



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **Telscombe Town Council** held on **Wednesday 18th March 2026** at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber at Telscombe Civic Centre.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned for public question time.

2583. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The secretary of the Telscombe Residents Association wanted to speak regarding agenda item 24, 'Consider options for a possible repair café at the Civic Centre'. He advised that the repair café in Saltdean had someone that could undertake PAT testing and they had their own insurance and suggested we hold a repair café to fit inline with the Saltdean and Newhaven ones. He asked that the agenda item be brought forward and this was proposed by the Chair and unanimously **agreed**.

The meeting resumed at 7.32pm.

2584. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr O'Connor who was away, and this reason for absence was accepted. Cllr Sharkey has been granted leave of absence until May 2026. Cllr Gallagher was absent but had not sent apologies.

2585. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

None.

2586. TO APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2026

It was proposed by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting on 11th February 2026 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Watts.

2587. TO AGREE MINUTES FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES AND ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Amenities & Civic Centre –

Cllr Judd proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 3rd December 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

b) Planning & Highways –

Cllr Williamson proposed that the minutes of the meetings on 7th and 28th January and 18th February 2026 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Robinson and **RESOLVED** that

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2587. To agree minutes from the following committees and adopt recommendations (Contd)

the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

c) Policy & Resources –

Cllr Clarkson proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 14th January 2026 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Page and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and recommendations adopted.

2588. TO NOTE ACTION LIST AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
20.11.24	Min 2362, p 4243 – To consider purchasing Adobe Pro	SN	It was agreed at full Council on 17.9.25 to proceed with purchase & set a revised due date.	March '26
16.7.25	Min 2480, p 4394 – To review possible merger with Peacehaven TC	SN	As agreed, I contacted PTC Clerk re a meeting, but no response received. It was agreed at full Council on 17.9.25 to continue to try and progress this. <i>Agreed at meeting on 21.1.26 to continue to pursue & Cllr Gallagher to follow up with PTC.</i>	July '26
19.11.25	Min 2535, p 4471 – To consider devolvement of assets from LewesDC	SN	As agreed at the last meeting, further info is to be obtained from LDC & a possible meeting to be arranged to discuss. <i>Meeting arranged for early February.</i>	See new agenda item
10.12.25	Min 2554, p 4489 – To consider costed service level agreement from LDC for proposed case in Chatsworth Park & decide how to proceed	SN	Final updated SLA awaited from LDC which will then be signed & returned. Working group to be set up to establish a business case for the café.	See new agenda item
21.1.26	Min 2571, p 4509 – Update on request to move Vodafone equipment at the Civic Centre including installing new equipment and to agree way forward	SN	Trial hole exploration being undertaken on 12.2.26 and updated awaited after that from United Infrastructure.	See new agenda item
11.2.26	Min 258, p's 4528/9 – To agree the updated Neighbourhood Plan and that it is put out for a referendum	SN	Lewes District Council issued the decision notice on Friday 13 th February and the referendum is scheduled to take place on 7 th May.	See new agenda item



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2588. To note action list and agree any further actions required (Contd)

The action list was noted and no further actions were required.

Agenda item 24 was brought forward for discussion.

2589. TO CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR A POSSIBLE REPAIR CAFÉ AT THE CIVIC CENTRE

It was felt that this item needed more in-depth discussion and agreement before a decision could be reached, especially as it was Cllr O'Connor's report and he was not present at the meeting. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that a working group of Councillors and a Council officer be formed to discuss this further and detailed proposals be taken back to a future meeting for consideration.

7.40pm – 1 member of the public left the meeting.

2590. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS FOR JANUARY 2026

Payments for January 2026 totalling £46,152.04 and receipts of £3,316.06 were proposed as correct by Cllr Robinson, seconded by Cllr Judd it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that they be approved and were signed by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Watts.

2591. TO AGREE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES TO 31st JANUARY 2026

The full income and expenditure lists which showed the budget and actual spend figures had been circulated and the Town Clerk/RFO's report detailed the reasons for any significant differences between budget and spend figures to date.

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the actual total figures at 31st January 2026 of £372,387 income and expenditure of £258,004 be agreed as correct.

2592. TO REVIEW GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES; AGREE AMOUNTS TO BE PUT INTO EARMARKED RESERVES FOR THE 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR AND AGREE VIREMENT OF FUNDS

Having considered the Town Clerk/RFO's detailed report and considered the position regarding the general reserve and earmarked reserves, it was proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree virements and allocate funds to be put into earmarked reserves as follows, but if at year end any alterations to proposed funds are required, the Town Clerk/RFO is authorised to amend figures with prior agreement via email from a majority of Councillors which may include reducing figures if not enough funds are available, or increasing figures for earmarked reserves if extra funds are available, whilst endeavouring to keep the general reserve within the 4 – 6 months bracket:-

Virements:-

- £300 from 4024-101 postage to 4025-101 insurance to cover the deficit
- £140 from 4023-101 subscriptions to 4058-101 payroll services to cover the deficit
- £200 from Bridleway 8 gate key deposits to 9014 Telscombe Tye (as agreed at P&R on 4.3.26)
- £1,500 from 9044 Wave Leisure to 9020 Youth projects
- £8 from 9027 burials to 9035 grounds maintenance

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2592. To review general and earmarked reserves; agree amounts to be put into earmarked reserves for the 2026/27 financial year and agree virement of funds (Contd)

To earmarked reserves from allocated budget funds:

- £1,000 from 4059-101 elections into ER 9021-910 election expenses
- £6,870 from 4098-201 playground equipment replacement into ER 9011-910 park/playground refurbishment
- £500 from 4417-301 kitchen appliances to ER 9046-910 kitchen appliances
- £500 from 4418 solar panels to ER 9047-910 solar panels
- £2,500 from 4349-401 bus shelter replacement to ER 9028-910 bus shelters
- £500 from 4350-401 bus shelter maintenance to ER 9028-910 bus shelters
- £1,422 from 1062-202 Income memorial benches to the ER 9042-910 for memorials/bench maintenance
- £3,500 from 4360-202 Café concession to the community café ER, 9040-910
- £7,000 from 4368-202 PWLB café loan to the community café ER, 9040-910

CIL monies to earmarked reserve:-

- £2,378 from 1026-401 Income CIL money into 9037-910 CIL monies

To earmarked reserves from general budget savings/increased income from various nominal codes:-

- £ 3,000 into 9011-910 playground refurbishments
- £10,000 into 9012-910 Civic Centre maintenance
- £ 750 into 9013-910 IT/server
- £5,000 into 9023-910 street lighting
- £ 250 into 9030-910 CCTV
- £ 250 into 9033-910 phones
- £5,500 into 9035-910 grounds maintenance
- £2,500 into 9039-910 cliff top fencing
- £2,500 into 9040-910 community café
- £ 250 into 9048-910 recruitment advertising

- To leave the ER 9036 for Coastal Management of £6,500 as it is.

2593. BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE/REVIEW

Having considered the current version of the business plan, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** that no amendments to the Council's section of the business plan V 2.6 dated 25.2.26 were required and the remainder of the plan was acknowledged.

2594. TO NOTE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S INTERIM REPORT FOR 2025/26 AND AGREE ACTION TO TAKE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Internal Auditor's interim report was considered and it was noted that the Council had maintained a satisfactory system of financial control. The Auditor gave two recommendations, one to consider compliance with paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 on page 14 of the Practitioners Guide at a meeting before the end of the financial year to enable the Council to support a positive response to the new Assertion 10 on the Annual Governance Statement and secondly that VAT advice from the Parkinson Partnership be taken prior to construction of the café to ensure most efficient VAT decisions are implemented.



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2594. To note Internal Auditor's interim report for 2025/26 and agree action to take on recommendations

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RESOLVED** to note the Internal Auditor's interim report and agree to their two recommendations which will be considered under the next two agenda items.

2595. TO CONSIDER ESTIMATE FROM THE PARKINSON PARTNERSHIP ON ADVICE RE VAT ON CAFÉ PROJECT

Having considered the Town Clerk's report, based on the recommendation from the Internal Auditor, it was proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree to take advice from the Parkinson Partnership regarding the VAT implications on the café project, including any options to maximise VAT recovery for a fixed fee of £875 plus VAT to include an online consultation. A report and reasonable aftercare.

2596. TO CONSIDER IF THE COUNCIL MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEW ASSERTION 10 ON THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

It was proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Lawrie and unanimously **RESOLVED** that having considered the Town Clerk's report which detailed exactly how the Council complies with each of the paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 of the Practitioner's Guide that the Council therefore meets the requirements of the new Assertion 10 on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

2597. TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Health & Safety Policy which had no alterations from the previous document, as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee and that it be signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

2598. TO APPROVE THE RISK ASSESSMENT

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Risk Assessment with minor amendments to wording, but no amendments to headings or risk factors, as recommended by the Audit Sub-Committee, and that it be signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

2599. TO APPROVE ASSET REGISTER AND LAND & BUILDINGS ASSET LIST

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to (a) approve the Asset Register as recommended by the Audit Sub-Committee, showing total purchases of £9,252 and disposals of £3,765, resulting in a total asset register value increasing to £1,814,667 (b) to approve the land and building asset list with no amendments and (c) that both documents be signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

2600. TO ADOPT THE SMOKE FREE POLICY

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Smoke Free Policy with amended wording, as recommended by the Policy & Resources



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2600. To adopt the Smoke Free Policy (Contd)

Committee, and that it be signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence. A review is due in 3 years' time.

2601. TO ADOPT THE EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the updated Employment Handbook which included updated Policies, as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee, and that it be signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence. A review is due in 3 years' time.

2602. UPDATE ON CAFÉ PROJECT AND AGREE FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Town Clerk gave a brief update on the project to include that the Service Level Agreement had been signed, Lewes District Council employees are beginning to start work on the project and that an architect was visiting the site the following day. It was proposed by Cllr Page, seconded by Cllr Robinson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to note the present position, including the financial implications of having to meet the costs set out in the Service Level Agreement estimated at £43,000 including VAT, to be funded from existing Council funds as the CIL grant will not be released and a loan not applied for unless it is agreed for the project to proceed: that the café working group will have a meeting to formulate a business plan to meet the requirements of the Council to be brought back to a future Council or Amenities/Civic Centre Committee meeting.

2603. UPDATE ON DEVOLVEMENT OF LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSETS AND AGREE IF WE WANT TO TAKE ON ANY ASSETS

Following consideration of the information provided at previous meetings and the content of the Town Clerk's report, it was proposed by Cllr Judd, seconded by Cllr Page and **RESOLVED** by a majority that in view of the financial and staffing implications, the Council agree not to take on devolvement of any assets from Lewes District Council. Cllrs Clarkson and Lawrie abstained.

2604. UPDATE ON PROPOSED 20m HIGH TELECOMS POLE AND ASSOCIATED TELECOMS EQUIPMENT ON THE PATIO AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AND AGREE WAY FORWARD

Following consideration of the proposals put forward by United Infrastructure, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** not to agree for an upgrade to the telecoms equipment on the patio, especially due to the visual impact of a 20m high telecoms pole to neighbouring properties and users of the Civic Centre, loss of amenity space on the patio for the Civic Centre and the unknown affects of exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (EMF).

2605. UPDATE ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTIONS AND ASSOCIATED COST TO UPDATE THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Following agreement of the finalised Neighbourhood Plan at the Extra-Ordinary meeting held on 11th February and notification that it would go to referendum, Lewes District Council have confirmed that a referendum has been called on 7th May. The Steering Group had drafted a leaflet that they would like circulated to residents in Peacehaven and Telscombe Towns which was circulated with the agenda.



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2605. Update on the Neighbourhood Plan, agree any further actions and associated cost to update the Council's website (Contd)

It had been passed to Lewes District Council for their comment as to whether it is neutral and can be issued. The Steering Group have also advised that their website is to be closed down and would like all information contained therein transferred to the 2 Town Council's websites. It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Williamson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the leaflet to be printed if it is approved by Lewes District Council and to agree the cost of £250 from our website host to transfer the information from the Steering Group's website to the Town Council's website.

2606. TO REVIEW THE CIVIC CENTRE HIRE CHARGES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

It was noted that it was agreed several years ago that political parties be charged the charity rate for room hire at the Civic Centre and following discussion it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** that all political parties should be charged the private/commercial hire rate for Civic Centre rooms and not the charity rate.

2607. TO NOTE THAT NO APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED REGARDING CO-OPTION OF CANDIDATES TO FILL THE 2 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

It was noted that no applications for a Councillor had been received and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to advertise the vacancies for one last time in July this year and even if they are not filled, not to advertise the vacancy again as it will be within 6 months of the next scheduled election.

2608. TO CONSIDER TENDERS RECEIVED FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR 2026/27 AND AGREE TO APPOINT A CONTRACTOR

The prices for the Grounds Maintenance Contract 2 Hedge & Tree Cutting were considered and it was proposed by Cllr Williamson, seconded by Cllr Clarkson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the estimate and award the contract to Ace Landscapes in the sum of £5,041 plus VAT.

2609. REPORTS FROM:-

Deputy Mayor:- Cllr Watts thanked all the Councillors for their help and donations for the Mayor's quiz night which raised £206.

County Councillor:- Cllr Robinson confirmed that ESCC had secured a £70m loan for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

District Councillors:- Cllr Robinson gave a brief update on the North Quarter Development in Lewes and the fact that LDC had purchased the land for £9m, with the proviso that it will be bought back by the developers, Human Nature.

Representatives on outside bodies:-

Joint Action Group - Cllr Robinson advised that there has been a spare of thefts locally and an incident with a group of youth's intimidating staff at McDonalds in Newhaven.

Lewes District Association of Local Councils – the Town Clerk advised she had been notified by the LDALC that if the Councillor representative was unable to attend, then there was a standing invitation for the Town Clerk to attend.



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2609. Reports From (Contd):-

Representatives on outside bodies (Contd):-

The Town Clerk also advised that the Council's Outside Bodies Policy states that the Clerk or a Council Officer should not attend as a Council representative unless instructed to by the Council. She therefore asked if she would be granted permission to attend, however, it was not felt that this was necessary.

2610. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Cllr Robinson advised that the women from the local mosque were holding a community engagement event on 11th April which will have representatives from the Police, Wave Leisure, SCDA and there will be food.

There were no other urgent matters.

The Deputy Mayor closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Signed
Deputy Mayor

Date of next Council meeting – Annual Meeting 20th May 2026