

# TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of the **Telscombe Annual Town Meeting** held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30 pm.

**PRESENT** Councillors: C Cheta, C Clarkson, C Gallagher, J Harris, D Judd *Mayor*, L O'Connor, B Page, C Robinson, A Selby & I Sharkey

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

## 256. **APOLOGIES**

Cllrs Mills and Smith sent apologies due to a prior engagement. Cllr Brindley was absent but had not sent apologies.

## 257. **TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022**

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

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

### a) **Amenities & Civic Centre (ACC) – Cllr Clarkson, Chair**

Cllr Clarkson thanked the Council staff for their hard work and commitment over the last 12 months and said that the output of the Council and its ability to deliver for residents is nothing without the dedication and hard work of the staff.

He advised that the responsibilities of the ACC committee are the upkeep, running and ongoing improvement of the town's amenities like parks and playgrounds as well as the Civic Centre. To help with this an access survey was conducted of Chatsworth Park and more recently a survey of park users and the responses have allowed the committee to begin to focus on specific areas for improvement. Updates are added to the town website and with the support of the Telscombe Residents Association, and a CIL grant from Lewes District Council, new information boards had been installed in the park.

He went on to say that ACC Committee also covers the events working group which has been key to planning some incredible events not just to raise funds for the Mayor's charities but to celebrate our community. The highlights of the last 12 months were the outstanding summer fayre and the Disney Sing-a-long hosted at the Civic Centre.

He advised the Chatsworth Park Volunteer Group, consisting of residents and Councillors, had been co-ordinated by the ACC committee and they had gone from strength the strength. The group meets monthly to carry out the work of the Chatsworth Park and Copse management plan, including introducing wildflower meadows, bulb planting, dead wood cutbacks and the installation of 2 hibernaculum and several log pile habitats.

He advised that the ACC committee had been building strong links with the community and encouraging people into the park. This included Wander Coffee concession in the park, use of the forest school area for a local community interest company and Meridian Primary students making bee homes and bat boxes.

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## 258. To Receive Reports from the Chairmen of the Following Committees (Contd)

### a) Amenities & Civic Centre (ACC) – Cllr Clarkson, Chair

Cllr Clarkson finished by saying that the value of our green spaces had never been more clear and he was very grateful to have had an opportunity to work with this committee.

### b) Planning & Highways (P&H) – Cllr I Sharkey, Vice-Chair

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Brindley, the Vice-Chair, Cllr Sharkey, read his report. It explained that the committee meets every three weeks and although the Town Council is consulted by Lewes District Council (LDC), the Planning Authority, on planning applications, 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. However, LDC do take our comments into consideration before making the final decision on a planning application.

She advised that planning applications for 2022/23 to date totalled 53. The Committee had supported 36, of which 18 had been approved by LDC and they had objected to 14 of which 4 had been approved by LDC. There were still 29 applications awaiting a decision from LDC.

Cllr Sharkey went on to advise that amongst other things, the Planning and Highways Committee are also responsible for Telscombe Town Council owned bus shelters, arranging the grass verge cutting on behalf of East Sussex County Council, some street lighting in and around our parks and are involved in the Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### c) Policy & Resources (P&R) - Cllr Gallagher, Chair

Cllr Gallagher advised that the P&R Committee is responsible for reviewing and implementing the many policies and regulations required by law for a Town Council. She explained that Standing Orders and a Code of Conduct are adopted by the Town Council to ensure that all procedures and people connected with the Council operate within agreed boundaries and that there are Financial Regulations as well, covering Council spending, the amount of reserves held and the uses identified for those reserves to be spent on.

She advised that there are also 3 sub-Committees reporting to the P&R Committee namely: Audit, Employment and Grants.

She advised that the Council benefits from an experienced team of staff lead by The Town Clerk who is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and that the finances had been carefully managed over several years to allow for all commitments to be covered, with investment into improved amenities as well.

Cllr Gallagher also advised the Committee covers Telscombe Tye which is Common Land owned and managed by Telscombe Town Council. The Tye is a unique chalk grassland and part of the South Downs National Park extending to the cliff edge. It is subject to legal agreements and many laws of the land as laid down by Parliament. To make any changes to the maintenance and what happens on the Tye, the Council as owners have to seek professional or legal advice to make sure we are not breaching Commoners or public rights.

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## c) Policy & Resources (P&R) - Cllr Gallagher, Chair (Contd)

She advised that Stud Farm are situated on Gorham Trust Land, there are two farms with land adjacent to Gorhams Way and the National Trust also have land to the north.

The current Higher Level Stewardship Agreement by which the Council gets a grant to manage and protect the Tye comes to an end in April 2023 and an inspection is due by Natural England before a decision on the way forward will be taken.

She ended by advising that an Access Report was commissioned in April 2021 and the Committee is working through the report and its recommendations to improve accessibility for all and hopefully there will be better entrances and more resting places as we move through 2023.

## **259. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE TOWN MAYOR, CLLR D JUDD**

Cllr Judd started by advising that he felt incredibly proud to have served two terms as Mayor of Telscombe and East Saltdean.

He wanted to thank all of the community, local businesses, Councillors and other fundraisers for their generosity and to those who had given so much of their valuable spare time to help raise funds for his Charities. He wanted to ensure there was a 50/50 split between Telscombe and East Saltdean and advised that the beneficiaries were:-

The CTLA whose transport service provides such an important role throughout the Community.

The local Food Bank which is relied upon by an ever-increasing number of families and individuals. He then encouraged everyone to continue to donate to any food bank facility whenever they could afford to do so.

Boomerang Kids Childrens Nursery to ensure children can still attend if their parents or carers are struggling financially.

Kempton House day Centre which is a hive of activity and much used facility.

He ended by saying he had attended many functions and events over the last year and from May onwards was looking forward to supporting the new Mayor in their role and helping to fundraise for good causes and charities in the Community.

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

The Town Clerk said that as in previous years, the reports from the Committee Chairs had covered the activities of the Council over the last year. She thanked the current Councillors for their support and assistance over the last year. She advised that there had been a change of Committee Chairs last May and they had been pro-active in implementing actions and policies to enhance the Council's way of working and to develop the local area, especially Chatsworth Park and the Council-owned playgrounds.

She said that with the cost-of-living crises, the Civic Centre had opened up one afternoon a week as a warm hub for residents to come to, but unfortunately the attendance had been low.

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## **260. To Receive Report by the Town Clerk – Stella Newman (Contd)**

She advised that the Council had been lucky to have Cllr David Judd as Mayor for a second term of office and he not claimed any of his Mayor's allowance for carrying out his Mayoral duties so that he could use it to donate to local charities/groups. His fundraising efforts, especially the popular monthly bingo evening, had raised over £4,000 which again he will donate to local charities/groups.

She advised that following the re-opening of the Civic Centre after the Covid lockdown, inroads had been made into re-building its usage, as unfortunately some hirers decided not to return after realising they could work in alternative ways.

She finished by saying that the staff ensure all services are maintained to a high level and thanked them for their continued dedication to their duties.

## **261. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) STEERING GROUP, CLLR C GALLAGHER**

Cllr Gallagher advised that after some six years of evidence gathering, the Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan to 2030 is due to enter its final stage and go to Referendum around September 2023, after being verified by a Government approved examiner chosen by the planning authority, Lewes District Council. She advised that all of the documents, including the Plan Policy Document and a Design Guide, and evidence gathered and compiled could be found on Lewes District Council website with links from the Town Council and NDP Steering Group websites.

She advised that the plan had been written to ensure that policies are in place to protect the unique landscape and biodiversity of Peacehaven, Telscombe and East Saltdean, recognising the climate pledge signed by both Councils and the move towards net zero carbon emissions. She also advised that Neighbourhood Development Plans are all about the use of land within the planning boundaries and allowing local communities a chance to have a say in how development progresses and where shops, homes and offices are built.

Cllr Gallagher ended by advising that the protection of the biosphere and the flora and fauna are all covered in the NDP which will protect our parks, green spaces and improve active travel routes. Also, community buildings and the public realm will be enhanced to help to provide inclusive, healthy and welcoming Towns.

## **262. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS**

There were no written questions from electors

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

## **263. TO RECEIVE VERBAL QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL ELECTORS**

One resident advised he had come to a Council meeting last summer and enquired about a community garden and if he drew up a plan, who should he send it to. He advised he was looking at the area next to the car park at the Telscombe Playing Fields.

Cllr Robinson responded, advising that the area in question belongs to Lewes District Council (LDC) and not Telscombe Town Council, so he should contact LDC. She advised that she and Cllr

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## 263. To Receive Verbal Questions from Local Electors (Contd)

O'Connor are currently Lewes District Councillors for Telscombe and Cllr Clarkson for Peacehaven, but there are elections for both District and Town Councillors in May. Cllr Clarkson expressed an interest in seeing proposals in the meantime.

As there were no further questions, the Mayor closed the meeting at 7.55 pm.

Signed .....  
Mayor