



HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 / 2023

INTRODUCTION

This is the Annual Report issued by Haywards Heath Town Council and the Council trusts you will find it to be an insight into how it conducted its business and activities over the last Council year.

This report contains high level summaries on each of the Committee's activities, which are presented at the Annual Town Meeting. It also contains a variety of information and statistics that members of the public might find interesting. These include a list of the Town Councillors, which Committees they have served on over the last year, Councillor's attendance and their allowances.

The Council's Full Council and Standing Committee's agendas and accompanying papers are available for public inspection at the Town Hall, or on the Town Council's website so any resident can scrutinise the financial transactions of the Town Council.

If you seek any further information relating to this document, please do not hesitate to contact the Town Council offices.

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Mayor's Report 2022/2023

Firstly, my apologies for not being with you this evening on this important date in the Haywards Heath Town Council year. Unfortunately, due to a family bereavement I am currently overseas. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Alastair McPherson will take charge of the agenda this evening.

If I thought that my first term as Mayor was remarkable with the sad passing of the Duke of Edinburgh, the invasion of Ukraine and the easing of COVID restrictions, then the second year was to prove just as incredible and momentous.

Many of the voluntary, community and charity organisations in Haywards Heath and the surrounding areas had the opportunity to hold their AGMs and events for the first time since the COVID pandemic and I had the privilege to attend a large number of these. Learning about the tireless efforts of so many volunteers that went about their activities without fanfare during the pandemic was a truly humbling experience. Many of these volunteers were vulnerable themselves and yet put others before themselves. What a truly caring community we have here in Haywards Heath.

The council has maintained its support of the displaced persons from Ukraine living with us in Haywards Heath after fleeing the devastation of the savage war against their country by Russia. The Ukrainian flag still flies proudly at the Town Hall and we stand with the people of Ukraine as they continue to endure the devastation of this war.

Our engagement with community groups has increased substantially from the efforts of our Events and Community Officer, Imogen Wilson. The Town Council is now able to reach out and support more groups in our area and we have also established an Active Haywards Heath resource to encourage and promote the benefits of activity for our resident's health and wellbeing.

Early June of last year saw the residents of Haywards Heath join together in a celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in Victoria Park. The extraordinary achievement of 70 years as our monarch, was for a great many of us, a recognition of HM The Queen being the monarch for our entire lives. Our 'Picnic in the Park' that followed the official celebrations was remarkably well attended and demonstrated the strong feelings that our residents had for our Queen.

Then followed the great sadness of the death of HM The Queen on the 8th of September, 2022. We all knew it was to come at some time, but the outpouring of emotion from the country was echoed loudly here in Haywards Heath. As Town Mayor, I had the immense privilege of representing Haywards Heath at a number of memorial services for our late Queen. The succession was quickly announced and a moment of history for me was the Proclamation of our new King from the steps of the Town Hall.

My charity fund raising has continued on behalf of the Stroke Rehabilitation Centre at the Princess Royal Hospital here in Haywards Heath and our fund-raising target for completion of a sensory garden for recovering patients is well within sight now. The Mayor's PA and Marketing Communications Officer, Maria Horne, has created some wonderful events to benefit my charity. They could not have occurred without her involvement

I must thank all the hard-working staff at Haywards Heath Town Council and express my appreciation for how much support I have received from all my fellow councillors in carrying out the Mayoral role. On a more personal note, thank you for the support of my Consort, Margaret Baker, her advice and guidance has really contributed to my two years as Mayor. On May 15th I shall hand over the Mayoral Chain of Office to your new Town Mayor. It will be a bittersweet moment as I recall the honour and pride with which I have represented the wonderful town of Haywards Heath for the past two years.

Cllr Howard Mundin - Town Mayor

Leader of the Council's Report 2022/2023

Another year comes to an end and with it so does the current Mayor's period of office. Again, we have been graced with another outstanding Mayor who has carried out his duties to a very high standard.

The last year again has shown some very proud moments for your Town Council in that we were able to financially support the Ukrainian cause and the young people at the Bentwood Hub because West Sussex County Council had to withdraw funding due to funding cuts. It is hoped that the next council will continue with this support.

The Town Council has supported the Community by introducing Cost-of-Living Grants to service providers, run a coat exchange programme where circa 400 people received coats donated by our generous residents, assist the Foodbank's Baby Bank Service by being a collection point for donations and continued the "Leave nobody behind" initiative by providing 260 goody bags for elderly and vulnerable in the period leading up to Christmas. The Town Mayor was also able to deliver bags of cakes and biscuits to all of the Town's care/nursing homes to recognise Silver Sunday.

Community Safety has been another issue high on the Council's agenda. The Community Warden service and the Town Council has worked with the Police Crime Commissioner, Mid Sussex District Council and its fellow two District Council's to form a Business Crime Reduction Partnership and provide local businesses/retailers with a free reporting platform. Haywards Heath was pleased to pilot the project, which implemented this month.

Again, the Town Council is a cohesive unit supported by all councillors who support the chairs of the 3 main committees being the Environmental & General Purposes chaired by Matt Jeffers, which is responsible for all public matters such as allotments and Muster Green, Policy & Finance which is chaired by Jim Knight which is responsible for all spending and providing a balanced budget, and making sure that your council is financially sound for the coming years, and the Planning Committee which looks at all Planning Applications within the Town which Clive Laband, as Chairman, has brought to a new level of competence.

Then we have the officers, Brenda, Helen, Imogen, Maria, Andrew and of course our Groundstaff headed by Steve Trice who keeps the whole office show on the road and we all very grateful for his consistency in keeping us all on track.

As for me, this is my last meeting, as I have had the pleasure and pride to have had the support of councillors by electing me as their leader for the last 8 years and having had the pleasure to support Mayors Sujan, Sandy, Alastair, and Howard to carry out their duties, and I wish next year's newly elected council well with their deliberations.

Cllr. Mike Pulfer - Leader of the Town Council.

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Town Council is the first tier of local government and as such is the authority nearest to the people. Above the Town Council is the District of Mid Sussex and West Sussex County Councils.

Haywards Heath has a growing community of approximately 35,000 residents which will rise with the predicted increase in house building over the next 20 years. There are approximately 22,750 people on the electoral register.

The Town Council's precept is collected by Mid Sussex District Council and given to the Town Council in two 6 monthly payments. As of the 1st April 2023 the Town Council has agreed to a 7% increase in its Precept for the 2023 – 2024 financial year which equates to a precept of £768,024. Because of an increase in the tax base for Haywards Heath (i.e. the number of households that pay towards the Precept), Council Tax Payers have seen the amount they are paying amount to a 6% increase. This means that for a typical Band D property, the annual amount payable has increased from £58.09 to £61.57.

POWER OF COMPETENCY

The Localism Act 2011 replaced the power of well-being with the General Power of Competence. **Haywards Heath Town Council has qualified for this power.**

The General Power of Competence (GPC) has given the Town Council wider powers to deliver more services to the Town. GPC allows the Town Council to do anything that individuals generally may do, except where other aspects of law may forbid them from doing. This power gives the Town Council greater freedom to act.

To qualify for the power, the Town Council had to conform with the following,

- at least two thirds of the total number of councillors (16) have been elected (at ordinary or by-election, not co-opted), at the meeting of the Annual Full Council, normally at the beginning of a new Council Term, and a resolution is passed to confirm that the Town Council is eligible.
- the Town Council's Town Clerk holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA).
- the Town Clerk completes relevant training in the GPC provided in accordance with the national training strategy,

Haywards Heath Town Council passed a clearly minuted resolution on the 13th May 2019 (min 17), to confirm its eligibility for GPC.

TOWN COUNCILLORS

ASHENGROUND WARD
Richard Bates , West Corner, Lowfield Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4DW richard.bates@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 01444 452092
Sujan Wickremaratchi , 14 Colwell Close, Haywards Heath, RH16 4HF sujan.wickremaratchi@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07968 179083
Stephanie Inglesfield , 41 Cedar Way, Haywards Heath, RH16 4UQ stephanie.inglesfield@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07780 456316
BENTSWOOD WARD
Clare Cheney , c/o The Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1BA clare.cheney@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07582 304345
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Michael Pulfer , 6 Burma Close, Haywards Heath, RH16 3JE michael.pulfer@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07734 407467
HEATH WARD
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Sandy Ellis , 60a Queens Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1EE sandy.ellis@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07827 813366
Clive Laband , C/o The Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1BA clive.laband@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07966 196302
LUCASTES & BOLNORE WARD
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Alastair McPherson , C/o Mid Sussex Conservative Office, Suite E, KBF House, 55 Victoria Road, Burgess Hill, RH15 9LH alastair.mcpherson@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07966 057664
Matthew Jeffers , C/o The Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1BA matthew.jeffers@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 01444 455694
James Knight , C/o The Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1BA james.knight@haywardsheath.gov.uk or 07769 704063

Above Members were elected on 3rd May 2019 apart Howard Munding who was elected on the 17th October 2019 after the resignation of Christian Pitt on 14th August 2019.

Town Mayor – Mr Howard Munding
Town Clerk – Mr Steven Trice

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021/2022

MAYOR

Cllr. Howard Munding

DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr. Alastair McPherson

LEADER of the COUNCIL

Cllr. Michael Pulfer

DEPUTY LEADER of the COUNCIL

Cllr. Clive Laband

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr. J. Knight (Chairman)
Cllr. C. Ash-Edwards (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. C. Laband
Cllr. C. Evans
Cllr. R. Cromie
Cllr. R. Nicholson
Cllr. M. Pulfer
Cllr. R. Bates

ENVIRONMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Cllr. M. Jeffers (Chairman)
Cllr. S. Ellis (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. C. Cheney
Cllr. R. Cromie
Cllr. J. Langley
Cllr. H. Munding
Cllr. S. Inglesfield
Cllr. A. McPherson

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr. C. Laband (Chairman)
Cllr. A. McPherson (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. M. Pulfer
Cllr. C. Evans
Cllr. S. Inglesfield
Cllr. R. Nicholson
Cllr. C. Cheney
Cllr. S. Wickremaratchi

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee supervises all **financial and administrative** matters and ensures that all procedures and financial transactions are dealt with in accordance with the various statutes governing local authority activities.

The Policy and Finance Committee receives and considers every payment and receipt and reviews its income and expenditure at its bi-monthly meetings. In addition, the Town Council reviews its reserves regularly and checks the Town Council's bank balances and reconciliations at each meeting. In effect, every transaction of the Council's finances are published for Member's and resident's consideration. All this information can be found in the Committee agenda and all payments over £500 can be found listed on the Transparency page of our website, or by request to the Town Hall.

The Town Council's accounts are run in accordance with the statutory requirements laid down for local Councils. To date, the Town Council's procedures and Internal Audit were conducted to the satisfaction of the designated External Auditor and were in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements. As a result, the Committee approved the end of year 31st March 2022 Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, Annual Return, Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statement at the end of June 2022, without any issue being raised.

The Committee has also worked closely with the Town Council's Internal Auditor who again this year has no concerns about the financial operations and management of policies for the Town Council. The Internal Auditor carries out a bi-annual audit, which is over and above the annual External Audit process. These are ways of making sure that the Town Council is spending your money correctly and lawfully and within a manner set down and agreed by the Town Council as the corporate body.

Generally, the 2022/2023 Council year has again been very challenging due to substantial loss in income from Town Hall hires as the effects and new ways of working have been embraced by those who used the Town Hall. The Town Council has met these challenges and has been able to support the community, friends further afield and continue to lead on ground breaking and innovative projects whilst ensuring our land ownership and services are maintained. All of these projects and work are presented in this report under the relevant committee reports. The Town Council has also been able to manage its budgets with the uncertainty surrounding utility bills and inflation.

Cost-of-Living Crisis Emergency Grants - £25,000

Cost of Living Crisis emergency grants were introduced and awarded to fund gaps in service for groups and organisations who face shortfalls or gaps in their services during these very difficult times. Grants were awarded to Age UK WSBH, Ashenground Community Centre, Bentswood Hub, Haywards Heath Baptist Church, Haywards Heath Methodist Church, MSOPC and The Yews to fund the running of their Warm Spaces. Funds were also awarded to set up the Haywards Heath Baby Bank, allow Kangaroos to set up a bursary, GP referral members of The Dolphin Leisure Centre to receive a further discounted rate if needed, and to help fund 4Sight advisors to assist users with finding financial assistance.

Funding for the Bentswood Community Hub

After a presentation made by a representative of the Bentswood Community Hub who facilitates and support Sussex Clubs for Younger people with intervention youth sessions for children/young people, it was noted that the 8-11 youth club faced an uncertain future due to a funding shortfall. The Town Council was more than happy to help and awarded £6,000 to help the youth group get through to the end of the financial year, with a view to considering long term service level based funding on the output of the group this year.

Haywards Heath Reporting Application in Partnership with Cloudy ICT

In the current cost of living crisis, working more efficiently and effectively has never been more critical – and when you find a great way to make this happen while helping students build their IT and business skills, it's got to be a win-win situation. This is what we've just done at Haywards Health Town Council,

where we have recently collaborated with students both locally and across the country to develop a “report an issue” app to help us log and manage the jobs of our grounds team.

Cloud-based app - In the past, members of the public have had to ring up or submit forms to flag issues with a range of facilities, including allotments, street furniture, flower beds, cemeteries, hanging baskets and the war memorial, as well as highlight problems such as graffiti. Using our new app, reporting can be done quickly and simply online, with tasks automatically generated – leading to a paper-free, easily monitored works schedules for our Grounds Team. It also helps them with auditing and ensuring all street furniture and facilities are in working order, with no health and safety issues. Furthermore, because the app is a real-time, cloud-based service, it allows us to be more responsive to the needs of the local community.

Powered by students - So those are the nuts and bolts of the app, but what about the fantastic young people who created it? As well as CloudyICT and business students from schools and colleges in the Haywards Heath area, they also include members of the Cloudy Foundation’s Enterprise Academy, a charity set up by IT services provider CloudyICT during the early days of the pandemic to develop students’ digital skills. It was first based solely around conceptual app projects, but all that changed when a keen year-10 student called Aaran Chauhan got involved with a real-time app project for Campbell Park Council.

This proved so successful that the Academy started to run regular student app-creation projects for local councils, with ours being picked for the autumn/winter session. Meeting twice a week at 5pm over a two-month period, the students were mentored through the project by Microsoft, CloudyIT engineers and previous Academy Students, including Aaran, who is now working for CloudyIT – showing what an excellent work-experience opportunity this type of programme is.

Custom-built - They all worked exceptionally hard. After coming up with a plan of action, they collaborated in small groups to design all the different elements of the project, learning important core business, technical, project management and communication skills along the way. The students presented the custom-built app to the Council at a public launch ceremony in December, and their accomplishments have been captured in a Record of Achievement, which they can showcase to future employers and colleges.

Cllr James Knight – Chairman of the Committee said; -It's been a privilege working with such a dedicated group of young people, and their efforts are already making us more efficient as a council – having all the reports flow into one “pot” makes it so much easier to keep track of everything and respond promptly. We are all hugely grateful to the students for doing such a great job, with such enthusiasm, and in their own time, too. It's been a community-led project from start to finish and we are over the moon with the results.

Further activities of the Committee, which are mainly duties the Town Council must undertake each year (tested by the Internal Auditor).

- Set the Council 2023/2024 Town Council budget and recommended the Precept tax base rise to Full Council.
- Offering grants to community organisations. In 2022 / 2023 the Town Council awarded a total of 16 grants, from a grant budget of £8,500.
- Overseeing the Town Council’s external contract renewals and negotiations including Roundabout Maintenance, Parks Maintenance and Street Nameplates for 2023/2024.
- By requirement of Audit annually reviewed and readopted;
 - Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
 - Code of Conduct – the revised LGA Code of Conduct.
 - Internal Financial Risk Assessments,
 - Statements of Control and Audit review.
 - Town Council’s hiring fees for the Town Hall, Allotments and Cemetery charges.
 - Renewed membership to the National Association and West Sussex Association of

Local Councils

- Town Council's Councillors' Allowance Scheme and Councillor/Staff expenses,
- Town Council's Health and Safety matters and policies.
- General Data Protection Regulations.
- Freedom of Information Policy and Town Council Publication Scheme.
- Reviewing the Town Council's asset register.
- Operation London Bridge, activating it on the death of HM the Queen.
- Overseeing a revamp of the Council's inward investment for Events sponsorship brochure.
- Been responsible for the Town Council's website, newsletter, Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Committed to public safety by funding the seventh year of the ground-breaking Community/Business Warden for Haywards Heath, which will now focus on supporting the aforementioned DISC project.
- Has considered and agreed to support residents to protect footway links from Wealden Way to Muster Green South through an application to West Sussex County Council for map modification orders to protect the access from the footpath to Muster Green.
- Via a policy introduced by the Committee under the heading Ward Budgets, Councillors are allowed to spend money within their wards to support the community groups and organisations. This has included as examples;
 - Lucastes & Bolnore Ward – New Bench at Tim Farmer recreation ground.
 - Franklands Ward – the placement of trees at.
 - Ashenground Ward – Nothing to report.
 - Heath Ward – 2 salt bins for Gatesmead.
 - Bentswood Ward – the provision of a Defibrillator in the Ward.

ENVIRONMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

The key achievements of the Committee are listed below with the Committee working on a number of existing projects and having delivered a number of new initiatives, whilst continuing to provide four Allotments sites, Muster Green and Western Road Cemetery and nature reserve.

Community Events Programme

Haywards Heath Town Council was thrilled the full events programme was able to return in 2022/23, with the exception of the unfortunate cancellation of Town Day due to passing of HM the Queen. The Spring festival, Mid Sussex Marathon, Remembrance Service (as was the schools' service held at St Wilfrids Church on the 11th November 2022) and Christmas Fireworks were all able to make a comeback, and an additional event of 'Community Carols'. Not only was the 'Community Carols' event held to highlight the Winter Assistance Campaigns, including the Coat Exchange and Cost-of-Living Crisis grants, it was also an opportunity for the Town Council to give something back to members of local organisations who work tirelessly to support individuals and projects within the town. The Town Council are working towards delivering a full programme of events in 2023/24, with Spring into Summer replacing this year's Spring Festival and the addition of a one-off Coronation Celebration! Please keep an eye of the Town Council's website and social media feeds for more information.

Winter Assistance

2022 saw the introduction of the Haywards Heath Coat Exchange, with a huge number of coats being donated by the local community. The Exchange ended on 17th February, with over 300 people benefiting from a new coat due to the Exchange. Leave No One Behind at Christmas was reintroduced, with the aim of the campaign being to reach out to the elderly and vulnerable to provide them with information on organisations that could help them over Christmas and with rising costs. We also wanted everyone to receive a gift for Christmas. 260 elderly/vulnerable people benefited from the campaign.

Town Council land holdings

There has been a considerable amount of focus on the Town Council land holdings over the last year alongside a continuing of a full review of the working practices and health and safety requirements for the Town Council's amazing Groundstaff, including our new reporting application report presented under the Policy and Finance section of this report. Alongside the management plans Muster Green, Allotment sites and Western Road Cemetery (plus last year's full tree survey, which all identified works have been completed) a survey of the trees in our four allotment sites has been completed. Muster Green tree survey will be completed in April. Emergency works to the road network at Western Road Cemetery in early February and ongoing work is being undertaken to achieve works to the bank of the stream at America Lane.

The Town Council has been successful again with its application for a Green Flag for Muster Green and made a successful return to the South and South East in Bloom competition with Silver Gilt awards the Town General generally, Western Road Cemetery and Muster Green. This demonstrates how well the Town Council's land holdings, and how the Town generally is kept and managed. The Town Council is already readying an application for the same this year. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned is supported by the Town wide planting you see, roundabout maintenance (all in the Town), management of the trees along South Road and other community infrastructure such as litter bins, salt bins and benches. There is also the maintenance of many smaller areas of the Town such as the World War 2 garden at Burrell Road, Jubilee Gardens and land off Barnmead for example.

Partnership Working

The Town Council continues to work with its principal authorities by removing Graffiti for West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council. Furthermore, undertaking works in Mid Sussex District Council Parks and looking after street name plates and managing the Town's roundabouts for West Sussex County Council. These works ensure that the Town's environment and some

instances surrounding Parishes looks clean and tidy.

Environment Working Group

Haywards Heath Town Council is very conscious of the issues around climate change and has been proactive in looking at ways the Town Council delivers services, promotes and develops new initiatives within the Town and how it can act as a signposting/supporting body for residents, local businesses and voluntary organisations. We were very proud to become one of the first Town Councils to create an Environment Working Group in July 2018, which reports into the Town Council's Environment and General Purposes Committee which looks at Environmental issues.

The Committee's main focus has been overseeing the development, under the leadership of the Environment Working Group, of the Town Council's Environment Priorities and supporting Framework document. The Framework and Priorities can be found on the Town Council's Website, but the following are the highlights that were delivered during 2022/2023 with their development and the background work being undertaken during this year;

- Continuing the process to set up a cluster joint working approach with be surrounding Parish Councils so to share information, lobby organisations/principal authorities and work collaboratively.
- Advertising initiatives for information not direction such a Veganuary.
- Being the first Town in Europe to sign up to the Plant Based Treaty
- Undertook its annual review of the Town Council's overarching planting regime and reduced the amount of seasonal planting and replace parts with perennial planting.
- Held a number of litter picks led by Councillors.
- Developed wildflower beds on Muster Green, Milton Road, off Caxton Way and outside the Dolphin Leisure Centre.
- The electric van is continuing to run round Town and has been a great success.

Active Haywards Heath

The previously running 'Haywards Heath Sports Forum' had a rebranding in October 2022 and is now known as Active Haywards Heath. Active Haywards Heath is a platform for sports clubs, groups, venues and professionals operating within or around Haywards Heath. The group allows members to get to know other members of the sports, leisure and exercise industry to get to engage, share information, network and form necessary links with other like-minded individuals.

The first meeting of Active Haywards Heath took place on Tuesday 6th December. The second meeting took place on Thursday 9th February and saw a huge turnout with over 30 professionals in attendance.

Active Haywards Heath also has a Social Media presence across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A discussion board has been set up on 'Pro Boards' to allow a line of communication between all members. On April 30th, some of the members of Active Haywards Heath will be hosting and showcasing their businesses at 'Haywards Heath Gets Active', a sports taster event designed for residents of Haywards Heath to allow them to find a sport/ activity in a free, relaxed, fun environment.

Generally

The Town Council through its Councillors and officers sit on numerous outside bodies to help them, monitor their actions and indeed share their activities. This includes the Haywards Heath Dementia Alliance, Haywards Heath Business Association, the Rotary and Lions, Mid Sussex Health and Wellbeing Network, working with Mid Sussex Neighbourhood Policing and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action, just to name a few. The Town Council also continues its winter management plans and is well prepared in the event of adverse weather. The Christmas lighting scheme is provided by the Town Council and large number of footway/path street lights. The Town Council will also be administering two West Sussex County Council Operation Watershed application for Bolnore Road and Barnmead.

Matthew Jeffers – Chairman of the Environment and General Purposes Committee said,
“The Environment and General Purposes committee is committed to the health and wellbeing of the Community. This is demonstrated by its and the Council’s commitment to Active Haywards Heath, support for those who need to know that the Town Council is there to help them and the continuing work we do in the community in these very challenging economic times”

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Cllr Clive Laband Chairman, Planning Committee

It has been a challenging year, and notwithstanding the economic and social challenges inflicted previously by Covid and now endemic inflation, Officers and Councillors have met every three weeks without fail.

We have met 17 times for committee meetings to consider 339 applications.

Additionally, with Seven Planning Working Group sessions to formulate foundation responses for;

- the Section 18 district Plan Consultation - 2 Sessions
- the Hurst Farm development proposals - 4 sessions
- and the Lindfield TRO proposition to divert HGV traffic away from Lindfield

We have also attended collaborative pre-application discussions, principally to engage with potential developers, enabling applicants to share commercially confidential material/designs etc and exchange relevant ward information. The objective here is to improve the quality of applications and potential benefits for the Town. These meetings generally focus upon the larger, central locations in the town.

The technology enhancements, coupled with a large format monitor, continue to support clearer planning discussions and a sustainable reduction in our paper usage.

Developments in Perrymount Road near the station quarter have now delivered a significant and positive architectural impact upon the Town, updating this key visual gateway, with the 150 residential rental units now fully occupied. New commercial/retail leisure businesses occupy the ground floors and this trend is continuing, with more applications approved to provide new and high-quality converted accommodation in this sustainable central location, via the permitted development order legislation. This also means a permanent loss of office employment space.

To define our role

The Town Council does not determine applications; however, we are a primary statutory consultee, and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) as the relevant Local Planning Authority, must legally consider all our comments. This is a responsibility which we take and deliver seriously. We strive to work closely together, whilst providing a voice to safeguard the interests of the Town, and with a clear focus upon any material Planning Considerations which may be relevant to specific applications.

Neighbourhood Plan

We have been asked why we have not updated the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan, is a Land Use document. An updated Plan will support the delivery of strategic policies to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the Neighbourhood of the Haywards Heath Town area. Basic requirements should include a clear focus on safeguarding local character, and from this perspective it must include design and environmental policies based on the identified Townscape Character Areas, Conservation Areas, and the designation of local green spaces. More may be added.

The Neighbourhood Plan will moreover help shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.

Chronology

If we update our Neighbourhood Plan before the District Plan, some or all of the work, and indeed policies needed to facilitate the update could be overwritten and/or diluted by a subsequent adoption of an overarching District Plan. Statutory Process during the foundation work for the Neighbourhood Plan update, Policy discussions and research will include significant input from residents, Councillors and

potentially external experts if required. This is to ensure quality, fact-based decisions are delivered. The Plan process, depending upon its scale may include a formal public consultation and depending upon the extent of those changes, may require formal validation by an Independent Government Inspector, together with a public referendum to enable adoption of a new “made” Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Development Plans are **Relevant and material Planning Considerations. Critically it carries more weight if it follows adoption of the next District Plan.** Strategically, **adoption after the next District Plan is “made” is therefore the best, stronger choice for Haywards Heath. This will be a task for the new council.**

Land at Hurst Farm

The Homes England planning team have recently validated their application for approximately 375 new homes. This sustainable approach includes new highway and utility infrastructure prior to building, with plans to provide a minimum 30% affordable housing in the development. The proposal will include plans for a new, much needed Primary School, Cemetery, Allotments, and a Country Park. The Town Council will then measure the planning proposal against the Neighbourhood Plan, which is part of the planning policy framework. **We will consider this item at our Committee meeting on 17th April.**

Lastly, the past four years have been a busy and intense time for councillors, officers, and our community, during which the Planning Committee team have shouldered the heaviest timetable as councillors. I have certainly appreciated their dedication, humour and support, especially when discussions evolved to provide an unexpected consensus! We also owe our special thanks collectively to Steve Trice the Town Clerk, Andrew Sturgeon our Planning Clerk and to our officer staff for providing documentation, advice and support for our decision making. **Thank you.**

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan - Is now formally part of the planning framework on the adoption of Mid Sussex District Council's District Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is used in Mid Sussex District Council's planning decisions and as a planning decision tool by the Haywards Heath Town Council's Planning Committee.

What is in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan: -

The Plan is for the whole Town, including part of Ansty and Staplefield Parish. It provides a vision for the future of the Town, setting clear planning policies to achieve this vision. These policies accord with higher level planning policy, as required by the Localism Act. It looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- *Providing for a new Country Park, new Allotments, a new Cemetery, and a new School to be located off Hurstwood Lane.*
- *Policies on Clair Hall and the Dolphin Leisure Centre.*
- *Protecting Clair Park, Beech Hurst Gardens, Victoria Park, Muster Green, the Harlands School Playing fields and other established green areas within the Town.*
- *Allowing for the improvement of, and enhancements to all aspects of the Town Centre.*
- *Allowing for the Bluebell Railway terminus in Haywards Heath.*
- *Allowing for increased provision and facilities at St Francis Sports site.*
- *Providing housing for an ever-growing population.*
- *Supporting policies on the Environment, Sustainable Travel, Transport and Business Holding.*

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Annual Allowances are paid under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003.

As a starting point for allowances Haywards Heath Town Councillors resolved to take up to £516 per annum in 2011, which was the higher level offered to Parish Councillors rather than Town Councillors. During the last financial year, the level of allowance has risen to £1,116.

Payments relate to 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2023.

Councillor	Amount Claimed	Notes
Chris Ash-Edwards	£1,116	
Richard Bates	£1,116	
Clare Cheney	£1,116	
Rachel Cromie	£1,116	
Sandy Ellis	£1,116	
Christopher Evans	£1,116	
Stephanie Inglesfield	£1,116	
Matthew Jeffers	£1,116	
James Knight	£1,116	
Clive Laband	£1,116	
Jack Langley	£1,116	
Alastair McPherson	£1,116	
Howard Mordin	£1,116	Plus, Mayors allowance £1,066
Richard Nicholson	£1,116	
Michael Pulfer	£1,116	
Sujan Wickremaratchi	£1,116	
Total Claimed	£17,856	

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT FULL COUNCIL/COMMITTEE
to 14th March 2023

FULL COUNCIL

Councillor Name	Number of Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Absent
Chris Ash-Edwards	5	4	1	-
Richard Bates	5	3	2	-
Clare Cheney	5	5	-	-
Rachel Cromie	5	3	2	-
Sandy Ellis	5	5	-	-
Christopher Evans	5	4	1	-
Stephanie Inglesfield	5	3	2	-
Matthew Jeffers	5	3	2	-
James Knight	5	4	1	-
Clive Laband	5	5	-	-
Jack Langley	5	3	2	-
Alastair McPherson	5	5	-	-
Howard Mundin	5	5	-	-
Richard Nicholson	5	3	2	-
Michael Pulfer	5	4	1	-
Sujan Wickremaratchi	5	3	2	-

ENVIROMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES

Councillor Name	Number of Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Absent
Clare Cheney	4	2	2	-
Rachel Cromie	4	1	3	-
Sandy Ellis	4	4	-	-
Stephanie Inglesfield	4	1	3	-
Matthew Jeffers	4	4	-	-
Jack Langley	4	2	2	-
Alastair McPherson	4	3	1	-
Howard Mundin	4	4	-	-

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Name	Number of Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Absent
Chris Ash-Edwards	5	4	1	-
Richard Bates	5	5	-	-
Rachel Cromie	5	4	1	-
Christopher Evans	5	3	2	-
James Knight	5	4	1	-
Clive Laband	5	5	-	-
Richard Nicholson	5	2	3	-
Michael Pulfer	5	5	-	-

PLANNING

Councillor Name	Number of Meetings	Attended	Apologies	Absent
Clare Cheney	15	13	2	-
Christopher Evans	15	8	7	-
Clive Laband	15	14	1	-
Stephanie Inglesfield	15	12	3	-
Alastair McPherson	15	13	2	-
Richard Nicholson	15	9	6	-
Michael Pulfer	15	13	2	-
Sujan Wickremaratchi	15	9	6	-

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