



MINUTES of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on **MONDAY 29 JANUARY 2018**

Jacqui Landriani Town Mayor
Chris Cherry Deputy Town Mayor

Wendy Agate
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Cherry Catharine
Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Richard Cherry
Claire Fussell
Steve Hansford*
Diane Heckels
Janice Henwood
Colin Holden
Anne Jones MBE
John Merrill
Pru Moore*
Kirsty Page
Chris Thomas-Atkin
Julian Thorpe

* *Denotes non-attendance.*

(19.00)

261. **OPEN FORUM**

A resident was concerned that the Town Council had not been honest with the public regarding funding for the proposed new community building. The resident asked about the communication methods that had been used to engage with the public, whether a majority vote had been received - and if so, how this was recorded. The resident also asked whether a referendum would be held.

Andrew Barrett-Miles explained that if residents approved of the project and of the loan, and if a majority of those responding agreed then this would satisfy a Public Works Loan Board request for funding. There was no attempt to hide anything.

This had been discussed in the public meetings held at St John's

Church. In addition, every household would receive a questionnaire and voting would be fairly managed. Anybody over 18 could vote, and this would not be limited to one vote per household.

Another resident advised that the Leader of Mid Sussex District Council had a vision for Burgess Hill but this did not include Martlets Hall as part of the vision. The resident asked why the town was to be burdened with the debt for the next 50 years. Those who petitioned against the closure of Martlets Hall planned to seek funding, but as there were no minutes from the Steering Group meetings in the public domain, the campaigners were unable to check whether this funding was already being sought. Martlets Hall was not given away for nothing and so the profits should be used to fund the new project. The resident asked whether Town Councillors would raise this at the forthcoming District Council meeting.

Andrew Barrett-Miles confirmed that the District Council's vision did not include a replacement for Martlets Hall and had been made clear. As a Town Council we had to either succumb to it or do something about it. There had been a number of discussions between the Town Council CEO and the Leader of the District Council but they had no interest in the project. This meant that the building would be owned by the Town Council and the District Council would not have control.

The Town Council was tendering for fundraising consultants and a selection process was underway. The Council was keen to raise as much money as possible and was also seeking corporate support. The Steering Group would meet with the Business Parks Association to request support for the project. The Town Council expected the appointed fundraiser would propose a wide range of funding options. The next phase of the project was imminent.

262. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Pru Moore and Steve Hansford.

263. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

John Merrill declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as his wife owned property on the site.

Jacqui Landriani and Anne Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 as they both had an interest in burial plots at the site.

264. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor thanked Wendy Agate and Diane Heckels for their attendance at the Charity Curry Night where £250 was raised for local charity Signpost Mid Sussex.

265. **PRESENTATION FROM HAMSVA**

Sue Edgson introduced herself as the manager at Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action, which had been supporting 295 voluntary groups and charities across the district since 2015. HAMSVA championed the role of local voluntary and community groups. They currently received funding from West Sussex County Council as well as the District Councils. 27 of the 295 member groups were based in Burgess Hill, including Signposts and U3A. Membership was free.

From April 2018, Horsham District Council would no longer fund HAMSVA to provide support in the Horsham District and so they would rebrand as Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) and continue to support groups that operate in Mid Sussex. The local Community Co-ordinator had recently been working predominantly in Burgess Hill with Mid Sussex Cultural Group to plan activities based in the town such as ESOL classes and Yoga.

Sue explained that HAMSVA ran networks and forums which provided an opportunity for participants to share good practice and support one another. They also ran networking meetings at Ardingly Showground in partnership with Mid Sussex District Council twice a year. They provided subsidised training on a range of topics such as first aid, safeguarding and data protection. Last year a website dedicated solely to volunteering was funded and set up. As a member of the Business Parks Association, HAMSVA worked closely with local business and had a partnership with AMEX to help promote their community programme.

Sue advised that since moving out of Martlets Heights, a Community Room was still available at the new premises. The room was used by 30 voluntary groups, but was also available for meetings and training purposes. Sue shared contact details and distributed leaflets and postcards about the services that HAMSVA offer. She asked Councillors to recommend HAMSVA to local groups that might benefit from the services.

Janice Henwood asked how HAMSVA would cope without the funding from Horsham. Sue explained that £54,000 of funding would be lost but that reserves would be drawn on and that income could be boosted through hire of the Community Room.

The Town Mayor thanked Sue and colleague Linda Dove for the presentation.

266. **COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 20 November 2017 were **AGREED** and signed as a correct record.

267. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on Monday 4 December 2017, Tuesday 2 January and Monday 22 January 2018 were **AGREED**.

268. FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP NOTES OF MEETINGS

The Notes of the meeting of the Finance KAG held on Monday 11 December 2017 and 16 January 2018 were **AGREED**.

269. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP MEETING – BURIAL GROUND CHARGES AND REVENUE BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2018/19

Council was requested to consider recommendations from the Finance Key Area Group, following their meetings of 11 December 2017 and 16 January 2018, as set out in Agenda Item 9.

Chris Thomas-Atkin reported that the Finance Key Area Group had decided to introduce a voluntary burial ground charge for plot owners. He explained that to maintain the Burial Ground was costly and that over the next two years the Town Council would see a loss of income from West Sussex County Council in the Help Point and Maintenance contracts, in addition to preparing an application for a loan from the Public Loans Board. The income from roundabout sponsorship was also at risk, meaning a potential loss of annual income of around £90,000 in total.

This voluntary charge was for relatives to contribute towards the upkeep of their plot including headstone cleaning. Relatives were expected to maintain the plots but some were elderly or unable to continue this upkeep. Anne Jones expressed concern at rabbits digging in the plots. The CEO would investigate additional measures to prevent this.

RESOLVED that:

A) the new voluntary burial ground plot maintenance charge be approved,

B) the Revenue Budget and Precept as recommended be approved and,

C) Mid Sussex District Council be informed accordingly.

270. REVENUE BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2019/20

The Town Council was looking to secure a loan of £5 million from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The loan would be repaid over a period of up to 50 years with fixed repayments

being in the region of £190,000 per annum. To ensure there were sufficient finances to repay this loan, the Town Council would need to raise the precept over two financial periods. The first draft revenue budget for a forthcoming year had been discussed with the various Key Area Groups. It was presented to the Finance Key Area Group in November 2017 and approved by Council in January 2018. However, due to the timescales of the project there was a need to complete an advance budget for 2019/20 and seek early approval from Council accordingly.

The Budget for 2019/20 had been prepared by the Responsible Finance Officer and set out in Appendix 1. It was based on inflation at 3% (where applicable), a salary cost of living rise of 2% and a conservatively estimated tax base increase of 1.5%. It was proposed to increase the precept from £915,962 to £1,000,861 giving rise to an increase in the Band D rate from £78.08 to £84.05, a rise of £5.97 or 7.7% on the 2018/19 Band D rate. Chris Thomas-Atkin explained that there would be further opportunity to reconsider this budget before it was set and the District Council informed.

It was suggested that a Buy-a-Brick scheme be introduced to help fund the proposed community building. Every avenue would be explored by the professional fundraiser, to minimise the amount needed to be raised from Council Tax.

Chris Thomas-Atkin confirmed that if the public voted against the increase, then the 2019/20 precept would be reconsidered and any extra money from the previous increase would go towards other projects in the town.

RESOLVED that:

Council approve a provisional Precept of £1,000,861 for the financial year 2019/20.

271. ACCESS LICENCE: ROAD ADJOINING CYPRUS ROAD CAR PARK

Mid Sussex District Council had agreed to enter into a 10 year access licence with the Town Council for the road adjoining the Cyprus Road car park with an entrance off Cyprus Road. The Town Council had already installed an entrance barrier to which the owners of the properties with access from the road had contributed to. The District Council had submitted Heads of Terms for approval by the Town Council and had waived legal, licence and surveyors fees.

Janice Henwood felt that the 10 year licence was too short considering the importance of access if the new community venue was to be built. The Town Mayor advised that this was the standard term for Mid Sussex District Council licences.

RESOLVED that:

the Heads of Terms for the road adjoining the Cyprus Road Car Park be approved and accepted.

272. LICENCE AGREEMENTS: BURGESS HILL GREEN CIRCLE PUBLIC ARTS SCHEME

Burgess Hill Town Council recently installed 5 pieces of art on land along the Green Circle, which belonged to Mid Sussex District Council. The District Council had provided a Licence Agreement for each piece of artwork. It was noted the Agenda stated there were 4 artworks but in fact there were 5.

Janice Henwood asked whether the licence was for 10 years as in the event of the demise of the District Council, the licence should be transferred to its successor. This would also be the case for the Cyprus Road Access Agreement. CEO Steve Cridland would investigate this.

RESOLVED that:

A) the Council agree and enter into the licences provided by the Mid Sussex District Council for the installation of Artworks along the Burgess Hill Green Circle on land belonging to the District Council or their successor, and,

B) that the Chief Executive be authorised to affix the seal of the Council and sign the licences in the presence of two councillors.

273. DIARY DATES

Council received a schedule of forthcoming events as set out in Agenda Item 13, dated Monday 29 January 2018.

RESOLVED that:

the contents of the report be noted.

274. 2018/19 ROTA OF MEETINGS

Council received a draft rota of meetings for 2018/19 as set out in Agenda Item 14, dated Monday 29 January 2018. The Key Area Group meetings would be arranged as and when required and would be added to the rota during the year.

RESOLVED that:

the rota of meetings be approved.

275. Meeting terminated at 20.02 hours.