

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held on **Monday 3rd September 2018** in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllrs D Brindley *Mayor*, J Harris, G Maskell, R Maskell, B Page *Vice Chairman*, C Robinson & J Wilkins

Also Present: Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO (*minutes*)
Approximately 35 members of the public

The Chairman of the meeting, Cllr B Page, advised everyone present of the safety/fire procedures and the Council's filming policy.

He then greeted the many members of the public present, but said he found it strange that at the Councillors Surgery on Saturday morning which is a time when members of the public can come in and ask questions or voice concerns to Councillors, no-one attended. He also pointed out that public question time is purely for questions not statements and is for a 15 minute period only, although he would extend it slightly due to the number of people present.

1201. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public asked who has requested the proposed Public Space Protection Order for the Tye to be put in place.

Cllr Page replied that the Council had made the request due to the high number of sheep losses. The order is arranged by Lewes District Council and the proposal is going to their cabinet meeting on 17th September. If they agree it will go out to public consultation for 8 weeks.

Another member of the public said he was at the meeting when the proposed options regarding the Public Space Protection Order were discussed and members of the public had raised concerns. He asked if Lewes District Council will have seen the objections or if it was a waste of time voicing concerns.

Cllr R Maskell confirmed that LewesDC will have seen the objections.

Another member of the public asked why sheep are always grazing on the Tye.

Cllr Page then asked the public present if they were all here to ask questions about the proposed Public Space Protection Order to which they replied yes. Cllr Page then advised that the Town Clerk would read a statement which would hopefully answer a lot of possible questions.

The Town Clerk read the statement as follows:-

Telscombe Town Council purchased Telscombe Tye in 1989 and is now the registered owner of the land. The money for the purchase came from the equivalent of what today is 'Council Tax' and as with any purchase made by the Council, be it a bus shelter, lamp post or playground equipment, it is owned by the Council not members of the public.

The Tye is registered Common Land and in the Commons Register the tenant of Stud Farm (no matter who the tenant is) has rights to graze 252 sheep every day of the year. Also the owner of Kirby Farm has the rights to graze 100 sheep every day of the year.

Once Common Land has been registered, it cannot be de-registered and it would not matter who owns the Tye, the grazing of sheep will always be a requisite. Similarly as it is registered Common Land the owner of the Tye cannot fence it where and when they like, but

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1201. Public Question Time (Contd)

have to apply to the Secretary of State for permission. Telscombe Town Council did make an application for fencing in an effort to try and separate areas for sheep and walkers, but unfortunately following a 4 day Inquiry, the application was turned down. Some works are exempt from the Section 38 consent process which includes erection of temporary fencing (including electric fencing) for a period not exceeding 6 months, but it is limited to 10% of the area of the register unit of which it forms, which is not a large enough area to contain the sheep flock.

In 2012 the Council purchased a 'community flock' of 100 sheep with the intention of breeding the sheep and selling the lambs for profit. This income for the Council helps to keep the Council tax down. Also the Tye is chalk grassland which was created by sheep grazing and to conserve it, it must continue to be grazed. We do have an information board on the wall in our reception area regarding the chalk grassland.

The possibility of a Public Space Protection Order for Telscombe Tye to control dog walking and hopefully alleviate sheep attacks has been discussed and agreed by Telscombe Town Council at various meetings since late last year. This follows an unprecedented large number of deaths of the Council's flock due to dog attacks (over 30 deaths in 2017). The Council's flock is totally separate from that of Stud Farm and the Council therefore has nothing whatsoever to do with the Stud Farm flock.

Agendas and paperwork for Council meetings are published on the Council's website prior to the meeting for everyone to see. Agendas are also placed in the Council's notice boards which clearly state the business to be discussed. All information regarding the proposed PSPO has therefore been advertised and we encourage people to look at the Council's website on a regular basis.

A PSPO has to be put in place by the District Council not the Town Council and they have therefore taken the lead on this. A statement by LewesDC is as follows:-

LDC statement for Telscombe Town Council Policy and Resources Committee – 3 September 2018

The issues of sheep worrying and sheep attacks on the Tye are well documented. A consultation is being proposed to look at a number of different options for a Public Spaces Protection Order to address these issues.

Nothing has been decided yet and all residents will have an opportunity to feed their views into the consultation.

The District Council consulted the Kennel Club when putting together the proposed options for consultation and these reflect the charities feedback.

The decision about whether to consult will go to LewesDC Cabinet on 17 September 2018. If it goes ahead, the consultation would begin later in this month. **(and last for 8 weeks).*

The District Council would welcome all views on the proposals, including alternative proposals.

If you would like to speak to a Council Officer about the proposed consultation please give your details to the meeting Chair.

**additional comment by Stella for clarification.*

The member of the public that asked why the sheep are always on the Tye then said that this did not answer his question.

The Town Clerk responded that as in the statement she had read out, 2 farms have grazing rights for sheep on the Tye 365 days a year.

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1201. Public Question Time (Contd)

A member of the public asked who gets the EU subsidy.
Cllr R Maskell replied the Council do.

Another member of the public asked what evident there was that the deaths are due to dog attacks and whether there are any toxicology reports.

Cllr R Maskell replied that the farmer would have to be asked regarding whether there are any toxicology reports and let him know.

Another member of the public asked if the Council still had the HLS Agreement in place as it states that sheep should come off the Tye for 6 weeks.

Cllr Wilkins replied that they are taken off for that period normally in October.

Another member of the public asked why the farmer doesn't want to co-operate with the public and take the sheep off the Tye.

Cllr Page advised that he cannot answer on behalf of the farmer. He said that the Council are not doing anything to upset the public and that since they purchased the flock in 2012, this is the first time that the public have come to a meeting to complain and it is because of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). He explained that the public consultation period will give everyone the chance to state their view and that the meeting this evening is not to discuss the PSPO.

Another member of the public asked if there is a ratio of sheep to land.

Cllr R Maskell advised that Natural England advised that the Tye is under grazed.

Another member of public said that he thinks we are wasting tax payer's money regarding the PSPO. Although he understands that Stud Farm has grazing rights, he feels that there is an unhealthy relationship between the Council and the farmer. Rather than the Council stating that there is nothing they can do regarding the farm's grazing rights, he wants the Council to take it away to work more closely for the benefit of the public.

Cllr Page replied that he is welcome to go to the Councillor's surgery which is for an hour on the first Saturday of every month, when there will be more time to discuss issues and he now had to draw the public question time to a close.

A member of the public said he though public question time was being extended.

Cllr B Page explained that it had been extended by 15 minutes and now the Committee had to commence with the business on the agenda. Several members of the public then left the meeting.

1202. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllrs T Armour and A Smith due to work commitments and D Wright due to annual leave. The reasons for absence were **agreed** by the Committee. In the absence of Cllr Wright, the Committee Chairman, the Vice-Chairman Cllr Page chaired the meeting.

1203. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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1204. TO DISCUSS, APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2nd JULY 2018

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting and it was proposed by Cllr J Harris, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RESOLVED** that they were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Vice-Chairman, Cllr B Page.

1205. TO NOTE ACTION LIST

The points on the action list were noted.

1206. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

It was noted that updates were due to be carried out shortly regarding progress with the PSPO. There were no other updates.

1207. TO RECEIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO 30th JULY 2018

The Committee's income and expenditure figures to the 30th July 2018, of £52,186 expenditure and £123,178 income were unanimously **agreed**.

1208. TO AGREE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 30th JUNE 2018

The Town Clerk/RFO confirmed that the first quarter's bank reconciliations for the 2018/19 financial year up to 30th June had been checked by Cllr R Maskell on 22nd August. Cllr R Maskell had found the reconciliations to be in order showing total bank and cash balances of £455,631.60 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 was unanimously **agreed**.

1209. COMMUNITY FLOCK FINANCES AND RECORDS

Cllr Robinson explained that as a new Councillor, she did not feel that the Council had been transparent regarding the community flock. She therefore had a list of questions and requested that the answers be brought back to the next meeting. Her questions were as follows:-

1. Is there a signed partnership agreement between both parties and what are the heads of terms? (length of contract, break clause, welfare, etc)
2. Does the community flock have in their own right:
 - a) CPH (County Parish Holding) Number
 - b) Flock Number
 - c) Movement Licence
 - d) Sheep identification
 - e) Flock holding register - supplied by Defra
 - f) Medicine book recording all medicines purchased and administered
3. Profitability of the community flock – can the P&L account for 2016/2017 be presented to include stock, sale and loss of sheep, vets bills, sale of wool etc...



1209. Community Flock Finances and Records (Contd)

4. Welfare of the flock – in conjunction with the vet is there a yearly written health and welfare plan for the flock which include sufficient information to assess the basic output of the flock i.e. a record of lambing percentage and lambing records for each ewe

Cllr Page thanked Cllr Robinson for her diligence and advised that as per her request, answers will be brought back to the next meeting.

1210. TO AGREE CUTTING OF THE TYE

The Town Clerk advised that since issue of the agenda and report regarding the cutting of the lower part of the Tye, there had been some updates. The only contractor that had submitted a quotation, T J & R L Armour, originally advised in the quote that they were available to cut the Tye on Thursday 6th September, but subsequently advised they could only carry out the work on Monday 3rd September. The Town Clerk had therefore emailed Committee members requesting authorisation for the work to commence as per the quotation sent with the agenda and, having received a majority positive response, the cutting had gone ahead. The Town Clerk further explained that unfortunately the Council had only received one response for carrying out the work and, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1(h) the Clerk/RFO should strive to obtain 3 estimates otherwise regulation 10.3 shall apply which requires an order as far as reasonable and practicable to be the best available terms. It was therefore proposed by Cllr R Maskell, seconded by Cllr D Brindley and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** that the quotation for cutting the lower half of the Tye in the sum of £1,500 plus VAT be accepted.

1211. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK RE SCRUB CLEARANCE DISPOSAL

It was noted that the South Downs National Park Ranger is to carry out scrub clearance on the cross dyke area of the Tye and was seeking permission to have a fire on site to burn the wood that had been cleared. It was proposed by Cllr D Brindley, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** that permission be granted for the Ranger to burn the cleared scrub on the Tye.

1212. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING

None.

1213. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

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1214. TO DISCUSS, APPROVE & SIGN CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON 21st MAY and 15th AUGUST 2018

Cllr D Brindley requested that the minutes of the meetings on 21st May and 15th August 2018 be accepted and the recommendations contained therein be adopted, seconded by Cllr C Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted. In the absence of the sub-committee Chairman, it was **agreed** that the minutes were signed by Cllr B Page, Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee who was Chair of this evening’s meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.21pm.

Signed
Chairman

Next meeting of the Committee – Monday 12th November 2018