

**MINUTES OF THE SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 16th JANUARY 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), Mrs. J Miller and A Turner.

In Attendance: Temporary Clerk Mrs. L Butcher.

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

SHPC 1. Public Question Time

399-18 No members of the public were present

SHPC 2. Apologies

400-18 Apologies had been received from Cllr. S Lo-Fan-Hin, who had unexpectedly been called away. The apologies were **ACCEPTED**.

SHPC 3. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors in respect of items on the agenda

401-18 There were no declarations of interest.

SHPC 4.1 To Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting on 21st November 2017

402-18 The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2017 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4.2 Matters Arising (not covered below)

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

SHPC 5 Appointment of Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

403-18 The Chairman gave a verbal report explaining that he had replaced Cllr. S Lo-Fan-Hin on the Interview Panel, who was unable to attend as the other member of the Personnel Committee, and had been elected Chairman of the Panel. He went on to explain that following advertising the post the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC - who had conducted the process on behalf of the Council) had received 3 applications and after consideration and advice from SSALC all had been invited to interview by the Temporary Clerk, but 1 dropped out on the day. He outlined the interview scoring and process undertaken on Monday 15th January and that from this there was one clear preferred candidate Mrs Stephanie Mills, which the Panel were recommending be offered the post of Parish Clerk and RFO. Mrs Mills had an extensive background in IT and project management and previous experience as a Parish Clerk and RFO for a larger authority.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

Mrs S Mills be appointed to the post of Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) for South Heighton Parish Council and the Temporary Clerk be authorised to make all necessary arrangements.

The Temporary Clerk confirmed that, subject to references being taken up, Mrs Mills start date would be 29th January 2018; she would arrange with the Chairman appropriate handover arrangements prior to this; the updated Contract of Employment would be checked by SSALC before being issued and there would be a probationary period of 6 months with an initial review after 3 months.

SHPC 6. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

404-18 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report referring to her notes circulated in advance of the meeting explaining that the new regulations would come into effect in May 2018 and required that the Council appoint a GDPR officer and that under current guidance this could not be the Parish Clerk/RFO. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) was lobbying on behalf of smaller authorities on the impact this would have on them and guidance was continually being revised, as well as investigating different methods of meeting the obligations. Current guidance issued by SSALC was that for an authority the size of South Heighton a figure of £300 should be earmarked in Council budgets for the next financial year to facilitate an appropriate way to meet the requirements.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Temporary Clerk include an allowance of £300.00 for the GDPR requirements in the proposed budget for next year.

SHPC 7. Financial Update, Current Budget Review and Draft 2018/19 Budget

405-18 7.1 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report referring to the paper circulated at the meeting informing the Council that the full accounts had still not been supplied by the bank.

7.2 Consequently she had been unable to complete a full bank reconciliation, but had been able to establish a figure for the Council's balances (shown below) from the information available and that there was unlikely to be significant total variation from this, when all the bank statements had been received. She explained that the general account (65532351) figure included £100 that should have been allocated to The Hollow account and this would be rectified as part of the final update.

Bank balances at 15-01-2018	£
Community Directplus Account 65532351	13,112.40
Business Select Instant Access 65532364	6,818.63
Business Select Instant Access (The Hollow) 65533761	906.91
	20,837.94

a) The current balances shown above were **NOTED**

The Temporary Clerk went on to refer to the table of payments to be made (shown below), which had been updated and circulated at the meeting, informing the Council that the requested new cheque book had not been received and therefore only the first 4 invoices, which had been identified as priorities, could be paid with the remaining cheques.

Cheque No.	Name cheque made payable	Produce/Service	Amount
300297	HMRC	PAYE and NIC	£263.64
300298	South Heighton Village Hall Management Committee	Hall Hire (annual)	£312.00
300299	LDC	Play Area inspections and Dog Bin Emptying	£316.80
300300	Glynde Estates	Recreation Ground Rent (annual)	£135.00
	Parish Online	Mapping use and service (annual fee)	£36.00
	JRB Enterprise Ltd	Dog Waste Bags	£39.30
	Chris Bradshaw	Christmas Tree Lights and sundries	£168.24

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- b) The first 4 invoice payments identified above me made with the remaining cheques.
 c) The Temporary Clerk be authorised to prepare the necessary cheques for the payment of the remaining 3 invoices when the new cheque book arrives and obtains the appropriate Members' signatures to facilitate their payment.

7.3 The Chairman gave a verbal report referring to his paper circulated at the meeting from Denton and South Heighton Junior Football Club (DaSHJFC) which informed the Council that they had been unsuccessful in obtaining funding from Veolia and consequently were having to consider applying for funding in two phases, firstly for a container to replace that at the front of the site and then for a second to replace the rear container. If this was unsuccessful alternatives of replacing like for like ie without wood cladding and internal improvements would need to be considered. Members were sympathetic to the plight of DaSHJFC, but concerned that they may need to consider inferior containers that would not complement the other improvements being established under The Hollow Project. The Chairman reported that he had enquired if the Council could apply for funding on behalf of DaSHJFC on the same basis as the loan to cover the Council's VAT for The Hollow Project, but this was not possible and requested that Members considered whether they were aware of any other funding opportunities. Following discussion it was recognised that with only limited funds the Council could not contribute significantly to the replacement costs, but at the end of the financial year and The Hollow Project the Council would review the situation, although it was understood that only limited savings from The Hollow Project could be made as the grant was directed at specific elements that had to be delivered under the grant conditions.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- d) The Council continued, where ever possible, to support DaSHJFC in the replacement of improved timber clad containers at The Hollow;
 e) The Council would review the situation at the end of the financial year and, should The Hollow Project grant not be fully utilised, would apply to East Sussex County Council for any residual to be awarded to DaSHJFC.

The Chairman further reported that DaSHJFC had requested if it was possible to make improvements to the grass cutting arrangements and whether a revised joint contract approach/arrangement could be considered for the next financial year. It was acknowledge that there may be possible savings and/or service improvements with such an approach.

- f) It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk clarifies the current status of the Council's grass cutting contract and investigate potential improvements and joint arrangements if possible.

7.4 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report referring to the budget table and the table identifying the implications of various alternative percentage increases in the Parish Council's precept circulated at the meeting. The Temporary Clerk explained that the grant allocation received by the Council was still continuing to reduce significantly and that despite recent precept increases the Council would still have to utilise its reserves to limit a substantial precept increase to cover this reduction. Members

- SHPC 405-18 (cont.)** recognised that whilst it was not desirable to reduce the reserve funds they did not wish to substantially increase the precept bearing in mind the other financial pressures residents were already facing. Consequently Members felt that any increase in the budget/precept should reflect the level of the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) index which was currently running at 3%.
The Temporary Clerk went on to explain the potential implications for such a limited increase, a total of only £330 for the year, referring to the detailed budget tables comparing last year's allocations, with spend to date and proposed allocations. She also referred to previous budget headings and their use that required revision to meet financial regulations. Members considered the revised headings and went through individual budget allocations seeking to keep the total budget limited to a 3% increase and identified associated amendments and virements to achieve this and to ensure financial regulations were complied with.
- g)** It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised to revise the budget headings and allocations as discussed and make the appropriate virements to ensure that the total 2018/19 budget did not exceed a 3% increase of £330.
- 7.5** It was **RESOLVED** that the Council precept be increased for the financial year 2018/19 by 3% to £11,340 and the Temporary Clerk be authorised to notify Lewes District Council accordingly.
- h)**

SHPC 406-18 **8. The Hollow Project**

The Chairmen gave a verbal report referring to the papers circulated prior to the meeting detailing the revised quote in light of Members' requested revisions to the project and the related revised layout and indicative graphics. He reported that he had attended site visits with the contractor and Chris Bibb from Lewes District Council (LDC) who was managing the project on behalf of the Parish Council and subsequently, having identified the changes, the additional requirements and revisions had resulted in an overall increase in the play areas cost, but this was still within the grant allocation budget. Members reviewed the changes but considered the changes were still needed to better reflect the preferences expressed by children and residents from last year's public consultation. Concerns were however expressed about the durability and vulnerability of the edge treatment to the safety surfaces now being proposed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a)** The revised proposals and quote be accepted, subject to confirmation on the durability of the safety surface edging.
- b)** The Temporary Clerk be authorised to, in liaison with the Chairman, arrange a site visit with the Project Manager Chris Bibb to finalise and agree the safety surface edging treatment.

The Chairman then referred to the proposed Trim Trail and the various elements that could be included in each "station" as illustrated in the previously circulated papers, explaining that the exact form and location of these was yet to be determined. Members discussed the elements agreeing that they should complement and not duplicate the elements of the Green Gym. The Chairman explained that these would be installed by the contractor at the same time as the play area, but flexibility was needed to ensure the timely installation of the equipment.

- c)** It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised to, in liaison with the Chairman, arrange a site visit with the Project Manager Chris Bibb to finalise and agree the exact elements of the Trim Trail and their location and to report back to Council at the appropriate time.

The Chairman finally outlined the options for fencing the various boundaries of The Hollow and improving pedestrian access at the north eastern corner referring to the table of costs and illustration circulated at the meeting. Members considered the various alternatives and recognised that different treatment was needed for differing sections to reflect the need to control access and safety implications.

It was **RESOLVED** that, subject to the advice of the Project Manager:

- c)** The section around the deeper ditch adjacent to the play area should be sawn post and three rails with wire mesh to the lower section to reflect the current fence and restrict access to the ditch.
- d)** The section from this ditch to the brick culvert on the western boundary be cleft chestnut post and two rail fencing to reflect the rural nature of the site, to define a new edge to the recreation ground and provide a barrier to the drainage channel.
- e)** The section from the brick culvert to the culvert bridge on the north western edge of The Hollow be cleft chestnut post and two rail fencing with wire mesh to reflect the rural nature of the site, to define the park edge and restrict access to the drainage ditch.
- f)** The Temporary Clerk be authorised to arrange a site visit with the Project Manager and Chairman and Vice Chairman to seek his advice and develop tender documentation on the basis of the above.

SHPC 9. Street Lighting

407-18 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report informing Members that the new street lighting contract had been received, that this was an administrative issue and sought the Council's approval for the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Council.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman sign the contract on behalf of the Council.

SHPC 10. Administration

408-18 The Chairman gave a verbal report stating that it was originally intended to revise the Council's documentation in light of updated templates by SSALC and prior to the appointment of the new Parish Clerk, but this had not been possible. Consequently, with the appointment of Mrs Stephanie Mills, he was proposing that the documentation be reviewed in liaison with the new Parish Clerk.
It was **RESOLVED** that the review of documentation be revised to facilitate the involvement of the new Clerk.

SHPC 11. Annual Review of Inventory, Equipment and Asset Registers

409-18 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report explaining that she had been unable to find the soft copy of the asset register, with apparently only the Councillors' hard copy equipment forms on file. The Chairman proposed that with the appointment of the new Parish Clerk the registers be reviewed as part of the general document review, but that these documents are finished before May when they are due to be completed at the Annual Council meeting.
It was **RESOLVED** that the registers be reviewed before the Annual Council meeting in May.

SHPC 12. Register of Electors

410-18 The Temporary Clerk gave a verbal report referring to the paper circulated prior to the meeting setting out the basis for the use of the Electoral Register and its changed format and updating process. She pointed out that miss use of the Register could result in a £5,000 fine.
It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should hold the Register and be authorised to update it as necessary

SHPC 13. Planning and Tree Application Consultations

411-18 The Council had not been consulted on any applications.

SHPC 14. Action List

412-18 The Chairman reported back briefly on progress on the actions/tasks set out in the list circulated with the Agenda, explaining that it was longer as it had not been available at the last Council meeting, but the majority of tasks listed had been completed. Progress on the Action List was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the completed items be removed from the list and Cllr. Bradshaw prepare an updated list, incorporating new agreed actions, for the next Parish Council meeting.

SHPC 15. Parish Clerks Announcements and Correspondence

413-18 The Temporary Clerk informed the meeting that she had no matters to raise that had not been covered by other agenda items. The Chairman informed Members that the Council had received the latest monthly playground inspection, but there were no high priority issues.
The items were **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that no further action be taken at this time, but if Members wished to raise an item having viewed the gmail they should approach the Temporary Clerk and/or Chairman to have this added to a future agenda of the Council.
The Chairman informed Members that DaSHJFC had recently submitted an application for the use of the recreation ground for their 2018 Mini Soccer Tournament to be held on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th July 2018. There was no other booking for this weekend and it was **AGREED** that the dates be reserved in the bookings calendar until the Council could formally consider the application.

SHPC 16. Rolling Programme and Agenda Items

414-18 The Chairman outlined the revised rolling programme of meetings of the Council and their proposed items circulated with the agenda, making reference to the additional documents to be prepared. 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 17. Councillors' Updates

415-18 Cllr. Julian informed the meeting that, as the Council's representative, he would be attending the Veolia Community Consultation meeting tomorrow. (Wednesday 17th January).

SHPC To Confirm the Time, Date and Location of the next Meeting

416-18 It was **RESOLVED** that the next meeting would be on Tuesday 13th February 2018 at 7.00 p.m. at the South Heighton Village Hall, Heighton Road

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Signed

Date

Cllr. Chris Bradshaw Chairman South Heighton Parish Council