

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of the **TELSCOMBE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held on **Wednesday 26th May 2021** in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT Councillors: C Clarkson, C Gallagher, D Judd *Mayor*,
L Mills, L O'Connor, C Robinson *Deputy Mayor* & A Smith

ALSO PRESENT Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
3 members of the public via Zoom

240. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Sharkey due to a prior commitment.

241. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th MARCH 2019

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Robinson who was present at the last meeting, seconded by Cllr Clarkson, approved by the Councillors present and signed as a true record by the Mayor, Cllr D Judd.

242. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:-

a) Planning & Highways – Cllr Robinson, Vice Chair

In the absence of the Committee Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Robinson, gave a report. She advised that committee meetings are held every three weeks. She explained that Telscombe Town Council is consulted by Lewes District Council, the Planning Authority, on planning applications but we are only statutory consultees in the planning process. This meant that we only have the right to be informed of planning applications and the final decision is made by the Planning Authority and not the Town Council but they do take our comments into consideration before making the final decision on a planning application.

Planning applications considered by the committee during the past 12 months April 2020 - March 2021 totalled 49 (35 supported and 14 objected) of which 33 have been approved by Lewes DC, 8 refused and 8 are still awaiting a decision.

Cllr Robinson explained that the Committee are also responsible for matters concerning Council owned assets such as bus shelters, some street lights, grass verge cutting, the Peacehaven & Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan as well as liaising between residents and ESCC and other bodies on issues connected to the public highways.

Unfortunately, the verge tree planting scheme which many residents were keen to be involved with, was not able to progress due to the underground services being too near the surface on the proposed verges. The committee have now gone back to ESCC Highways to see if hedges would be a more favourable alternative and await their decision.

Cllr Robinson ended by advising that we are committed to improve the biodiversity of our local area as well as encouraging habitats for bees, butterflies and insects by introducing wildflowers to our verges in certain areas. The verges at Crowborough Road, Telscombe Tye, Gorham Court and Telscombe Road where it turns into Kirby Drive have now been formally designated by ESCC as wildflower verges for 2021.



242. To Receive Reports from the Chairmen of the Following Committees (Contd):-

b) Policy & Resources - Cllr Clarkson, Chair

Cllr Clarkson started by commending and thanking the Council staff for their incredible work over the last 12 months. It had been an unprecedented time and they have all been a credit to the town.

He explained that despite the difficulties of the last year the P&R committee had managed to progress a number of key issues which will not only improve council operations but also the town. The first is the Enquiry and Feedback mechanism. This was devised with Cllrs Robinson and Gallagher, Diana Joel and himself and is a method to track and respond to resident communications. It increases transparency but also provides Councillors with data on what issues are being reported and where, ensuring we better understand the needs and concerns of residents and can react.

He also advised there has also been progress with wild flowering for the Tye which has been a project driven by Cllr Robinson and the Town Clerk, Stella Newman. The committee is keen to improve the biodiversity of the Tye for residents now and in the future and although the last year had made it difficult for TTC to progress as quickly as we would like to Cllr Robinson and Stella had managed to push this forward. He also explained that we now have expert land management advice in place to support the committee in how best to improve the Tye as an asset for the town but also a unique habitat for wildflowers and birds. This is feeding into plans for a formalised Tye management document which will help council operations and promote the Tye.

Cllr Clarkson ended by advising he had enjoyed his time as chair of the committee and hoped the work that had been started can progress to greater improvements.

c) Amenities & Civic Centre – Cllr Gallagher, Chair

Telscombe Town Parks are Chatsworth Park, The Copse and Robert Kingan Playground.

Cllr Gallagher advised that the last twelve months had been dominated by the Covid 19 Pandemic which had prevented meetings taking place inside, but the Committee had been able to carry on with the plans for improving the amenity value of the open spaces by holding meetings via Zoom.

She explained that in August 2020 a survey was delivered to all of the 77 homes whose gardens border Chatsworth Park and the Copse. The aim was to find out how they felt about the boundary and the wildlife. 40% of residents responded and all replies were collated and the opportunity taken to contact those with specific issues. The Committee learnt that residents want to be given the opportunity to be involved with the decisions made regarding plans for the upkeep and improvements to Chatsworth Park and The Copse.

Cllr Gallagher advised that the Committee wished to pro-actively manage the green spaces to enhance the existing facilities to reduce the weeds and invasive undergrowth and introduce a greater variety of blossoming and colourful trees, bushes and plants and to that end a Management Plan is being produced with reports commissioned to feed in to it. She explained that there is a lot to do and community volunteers will help TTC bring positive change. Chatsworth Park Café Working Group, Friends of Chatsworth Park and Telscombe Town Tree Wardens are already supporting and actively working in the Parks. A trial mobile café and public toilet had been introduced to Chatsworth Park.

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242. To Receive Reports From The Chairmen Of The Following Committees (Contd):-

c) Amenities & Civic Centre – Cllr Gallagher, Chair (Contd)

Regarding the Memory Garden, Cllr Gallagher said it is a place for quiet reflection within nature. In the Spring and Summer 2021 more attention and care will be given to the central planting mound to encourage a more colourful planting regime and memorial benches and plaques can be purchased from the Town Council.

Keeping Telscombe Town tidy and litter free remains a Town Council objective, the provision of dual waste bins and educational notices are plentiful.

Cllr Gallagher ended by saying that the Civic Centre as the Community Hub had been closed for events and hire through lockdown, but as we come out of lockdown, maintenance and congregating will be resuming and events will be planned.

243. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE OUTGOING TOWN MAYOR, CLLR I SHARKEY

Cllr I Sharkey had given her apologies, so the new Mayor, Cllr Judd, read her report.

She advised that it had been a pleasure to have served a second term as mayor because of Covid and the resulting lockdown and in many ways it had been a “caretaker” year, with things just ticking over.

Her report advised there had been a few in person duties to perform: the flag raising for Merchant Navy day, a small Victory over Japan commemoration and Remembrance Day ceremony in Peacehaven were the only formal events I attended, but she had also been invited to attend a birthday celebration for a Saltdean resident who turned 100 in the autumn, and more recently the opening of two memorial benches, also in Saltdean. Apart from those, all other events were online: there had been a few Mayors and Chairs networking events on Zoom hosted by The High Sheriff and The Lord Lieutenant where they were able to share experiences of the unprecedented year. All had been worthwhile events, even though participants obviously had to provide their own refreshments!

To try and support local residents, Cllr Sharkey explained she had recorded a few video messages which she hoped had been of some support to those who watched them.

Regarding donations, Cllr Sharkey advised that at the end of her first main year she was able to donate what was left over from her mayoral allowance of £1,000 to the local foodbank as well as give 4 local charities (The City Cat Shelter, Autism Sussex, The House Project, Art Works Sussex) an equal spilt of the money I'd raised in that year and that at the end of her second year she had donated £711.50 each to the Lewes Citizens Advice and Kempton House day centre.

Finally Cllr Sharkey wished her successor the very best for the coming year.

244. TO RECEIVE REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK – STELLA NEWMAN

The Town Clerk, Stella Newman, said that as in previous years, the reports from the Committee Chairs had covered the activities of the Council over the last year so there was not



244. To Receive Report by the Town Clerk – Stella Newman (Contd)

much for her to add. However, she advised that the current Councillors had now been in office for 2 years and had a proactive approach to their role. They had implemented many plans to enhance our area, especially Chatsworth Park and she thanked them for their support and assistance.

Regarding the Civic Centre, she advised that unfortunately due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it had been closed to hirers over the last year. In times of total lockdown, the Civic Centre also had to close reception for public enquiries. However, it had still been an extremely busy year and office staff had adapted to working a combination of from home and in the office and she thanked them for their flexibility and hard work. She advised that TTC will shortly be employing a new member of office staff and she looked forward to working with her. She advised that the daytime caretaker had been doing a sterling effort to keep the Civic Centre clean and sanitised and had also undertaken minor maintenance works. The two evening/weekend caretakers had been furloughed, but hopefully TTC will be able to welcome them back soon and return to some sort of normality.

245. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP, CLLR C GALLAGHER

Cllr Gallagher advised that the Vision for the NDP is for Peacehaven and Telscombe towns to provide a good quality of life for all residents and an environment which is sustainable with clean air.

She explained that in 2011 through the Localism Act 2011 the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was introduced to give Towns and Councils more say as to how Communities develop and where new homes, businesses, sports and leisure facilities are sited. Once adopted the NDP and its local policies is a legal document which carries weight in determining planning applications.

She advised that in 2013 Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils resolved to work together and the plan area was designated. The proposed plan is complex and difficult as it combines two towns and an increasing population circa 25,000 and evidenced reports had been prepared by Consultants paid for by grants from Locality which is funded by central government. The fact that two Towns are preparing an NDP ring fences the land from speculative development and once adopted the Towns will receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) instead of the current 15% which means the Towns have more control over the spending on infrastructure.

Regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Meridian site, Cllr Gallagher advised that it is an important opportunity for the two Towns to become sustainable. Two public consultation surveys had taken place and the first was undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the Masterplan concept from AECOM. The owners of the Meridian Centre are Co-op Properties who have also conducted a pre-application survey, but the future of the Meridian Site is undecided as at May 2021.

Cllr Gallagher ended by advising that maintaining and protecting local green spaces, parks and recreational facilities (including new 'pocket parks'), creating alternatives to travelling on the congested A259, walkways and cycle tracks, improving the public realm, supporting business and employment, attracting tourism are some of the projects to be included in the NDP which will benefit residents and the environment. It is hoped the draft plan will be

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245. To Receive Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, Cllr C Gallagher

complete by September 2021.

246. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

None.

The Mayor advised that we would now move on to verbal questions from local electors.

247. TO RECEIVE FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL ELECTORS

Mr Pat Bowman from the Telscombe Residents' Association began by thanking Councillors and staff and congratulated Cllr David Judd on his appointment as Mayor and wished him all the best for his mayoral year.

Mr Bowman then advised that in 75 years there may not be an A259 and asked what the Council is doing about it. Cllr Robinson advised that Lewes District Council had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Environment Agency to build defences from Ambleside Avenue to Portobello. It will need Government funding and will take time, but there will be consultations with residents and the Town Council.

There being no further questions, the Mayor closed the meeting at 7.59pm.

Signed
MAYOR