



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Telscombe Town Council** held on **Wednesday 20th March 2024** at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber at Telscombe Civic Centre.

Councillors Present:- Cllrs Clarkson, Gallagher, Judd *Deputy Mayor*, Lawrie, McGuckian, O'Connor *Mayor*, Page, Perrotta, Robinson, Sharkey & Watts

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

2236. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public present.

2237. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies and all Councillors were present.

2238. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

2239. TO APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th JANUARY 2024

It was proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 17th January 2024 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Mayor, Cllr O'Connor.

2240. TO AGREE MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES AND ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Amenities & Civic Centre – 20th November 2023

As the Chair of the Committee was not present at the meeting on 20th November, Cllr Judd as Vice Chair proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 20th November 2023 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Sharkey and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations therein adopted.

(b) Planning & Highways – 18th December 2023, 10th & 31st January 2024

As neither the Chair or Vice Chair were at the meeting on 18th December 2023, it was chaired by Cllr Judd who proposed that the minutes of the meeting be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations therein adopted.

Cllr Sharkey proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 10th and 31st January 2024 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Watts and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations therein adopted.



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2240. To agree minutes from the following Committees and adopt recommendations (Contd)

(c) Policy & Resources – 15th January 2024

Cllr Clarkson proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 15th January 2024 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr McGuckian and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

2241. TO NOTE ACTION LIST AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The action list was noted as follows and it was **agreed** that no further actions were required:-

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
17.5.23	Min 2115, p 3876 – To agree Bank Mandate /Signatories to Council's Bank Account	SN	Signatories to be set up with bank.	May '24
17.5.23	Min 2116, p 3876 – To agree Bank Mandate /Signatories to Mayor's charity fund Account	SN	Signatories to be set up with bank.	May '24
19.7.23	Min 2132, p 3921 – To decide way forward regarding remaining 2 Cllr vacancies	SN	As agreed, the 2 vacancies will be advertised every 6 months. <i>Advert was put out in Jan '24 & no applicants. Will continue to advertise every 6 months until positions filled.</i>	Complete
19.7.23	Min 2142, p 3923 – To consider purchasing an Adobe Acrobat Pro acct	SN	Account to be purchased. <i>PO issued to Northstar – they are waiting for Adobe to set us up on the Government pricing tariff – am chasing them regularly.</i>	Jan 2024
15.11.23	Min 2174, p 3997 – To review Havens Com-munity Hub's hire of the Civic Centre	SN	A meeting has been set up between Havens & TTC staff, along with Cllrs O'Connor & Judd for January 2024. <i>Meeting has taken place & have agreed for monthly update meetings with them.</i>	Complete
15.11.23	Min 2182, p 3999 – To adopt reviewed disciplinary policy	SN/DJ	Meeting to be arranged between Cllr Judd and Town Clerk to devise appropriate wording. <i>Meeting has taken place & wording agreed.</i>	See new agenda item 19.
20.12.23	Min 2210, p 4024 – To review and agree Investment Policy & Council Investments	SN	Nationwide Account to be opened shortly.	May '24



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2241. To Note Action List and Agree Any Further Actions Required (Contd)

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
20.12.23	Min 2214, p 4025 – Consider joint Youth Mayor	SN	SN has contacted PHTC's Clerk and is awaiting a response. <i>Meeting taken place.</i>	See new agenda item 23
20.12.23	Min 2215, p 4025 – Update re café concession CIL bid, note progress to date, consider draft drawings & agree to issue survey	SN	Working group meeting arranged beginning Feb to formulate survey. <i>Survey questions agreed.</i> <i>CIL bid has been submitted.</i>	Complete
20.12.23	Min 2216, p 4025 – Agree to present retired long standing TRA committee members with an award from the Council	LOC	Award purchased and to be presented by Cllr O'Connor at a time to be arranged. <i>Award presented at bingo event in February.</i>	Complete
17.1.24	Min 2228, p 4040 – To agree contribution to CTLA & sign SLA for 24/25 4 towns community bus	SN	Advised CTLA re contribution. Asked for SLA for signature & other Council's contribution amounts.	May 2024
17.1.24	Min 2230, p 4041 – To agree insurance renewal & cyber insurance	SN	Zurich Insurance invoice paid. Awaiting advice from Northstar re security improvement.	May 2024
17.1.24	Min 2231, p 4041 – Consider Cllr for the SDNPA Board	SN	Agreed for Cllr McGuckian to apply & info forwarded to him for completion. He subsequently submitted application.	Complete
17.1.24	Min 2232, p 4041 – Consider adding Ovesco & Greenhavens as new outside bodies	SN	Both added to the list & Cllr Gallagher put down as Cllr rep.	Complete
17.1.24	Min 2233 – ratify wording for Cllr email block	SN	Cllrs have added wording to their email block.	Complete

2242. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2024

Payments for January 2024 totalling £19,344.50 and receipts of £7,957.01, and payments for February 2024 totalling £32,026.11 and receipts of £8,663.14 were proposed as correct by Cllr Page, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** that they be approved and were signed by the Mayor, Cllr O'Connor.

2243. TO AGREE INCOME & EXPENDITURE TO 29th FEBRUARY 2024

The Town Clerk/RFO's report detailing any significant differences between budget and actual spend figures, along with the full income and expenditure lists which also showed the budget and actual spend figures were noted. It was proposed by Cllr Sharkey, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the actual total figures at 29th February 2024 of income of £351,439 and expenditure of £249,087 were correct.



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2244. TO APPROVE FUNDS TO GO INTO EARMARKED RESERVES, NOTE THE GENERAL RESERVE POSITION AND APPROVE A VIREMENT OF FUNDS

The Town Clerk's report was considered which detailed the position regarding the earmarked reserves and requirements for 2024/25 and the general reserve position and requirement for the 2024/25 financial year.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Page, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that amounts be put into Earmarked Reserves and virements be made as follows:-

- From committed funds:-
 - £320 into 9027-910 burials (from 4029-101)
 - £2,980 into 9021-910 elections (from 4059-101)
 - £9,500 into 9011-910 park/playground refurbishment (from 4098-201)
 - £2,080 into 9040-910 community café (from 1065-202)
 - £3,400 into 9040-910 community café (from 4360-202)
 - £10,968.75 into 9037-910 CIL monies (from 1026-401)
- From residual funds/increased income from various nominal codes:-
 - £5,000 into 9012-910 Civic Centre maintenance
 - £1,500 into 9013-910 IT/server
 - £223 into 9018-910 Tye signage
 - £4,672 into 9023-910 street lighting
 - £4,674 into 9028-910 bus shelters
 - £890 into 9030-910 CCTV
 - £180 into 9032-910 website
 - £3,110 into 9035-910 grounds maintenance
 - £1,000 into 9038-910 Neighbourhood Plan
 - £2,289 into 9039-910 clifftop fencing
 - £1,000 into 9045-910 legal fees
- To set up two new ER's:-
 - £2,500 into a new ER for kitchen appliances
 - £2,500 into a new ER for solar panels
- As discussed at full Council in December, to make a virement of funds from 9036-910 coastal management as follows:-
 - £5,000 to 9012-910 Civic Centre maintenance
 - £5,000 to 9035-910 grounds maintenance
 - £10,000 to 9040-910 community café
- To make a virement of £1,000 from nominal code 4404-301 external/internal decorating to 4419-301 internal/external works.

2245. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE/REVIEW

The Business Plan was reviewed and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.

2246. TO APPROVE ASSET REGISTER INCLUDING LAND & BUILDINGS ASSET LIST

It was noted that an asset register forms the basis for decisions on risk and insurance issues. It also provides information on the age of certain items and provides assurance of the continued existence of



2246. To Approve Asset Register Including Land & Buildings Asset List (Contd)

Council property, as well as forming a basis for completion of the figure on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. It was also noted that assets should be listed at their original purchase cost and once recorded, the value of assets must not change from year to year. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local Councils.

The full Asset Register had been considered at the Audit Sub-Committee meeting on 6th March and the disposals and purchases were noted and agreed. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Asset Register showing purchases of £532 and disposals of £2,392, resulting in a decrease in the overall total to £1,798,001 and the separate land & buildings asset list, the values of which are included in the main asset register. The documents were signed by the Mayor as correct.

2247. TO APPROVE THE REVIEWED RISK ASSESSMENT

The Audit Sub-Committee had reviewed and agreed the risk assessment and recommended approval and signing by the Mayor. Cllr McGuckian felt some more items should be added regarding the Tye and following discussion it was therefore proposed by Cllr McGuckian, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Risk Assessment with the addition of three items for the Tye regarding (i) cars driving on the Tye (ii) irresponsible horse riders and (iii) public order offences and that the wording for each item be agreed by a majority via email. It should then be signed by the Mayor. A review is due in a year's time.

2248. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

The Audit Sub-Committee had reviewed and agreed the Health & Safety Policy and recommended approval. It was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Health & Safety Policy and it was signed by the Mayor. A review is due in a year's time.

2249. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had reviewed the Dignity at Work Policy and recommended approval. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Dignity at Work Policy (previously known as the Bullying & Harassment Policy). A review is due in a three years' time.

2250. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED COMPLAINTS POLICY

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had reviewed the Complaints Policy and recommended approval. It was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Complaints Policy. A review is due in three years' time.

2251. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had reviewed the Model Publication Scheme and recommended approval. It was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Model Publication Scheme. A review is due in three years' time.



2252. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED RECORDING OF PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had reviewed the Recording of Public Council Meetings Policy and recommended approval. It was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Recording of Public Council Meetings Policy. A review is due in three years' time.

2253. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED SICKNESS & ABSENCE POLICY

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee had reviewed the Sickness & Absence Policy and recommended approval. It was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Sickness & Absence Policy. A review is due in three years' time.

2254. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The Disciplinary Policy was taken to the Policy & Resources Committee in November for review and subsequently taken to full Council. At full Council it was agreed that additional wording was required regarding an informal procedure and the wording should be drafted by Cllr Judd as Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee and the Town Clerk. The draft wording was contained within a report for this meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Lawrie, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Disciplinary Policy. A review is due in November 2026, to coincide with the review of the Grievance Policy.

2255. TO ADOPT THE UPDATED EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK

Having carefully considered the Town Clerk's report and amendments to the Employment handbook as agreed by Cllr Judd as Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee, it was proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Employment Handbook. A review is due in three years' time.

2256. TO AGREE THE EAST SUSSEX PENSION FUND EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS

It was noted that The Local Government Pension Scheme requires all employers to have a published policy on mandatory discretions and also advise them to have a published policy for non-mandatory discretions. Our Employer Discretions were due for a review and after examining the draft documents it was proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the East Sussex Pension Fund Employer Discretions documents as per the drafts circulated with the agenda.

2257. TO CONSIDER THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL'S LATEST REPORT AND AGREE COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCE AMOUNT & MAYOR'S CIVIC ALLOWANCE FOR 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR

It was noted that an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is convened by the District Council as the 'Responsible Authority' to review allowances for Parish/Town Councils. A Parish/Town Council may choose to pay their members an allowance to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties, but there is no obligation to pay such an allowance. An allowance can be paid to all members that have been elected and where members receive an allowance, (the amount paid to the Chair may be different), the amount to be paid to each must be the same. If a Parish/Town Council decides to pay a



2257. To Consider the Independent Remuneration Panel's Latest Report and Agree Councillor Allowance Amount & Mayor's Civic Allowance For 2025/26 Financial Year (Contd)

basic allowance, it should have regard to the recommendation from its IRP. The last IRP review was undertaken in February 2020 and an updated report issued in November 2020 and, following consideration of the IRP's report, it was agreed to pay Telscombe Town Councillors an allowance, but not to increase it from the amount being paid then of £250, with the Chair receiving the same amount.

In subsequent years the amount of the Councillor's allowance had been considered by full Council having regard to the last IRP's report issued in November 2020, and at the full Council meeting in July 2023, it was again resolved not to increase the allowance and leave it at £250 for all members for the 2024/25 financial year. We currently only have 8 eligible Councillors, as 3 have been co-opted and we have 2 vacancies. It was noted that 2 Councillors chose not to claim their allowance for 2023/24.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the latest IRP Report dated February 2024 and the suggested amount of up to £750 that could be paid to Town and Parish Councillors (15% of the Lewes District Council allowance). It was noted that as per the necessary requirements, the IRP's report had been published on the Council's website and the allowances agreed would be publicised in a notice. It was ultimately:-

- a) Proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to increase the Councillor allowance to £300 for the 2025/26 financial year which is paid to elected Councillors only.
- b) Proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr McGuckian and unanimously **RESOLVED** to increase the Chair's allowance to £500 for the 2025/26 financial year.
- c) Proposed by Cllr Sharkey, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RESOLVED** that no indexation in line with annual staff salary increases be applied to Councillor allowances, but that a review of the Councillor allowance is undertaken annually.
- d) Proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr McGuckian and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillors be paid travel and subsistence costs in line with those agreed as part of the members allowance schedule for the District Council when travelling out of the Council area to visit another Council or attend conferences or seminars.
- e) Proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that payment of the Councillor allowance is made in one lump sum at the financial year end in March.

It was also proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Sharkey and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Mayor's civic allowance for the 2025/26 financial year remain at £1,500.

2258. UPDATE REGARDING YOUTH MAYOR AND AGREE WAY FORWARD

Following agreement at the meeting in December 2023 that Peacehaven Town Council be approached regarding the possibility of a joint Youth Mayor, the Town Clerk advised she had met with their Town Clerk and it was felt not to be a viable proposition in view of the amount of extra time and pressure it would put on the student. It was therefore proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** not to pursue the possibility of a joint Youth Mayor with Peacehaven Town Council.

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2259. TO CONSIDER REQUEST TO SET UP A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION FOR CHATSWORTH PARK

There was a long debate regarding the advantages and/or disadvantages of setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) called The Friends of Chatsworth Park. It was noted that a CIO is able to access sources of funding that are not available to Town and Parish Councils; that 3 of our current Councillors were proposed as Trustees; that the wording of the draft Constitution needs amending to show that any proposed work would have to be taken to the Council for agreement and that the aims of the CIO need to be clearly stated. There was concern that Council Officers may incur extra work from recommendations made by the CIO, but it was clarified that any actions would be undertaken by the volunteers. It was therefore proposed by Cllr McGuckian, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the wording of the Constitution should be amended as discussed and this, along with a further proposal, be taken back to a future Council meeting for consideration.

2260. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE MP TO START NEGOTIATIONS TO MERGE TELSCOMBE AND PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCILS

The Town Clerk advised that she had attended the Peacehaven Town Council (PTC) meeting the previous evening where this matter had been discussed and they had agreed to defer if for 6 months. One of PTC's Councillors wanted the draft joint Working Group's Terms of Reference amended and PTC had agreed that the wording should be looked at and amended. The Town Clerk also advised that she had concerns regarding the financial implications of a merger and possible staff redundancies, as a town Council would not have 2 Town Clerks or 2 RFO's and that she had queried information provided in the letter from the MP, Lloyd Russell-Moyle, but had not received a response. There was lengthy discussion regarding possible merits of a merger and it was felt that this should be investigated. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr McGuckian and unanimously **RESOLVED** that this should be pursued, to defer it for 6 months in line with agreement by PTC, but that in the interim a separate working group consisting of TTC Councillors/Officers should be set up to start making investigations. The separate working group members was agreed as Cllrs Gallagher, Judd, Lawrie, McGuckian, O'Connor, Perotta, Sharkey, Watts and the Town Clerk

2261. REPORTS FROM:-

The Mayor:- Cllr O'Connor had attended 9 events since his report at the Council meeting in December as follows:- Family Support workers Carol concert; Christmas tree lights switch on for East Saltdean traders; Peacehaven Mayor's Christmas tea party; the Council's Christmas day morning event; the Mayor's fundraising bingo events in January and February; the PCS bowling trip supported by the Mayor's charity fund and the licensing of Revd Louise Oliver at St Nicholas's Church in Saltdean.

Deputy Mayor:- Nothing.

District Councillors:- Cllr Clarkson who is a District Councillor for Peacehaven Town Council advised that the Council Tax Reduction scheme had been agreed and LDC had supported Zanes Law regarding stronger protections around contaminated.

Cllr O'Connor advised that he had attended the Local Government Association forum re transport strategy and that the LDC Local Plan consultation was complete and a draft plan would be issued in the next few months.

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2261. REPORTS FROM (Contd):-

East Sussex County Councillor:- Cllr Robinson advised that a general update from ESCC had previously been circulated by email; that ESCC were funding Huggg food vouchers for eligible children and that Adult Social Care was still expensive and money had to be taken from reserves to help fund this.

Representatives on outside bodies:-

Lewes District Association of Local Councils – Cllr Clarkson advised that he had attended their last meeting and they will be arranging a meeting with East Sussex Highways.

Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO) – Cllr McGuckian advised that surveying work had commenced regarding the Safer C7 project. Cllr Gallagher advised she had also attended and it is an interesting organisation.

South Downs National Park Authority – Cllr McGuckian advised he had attended the SDNPA workshop and the hustings re the Cllr appointment to the Authority. Cllr Gallagher advised she had also attended both and herself and a Rodmell Councillor were the only ones at the hustings who were not candidates.

Cllr Robinson advised she had attended a Safer Communities meeting and the Police will no longer assist anyone with mental health issues due to the high amount of hours involved.

2262. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

There were no urgent matters and the meeting was closed at 9.50 pm.

Signed, Mayor.....

Date of next Council meeting – 15th May 2024 (Annual Meeting)