

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2017 at 7.00 p.m.
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, HEIGHTON ROAD, SOUTH HEIGHTON

Present: Councillors: C Bradshaw (Chair), Mrs. G Hazell, P Julian (Vice Chair) and S Lo Fan Hin

In Attendance: Mrs. L Butcher and Mr. A Turner.

In the absence of the Parish Clerk, Cllr. Lo Fan Hin agreed to take the Minutes of the meeting.

SHPC Public Question Time

340-17 No attendees wished to raise any questions or matters affecting the parish.

SHPC Apologies

341-17 There were apologies from Cllr. Mrs. J Miller who had been unavoidably delayed and had not yet returned to the country. The apology was **ACCEPTED**.

SHPC To Approve and sign the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting on 25th August 2017

342-17 The Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25th August 2017 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Matters Arising (not covered below)

There were no matters arising that were not covered by the items on the agenda.

SHPC To Receive Declarations of Interest from Council Members

343-17 There were no declarations of interest.

SHPC Application for Co-option onto the Council

344-17 The Chairman referred to the letter from Mr. Alfred Turner, circulated with the agenda, requesting he be considered for co-option onto one of the vacant seats on the Council and to his previous expressions of interest into the role and attendance at Council meetings and the Council's stall at the Summer Fete. The Chairman outlined the process for the consideration of co-option and corrected information he had previously given to Mr. Turner on the voting arrangements and invited him to address the meeting. Mr. Turner referred briefly to his experience and background expressed in his previous correspondence and Members asked a few questions of clarification. The Chairman then requested a vote on the proposal that Mr. Turner be co-opted onto the Council, which was seconded by Cllr. Julian. It was **RESOLVED** that Mr. Alfred Turner be co-opted onto South Heighton Parish Council.

SHPC Staffing Matters

345-17 The Chairmen explained to the meeting that Mr. Keogh had left the employment of the Council and that the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Council's (SSALC) had been approach to provide a Temporary Clerk to fulfil the role of Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer until a new Clerk was appointed. Mrs. Linda Butcher had been recommended by SSALC and agreed to take on the role, subject to ratification by the Parish Council.

The Chairman invited Mrs. Butcher to outline her experience and for Members to ask appropriate questions. The role and duties of the Temporary Clerk were discussed, as were the roles and support that was needed and could be given to and by Members in the current circumstances. The Temporary Clerk would focus on the financial requirements and establishing appropriate administration arrangements, with the Chairman preparing Agendas and Minutes and responding on general enquiries received via the Council's email account. The Chairman explained that the Temporary Clerk's terms and conditions were as set out in the exempt report and recommendations of the Personnel Committee previously accepted by the Council (Minute SHPC 334-17) and suggested that the period for these temporary arrangements be until the end of the financial year to cover the new budget setting process and the implementation of The Hollow Project.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Mrs. Linda Butcher be ratified as the Parish Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer in the role of Temporary Clerk under the terms previously accepted and
- b) The Council makes arrangements to seek the appointment of a new Clerk for the end of the financial year, namely March/April 2018.

Mr. Turner signed the necessary declarations in the presence of the Council's Proper Officer, in order that he could take up his role as Councillor and participate fully in the meeting.

SHPC Financial Update**346-17**

The Chairman presented the report prepared by the previous Clerk circulated with the agenda, noting that the final instalment of the precept of £6,421.50 had been received from Lewes District Council (LDC) and reported that the payments previously agreed under the accepted recommendations and actions proposed by the Personnel Committee had also been made. The Chairman also reported that the Council had received an invitation from LDC to be incorporated within their annual play ground inspection scheme, which would significantly reduce the cost of this statutory requirement.

Name Cheque made payable to	Product/Service	Amount
LDC parks	Play Inspections (August)	£18.00
Total		£18.00

BALANCES

Current Account	£16,197.92
Deposit (Reserves)	£6,817.56
The Hollow 33761	£906.81

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Chairman notifies LDC that the Council wished The Hollow Play Area to be included in their annual inspection regime at the indicated additional cost of £9.95 for a DDA Assessment.
- b) The payments indicated in the table (above) be made.
- c) The balances above be **NOTED**.

SHPC To Consider the Application Arrangements for the Annual Bonfire Event**347-17**

The Chairman outlined the minor revisions in the Application Form and Licence, circulated with the agenda, that had been incorporated following the Council's resolution (Minute SHPC 318-17) to retain £200 of the deposit until re-seeding of the bonfire site had successfully been achieved and reported that the revised documents had been supplied to the South Heighton Village Hall Management Committee (SHVHMC) who were currently preparing the supporting documentation including a restoration programme. He went on to explain the proposal that the event be approved in principle, subject to the supporting documentation being submitted and considered by the Lewes District Council Safety Advisory Group (LDCSAG) and the payment of the appropriate fees being made with the full application and documents going to Council at the October meeting for final ratification. In the interim SHVHMC would submit the draft supporting documents to the Council for comments prior to that meeting so that any appropriate amendments could be made in advance of submission to LDCSAG. Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the supporting documents and noted the changes made to the Application Form and Licence.

- a) It was **RESOLVED** that the Bonfire Event on the 11th November 2017 be approved in principal, subject to ratification at the Council meeting on 24th October following submission of the final documentation and fees.
Cllr. Turner commented that the current wording in respect of motorised wheeled vehicles could be considered to exclude disability scooters and that this would be discriminatory. This was noted and it was recognised by Members that this was not the intention of the rules/regulations.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** that the wording of the regulations in respect of vehicular access to The Hollow be reviewed to facilitate mobility scooter access as part of the preparation of new signage to replace the existing at The Hollow.

SHPC Update on Parish Plan Review**348-17**

The Chairman updated Members on the progress of the Parish Plan Review and outlined the proposal for a leaflet which could be circulated with the Autumn/Winter newsletter, referring to a paper with draft wording, circulated at the meeting, which would form the basis of the leaflets contents.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to prepare a summary consultation leaflet, on the basis of the circulated paper, for consideration at the Council meeting on 24th October.

SHPC Remembrance Day Arrangements**349-17**

Cllr. Julian outlined the proposed arrangements of Newhaven Town Council and the British Legion for a Remembrance Day service and wreath laying ceremony in Newhaven referring to an invitation for a representative from the Parish Council to attend. Members considered it was important to recognise the sacrifices made to retain our freedoms and way of life and to represent the residents of South Heighton at such an event.

- SHPC 349-17 Cont.** It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Miller be authorised to purchase a wreath up to a value of £25 and Newhaven Town Council be notified that a representative from the Parish Council would attend the ceremony to lay a wreath on behalf of local residents.
- SHPC 350-17** **Planning and Tree Applications**
The Chairman referred to the plans for the alteration of an outbuilding at Manor Farmhouse application number LW/17/0673, circulated with the agenda. Members considered the proposed roof and door changes and on balance believed that they did not have a detrimental impact or adversely affect the setting of the Listed Building or Conservation Area.
It was **RESOLVED** to raise no objection to the application.
- SHPC 351-17** **Action List**
The Chairman reported back briefly on progress on the actions/tasks set out in the list circulated with the agenda. Progress on the Action List was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the completed items be removed from the list and the Chairman prepare an updated list, incorporating new agreed actions, for the next Parish Council meeting.
- SHPC 352-17** **Draft Items for the Autumn/Winter Newsletter**
The Chairman outlined the arrangements for the preparation and publication of the next Council Newsletter which it was proposed would be in the colour A3 format used for the Spring/Summer addition, which had received a positive feedback from local residents and requested Members to identify articles that they believed should be covered in the next edition. Members considered the various current issues and possible items and suggested articles on: the Parish Plan to link with the proposed leaflet being enclosed, the Summer Fete and Denton Challenge and the success of the consultation on the play area at The Hollow, an update on The Hollow Project progress, the Council's responses to the proposed Asphalt Plant, Flood Defences and A26 resurfacing, the incidents of graffiti and further fly tipping at The Hollow, coming events such as the Bonfire and Father Christmas and the interest/possibility of a Christmas Carol community charity fund raising event on the Village Green (responses to Cllr. Hazell). The Chairman requested that if Members thought of any other issues they let him know.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to prepare a draft Newsletter based on the suggested issues and items for consideration at the Council meeting on 24th October.
- SHPC 353-17** **To consider the exclusion of the press and public**
The Chairman proposed under Standing Order 3g the Council determine whether the presence of the press and public would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential financial business to be considered and propose the motion that: "In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is proposed that, in the public interest, the public and press be temporarily excluded and they be requested to withdraw from the meeting, in accordance with the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960 Section 1." The motion was seconded by Cllr. Julian and agreed by the meeting.
- SHPC 354-17** **To Consider Tendering Documentation and Process for The Hollow Project**
The Chairman referred to his confidential exempt report circulated by hand prior to the meeting, outlining the background and proposed process and tender document and the financial estimates for elements circulated at the meeting. He explained that to achieve economies of scale and best value the project would now consist of one main tender including all the play ground works and the trim trail (the location of which still had to be determined in light of comments made by Denton and South Heighton Junior Football Club and the South Heighton Village Hall Management Committee), consequently the timetable had been modified slightly to accommodate statutory requirements under tendering regulations, but that the Parish Council would still choose the contractor/final project and the completion remained targeted before the May Bank Holiday. There were two main changes from the project bid that was put forward and previously agreed by Council (Minute SHPC 220-17). The first was that it was proposed that LDC take a larger role in managing the project to utilise their experience and established practices and documentation; this was more likely to ensure a better quality result and supervision and avoid the need for the Parish Council to prepare and adopt all the necessary background documentation required. The second was that the tender was restructured to seek the best overall design and level of equipment provision for a fixed price rather than obtaining variable bids for set pieces of equipment. This would achieve more creativity in design, best value in terms of levels of provision and utilise the full level of grant. It would also ensure the priority equipment chosen by children in the summer consultation was provided first. In addition he explained that the specification of the safety surfacing had been changed from that originally shown to Members as there were concerns as to its long term stability

SHPC 354-17 Cont. on top of the existing surfaces and an alternative that still achieved the effect of a natural green rural like surface had been substituted.
The Chairman also informed Members that he had been advised by LDC finance officers that the proposed method for dealing with the significant VAT element of the project on a monthly basis was not possible and had subsequently explored alternatives with LDC officers in liaison with East Sussex County Council Officers administering the project grant. As a result an alternative had been prepared, where it was proposed that LDC would grant a short term temporary loan to cover the initial VAT element which could be repaid by the Parish Council on receipt of the VAT element reclaimed from HMRC. Members sought clarification on the tender arrangements, noting that the tenders would be considered at the Parish Council's meeting in November, and the detailed cost implications of the short term temporary loan. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council would need to switch to reclaiming VAT on a quarterly basis, but as a result the loan would only be needed for a very limited period ie probably only a few weeks before its repayment and that the interest was only a nominal yearly rate of 0.25% and that this was the cheapest option available and ensured there was no disruption or pressure on the Council's limited budget which might impact on its ability to deliver and pay for other service commitments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Chairman be authorised to finalise the location of the trim trail elements on behalf of the Parish Council.
- b) The revised tender format and process as set out in the report be approved.
- c) LDC manages the revised tender process and project elements on behalf of the Parish Council.
- d) The Parish Council, when necessary in the project programme, take out a short term temporary loan with LDC up to a maximum of £24,000 to cover the VAT elements of the project only.

The Chairman wished to have his thanks to the LDC officers for their support and efforts in successfully facilitating the progress of the project noted and these were endorsed by all Members.

SHPC 355-17 Parish Clerks Announcements & Correspondence

The Chairman reported that the Council had received an invitation to send a delegate to the Annual General Meeting of the East Sussex Association of Local Councils Limited on Friday 6th October at Seaford from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and enquired if any Member wished to attend. No Member was available to attend.

SHPC 356-17 Urgent Items and items for the next agenda

The revised Rolling Programme of Meetings and Standing Items was **NOTED** and the Temporary Clerk informed the meeting that the Draft 2018/2019 Budget will also need to be discussed in order to start the budget review and precept setting process.

Items identified for inclusion on the next meeting agenda include:

Half Year Budget Review.

Membership Review (annual review of the Council's and Clerk's membership of outside bodies and organisations and related subscriptions etc. to inform the budget process).

Approve Autumn/Winter Newsletter for publication (to include update on Parish Plan Review and progress on The Hollow Project).

Review Information Provision Protocol (annual review of protocol dealing with general information requests to the Council and charges to be made and the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998).

Update on progress on the Parish Plan Review and The Hollow Project

SHPC 357-17 Councillors Updates

Cllr. Julian informed the meeting that he had arranged for the debris brought down by rain water to The Hollow to be swept and had subsequently thanked the LDC staff responsible for their prompt action.

SHPC 358-17 To Confirm the Date of the next Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the next meeting would be on Tuesday 24th October 2017 at 7.00 p.m. at the South Heighton Village Hall, Heighton Road

The meeting ended at 9.00pm

Signed

Date

Cllr. Chris Bradshaw Chairman South Heighton Parish Council