

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes: **Policy and Finance Committee** held on Monday 27th June 2011

Present Cllrs:

J Ash-Edwards (Chairman)**
T Farmer (Vice Chairman)
C Ash-Edwards
R Bates
D Dorking
M Davies
S Hillier

Apologies ** Absent *

Also present:

Cllrs: R Clarke and J Sabin

1. Apologies

J Ash-Edwards – Conflicting Meeting

In light of Cllr J Ash-Edwards' apologies Cllr T Farmer chaired the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on Monday 11th April 2011 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

3. Substitutes

None

4. Declarations of Interest

None

5. West Sussex County Council – Proposed Changes to Bus Services

Members considered the schedule of suggested changes and break down of the usage of each service produced by the Clerk. Members discussed each service in turn and from these discussions the following representation was formulated.

Haywards Heath Town Council took the opportunity to consider the Potential Changes to Supported Bus Services across West Sussex, with special attention being given to services that affect Haywards Heath, at a meeting of the Council held on the 27th June 2011.

Unfortunately, the Council feels that this consultation has thrown up more questions than answers, even after Town Council officers had made further investigations into the usage of each service. Where it is accepted that it is not economically viable to provide services that are not well used it was felt that thought must be given to innovative re-routing of services or even an amalgamation of services such as the 86 and 89. Most importantly we wish to understand how the person at the bus stop will be consulted on the matter.

Turning to specifics, the no. 31 service was funded by section 106 contributions and was part of the travel plan for Bolnore village. This service should continue to be funded so as to support residents and enable children to travel out of Bolnore village to school.

The Town Council feels that these reductions will also affect the surrounding villages going some way to isolating them from the Town even further than they are now. Members also had concerns that the right type of bus is being used on each route and whether services can be adapted to run less frequently during the day and more frequently during peak hours.

In conclusion, Haywards Heath Town Council feel that there is a lot more work needed to understand the needs of the bus service users, and feel that hiding behind cuts rather than forcing the bus companies to be innovative is not in the best interest of the Town. The Council look forward to seeing how the County Council presents its findings and what it intends to do during the second phase of consultation in October 2011.

It was also agreed that in line with the successful partnership working arrangements in place with Southern Rail that it would be prudent to form a bus working party who could directly liaise with the Countryliner and Metro Bus.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Recommend to Full Council that a bus service working group be formed and to make representation to West Sussex County Council, in consultation with the Chairman of the committee on the withdrawal of bus services as per the body of this minute;

6. Cluster Working and Community Action Plans

Members welcomed the initiative that would potentially benefit the community by offering better value for money and/or improved services. However, in supporting the Clerk in exploring the possibilities of Cluster Working Members did have concerns about how the initiative would work and who would derive the most benefit. Firstly, this would be in terms of West Sussex County Council passing a suitable financial contribution to provide the service. Members were mindful that resources and finances were stretched, but the Town Council could not be expected to undertake a service already being provided by another local authority with no financial input. It would be impossible to raise Council Tax to provide a service that another authority was charging for. With respect to the Parish Councils there was concern that only the Town Council would have the man power and vehicles to provide a service. This could be detrimental to the services the Town Council offers to the residents of Haywards Heath. Possibly, if a business case based on a contribution from West Sussex could help increase the capacity of the Town Council then a service/project might be viable. The Clerk agreed and noted the concerns raised by Members but stressed that he was in very early discussion with Lindfield, Lindfield Rural and Ardingly Parish Councils, with a meeting to be held in late July. The Clerk also stressed that any project/service initiative would be reported to the Council with a robust and sustainable business plan, which considered each partner and the tax payer.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Authorise the Clerk to enter into negotiations to formulate a business plan for the development of a cluster working partnership with surrounding villages.

7. Quality Status Criteria

The Clerk introduced the concept of Quality Status by running through the Criteria attached to the report. Members noted what had to be achieved and what elements of the criteria fell directly on them. It was acknowledged that the main requirement on them was to hold Ward Surgeries on a regular basis. In terms of progress the Clerk informed Members that he hoped to submit an application in December and that he was striving to attain the qualification.

Members **AGREED** to;

Note the Clerks update

8. Mid Sussex Standards Board Representation

Members considered a request from Mid Sussex for representation on the above body. It was noted that this would probably be a short term appointment because the pending Localism Bill is looking to abolish Standards Boards. Nevertheless, Cllr C Ash Edwards was nominated and duly agreed to be Haywards Heath Town Council's representative.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Recommend to Full Council that Cllr Christopher Ash-Edwards be nominated to sit on Mid Sussex District Council's Standards Board on behalf of Haywards Heath Town Council.

9. Victoria Park Paddling Pool

New Members of the Council were informed that the Environmental and General Purposes Committee had considered four options for the re-development of the paddling pool back in October 2010, which included leaving it as it is at the present time. The solution agreed by the committee and the general consensus of the public consultation was for a water based theme with interactive water pumps and rills. Members were also informed that the philosophy behind the project was to reduce daily maintenance and running costs as there would not be standing water to test and it would improve the play value on the site. The improvement to the play value to the site included having interactive equipment and an improved access for disabled children. Members noted that the grant was being requested to fund two extra pieces of equipment to add to those already in the scheme. In considering the grant, Members noted that the project was being funded by Section 106 developer contributions for play and that there had been no direct financial contribution from Mid Sussex District Council. Nevertheless, it was noted that District Council officers had spent a considerable amount of time procuring the project, consulting with residents and group and as the collecting authority it had the right to use the money as it was time constrained. Members also had no objections to the monies being sent on the project, with this in mind,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

To contribute £4,509 of the Town Council's Town Fund to assist with the financing of Mid Sussex District Council's redevelopment of Victoria Park Paddling Pool.

10. Grant Applications

Members considered two grants. Members made no comment and fully supported the grant to the Red Cross for Amber Hazard Light Bars and a Finger Pulse Oximeter. In relation to the Kangeroos request for a grant towards an Apple ipad and Proloquo2go software, the Chairman identified that the products requested could be purchased cheaper than the £610.00 requested. Subsequently,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

- (a) Award a Grant of £509.00 to the Kangeroos towards the purchase of an Apple ipad and Proloquo2go software.**
- (b) Award a Grant of £600.00 to the Fire and Emergency Support Service FESS (British Red Cross) towards the purchase of Amber Hazard Light Bars and a Finger Pulse Oximeter.**

11. Town Centre Roundabouts Update

The Clerk explained that the Council maintained 6 roundabouts in the Town on behalf of West Sussex County Council. This was convenient to both parties and generated a good income to the Town Council through sponsorship. The Clerk went onto inform Members that further sponsorship had been secured for the roundabout on Oathall Avenue. In addition, the Responsible Finance Officer was in advanced discussions with Crest Nicholson with regards to the maintenance of the new roundabout being developed at Fox Hill. Members welcomed the initiative as it ensured that the roundabouts were kept up to a standard the Town Council would expect and

Members **AGREED** to;

Note the Clerks update.

12. Urgent Business

The Clerk informed Members that Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils were asking for representatives from Towns and Parishes to sit on Mid Sussex District Council's *District Plan* Infrastructure Working Group. Albeit a very short appointment of only two months, Members felt that it was important that the Town Council was represented. Cllr Sabin who was one of the Town Council representatives on the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils volunteered to sit on the working group, this was agreed and

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Recommend to Full Council that Cllr John Sabin be nominated by Haywards Heath Town Council to be a representative of the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils on the Mid Sussex District Council's *District Plan* Infrastructure Working Group.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm