

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of **TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL** held on **Wednesday 21st November 2018** in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30pm.

PRESENT:- D Brindley *Mayor*, J Harris, B Page, C Robinson, I Sharkey, A Smith, D Wright, J Wilkins

Also present: Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO (*minutes*)
15 members of the public (approx)

1414. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr L O'Connor gave details of previous Freedom of Information requests and how he had asked for an internal review of his last request. This had led to the Council taking a draft Freedom of Information Policy to the last Policy & Resources meeting where it was agreed and put forward to this evening's meeting for adoption. He asked if the new draft Freedom of Information Policy was compliant with revised guidance recently issued by Cabinet. Mr O'Connor then advised that he had previously been provided with a list of eartag numbers for dead sheep, but following release of the list of current sheep in the community flock, he was concerned to see that 2 that were on that list also appeared on the previous list of dead sheep. *Cllr Wright advised it was a model Policy provided by the Sussex Association of Local Councils.*

Cllr Smith responded by advising that the Council are not trying to hide anything and that the Council went with the model policy provided by the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC) as we do not have experts in this matter and we are not qualified to question their information. He advised that if it is not right, he would be happy to send it back to SALC. Cllr Smith went on to advise that we have an agreement with Stud Farm and pay them a £250 management fee and costs for sheep upkeep and at the last meeting Cllr Armour had advised it was a 'no brainer' and would not look after the sheep for that amount if he wasn't a Councillor. Cllr Smith then gave thanks to Cllr Wilkins for transferring information from paper to a computerised system, advised that no-one is infallible and an error may occur and again re-iterated that the Council are not hiding anything. He then confirmed that the Council had received a large sum due to lamb sales and the community flock was therefore having the desired affect of making money.

Another member of the public advised that the public want the truth. It is not about profit, it is about the allegations of dogs killing sheep on the Tye and they asked why no evidence had been given.

Cllr Smith responded that it is irresponsible dog owners causing the problems and quite a lot of evidence had been provided.

The resident responded by advising that they knew it could happen, but that the Council had not provided any evidence of dogs worrying sheep in this area and the use of the Tye is important to the residents.

Cllr Smith responded that the Tye is important to the Council too.

Mr O'Connor then advised that clearly the information provided is not correct, there is no proof of dog attacks and if the information provided is what LewesDC lawyers have used as evidence, they have fallen down.

Cllr Smith responded that the lawyers are very thorough.

Another member of the public advised that the sheep deaths due to dog attacks form the basis of the PSPO and could not believe that Cllr Smith said mistakes may occur and asked why the sets of figures were different.

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1414. Public Question Time (Contd)

Cllr Smith asked Cllr Wilkins to answer the question. Cllr Wilkins advised that she had assisted the farm with a computerised system of logging sheep as no-one else knew how to use it. A wand is held over the ear tags and the sheep recorded electronically which was done just over a month ago. The information from now on will therefore be accurate. Regarding fatalities, Cllr Wilkins had gone through the farm diary and input all the information into spreadsheets for 2016, 2017 and 2018, along with the possible causes of death listed. She then forwarded the spreadsheets to the Town Clerk to neaten them and make them more legible.

Cllr Page asked the Chairman if he could ask the residents a question and the Chairman agreed. Cllr Page then asked if the residents were suggesting that the Council so desperately wanted a PSPO that they had fabricated figures and if so why we wanted the PSPO.

A member of the public responded that Cllr Wilkins had said she had done the best she could do with the figures and passed the information to the Town Clerk to make them more accurate.

Cllr Wilkins strongly denied this and advised she had sent them to the Town Clerk to make the spreadsheet readable.

The same member of the public responded that the figures were ‘wishy washy’ and should be based on evidence.

Another member of the public advised that the cattle grid by bridleway 8 needed cleaning.

The Mayor then advised that public question time had overrun by over 20 minutes and would accept one more question.

Another member of the public asked if Cllr Wilkin’s information proved and backed-up the evidence contained in the PSPO as sheep can get injuries from barbed wire, badgers or foxes.

Cllr Wilkins advised that she had nothing to do with the information provided to LewesDC for the PSPO and Cllr Smith confirmed that the information had come from Stud Farm.

The member of the public advised that the farmer should be keeping accurate records.

Cllr Smith advised that the LewesDC lawyer had attended the farm and had seen the farm’s records. The consultation ends on 23rd November and all comments will be looked at.

Another member of the public advised that the information should have been available at the beginning of the consultation.

Cllr Brindley then drew public question time to a close at 8.20 pm.

1415. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr A Loraine who has been granted leave of absence until the end of November, Cllrs R Maskell, G Maskell and T Armour due to annual leave and Cllr Mendoza due to work commitments. These reasons for absence were accepted.

1416. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Smith declared an interest in agenda item 12, ‘To provide response to LewesDC’s consultation on Telscombe Tye Public Spaces Protection Order’ as he is a District Councillor.

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1417. TO DISCUSS & APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2018

It was proposed by Cllr A Smith, seconded by Cllr I Sharkey and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 19th September 2018 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Mayor, Cllr D Brindley.

1418. TO RECEIVE MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:-

(a) Planning & Highways – 29th August, 17th September & 8th October

Cllr J Wilkins proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 29th August, 17th September and 8th October be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr C Robinson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

(b) Policy & Resources – 3rd September 2018

As Cllr B Page had chaired the meeting in his capacity as Vice-Chairman, he proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 3rd September be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr C Robinson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

(c) Amenities & Civic Centre – 23rd July 2018

In the absence of the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllr I Sharkey proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 23rd July be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr A Smith and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

1419. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2018

Payments for August of £72,296.95 and receipts of £150,383.19 and payments for September of £55,999.82 and receipts of £5,174.69 were proposed as correct by Cllr B Page, seconded by Cllr D Wright, unanimously **agreed** and signed as accurate by the Mayor, Cllr D Brindley.

1420. NOTIFICATION OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2018

The figures at 30th September 2018 for all committees and earmarked reserves being expenditure of £295,151 and income of £366,597 were proposed as correct by Cllr B Page, seconded by Cllr D Wright and unanimously **agreed**.

1421. TO AGREE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2018

The Town Clerk/RFO confirmed that the second quarter's bank reconciliations for the 2018/19 financial year up to 30th September had been checked by Cllr D Wright on 8th November. Cllr Wright had found the reconciliations to be in and had signed the bank reconciliation, corresponding bank statements and supporting documentation as correct. The signed bank reconciliation was attached to the agenda for members to check and it was proposed by Cllr D Wright, seconded by Cllr J Harris and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation showing total bank and cash balances of £458,598.81 was accepted as correct.

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1422. TO NOTE ACTION LIST

The action list below was noted:-

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
19 th Sept 2018	Min 1407, p 2845 – To agree revision to Grass Verge Cutting Contract from 2019	SN	The agreed 3 year grass verge cutting contract will go out to tender in January.	March 2019
19 th Sept 2018	Min 1408, p 2845 – To Consider financial support for CTLA, CAB and Wave Leisure Summer Holiday programme	SN	The agreed amounts will be included in the budget for 2019/20.	January 2019
19 th Sept 2018	Min 1409, p 2845 – To agree working party to arrange 2019/20 budget.	SN	A meeting of the working party has been arranged for 26 th November and draft figures will be taken to Council in December 2018.	January 2019

1423. TO AGREE FORMATION OF A TELSCOMBE TYE COMMONS COMMUNITY GROUP

This had been discussed at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 12th November. Cllr Robinson advised she would be willing to set up and Chair the group but felt it should be a small group with maybe one other Councillor representation. Cllr Brindley confirmed he would like to sit on the group. The aim of the group would be to work with the farmer, see what the requirements of the HLS agreement are and report back to the Council with recommendations. The recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee that Cllr Robinson progresses with setting up a Tye Community Group was proposed by Cllr D Wright, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

1424. TO PROVIDE RESPONSE TO LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON TELSCOMBE TYE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

Cllr Smith had declared an interest in this agenda item and took no part in the discussion or vote.

As landowners, LewesDC have a statutory requirement to consult Telscombe Town Council on the proposed public spaces protection order for the Tye. Following a brief discussion Cllr Robinson proposed that Telscombe Town Council did not comment on the proposal, seconded by Cllr I Sharkey and **RESOLVED** that Telscombe Town Council do not comment. Cllr Smith did not take part in the vote.

1425. TO AGREE INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The report from the Internal Auditor following their interim visit on 5th November had been circulated. Their summary comments were noted as follows:-

'It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Telscombe Town Council are very well established, regulated and followed. The clerk ensures the council follows best practice regulations and has over time adapted and changed the internal procedures as regulations and technologies have changed to maintain compliance.'

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1425. To Agree Interim Internal Audit Report (Contd)

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures very seriously and I am pleased to report that overall the systems and procedures you have in place are entirely fit for purpose and indeed are a model of good practice. I would like to thank Stella for her assistance and hard work.

They also confirmed under the Financial Regulations, Governance & Payments heading that:-

'The Council has a robust process for authorising expenditure in place and my testing confirmed financial regulations are being followed. I would like to compliment the Clerk on the quality of documentation held, the audit trail is particularly strong at Telscombe and the process of recording payments and bank reconciliations in Council minutes should be considered best practice.'

There were a few points forward listed as follows in italics, with the Town Clerk/RFO's recommendations listed underneath:-

1. *At the time of my audit (October 31) RBS has only been updated to the end of August 2018. I understand that the delay in inputting transactions was due to a period of annual leave.*

September's figures have now been input following Town Clerk/RFO's return from leave and the bank reconciliation up to that date checked by Cllr Wright and found to be in order. October's figures have been input and the Town Clerk/RFO is awaiting the bank statements to come through so she can carry out the reconciliation.

2. *I suggest the Council should consider moving to online banking in the near future. Cheques are not very secure, and are often lost by suppliers. Additionally, as banks are closing, it is becoming difficult for both suppliers and banks to deal with cheques.*

It would seem a sensible idea which would streamline our payments. However, as the current Councillors' term of office ends in 6 months, I recommend reviewing the situation regarding online banking for Councillors once the new Councillors take office in May. In the meantime the Town Clerk/RFO will contact the bank with a view to her being set up for online banking and to have all the necessary information to hand to report to Council in May.

3. *As a larger council Telscombe TC is required by law to follow the 2015 Transparency Code. I have reviewed the website and it appears that all required disclosures are in place. I confirmed by sample test that transactional date is being kept up to date. However, the website is a little cluttered.*

I think it would be easier to follow if we had a separate page for transparency and recommend we ask our website hosts to implement this.

4. *Money cover is a little low at present at 250K*

Our insurance policy is due for renewal in February which will be the final year of a 3 year term. A review with the broker is due to be undertaken in January and I recommend asking them at that time to increase money cover to £500,000.

5. *The Council backs up its computer data on external drives and memory sticks, but also has backup arrangements with Peacehaven TC.*

I recommend contacting our IT company to test from a remote location that data is recoverable away from our offices.

6. *The council has a maximum float of £350 in petty cash at the interim audit date there was £328. I recommend the Council considers ending the use of petty cash and makes payment using the corporate credit card for incidental items.*

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1425. To Agree Interim Internal Audit Report (Contd)

I recommend maintaining a petty cash float, but reducing the amount of transactions to a minimum.

7. *Budget reporting is could be improved by ensuring budgets are set on the accounting system for all lines where significant activity is anticipated.*

I note the auditor's comments and will budget if significant activity is anticipated

8. *I note that all Council cash reserves are currently held at with one bank, Nat West, who also manage the Council's Treasury Reserve Account. The Council is not therefore maximising coverage against bank failure under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. I recommend that the Council draws up an investment policy and spreads cash assets across a range of financial institutions in order to maximise protections against bank failure.*

a) I obtained a model investment policy from SALC which was agreed at P&R on the 12th November and is on the agenda for adoption at tonight's meeting.

b) I will investigate investment possibilities with alternative financial institutions and bring back the information for consideration at a future meeting.

The Town Clerk/RFO's comments and recommendations on the Auditor's points forward were considered and it was proposed by Cllr D Wright, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RESOLVED** to proceed with the Town Clerk/RFO's recommendations.

1426. TO AGREE CIVIC CENTRE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE TIMES

Following consideration it was proposed by Cllr A Smith, seconded by Cllr D Wright and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Civic Centre and Council Offices close for the Christmas and New Year period from Tuesday 25th December to Tuesday 1st January 2019 inclusive.

1427. TO AGREE MEETINGS DATES FOR 2019

It was noted that the Town Meeting was to be held on 6th March prior to Purdah commencing and some Committee meetings were slightly later in May/June due to the Election on 2nd May. The meeting dates for 2019 were therefore proposed by Cllr C Robinson, seconded by Cllr I Sharkey and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that they be agreed.

1428. TO UPDATE APPRAISAL POLICY

It was noted that minor adjustment was required to the Appraisal Policy due to the staff restructuring earlier in the year as follows:-

Who appraises – The Town Clerk - 2 to 3 members of the sub-committee, not necessarily the Mayor

The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO - The Town Clerk
Change to:- Amenities Officer – The Town Clerk

Admin and maintenance staff - The Deputy Town Clerk
Change to:- Admin and maintenance staff – The Town Clerk

It was proposed by Cllr J Wilkins, seconded by Cllr C Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the required changes and ADOPT the amended Policy. The Policy will be due for review in 3 years' time.

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1429. TO ADOPT INVESTMENT POLICY

Following the Auditor's interim visit, he recommended that the Council adopt an Investment Policy. The Town Clerk confirmed she had made enquiries and the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments 3rd Edition which has been issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to "have regard" to "such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue". Under the terms of the Guidance, from the 2018-19 financial year, it is mandatory for any Parish Council expecting investments to exceed £100,000 at any time in the financial year to prepare an annual investment strategy. This must be:

- approved by Full Council
- publically available on the Council website
- subject to review and renewal at least annually.

Telscombe Town Council's investments exceed the £100,000 limit and a draft Policy provided by the Sussex Association of Local Councils had been taken to the last Policy & Resources meeting and agreed and their recommendation was to adopt the Policy. It was therefore proposed by Cllr D Wright, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the draft Policy be adopted. It will be due for review in 3 year's time.

1430. TO ADOPT FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Following a request for an internal review of a freedom of information request, Cllr Smith had approached the Sussex Association of Local Councils and a draft Policy from them had been obtained. The draft had been agreed at the recent Policy & Resources Committee and the Committee's recommendation is that it be adopted by Council. However, a member of the public had brought up a query regarding revised guidance issued by Cabinet in August and it was therefore proposed by Cllr A Smith, seconded by Cllr D Wright and **RESOLVED** to check back with the Sussex Association of Local Councils to see if the revised guidance had been taken into account in their model Policy.

1431. TO AGREE REMOVAL OF COMMITMENT TO JOSIAH POVEY CHARITY

The Town Clerk explained that she had recently been approached by Revd Tim Mills who is the Chairman of The Rev Josiah Povey's School Charity Trust. Apparently the Charity's Governing Document states that the Nominative Trustees for the Charity should be appointed by Telscombe Town Council and as two Trustees had recently resigned, he had requested that Telscombe Town Council appoint new Trustees. The Trustees are in term for a period of 4 years and the document also states that 'the person appointed may be but need not be a member of the Council.' The Council were unaware of these requirements and had not appointed Trustees for over 10 years.

Guidance from the Charity Commission regarding appointing Trustees to a Charity, as well as full information of The Rev Josiah Povey's School Charity Trust and their Governing Document had been presented to and considered at a recent meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee. Following consideration, the Committee's recommendation is that the Charity be requested to remove the two previously mentioned requirements from their Governing Document. Following discussion it was therefore proposed by Cllr D Wright, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee be agreed as follows:- That The Rev Josiah Povey's School Charity Trust be requested to remove the two previously mentioned requirements from their Governing Document being (a) the Council appoint 2 Nominative Trustees and (b) that 'the Trustees may be but need not be a member of the Council.' This removes any commitment

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1431. To Agree Removal Of Commitment To Josiah Povey Charity (Contd)

from the Council to the Josiah Povey Charity. The Town Clerk was asked to write to Revd Tim Mills accordingly.

1432. BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW

Cllr Smith advised that the current Business Plan is coming near to the end of its term. Most items have been either completed or suspended. He advised, however, that the Neighbourhood Plan information needs to be updated with the needs of the steering group to be added. The remainder of the Business Plan was noted by members.

1433. REPORTS FROM:-

Mayor – The Mayor advised that he attended the Lewes bonfire celebrations and the recent Remembrance Day Parade and service at the Peacehaven and Telscombe War Memorial.

Deputy Mayor – The Deputy Mayor was absent and had not sent a report.

District Councillors – Cllr Smith advised that Lewes District Council are having a full Council meeting the following Monday and that the Local Plan part 2 has not proved popular.

County Councillors – Cllr Smith advised that East Sussex County Council are trying to increase services and are also budget setting at the moment but it will be a difficult road.

Representatives on Outside Bodies -

Citizens Advice – Cllr Sharkey advised the Citizens Advice were concerned as to where they could go when the Peacehaven library moves. Cllr Smith advised that the library have negotiated and will be staying where they are.

Saltdean Residents' Association – As the SRA Chairman was at the meeting, Cllr Page asked if she would like to say anything. She advised that group are concerned about development in the area and do not want to lose greenspaces.

Crime Stoppers – Cllr Harris advised that he is going to get some pamphlets and would like to put them in the Civic Centre.

1434. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING

There were no urgent matters.

1435. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of items pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Signed.....
Mayor, Cllr D Brindley

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CONFIDENTIAL

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.03 pm.

Signed.....
Mayor, Cllr D Brindley