

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

### MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

#### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011

**Councillors:** Christopher Ash-Edwards  
Jonathan Ash-Edwards  
Richard Bates  
Rod Clarke  
Mims Davies  
David Dorking  
Sandy Ellis  
Tim Farmer  
Julie Hayden  
Stephen Hillier  
Warren Hill  
Jacqueline Hollister\*\*  
Natalie March  
Christine McLean  
Michael Pulfer  
John Sabin

**Apologies\*\* Absent\***

**Also present: S Wickremaratchi and Ms C Jones**

Before the meeting commenced the Council received a presentation from the Bluebell Railway, which initially focused on the ongoing works to link the Bluebell Railway to East Grinstead. The presentation then focused on the long term objective of bringing the Bluebell line into Haywards Heath. After the presentation Members were invited to ask questions and enter into in debate. Members thanked the Bluebell representatives, welcomed the plans to come into Haywards Heath and acknowledged the benefits of doing so. Members stressed that they had urged the development company leading on the re-development of Haywards Heath Train Station to retain the designated 5<sup>th</sup> platform so that the Bluebell could stop at Haywards Heath station in the future. This was significant due to Solum Regeneration plans to redevelop Haywards Heath Station looking as if they would come forward in 2012.

#### **50. Council Prayer**

Members stood for the Council prayer, which was read by the Town Mayor. During the prayer Cllr R Bates and Cllr Mrs C McLean left the Chamber.

#### **51. Public Forum**

None

#### **52. Apologies**

Apologies were received from;  
Cllr J Hollister due to ill health.

#### **53. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **54. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011 without comment were then taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Mayor.

#### **55. Mayors Lists of Engagements and Announcements**

Members noted the Mayors list of engagements. The Mayor during the item thanked Mrs Hewett (Assistant to the Town Clerk) for all her efforts in organising the Remembrance Day Service. The Mayor also thanked all of the other Members of staff who came out to help on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **56. To receive and consider adoption of the Minutes of the following Committees:**

- (i) Planning Committee - **MINS. 60 - 86**  
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Planning Committees, dated 26<sup>th</sup> September 2011 - **Mins 60 - 66**, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 - **Mins 67 – 76** and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011 - **Mins 77 - 86** were moved, seconded and agreed without discussion by Council.
  
- (ii) Environment & General Purposes Committee - **MINS. 20 - 29**  
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Environment & General Purposes Committee dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011 **Mins 20 - 29** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council. (It was noted that the agenda and report referred to minutes 20 – 30, this was a clerical error)
  
- (ii) Policy & Finance Committee - **MINS. 26 - 36**  
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 **Mins 26 - 36** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

#### **57. Representation on Mid Sussex District Council's 'District Plan'**

Members of the Council considered the Draft District Plan and made the following comments;

Members generally welcomed the production of the District Plan, which was felt to be an excellent starting point to govern the future development of Haywards Heath and the District. Members were also supportive of the aim of the document, which promoted a better place to live and work. The move away from the high numbers of houses proposed in the South East Plan was acknowledged and Members hoped that when the document was examined, the Inspector would agree with the numbers proposed. Members recognised that there was a need for new housing and that the South East would take a high proportion of the housing numbers, but stressed that even though housing was needed, the Town would not become a default area for development within the District. Members accepted that the Town would only benefit from improved infrastructure if it was financed through new housing development, but at the same time recognised the need to provide a balance between housing and green spaces in and around the Town. Members felt the District Council should drive the document forward so that it could be adopted as soon as was practicably possible, which would then enable the Council's Neighbourhood Plan to be developed and attached to the Plan. It was crucial that the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan was adopted at the same time as the District Plan so there were no opportunities for developers to submit applications within the interim period.

However, it was felt that the District Plan should be sustainable and provide a platform to enable the Town Council to produce a sustainable Neighbourhood Plan. This would include the District Council ensuring that the desired amount of housing

could be serviced by the utilities companies, and that the Town's already overused infrastructure was upgraded to meet the potential uplift in population through accepting the Town Council's infrastructure requirements and reflecting them in the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

It was acknowledged that the District Plan was a very high level document and in line with Neighbourhood Planning philosophy, pushed the detail down onto the Parish/Town Councils. Members had accepted the challenge by producing the Neighbourhood Plan and wished to reiterate the Town Council's position in asking that all policies relating to the Town be removed, especially policy HH8 which related to Haywards Heath Railway Station as the Town Council did not support mixed housing on the site. Members accepted that Haywards Heath was a commuter Town and agreed to continue, in partnership with other responsible agencies, to actively pursue and support the re-development of the Haywards Heath Train Station. Moving forward in line with the District Plan, the Town Council would also pursue in the development of the Town Centre and business accommodation in and around the Town to generate employment opportunities locally. To support this vision the Town Council agreed with the continuation of the level of affordable housing in the Town and acknowledged the need for additional family housing.

It was also agreed that it was vitally important that the Town maintained its character and identity and that where possible the Town did not coalesce with neighbouring Parishes and Towns. This made the protecting of the green spaces around the border of the Town essential.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

**Instruct the Clerk, in liaison with the Leader of the Council to make representation to Mid Sussex District Council on its District Plan as per the body of this minute.**

#### **58. Motion to change the Vice Chairman of the Environment and General Purposes Committee**

Cllr Farmer put forward a motion, which asked for (A) the agreement of Council to remove Cllr Hill from his role as Vice Chairman of the Environment and General Purposes Committee on the grounds of his non attendance at Council meetings and (B) to appoint Cllr Mrs March as the new Vice Chairman for the rest of the 2011 – 2012 Council year. Debate on the issue opened but was duly suspended so that Cllr J Ash-Edwards could second the motion. Once the process of putting the motion forward had been properly undertaken, debate re-opened. The Members of the minority party felt that it was not appropriate for the Council as a whole to decide that Cllr Hill be removed and that it should be done by the appropriate Committee and then reported to Council. This argument was countered by the fact that Full Council set committees at the annual meeting of the Council and any resolution from the Environment and General Purposes Committee would be ratified by the Council. It was also stated that it would be prudent to resolve the issue immediately as Cllr Hill's non attendance was not helping the Committee in its work and was embarrassing for the Council. The Clerk interjected and stated that he had taken advice from the Sussex Association of Local Councils who had said there was nothing wrong legally with the motion and that there was no hard and fast rule relating to the matter. This was a grey area and ultimately the Council had the final decision on these kinds of matters. Discussion then continued until Cllr Hill addressed Council by saying that due to personal and business circumstances which he was not prepared to explain in a public meeting, he had not been able to attend as many Council meetings as he had been required to and that no Councillors had contacted him to find out the reason for his non attendance. At this point, Cllr Hill asked to resign as Vice Chairman before any vote took place. The Clerk interjected again at this point and

stated that in the light of Cllr Hill's resignation, that recommendation of part (A) of the motion should be discharged and a process to elect a new Vice Chairman should be undertaken. As per the motion's recommendation, Cllr Mrs March had been nominated to replace Cllr Hill as Vice Chairman. In addition, Cllr Bates nominated Cllr Mrs Mclean to stand as Vice Chairman. With this, a vote was taken and

**Cllr Mrs March received 12 votes, Cllr Mrs Mclean 2 votes will one abstention.**

Therefore,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

**Appoint Cllr Mrs March as the Vice Chairman of the Environment and General Purposes Committee for the remainder of the 2011 - 2012 Council year.**

#### **59. Membership of internal and external committees and outside bodies**

The Clerk introduced the report and asked for nominations for Membership on the Council's Planning Committee and the Albemarle Management Committee as outlined in the report, and ratification of the roles of Cllr Mrs Davies and Cllr Dorking as monitors of the Council's financial activities. Members duly nominated Cllr Dorking to sit on the Planning Committee due to Cllr Hill's resignation and Cllr Mrs Ellis to sit on the Albemarle Management Committee in light of an invitation from the Chairman of the Committee.

Members **RESOLVED** that;

- (a) Cllr Dorking replace Cllr Hill on the Council's Planning Committee.**
- (b) Cllr Mrs Ellis take up the role of the Council's representative on the Albemarle Management Committee.**
- (c) Ratified the recommendation of the Policy and Finance Committee to make Cllr Mrs Davies and Cllr Dorking monitors of the Council's financial activities.**

#### **60. Verbal update on the position of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Farmer, the Leader of the Council, updated Members on the position of the background work being undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan. It was explained that in line with the latest information received from Mid Sussex District Council via the Department for Communities and Local Government, due to the regulations for a Neighbourhood Plan not being made available until April 2012, that the Town Council would not be able to go out to consultation until May 2012. This would then entail a six week consultation period held by the Town Council, then inspection and further consultation to be undertaken by Mid Sussex District Council after the Inspector's approval. This process could potentially pave the way for a referendum in November 2012 alongside the Police Commissioners elections. Cllr Farmer added that at present legislation did not allow for a local referendum alongside the Police Commissioners elections but there was an opportunity to lobby the Government on the matter. Members also noted that the Clerk had submitted a Front Runner application to the Department for Communities and Local Government which, if granted, would assist with the cost of the development of the document. The Community Liaison Officer had developed a robust document which presented the feedback from the infrastructure consultation. In closing, Cllr Farmer added that he and the Clerk had been liaising with surrounding villages and towns to see where there were opportunities to make statements of mutual understanding. They had also been speaking to local community groups/organisations and talking to developers with land interest in the Town. There was also ongoing work with the St Francis

Social and Sports Club with regards to the re-provision of facilities at the site. It was noted that the next stage was to draw this information together and for Members to agree, which housing sites could be potentially included in the Neighbourhood Plan so that the document could be developed and taken through the appropriate Council committee process early in the New Year.

Members **AGREED** to;

**Note the Leader's Update**

**61. To consider any urgent items the Mayor has received under S.O. 11.**

None

**62.** Members resolved to move into Exempt Business and excluded the press and the public from the Council Chamber. The Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee then recommended the adoption of the committee's exempt minute no. 37 of the meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The resolutions were seconded and agreed without discussion.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm