

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the **Telscombe Annual Town Meeting** held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 in Telscombe Civic Centre at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT Councillors: C Clarkson, C Gallagher, L O'Connor, B Page, C Robinson,
N Watts *Deputy Mayor* & T Williamson

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

280. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Lawrie and Judd.

281. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th APRIL 2025

Approval of the minutes was deferred pending review by all Councillors.

282. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:-

Planning & Highways (P&H) – Cllr C Gallagher, Chair

Cllr Gallagher's report advised that the Planning and Highways Committee has a maximum of 9 members and meets every 3 weeks with meetings open for members of the public to attend.

She explained that the role of the Committee is as an official consultee to Lewes District Council (LDC) who are the Local Planning Authority and East Sussex County Council who have responsibility for highways, verges, pavements, signage, footpaths and many other public realm matters.

The Town Council adheres to the various Policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local District Local Plan and the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan and provides the local view to ensure that decision makers are aware of impact on residents' daily living. Objections need to be "material" in planning terms and the presumption in the NPPF is in favour of development.

For the period April 2025 until March 2026, 46 applications were considered by the Committee of which 96% approved by the Committee were also approved by LDC and 15% of the applications objected to were refused by LDC.

Improvements around the area included some public footpaths being given official status including East Saltdean from Northwood Ave to Findon Avenue including across the green in East Saltdean and the twittens at the rear of Grassmere Ave and Cliff Gardens in Telscombe Cliffs.

A Wild Flower Verge status had been granted at Crowborough Road in East Saltdean and a circular walk was now available for all, but particularly the residents of Homeridge House, with 2 benches giving resting points looking out to sea. The Saltdean Community Charity masterminded the project using a grant from the Co-op Local. Thanks were given to local volunteers who help maintain the verge and generally throughout the Town assist in improving the public realm by litter picking and reporting fly tipping.

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



282. To receive Reports from the Chair of the following Committees (Contd):-

Planning & Highways (P&H) – Cllr C Gallagher, Chair (Contd)

Cllr Gallagher ended by advising that the Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan 2026-2030 which was first established in 2013 had been impartially examined by a Government Inspector and a Referendum date of 7th May 2026 had been set.

Policy & Resources (P&R) - Cllr Clarkson, Chair

Cllr Clarkson's report thanked Council staff for their continued hard work and commitment over the last year advising that their output remains extraordinary for the size of the team, and the Council would simply not function without their professionalism and dedication.

It explained that the P&R Committee continues to operate across two core areas, governance and policy and management of Telscombe Tye.

Governance - The Committee oversees the policies and procedures that allow the Council to function safely, legally and transparently and this year significant updates to the employee handbook were undertaken to ensure staff have clear, modern guidance across a range of areas. IT and data protection policies were refreshed, ensuring that staff are supported with current best practice and that the Council continues to meet its responsibilities around information security.

Telscombe Tye - Early stages of the upcoming management plan for the Tye were worked on, laying the foundation for long-term stewardship of this important landscape. He explained that Telscombe Tye is a unique open downland landscape stretching between Telscombe Cliffs, Saltdean, and Telscombe Village and is one of the few expanses of downland within the South Downs National Park that reaches uninterrupted to the cliff top, providing rare habitat continuity along an otherwise urbanised coastline. The chalk grassland pockets support an array of wildflowers, insects, and ground-nesting birds.

The Tye is not only an ecological asset but also a major amenity for residents, offering Rights of Way that are heavily used by walkers and dog-walkers providing an accessible green space for physical and mental wellbeing. The Committee has continued its work to maintain and improve access to the Tye including the repair and replacement of several access gates to improve entry for disabled residents and those with mobility needs. These improvements help ensure the Tye remains available to everyone and reflect the Committee's intention to make access as inclusive as possible.

Cllr Clarkson ended by advising that he had enjoyed his time as Chair of the Committee and remained proud of the positive progress it had made and hoped that it maintained its strong direction of supporting staff, strengthening Council policies and managing the Tye with care for residents today and for future generations.

Amenities & Civic Centre (ACC) – Cllr O'Connor, Chair

Cllr O'Connor's report advised that the Amenities and Civic Centre Committee had continued its work to maintain, run and improve the town's amenities such as parks and playgrounds. It had also overseen the running and upkeep of the Civic Centre to enable it to play a central role in the community. The Chair thanked council staff for their support during the year and Councillors for their work on the Committee during a busy year with the following key issues being tackled:-

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



282. To receive Reports from the Chair of the following Committees (Contd):-

Amenities & Civic Centre (ACC) – Cllr O'Connor, Chair (Contd)

Chatsworth Park and Greenspaces - The Committee had overseen several environmental and infrastructure improvements in Chatsworth Park with habitat conservation remaining a priority. Infrastructure projects included repainting the ball wall, the "Living Path" project at the southern end of the park and a specification for tree cutting was tendered to continue to keep the park safe and secure. The committee also moved forward with the business case and project management for a potential café project within the park.

Playgrounds and Maintenance - Regular safety inspections led to various repairs across the town's playgrounds including repairing the junior swing unit at Chatsworth Park South ongoing work to replace goal posts and the costly repair of "wet-pour" the surfaces in all of the playgrounds. The committee is also reviewing longer-term refurbishment plans and addressing repairs to picnic tables and wooden play equipment.

Community Events - The Committee successfully planned and executed a diverse range of community events. The 2025 calendar included Armed Forces Day and Merchant Navy Day flag-raising ceremonies, a Macmillan Coffee Morning and a children's Halloween party. Planning for 2026 is well underway, with Nick Emmett booked as the MC for the Summer Fayre scheduled for July 11th.

Civic Centre and Environmental Initiatives - Maintenance of the Civic Centre is always a necessity and this continues to be an ongoing priority. On environmental matters, the Council reviewed its Net Zero figures and recommended they be included in future annual reports in a graph format to track progress. A rolling programme of replacing lighting at the Civic Centre with LED lighting should hopefully be completed this financial year.

283. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE TOWN DEPUTY MAYOR, CLLR N WATTS

The Deputy Mayor advised that the year had been a challenging due to the Mayor, Cllr Isobel Sharkey, taking ill and needing intense treatment and he hoped that she would be back to attending meetings soon. Cllr Watts advised that before the Mayor took leave of absence, she was pleased to attend several engagements in the town.

For the Mayor's fundraising, she had decided on community groups who had projects supporting bio-diversity and the environment, giving out funds in the form of small grants. He passed on the Mayor's thanks to all those who had attended events to raise money for her charity fund. Just over £6,000 had been raised.

Cllr Watts reported that as Deputy Mayor he had been kept busy over the year and attended many events that the Mayor was not well enough to attend. Among them was the annual inspection of the TS Defiance Sea Cadet Unit, where he was introduced to the new Mayor's cadet, Jacob Warr-Lord.

Cllr Watts ended by advising that as the Mayoral year comes to an end, as a town and community, we are uncertain what will happen in the forthcoming Local Government reorganisation, but that the public could rest assured that their local Councillors and Town Council would continue to work for the constituents of Telscombe Cliffs, Telscombe Village and East Saltdean.

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



284. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

There were no written questions from electors.

285. TO RECEIVE VERBAL QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL ELECTORS

One elector had no questions, but updated Councillors on email correspondence he had recently had with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) regarding a possible bus stop relocation in Peacehaven. ESCC had advised them that it had been put on hold as they did not feel it appropriate to progress work that may fall within the remit of a different authority once a decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was known. Peacehaven Town Council's Town Clerk had contacted Becky Shaw (ESCC Chief Executive) and Rupert Clubb (Director of Communities, Economy and Transport) who had confirmed that was not correct and they would be taking immediate steps to ensure all ESCC Officers were aware of ESCC's position. The elector also advised he had been in contact with Brighton & Hove Buses with queries if the Telscombe area came under Brighton & Hove after the LGR, but they did not have any answers as a decision on LGR had not been made.

Another elector advised that vehicles frequently park on pavements and grass verges near their property and cause an obstruction, as well as commercial vans parking on the road. They wondered if anything could be done to stop this. They were advised to report instances to The Parking Shop as they can enforce where a specific restriction exists, for example if there are yellow lines on the road, or if there are specific signs banning verge parking. No parking at any time on verges or footways has been imposed on limited roads in Telscombe Cliffs. Causing an obstruction could be a criminal offence and would be dealt with by the Police.

As there were no further questions, the Deputy Mayor closed the meeting at 8.05 pm.

Signed
Mayor