications will be considered as part of the short medium and long term plan and included in the budgets accordingly. Particularly as legislation also changes and this may affect the business plan and vision. A councillor commented that although the Masterplan had been laid out by former councils as it had no legal status it was not that useful but could be discussed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. A councillor commented that he would like to see meetings but not so many that things get delayed, and hoped that all of these would be progressed quickly. He

also commented that although he was keen to see the office and pavilion use at the War Memorial recreation ground he did not want to see a commercial enterprise in there as such, but to make it compliant for the sports teams and other use for local residents.

A councillor commented that the building had not generated enough income to cover the costs and hoped that by working with both Wealden and the County Council positive outcomes could be sought. It was uncertain with the devolution bids including devolvment of activities and the potential of the 3 counties bid that many things would change. It was most important to achieve these goals by seeking funding from many different sources. With regards to revitalising the SLR he felt that asking specific officers of East Sussex County Council was more productive since the changeover meant that the stewards had little powers to do anything extra within the area.

Councillors commented on the various issues with parking and the fact that police would not enforce plus Wealden would not decriminalise. The reports from the parking working group (on the full council agenda) would also be updated with the latest report.

A councillor asked if the condition survey was required, a councillor commented that to take the vision forward it was important to know whether the building was sound and that there were cracks and maintenance issues that needed addressing.

A councillor commented that the assets that the town council owned and were under their control needed to be looked at as part of this, and these should be addressed first as the High Street for example the town council had no direct control over. He commented that many of the new housing had very small gardens and there was a need for something for the children and therefore this is something that should be considered. He also stated that many of the changes to the pavilion were to ensure that the sports clubs could continue to use the grounds at Wannock, however it was also important to ensure that all users could use the facilities and these were also being considered. This included updating the shower and changing facilities and to see if there were ways to minimise the council tax on the office area.

NB a private letter from a resident had been circulated to councillors that day indicating that an offer to enhance the area was possible and that would have to be considered at another meeting, to find out more details. It looked promising but a councillor commented that it would need investigating first.

A councillor commented that although a Neighbourhood Plan was desirable for various reasons, it was essential that as part of the decision making an idea of the costs for the proposals was made. Initial costs had been in the region of £60,000 and this level of expenditure (if it were that high) would need to significantly enhance the area and the income received from CIL to be viable. He reminded the council that any Neighbourhood Plan would have to fit in and comply with the core strategy and local plan being developed by Wealden District Council. He also stated that with regards to the high street ideas on generating visitors including possibly the branding of the town and maybe specialist shops to come to the area. He agreed that revitalising the SLR would be good for the town and good communication between the council and other authorities would be very useful in developing the town. He also stated that it would help pinpoint the appropriate officers to contact for various issues. He suggested that Kelvin Williams of Wealden District Council Planning and Amanda Hodge of Housing at Wealden, may be able to come and not only speak to the council but also to residents. (NB could be included in the town assembly or other meetings set up for the residents).

A brief discussion took place on how new businesses and old businesses could be encouraged in the High street. Mention was made of reduction in business rates, but a councillor commented that this would mean that private business was being subsidised by public money. A (district) councillor present stated that shops already had some reductions.

A councillor stated that she felt it was essential that the plan was deliverable and funded. If it was not deliverable it would be a waste of money to pursue. She also felt it was important that the council had good communication with the residents and spoke to them about what the town had and what it wanted and ways to achieve that. Any Neighbourhood plan would have to tie in with the local plan being developed by the district council by the end of the year. She commented that meetings with the residents and including this type of communication with the residents at the annual town assembly was an excellent idea. She also agreed that meetings for the residents with officers from the district council such as the Head of Planning and the head of housing may be welcomed by the residents, and this may increase from the 7 people who attended the annual town assembly this year. She also commented that showing residents who was responsible for certain areas was a good idea, and it didn't matter how many leaflet drops were made the same questions were still asked as many people did not know or care which level dealt with a problem as long as it was resolved.

Many councillors agreed that more communication including digital would help, but that there were a lot of elderly who would still prefer paper at this stage even though the demographic was changing.

There were suggestions that more surveys would need to be carried out.

Councillor D Shing arrived at 8.16pm

A councillor commented that the staff resources would need to be increased to enable some of the projects to move forward.

A councillor asked if the S106 money could be used. The clerk commented that this was already being done and had so far paid for the new outdoor gym and was being looked at by the buildings and land group for the other funding that was available.

Councillor Mrs W Alexander left at 8.19pm

A councillor commented that there would be more reductions in services from the District and County levels and inevitably the town council would need to look at what will happen. He also stated that development was coming and it was better to shape the nature of the development through a neighbourhood plan and participate in the changes. He commented that the changes would last beyond the lifetime of the council. He stated that he would like to see the plan keep Polegate separate to Hailsham and Eastbourne and Willingdon; to create a large enough self-sustainable and economically viable area with good facilities. He wanted to see the council make the community hub a reality.

A councillor commented that the steering group should look at Business Improvement Districts. (Mr Carden commented that Chichester, Worthing, Manor Royal were successful examples <http://www.manorroyal.org/pages/index.cfm> and he commented that the council were at a starting point and that it was distilling its views into an action plan and a blue print over the next few months to include certain items in the budget preparation for Autumn. The Principles of development for the Neighbourhood plan and public consultations would be required. He stated that it was not something the council could do alone and it would need cooperation from the District and County Councils, transport and Health providers. He also mentioned that the devolution bid would have an effect on what would be provided as much may be devolved to the town council but without funding. He stated that the council would need more staff to achieve this and also more councillor involvement it was achievable. Mr Carden mentioned the longer term aim of the community hub and that could provide the ultimate solution for local public services.)

It was proposed that the recommendations be voted on in principle with the

amended "will run in tandem with" to "will receive reports from" (2.1 of the recommendation report) shown as 1) below:

It was resolved to accept the recommendations in principle as follows:

1) To form a Town Centre Steering Group.

This will be made up of say 2-3 councillors, shop keepers and other interested parties within the town.

The remit of the Steering group will be to assess the current street scene condition. For example, how the High Street looks, whether there is a need for dropped kerbs, finger posts, additional bins and general street scene (weeds and issues) etc. They will report back to council with the condition (and potentially ideas for improvement of the street scene). The council would invite interested parties, potentially by a meeting for that purpose, leaflet drops to shops etc. This will call upon the information in the Town Council's Masterplan, comments from shop keepers and nearby attractions on their needs, the Wealden District Council accessibility reports and more.

"Be part of the town centre improvements"

This will receive reports from the three other groups:

- The Bin working group
- The parking working group
- The Principles of development working group

Ideally a group will be set up for a first meeting in September 2016.

THE GOAL – TO SEEK IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE TOWN AND MARKETING POLEGATE AS A DESTINATION.

2) For Council to commission a buildings survey on 49/51 High Street

An initial buildings survey (buildings surveyor) will be required to determine if the building itself is "sound".

Having determined the structure of the building a site survey (land surveyor/architect) should be commissioned with a specification of what should be included and questions on what could be included on the site.

- Accessible chambers
- Accessible reception/hub
- Accessible public toilets
- Office for (adequate number) of staff
- Office for Town Clerk
- Meeting room(s)
- Function room?

(Contractors could be asked to come and make a quote on what they would include in a survey and to make a quote and proposal to council before a contractor is selected. Including site constraints, planning constraints and land constraints).

3) For council to form a Principles of development (Neighbourhood Plan) working group Remit : to consider what would be required in a future Neighbourhood Plan, how this complies to the Town Council’s Master Plan (are there points to be kept or rewritten completely). What the consequences and implications (including financial) of a Neighbourhood Plan. 4) For the Town Council to revitalise communications with East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council through the SLR (strengthening Local relationships). To determine what services may be ceased/devolved. To then determine whether the town council wishes to take on these services (in consultation with the public). What services will make a real difference to the community. Have regular meetings with both County and District Councillors. 5) To continue with the parking working group to find solutions to the town’s parking problems. 6) To hold meetings with the users of the War Memorial Recreation ground (including sports clubs), with the potential view of improving the grounds and pavilion, obtaining extra funding, potentially creating an umbrella sports body with a specially drafted lease. Potentially having a voluntary refreshment facility run by volunteers/the umbrella body. Ask the sports clubs to get together and produce a joint proposal for the configuration of the pavilion. 7) Consult with the public on “Polegate into the future” to determine how the residents would like to see the town improve in the future. This could be a theme for a meeting or an annual town assembly (2017?) Leaflet each house with a poster – “Are you interested in helping with your skills or time?” “What do you want for the town? – come have your say” A resolution to delegate to the clerk to arrange this and to accept in principle the community consultation.
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Consultations with the public can be in any or all of the following forms:

- ***Leaflet drops to houses***
- ***Posters***
- ***Meetings of interested parties***
- ***Ballot surveys***
- ***Survey monkey***

8) Council to form a Town Centre Development Plan through the steering group considering things like traffic flow, appearance of the town centre, the layout of the town. (This will be linked to the Principles of development)

Vote all in favour Cllrs D Watts, D Dunbar, Ms A Snell, M Falkner, Mrs M Piper, E Board, D Murray, S Shing, D Shing

The meeting closed at 8.57 pm

Signed Mayor of Polegate _____

Date _____