



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Telscombe Town Council held on Wednesday 17th September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber at Telscombe Civic Centre.

Councillors Present:- Cllrs Clarkson, Gallagher, Judd, Lawrie, Page, Robinson, Watts *Deputy Mayor* and Williamson

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

2490. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

2491. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Ndeloa due to work commitments, Cllr O'Connor who was attending another meeting and Cllr Sharkey who was unwell. These reasons for absence were accepted. As the Mayor, Cllr Sharkey, was not present, the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Watts, chaired the meeting.

2492. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Clarkson declared an interest in agenda item 20 regarding the Charitable Incorporated Organisation that has been set up called Telscombe Greenspace Volunteers as he is a Trustee.

2493. TO APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th AUGUST 2025

It was proposed by Cllr Gallagher seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting on 20th August 2025 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Watts.

2494. TO AGREE MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES AND ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Amenities & Civic Centre – 28th May 2025

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Vice-Chair, Cllr Judd, proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 28th May 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Williamson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

b) Planning & Highways – 2nd July, 23rd July and 13th August 2025

Cllr Gallagher proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 2nd July, 23rd July and 13th August 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Williamson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

c) Policy & Resources – 9th July 2025

Cllr Clarkson proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 9th July 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Robinson and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

2495. To note action list and agree any further actions required (Contd)

Meeting Date	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
16.7.25	Min 2482, p4395 – To agree internal auditor’s terms of engagement for 2025/26 financial year	SN	Town Clerk signed terms of engagement document.	Complete
20.8.25	Min 2388, p’s 4417/18 – To agree TTC’s response re consultations by LDC & BHCC regarding Local Government Re-organisation & consider whether to write to the Minister of State for Local Government & English Devolution expressing concerns & objections at being included within BHCC’s proposals.	SN	As agreed at the meeting, final version of letter agreed by majority of Cllrs via email and issued to Mr J McMahon. Basis of letter used to respond to both LDC and BHCC’s consultations. Draft minutes and copy letter put on our website.	Complete Complete Complete

Min 2362, p4243 – To consider buying Adobe Pro:- it was unanimously **agreed** to proceed with this and to set a revised due date.

Min 2480, p 4394 – To review possible merger with Peacehaven TC:- it was unanimously **agreed** to continue to pursue this and the Town Clerk was asked to attempt again to arrange an informal meeting with Peacehaven Town Council.

Min 2388 p’s 4417/18 – To agree TTC’s response re consultations by LDC & BHCC re LGR:- Cllr Robinson thanked the Town Clerk for her excellent letter to the Minister of State for Local Government & English Devolution which also formed the basis of the Council’s response to the LDC & BHCC’s consultations.

The remainder of the action list was **noted**.

2496. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR JUNE AND JULY 2025

Payments for June 2025 totalling £28,495.15 and receipts of £9,776.53, and payments for July 2025 totalling £32,141.98 and receipts of £7,435.75 were proposed as correct by Cllr Page, seconded by Cllr Lawrie it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that they be approved and were signed by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Watts.

2497. TO AGREE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES TO 31st JULY 2025

The full income and expenditure lists which showed the budget and actual spend figures were circulated and the Town Clerk/RFO’s report detailed any significant differences between budget and spend figures to date. The Town Clerk clarified that under the Civic Centre, the final loan payment had been made.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

2497. To agree income and expenditure figures to 31st July 2025 (Contd)

It was proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Lawre and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the actual total figures at 31st July 2025 of £183,072 income and expenditure of £103,183 be agreed as correct.

2498. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE/REVIEW

It was proposed by Cllr Williamson, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RESOLVED** that no alterations were necessary.

2499. TO AGREE START OF BUDGET SETTING PROCESS AND MEMBERS FOR A BUDGET WORKING GROUP

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs being Cllrs Clarkson & Robinson from P&R; Cllrs O'Connor and Judd from ACC and Cllrs Gallagher & Watts from P&H; the Mayor, the Town Clerk and Cllr Page be appointed to a budget working group and for the Town Clerk/RFO to draw up draft budget figures for consideration at an initial meeting be set up in October.

2500. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct had its 3 year review undertaken by the Policy & Resources committee and they recommended that no amendments were required. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the Code of Conduct in its present form with no amendments and that it be reviewed again in 3 years' time.

2501. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Having had its 3 year review at a recent Policy & Resources Committee meeting, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy in its present form with no amendments and that it be reviewed again in 3 years' time.

2502. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Having had its 3 year review at a recent Policy & Resources Committee meeting, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the Media & Communications Policy which had not had any amendments recommended by the P&R Committee, with a review due in 3 years' time.

2503. TO ADOPT THE REVIEWED TREE POLICY

The Tree Policy had its 3 year review at a recent Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the Tree Policy with the one minor amendment changing one word under the section of badger sett from 'will' to 'may' in the last sentence as recommended by the P&R Committee, with a review due in 3 years' time.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

2504. TO NOTE THAT NO COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED AND TO AGREE WAY FORWARD

It was noted that no applications had been received following a recent advertisement of the 2 Councillor vacancies and it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RESOLVED** to re-advertise again in 6 months' time, being January 2026 and any applications be considered at the full Council meeting in March 2026.

2505. TO CONSIDER EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2024/25 AND CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

It was noted that once we are in receipt of the External Auditors' Report, we are required to publish a "Notice of conclusion of Audit" which details the rights of inspection in line with the statutory requirements along with the certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3). This had been displayed on the Council's notice boards for 2 weeks from 24th July and on the website. As required, the Town Clerk had also emailed the report to Councillors.

Regarding the auditor's report, everything was found to be in order for this year's figures and other documents submitted, as follows:-

'Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

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*'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the Council: **None.**'*

It was proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the Auditor's report and agree that no other action was necessary as nothing had been highlighted as requiring attention. Thanks were given to the Town Clerk/RFO for the successful audit.

2506. TO NOTE POSSIBLE LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSET DEVOLVEMENT AND AGREE IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN TAKING ON ANY ASSETS

The Town Clerk's report advised that when Lewes District Council (LDC) transitions to the successor authority, they want to ensure that their assets are best placed to support the new authority, whilst ensuring that key assets for the communities remain at the heart of local communities – this may mean a transfer of some assets to Town and Parish Councils where it is appropriate and financially viable to do so. They are therefore asking Town and Parish Councils if they may be interested in taking over management of areas on their asset list and at this stage it is not clear if any payment will be required from us for any possible transfers. Housing land and assets are not included within the scope of the strategy as they form part of the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account underpinned by a standalone 30-Year Business Plan.

Following discussion of the available areas, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and unanimously **RESOLVED** to advised LDC that we may possibly be interested in the following areas and to find out further details to be brought back to a future meeting for consideration:-

Fairlight Avenue car park; Fairlight Avenue public conveniences; Telscombe playing fields; Telscombe playing fields portacabin 1.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

2507. TO AGREE THE CONTRACTOR TO CARRY OUT THE GRASS VERGE CUTTING FOR 2026/27, DEPENDENT ON OPTIONS GIVEN TO US BY EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Following consideration, it was proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the price from Grasstex to cut urban grass verges in Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean in accordance with the maps provided by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) 4 times a year in the 2026/27 financial year at a cost of £3,775 net of VAT per cut, annual total £15,100 net of VAT, and for them to sign the appropriate contract. This is dependent on the options due to be received shortly from ESCC and Telscombe Town Council being offered the opportunity to self-deliver, with the financial remuneration being as they advised us last year of £7,300.

2508. TO AGREE CONTRACTOR TO CARRY OUT GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 1 FROM SEPTEMBER 2025 TO THE END OF MARCH 2027

There was lengthy discussion regarding the prices we had received for undertaking the Grounds Maintenance Contract 1. Ultimately it was proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the price from Ace Landscapes in the sum of £5,731.92 from September 2025 to the end of March 2026 and the sum of £11,430.82 for the 2026/27 financial year. All necessary insurance details, waste licence, H&S procedures and RAMS had been received with their application and the Town Clerk had followed up 2 references which were positive.

2509. TO NOTE A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION HAS BEEN SET UP WHICH COVERS TELSCOMBE GREEN SPACES INCLUDING CHATSWORTH PARK AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED

It was noted that a CIO had been set up called The Telscombe Greenspace Volunteers and that the Trustees are Cllr O'Connor, Chair of the Amenities/Civic Centre Committee, Cllr Clarkson, Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee and Cllr Alexander of Peacehaven Town Council. The Town Clerk's report raised concerns regarding possible conflicts of interest and the Charitable Incorporated Organisation's (CIO) remit with regards to work that could be carried out in Chatsworth Park which is owned by the Council and the revised Objects in the Constitution which were recommended by the Charity Commission. The revision removed the wording agreed by full Council at the meeting on 17th July 2024 which required any proposed works by the CIO to be agreed with the Council before anything was undertaken. These concerns were reiterated by Cllr Page at the meeting and the fact that the Charity Commission had advised the Trustees that they should ensure that the charity is able to operate entirely independently of Telscombe Town Council and amongst other things the trustees must *'not commit themselves simply to giving effect to the policies and wishes of Telscombe Town Council.'*

Cllr Clarkson explained that they had difficulty finding 3 trustees which is why he and Cllrs O'Connor and Alexander had agreed. He also clarified that he was unsure why the charity was set up and maybe they failed to do it the right way. He confirmed that he felt a process needed to be set up between the Council and the CIO and advised that the volunteers were not planning any major works in the park, but would like to continue with the litter picking, path clearing etc that is carried out monthly. A long debate ensued and it was ultimately proposed by Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendation from the Town Clerk to undertake a formal review of governance arrangements between the Council and the CIO, including the original terms under which the CIO was established and any associated agreements, to ensure that they are robust, transparent and in the best interests of the Council and the community. This is to include establishing clear protocols and lines of accountability for any activities undertaken by the CIO on Council-owned land, including a



2509. To note a Charitable Incorporated Organisation has been set up which covers Telscombe green spaces including Chatsworth Park and agree any actions required (Contd)

requirement for prior approval, submission of insurance and RAMS documents for any outside contractors being used, and alignment with Council policies and procedures. This is to be facilitated by setting up a working group consisting of Cllrs Gallagher, Lawrie and Williamson, as well as the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk was also asked to clarify with the Council's Insurers if the CIO's activities will be covered under their insurance, or whether the CIO will need to take out their own insurance.

2510. TO APPROVE THE RATES OF PAY APPLICABLE FROM 1st APRIL 2025 FOR ALL STAFF MEMBERS AS RECENTLY AGREED BY THE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND RECOMMENDED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

It was noted that the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services had reached agreement on salary rates for the 2025/26 financial year and the rates had been received from both ESALC and the SLCC recommending that Councils implement the pay award as swiftly as possible and backdate it to 1st April 2025.

The agreed figures represented a 3.2% increase for all NJC pay points which is equivalent to a .41p per hour increase for the lowest paid staff member and an .81p per hour increase for the highest paid staff member. The current National Living Wage is £12.21 an hour and on the new NJC scale, the lowest point is £12.65 per hour, with the rates we pay staff starting several points above that.

A table showing the pay scale point for each staff member, their current salary, the new salary, the percentage increase, their hours worked and their actual salary if they are part-time was taken to the Employment Sub-Committee on 30th July 2025 and agreed in accordance with our Committee Terms of Reference. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the increase of 3.2% for all staff members as agreed by the NJC and recommended by ESALC and the SLCC in accordance with the new scale provided by them, which had been circulated with the agenda, and that it be backdated to 1st April 2025.

2511. TO AGREE THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FROM LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL REGARDING ASSISTANCE FOR THE CAFÉ PROJECT

The report from the Town Clerk was noted and it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the draft Service Level Agreement template received from Lewes District Council with regard to assistance to be provided with the café project, with the final document including figures payable to be brought back to a future meeting for agreement.

2512. TO AGREE VIREMENT OF FUNDS

Following consideration of the Town Clerk's report, it was proposed by Cllr Page, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to make a virement of £475 from nominal code 4414-301 gas to 4412-301 water and sewage to make allowance for the variations and to make a virement from earmarked reserve 9036-910 coastal management to 9045-910 legal/professional fees to cover expenditure of £3,500.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

2513. REPORTS FROM:-

Deputy Mayor:- Cllr Watts advised he had attended the Artwave event at Lewes House in the grounds of Lewes Castle. He will also be attending the Chair of ESCC's Civic reception at Charlston Manor in a couple of weeks' time.

County Councillor:- Cllr Robinson advised that she was in an ESCC meeting today when Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) released their proposals for the local government re-organisation. They were proposing 5 different unitary authorities and the one for BHCC included Peacehaven, Telscombe Cliffs, East Saltdean and Falmer.

Representatives on outside bodies:- None.

2514. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Cllr Gallagher advised that Peacehaven Town Council are considering the same highways issues as ourselves being crossings on the A259, cycleways and parking issues. She felt that we should consider working jointly with Peacehaven Town Council and wanted staff to have an informal meeting and asked if Cllr Robinson as our East Sussex County Councillor could also be involved.

There were no other urgent matters.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

Signed
Mayor

Date of next Council meeting – 19th November 2025