

# TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of the TELSCOMBE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30 pm.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors: T Armour *Deputy Mayor*, D Brindley *Mayor*, J Harris, G Maskell, R Maskell, B Page, C Robinson, I Sharkey, J Wilkins & D Wright

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Approx. 21 members of the public, Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO

## **233. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor A Smith due to a prior engagement.

## **234. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2018**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr R Maskell, seconded by Cllr J Wilkins, approved by the Councillors present and signed as a true record by the Mayor, Cllr D Brindley.

## **235. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:-**

### **a) Amenities & Civic Centre – Cllr G Maskell**

Cllr G Maskell began by thanking her fellow committee members for their team work in making projects come together and continuing to work very hard for the community.

She advised about installation of the car park barrier and a new waste bin outside the Coastway Veterinary Practice, reminding everyone that all waste bins are now dual purpose for rubbish and dog waste.

She highlighted commemorative activities such as the unveiling of a plaque by the entrance to the Civic Centre for the Telscombe Cliffs Airfield and the raising of the Red Ensign flag at the Civic Centre for Merchant Navy Day.

Cllr G Maskell listed functions held by the Council including the ever popular monthly bingo and boozy bingo evenings which are now in their 12<sup>th</sup> year, the Macmillan coffee morning, fireworks event, Christmas evening and Christmas coffee morning, all of which were well supported and raise valuable funds for local charities. The next function is the Mayor's end of term informal entertainment evening with Cllr Brian Page and music by Stan Newman.

Regarding working with the community, Cllr G Maskell advised that the Council had permitted access to Chatsworth Park for the Telscombe Cliffs Forest School and Peacehaven Heights Beach School children and had donated litter pickers to Telscombe School. She had also helped organise Lewes District Council to donate the redundant black recycling boxes to Telscombe School for their allotment garden. Also the Council had organised Telscombe School reception children to visit Stud Farm and provided transport free of charge and she thanked Cllr Armour for his hard work during the children's visits.

Cllr G Maskell informed everyone that the major project over the last year was the refurbishment of the Council's 3 playspaces after several years of planning. There had been many hurdles to overcome, but works were now complete. Lots of new equipment had been

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## a) Amenities & Civic Centre Report – Cllr G Maskell (Contd)

installed, surrounded by colourful new fences and gates. She thanked Chris Bibb of Lewes District Council for his management, guidance and assistance with gaining sponsorship during the project. The Committee's next undertaking is to upgrade the Civic Centre kitchens, carry out electrical and redecoration work to keep the Civic Centre a pleasant and inviting building for the community and hirers.

Finally, Cllr G Maskell thanked Stella Newman, the Town Clerk, for her hard work over the last year, Karen Shaddick who had been promoted to Senior Admin Assistant and welcomed Bianca Buss, Amenities Officer and Diana Joel, Admin Assistant to the team. Along with the office staff, the caretakers ensure things run smoothly and she thanked them all for helping to carry out the Councillors workload for them.

Cllr Maskell also thanked volunteer Stan Newman, whose services are called upon to help with music, quizzes and photographs.

## b) Planning & Highways – Cllr J Wilkins

Cllr Wilkins advised that the Committee meets every 3 weeks and although it is only advisory, it does provide an important link between residents and the Lewes District Council (LDC) Planning Authority. She advised that due to the growing complexity of planning legislation, training had been arranged for Councillors and Officers from a former director of LDC's Planning Department which has enabled members to comment more effectively on the applications brought before the Committee. This is borne out by statistics which show that of the 87 applications considered this year (almost double from last year), the Committee's decisions were upheld by LDC in 83% of cases. For information, Cllr Wilkins advised that 82 were domestic applications of which LDC granted 37, refused 13, 1 was withdrawn, 2 were certification for lawful development and 29 were still awaiting a decision from LDC. The other 5 include 3 tree work applications and 2 for Southern Water's Portobello installation.

Cllr Wilkins advised that the Committee are also responsible for matters concerning Council owned assets such as bus shelters, street lights and also grass verge cutting. They liaise between residents and East Sussex County Council and other bodies on issues connected to the public highways.

Regarding the tree planting scheme, Cllr Wilkins said that, having encountered more delays, it had been decided that now all elements finally appear to be in place, the scheme will be implemented at the beginning of the next planting season in the autumn.

Cllr Wilkins ended by saying she was indebted to fellow committee members and stalwart Councillors who act as substitutes who have to read large amounts of material prior to each meeting and discuss each application on both its own merits and, more importantly, on its impact on the town, residents and local amenities. She also thanked Bianca, Amenities Officer for her careful research and advice, Karen and Diana for checking the weekly lists of applications and compiling paperwork and Stella, Town Clerk for her advice on legal issues and matters of protocol. It was a team effort and she was proud to have been the Chairman of the Committee for the last year.

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## c) Policy & Resources – Cllr D Wright

Cllr Wright advised that the community flock is its largest resource and for this year there has been a fall in ewes to 69. The flock provides income which helped maintain the band D Council tax at £89.27 for 2018/19. Due to ewe losses, Lewes District Council had proposed a Public Space Protection Order for the Tye, but following public consultation had decided not to enforce the order, but they may in the future if they feel it is necessary.

He advised that the Committee also has several sub committees including Audit and Employment who had restructured the admin staff and employed more part-time staff resulting in an overall saving. The Grants sub-committee had agreed grants totalling £7,990 in total.

The Committee had updated Council policies, including the Freedom of Information in accordance with national guidelines.

Cllr Wright ended by advising that the Council's assets total £1,791,218 and for the 2019/20 financial year the Council's part of the Council tax has had a .05p decrease to £89.23 for a band D property. He also thanked the existing staff, Stella, the Town Clerk, for her extra work involved surrounding the PSPO and also the new staff.

## **236. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE TOWN MAYOR, CLLR D BRINDLEY**

Cllr D Brindley, advised it had been a great honour and privilege to be the Mayor of Telscombe for the last year.

During that time he had attended:- the RNLI fete in Newhaven; Blind Veteran's fete in Ovingdean; a school talent competition at Peacehaven Heights Junior School; a Civic Service for his term as Mayor at the Telscombe Community Church in Buckhurst Road; the Deans Senior Tea Club held at the Civic Centre as often as he could; the Council run children's Halloween party, fabulous firework display, Macmillan coffee morning and many bingo evenings; the Lewes bonfire celebrations; the Remembrance Day parade and service at the Peacehaven & Telscombe War Memorial; the Peacehaven Players Christmas pantomime; Peacehaven Community School's musical Grease and various carol concerts. He advised the highlight was the Christmas day breakfast morning held at the Civic Centre, the helpers on the day and before-hand who offered support were fantastic. He had also taken part in the unveiling of the Tommy statue in Peacehaven.

Next on the itinerary is his end of term celebration party on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April, where dressing as your favourite celebrity was optional and he advised you will be able to see the Mayor's Misfits live. Tickets are on sale at the Civic Centre and include a buffet.

Cllr Brindley ended by expressing his gratitude to his fellow Councillors and Council staff for all their help and advice during his term, as without all their help his charity fund would not be as healthy as it is.

## **237. TO RECEIVE REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK – STELLA NEWMAN**

The Town Clerk, Stella Newman, advised that the Chairmen's reports had covered the activities of the Council, so there wasn't much for her to report on.

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## **237. To Receive Report By The Town Clerk – Stella Newman (Contd)**

She gave thanks to the Councillors for their contribution, not only for the last year, but the 4 years of their term of office. There had been many events that had taken place which they had attended voluntarily to help raise funds for the Mayor's charity fund, as well as attending the Council and committee meetings and the monthly Councillors' surgeries. She explained that the 2 new Councillors who were elected at the by-election last March have now been in office for a year and thanked them for their input during that time. Also the 2 new members of staff, Diana on reception and Bianca the Amenities Officer have also nearly been at the Council for a year. They have added to an effective team of staff and the Clerk thanked them and the existing staff, Karen the Senior Admin Assistant, Mick the daytime caretaker and out of hours caretakers Tom and Graham for their hard work and continued support throughout the year.

## **238. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS**

None.

The Mayor advised that we would now move on to verbal questions from local electors. However, to avoid delay with checking that they are local electors and to ensure that the questions were answered accurately, verbal responses would not be given this evening, but written responses would be issued. Once issued, the written responses would be noted in the minutes for information.

## **239. TO RECEIVE FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL ELECTORS**

Pat Bowman, Chairman of the Telscombe Residents Association advised he had a statement rather than a question and thanked Cllr Ron Maskell for his help on social housing and asked if Telscombe Town Council could put pressure on Lewes District Council to improve infrastructure and implored the Council to use whatever influence they have.

The names and addresses of electors that asked a question were recorded by the Town Clerk so that a written response could be issued to them.

An elector asked for the profitability of the community flock in 2017 and also when her previous email query would be answered.

*Cllr R Maskell advised that advice from a vet had been sought regarding her email query and an answer will be issued to her shortly. (Reply emailed on 15th March)*

*Subsequent written response from the Town Clerk:-*

*I attach a spreadsheet showing the profit and loss from all years, including 2017, of the community flock. This spreadsheet is available on the Council's website. (actual profit for 2017 -£506.49).*

An elector asked the Council to confirm that, as stated in the Policy & Resources meeting minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017, if the HLS Agreement targets are not met by the end of the agreement in 2022, that all monies received may have to be returned in the region of £45000 and how does the Council propose to fund this? She said she had several other questions and she was asked to email them to the Town Clerk for a written response.

*Subsequent written response from the Town Clerk:-*

*The minutes state that the Town Clerk said 'we have the 'potential' of paying back all monies previously paid, being up to £45,000.' I have looked through available correspondence the previous Town Clerk had with Natural England and cannot find any reference to this. I have a meeting with Natural England next month and will ask them for confirmation regarding this.*

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## 239. To Receive Further Questions from Local Electors (Contd)

Subsequent emailed questions from the same elector and Town Clerk's responses are as follows:-

Q. Did TTC have any undertaking from Mr Armour in 2012 that he was supportive of the grazing regime required by Natural England in order to meet the targets set by the HLS agreement?

A. No.

Q. If there was an undertaking in 2012 at what point did Cllr Armour withdraw his support of the HLS Agreement. (by failing to remove sheep from the Tye between May and July during the flowering/seeding and bird nesting seasons)

A. N/A.

Q. If there was no undertaking by Mr Armour, why and how did the council proceed with the HLS Agreement knowing that its targets were unlikely to be met?

A. *The Council did not know that its targets were unlikely to be met.*

An elector asked if the sheep would be taken off the Tye in the summer.  
*Subsequent written answer from the Town Clerk.*

An elector asked why the sheep were reduced to 69.

*Cllr Page advised her this was due to sheep deaths over the last year and the Council had decided not to purchase additional ewes to make the flock up to the previously agreed 100.*

*Subsequent written answer from the Town Clerk:-*

*I know Cllr Page answered your question on the night, however, would like to reiterate that although the Council had previously agreed to maintain a flock of 100 ewes, due to deaths over the last year the flock has reduced to 69 and it was agreed at a Council meeting in September not to purchase additional ewes for the 2018/19 season which started last October.*

An elector asked if the Council will seek a public vote on whether to continue with the community flock.

*Cllr Brindley advised her that it will be down to the new administration in May to make that decision.*

An elector said that Cllr Wright had said in his presentation that Lewes District Council had not proceeded with the Public Space Protection Order due to a limited community response and he asked for clarification on this.

*Subsequent written answer from the Town Clerk:-*

*I refer to the question you raised at the Annual Town Meeting regarding Cllr Wright's comment that LDC had not proceeded with the PSPO due to a limited community response. I have contacted Cllr Wright regarding this and he advises me that he meant that there was an overall low response to the PSPO from the electors in Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean, being only 13%.*

An elector asked what steps Telscombe Town Council are taking to ensure the HLS Agreement is being adhered to.

An elector asked if any accrual was made for stock replacement in the Council's accounts.

*Subsequent written answer from the Town Clerk:-*

*The Council's accounts are on a cash in and cash out basis and no allowance is made for accruals.*

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An elector asked what the purpose of the barrier was as it is always left open. She was asked for clarification of what barrier she was referring to and she advised the one on bridle way 8. *Cllr R Maskell advised that key-holders are obviously leaving it open over which the Council had no control and Cllr Brindley advised the Council would write to key-holders reminding them to close it behind them.*

*Subsequent written answer from the Town Clerk:-*

*As answered by Cllr R Maskell at the meeting, unfortunately we have no control over key-holders leaving the bridleway 8 gate open and Cllr Brindley advised that TTC would write to key holders reminding them to lock the gate. It has subsequently been agreed by the Planning & Highways Committee to leave the gate open for a period of 6 weeks and to monitor the situation. The continuance of the gate will then be discussed at a Planning & Highways meeting on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019.*

An elector advised that cows are escaping from the farm's field and asked what the Council are going to do about it.

*Cllr Brindley advised that the Council are not responsible for this and the land they had escaped onto, being the playing fields in Telscombe Cliffs Way, was owned by LewesDC.*

There being no further questions, the Mayor closed the meeting at 8.04pm.

Signed .....  
MAYOR