

**MINUTES OF THE SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 24th OCTOBER 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), S Lo-Fan-Hin, Mrs. J Miller and A Turner

In Attendance: Temporary Clerk Mrs. L Butcher and Cllr. Johnny Denis.

In the absence of a permanent Clerk, Cllr. Mrs Miller agreed to take the Minutes of the meeting.

SHPC 359-17 1. Public Question Time

On the invitation of the Chairman Cllr. Denis introduced himself as the newly elected Green Party member on Lewes District Council for the Ouse Valley and Ringmer Ward and invited the Parish Council Members to inform him of the current issues and concerns in respect of residents in the South Heighton parish. Several issues were briefly discussed including the recent application for an Asphalt Plant at North Quay and a proposed Concrete Plant at East Quay by Bretts.

Cllr. Denis invited the Council to contact him in the future with any issue or concern it may have.

The Chairman requested the results of the survey of South Heighton residents referred to in recent publicity from the Green Party and Cllr. Denis agreed to obtain this and forward it to the Chairman.

Cllr. Denis requested to remain and if appropriate comment on items on the agenda. The Chairman enquired if Standing Orders needed to be suspended to allow this and the Temporary Clerk explained that under recent changes there was not now a need to formally suspend Standing Orders to facilitate this. The Council **AGREED** to Cllr. Denis making comments during the meeting at the discretion of the Chairman.

SHPC 360-17 2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

SHPC 361-17 3. To Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 12th September 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2017 were **AGREED**, subject to a minor amendment to the apologies from Cllr. Mrs Miller, 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 362-17 4. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors in respect of items on the agenda

Cllr. Turner declared a possible interest in item 7, as a member of the South Heighton Bonfire Society although he was not on the Committee or took an active part in the Society. In consultation with the Temporary Clerk it was **AGREED** that there was not considered to be a substantive conflict of interest or pecuniary interest and Cllr. Turner should be allowed to take part in the debate and vote on the item

SHPC 363-17 5. Financial Update, Current Budget Review and Draft 2018/19 Budget

The Temporary Clerk presented her report circulated with the agenda and informed the Council that she had been unable to complete a bank reconciliation and final balances as she was awaiting requested statements from the Council's bank, but had revised the format of the Bank Reconciliation to a more appropriate form. These would be presented to a future meeting of the Council.

The Temporary Clerk outlined the concerns expressed by the external auditor referred to in her report and noted that there were previous concerns that had not been addressed and picked up by the Council's internal auditor. Possible options to address these concerns were discussed, including changing the internal auditor arrangements. The Chairman also referred to additional advice from the Chief Executive of the Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils (SSALC) on the need for a more appropriate method of salary/expenses payment by the Parish Council. The Temporal Clerk explained that it was now usual for salary payments to be managed via an external company, but that appropriate budgetary provision would have to be made. The Temporary Clerk pointed out that the new Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer would need to be made aware of these concerns to ensure they were appropriately addressed and would respond to the external auditor in light of the Council's discussions. The results of the Audit also needed to be posted on the Council's website at the earliest opportunity.

The Temporary Clerk then referred to the Invoices received by the Council contained in her report. The Temporary Clerk explained that SSALC had submitted a proposal for assisting in the recruitment of a new permanent Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) for the Council and outlined the key aspects referred to in her report, pointing out that there was currently no specified budgetary provision for this and a virement within this year's budget would need to be made. Recruitment options were

SHPC 363-17 discussed but it was recognised that SSALC had particular experience in this field and it was important that a correct and appropriate procedure was pursued.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Temporary Clerk be authorised to respond to the external auditor indicating that the concerns expressed in their report would be addressed and appropriate provision in the 2018/19 budget be made to employ a local government experienced auditor for the Council and for the management of the Council's salary/payment arrangements by an external firm.
- b) The payments indicated in the table below referred to in the Temporary Clerk's report be made.

Cheque No.	Name cheque made payable	Produce/Service	Amount
300287	LDC	Play inspections (Aug & Sept) Dog Bin Emptying (01.10.17 to 31.12.17)	£316.80
300288	Surrey Hills Solicitors	Professional Fees	£660.00
300289	Wellers Hedleys	Professional Fees	£270.00
300290	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Auditor	£120.00
300291	Royal British Legion	Wreath	£20.00
300292	JRB Enterprise Ltd	Dog waste bags	£39.00

- c) The Council accepts the offer from SSALC to use their services, as outlined in their proposal, to recruit a replacement Clerk/RFO, subject to agreeing the various elements and timetable for the process. The Chairman be authorised on behalf of the Council, in liaison with the Temporary Clerk, to draft the various documents in association with SSALC and bring a formal proposal to the Council for approval at a future meeting.
- d) The Temporary Clerk establishes a budget heading for recruitment and makes an appropriate virement from the Council's reserves and/or salary budget heading within the 2017/18 budget, to cover the SSALC fee of £200.00 and any other likely expenses (ie interview costs).

SHPC 364-17 6. Draft Projects and Initial Budget provisions for 2018/19

The Chairman gave a verbal report identifying projects from the Parish Plan Review that required consideration for financial provision in the 2018/19 budget, these included new signage at The Hollow and a replacement vehicular access gate, provision of seating, meadow seeding and bulbs for the Village Green. It was appreciated that these could not be finalised until the response to the last round of consultation on the Plan had been completed and proposals endorsed by the Council, but initial figures had to be identified to facilitate the budget preparation by the Temporary Clerk with a view to setting the Council's precept for the forthcoming financial year. The Chairman requested that Members forward any funding requirements they thought should be considered for next years budget to the Temporary Clerk's personal email prior to the next Council meeting to help facilitate this process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Temporary Clerk include allowance for the proposed Parish Plan projects referred to above within the initial budget for next year and bring any projects from Members to the next Council meeting for consideration.

SHPC 365-17 7. South Heighton Village Hall Management Committee Bonfire Event Licence Application

The Chairmen gave a verbal report referring to the proposed changes to the Bonfire Event Licence Schedule circulated with the agenda explaining that the main change was an additional paragraph to cover the circumstance of the construction of a scaffold bridge across the drainage ditch to facilitate the firework display, which was a new safety provision in respect of the event and had not been covered in previous licences. He went on to confirm that all the necessary papers and reports had been received from the South Heighton Village Hall Management Committee (SHVHMC), which had been previously circulated to Members for comments, as well as the administration fee of £1.00 and security deposit of £500.00. It was recognised that all the requirements had been complied with following the Council's agreement in principal to the event being held at the September Council meeting (Minute SHPC 347-17) and that the Schedule needed to be revised to reflect the provision of a scaffold bridge across the drainage ditch.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Licence, with the revised Schedule as circulated, be signed by the Temporary Clerk on behalf of the Council and a copy provided to the SHVHMC by the Chairman as the Temporary Clerk was away until after the event.

SHPC 366-17 8 Residents Complaints and Concerns re Installation works on behalf of Virgin Media

Cllr. Julian gave a verbal report on concerns and issues that had been made to him in respect of the poor work and attitude of the contractors undertaking the installation of cables for Virgin Media and his discussions with officers of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) who were responsible for the footways and roads where the work was being undertaken. The Chairman also reported that the

- SHPC 366-17 Cont.** Council had received complaints via its website. The various issues and concerns raised were discussed along with possible options. Cllr. Johnny Denis said he would also raise the issue at District, but it was recognised that only ESCC had jurisdiction and that as the works had been agreed there was little that other local authorities could do; it was primarily up to residents to pursue any particular problems directly with Virgin Media. Councillors were however keen to support residents in what ever way they could and would continue to report complaints where appropriate and provide information for residents on how they could pursue their own particular issues.
It was **RESOLVED** that
- a) The Chairman be authorised to prepare a response to residents indicating where they could pursue their own issues and contact Virgin Media and East Sussex County Council with respect of the complaints and issues raised.
 - b) The Chairman be authorised to prepare an article to be included in the Autumn/Winter newsletter to outline what the Council had done in respect of the complaints and provide the contact information for residents to pursue their own complaints and issues (see item 10).
- SHPC 367-17** **9. The Hollow Project and and Parish Plan Review Update**
The Chairman gave a verbal report informing Members that the tender process for the Play Area was progressing, the tender documentation had been completed following the Council's consideration and approvals in September (Minute SHPC 354-17) and Lewes District Council (LDC) had started the tendering process and those received would be opened and scored by the Chairman and Vice Chairman with the LDC Project Coordinator in line with their tendering arrangements and the results reported back to Council in November for formal appointment of the contractors. The Chairman explained that the Parish Plan Review Summary Leaflet was still in preparation on the basis of the framework agreed by Council (Minute SHPC 348-17) referring to a paper setting out the main elements to the content of the leaflet circulated prior to the meeting.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to circulate the draft Summary Leaflet for Members comments and in light of these prepare a final version for printing for inclusion with the Autumn/Winter newsletter.
- SHPC 368-17** **10. Autumn/Winter Newsletter**
The Chairman gave a verbal report on the progress of the newsletter referring to a draft copy circulated at the meeting. Members considered the content and made minor comments.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised to prepare a final version in light of the comments made at the meeting and the inclusion of an article on the Veolia cable works as referred to above (Minute SHPC 366-17 b), circulate this to Members for final comments and subsequently arrange for printing 500 copies for Members to deliver to residents on the weekend of the 4th November.
- SHPC 369-17** **11. Planning and Tree Application Remembrance Day Arrangements**
The Chairman gave a verbal report outlining the application for the construction of a flood defence bund on land north west of the New Road industrial area to the east of the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility SDNP/17/04190/FUL referring to various plans and background information circulated in advance of the meeting.
It was **RESOLVED** that no objection be made to the application in principal, but that a request be made that compensation be provided to the local community for the destruction of the newly planted landscaping that was provided and consequently depleted the residual Newhaven Community Fund.
- SHPC 370-17** **12. South Downs National Park (SDNP) and Waste and Minerals (W&M) Plan Update**
The Chairman gave a verbal report referring to the papers circulated prior to the meeting explaining that this was the last consultation stage on the SDNP Plan, but there had been no changes in respect of the policies for South Highton and Norton, which sought to protect the character of the area, from the previous version of the Plan and that the W&M Plan was primarily an exercise seeking additional extraction sites with again no principle changes to the policies of the approved Plan to which the Council had previously objected. Members expressed their concern about the continued and escalating effect of the policies of the W&M Plan on Newhaven and the impact, particularly of traffic and pollution, on the parish, but recognised that the Plan had been approved and could not be changed at this stage.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Council make no further comment on the SDNP Plan, or raise further objection to the Waste and Minerals Plan.
- SHPC 371-17** **13. Rolling Reviews of the Council's Documentation**
The Chairman gave a verbal report referring to a paper circulated at the meeting outlining the list of document/policy templates recently reviewed and published by the Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils, proposing that this was used to revised the Council's own documentation in the next

SHPC 371-17 few months, utilising the experience of the Temporary Clerk, to facilitate a review of all documentation by the end of the municipal year.

Cont. It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman be authorised, in consultation with the Temporary Clerk, to prepare a programme and prepare/revise documents for/of the Council based on the SSALC templates for consideration at future meetings of the Council.

SHPC 372-17 14. Annual Membership Review

The Temporary Clerk introduced her report, circulated with the agenda, outlining the various memberships the Council currently had and their value, noting that the Council may wish to pay for a permanent Clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks as was common practice now. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Council retains its current level of limited membership of organisations and the Temporary Clerk make appropriate provision in the 2018/19 budget for these to continue.
- b) The Council makes provision for the payment of a permanent Clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks.

SHPC 373-17 15. 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 374-17 16. Parish Clerks Announcements and Correspondence

The Temporary Clerk outlined that she had been investigating the arrangements for the Council's current grass cutting contract as part of preparing next years budget, but had been unable to establish that there was actually a formal contract with Peacehaven. The Chairman informed the Council that the Denton and South Heighton Football Club had expressed an interest in supporting a revised contract to achieve more frequent cuts of the grass at The Hollow recreation ground and LDC had also offered to assist in establishing a contract linked to theirs to facilitate savings for the Parish Council. Members briefly discussed the potential for options if the 3 year contact was at an end. It was **RESOLVED** that the Temporary Clerk establish the Council's obligation should there be the residue of a 3 year contract with Peacehaven Town Council and in liaison with the Chairman explore alternative arrangements, with the outcome being reported to a future meeting of the Council.

SHPC 375-17 17. Rolling Programme and Agenda Items

The Chairman outlined the revised rolling programme of meetings of the Council and their proposed items circulated with the agenda, making reference to the need to include items agreed at this meeting. The programme was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the Chairman prepare an updated programme, incorporating new agreed items, for the next Parish Council meeting.

SHPC 376-17 Councillors Updates

Cllr. Lo informed the meeting that he had attend the annual Southern Water conference and briefly referred to the issues raised and discussed. These were **NOTED**
The Chairman referred to the monthly Play Inspection Report which had identified a warn chain on the swings and that this was a high risk and that this had now been repaired by LDC officers under the arrangements for minor repairs. The action was endorsed and **NOTED**
The Chairman informed the Council that they had been formally notified by the Environment Agency that they would carry out essential de-silting of the drainage ditch at The Hollow between October and December and that he had contacted them informing them of the scaffold bridge constructed for the bonfire event requesting notification when an actual date was known and to avoid the weekend of the bonfire event on 11th November. The action was endorsed and **NOTED**

SHPC 377-17 To Confirm the Date of the next Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the next meeting would be on Tuesday 21st November 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