

**PEVENSEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**The minutes of the COUNCIL MEETING held via Zoom**  
**on 4th August 2020 commencing at 7.00PM**

**Present:** Councillors: Lowton (Chairman), Beck, Geary, Gibson, Howard, MacKinnon, Peasgood, Purslove, Turner and Withey.

Wealden District Councillors: Cade, Clark and Doodles.

S Mosedale (Clerk), A Beams (Locum Clerk)

1 member of the public

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Cllr Lowton welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the council and reminded attendees of the meeting protocols.

**114. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillors Beaney and Rabbits.

**115. Disclosure of interest**

Cllr Lowton declared a personal interest in agenda item 126, in respect of his position as a trustee of Pevensey Town Trust in a personal capacity.

**116. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Howard, seconded by Cllr Withey and approved by all present who had attended the previous meeting. Cllr MacKinnon abstained having been absent from the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

Cllr Peasgood joined the meeting at 7.06 pm.

**117 (a) Annual Governance Statement**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement. Proposed by Cllr Withey, seconded by Cllr MacKinnon and unanimously agreed.

**117 (b) Accounting Statements 2019/20**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements 2019/20. Proposed by Cllr Beck, seconded by Cllr MacKinnon and unanimously agreed.

Cllr Lowton thanked the Clerk for the successful completion of the internal audit which confirmed no issues were found.

**118. Local Police Issues**

The police report had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour among young people recently, and there was support for the police's involvement through operation Blitz.

Cllr MacKinnon reported that the Friends of Pevensey Playground (FOPP) had received £500 from the police for an event held in the village.

Cllr Lowton reported that a resident had raised concerns regarding apparent drug dealing in Pevensey Bay, and the perceived lack of response from the police. There had also been two separate

incidents involving car fires in the last few weeks, and he would raise these issues directly with the local Inspector.

Cllr Geary raised concerns about the apparent increase in young people ASB, particularly in the castle area

It was agreed to highlight Operation Blitz via the council's Facebook and Twitter social media feeds.

#### **119. Open Forum**

The member of the public present was invited to speak and stated that he had sent a letter to all Councillors regarding Pevensey Town Trust. He had also contacted the Clerk via email regarding the council's grants scheme and asked what was happening with this.

Cllr Lowton asked the Clerk to respond to the resident's email regarding the grants.

#### **120. County Councillor's report**

The East Sussex County Councillor was not present, and no report had been received.

#### **121. District Councillors' reports**

Cllr Cade provided an update which included:

- Wealden District Council (WDC) staff continued to work mainly from home
- Waste collection services continued to be provided during the pandemic, except for a six-week suspension of the garden waste collection, and missed bin reports were no higher than normal despite the contractor having up to a 20% reduction in available staff
- Council and committee meetings continue to be held remotely
- The council continues to support the work of the hub who have received over 1,200 calls and had more volunteers come forward than were needed. This has helped effectively support vulnerable and shielded residents across the District
- A significant increase in homelessness has been seen, effected by the pandemic. Many have been settled into permanent homes and the situation continues to improve
- Government financial support for businesses through discretionary grants, business rate relief and reductions remains available, with over £54 million having been provided so far. The business grant scheme ends on 28 August and all eligible businesses are encouraged to apply.
- A Climate Change conference is being held on 3 September and all councils are encouraged to nominate delegates to represent them
- A 'Restart/Recovery' report is available on the WDC website which aims to get the economy revitalised through providing more help for existing businesses and encouraging new business to the District
- It was felt that the pandemic had bought out the best in the community, and Cllr Doodes added that officers and members had worked well together throughout the crisis, and she had received a number of resident comments thanking WDC for their support

Cllr Lowton highlighted to the District Councillors the concerns of local residents about the poor standard of debate and discussions at the recent WDC South Planning Meeting. He then thanked the District Councillors for the report.

The Clerk was asked to check if any councillors had volunteered to attend the Climate Change conference and update the Chairman with the result.

A reminder about the closure of the business grants scheme was to be added to the councils Facebook and Twitter social media feeds.

### **122. Adoption of Co-Option Policy**

Cllr Lowton thanked the Clerk for drafting the policy, which had been circulated with the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Co-Option Policy. Proposed by Cllr MacKinnon, seconded by Cllr Howard and unanimously agreed.

### **123. Update on Waverley Gardens streetlight replacement**

The Clerk provided a verbal update to inform members that the application and supporting documents for the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing approval had been submitted electronically and in paper form to the Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) and a response was awaited.

Cllr Lowton reminded members that a Streetlighting Working Group had been appointed previously and the Clerk was asked to reconvene the group to consider any other lights in need of LED replacement while this work was being completed.

### **124. Review of Clerk's salary**

It was agreed to defer this agenda item to the end of the meeting after the exclusion of the press and public.

### **125. Update on Sports Club lease**

The Clerk provided a verbal update to inform members that the lease had been returned from the solicitors with some minor amendments. It was agreed to send the revised version to the Sports Club for their comments prior to being signed.

### **126. Report on Pevensey Town Trust (PTT)**

Cllr Lowton reminded members of his previously declared personal interest, and even though as there was no pecuniary interest he could contribute to any discussion and vote he would abstain from doing so. He asked Cllr Withey to chair this agenda item.

Cllr MacKinnon read a prepared statement giving a background to the PTT and its role in protecting and managing historic assets in the village. Events were outlined which had led the PTT changing their constitution twice to initially reduce the number of Parish Council trustees, then subsequently to remove them completely. These changes were considered not in accordance with PTT's own rules, and there were additional concerns regarding PTT's financial management, governance and policies, which had been raised with PTT through the PTT Clerk.

Cllr MacKinnon stated that having received no response to her concerns, she had been left with no choice but to report the concerns to the Charity Commission, and was now seeking support from the Parish Council to contact PTT regarding the concerns over removal of Parish Councillors as trustees, contact the Charity Commission highlighting the concerns over the way PTT is managed, obtain copies of minutes from PTT and contact Westham Parish Council for their views, as their representatives have also been removed from the trust.

The Clerk provided comments from Cllr Rabbits relating to concerns raised previously over changes to the PTT constitution, and that at that time despite contact with the Charity Commission, he was advised nothing could be done.

Cllr Geary requested that Cllr Withey invite the member of the public to comment (as he is the Chairman of PTT). He stated that PTT had checked their actions with the Charity Commission, and he had been advised that everything was in order. As per his email to all councillors, he was happy to arrange a meeting to discuss the issues raised.

Cllr Peasgood was in favour of continuing a dialogue with the PTT and suggested a meeting and with a view to resolution of differences and to seeking a clearer understanding of the situation

It was noted that the issues had been going on for some time, and that the offer of a meeting had only been received yesterday. It was thought there was little to be gained by a meeting at this stage following previous inaction from PTT in response to concerns raised.

A proposal was made by Cllr MacKinnon, seconded by Cllr Howard and supported by five other councillors, with one councillor against. Cllr Lowton abstained due to his declared personal interest.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** for the council to:

- (a) Write to PTT to express their concerns regarding the way in which Parish Council representation had been removed from the trust
- (b) Request copies of all minutes from PTT meetings for the period since the concerns were initially raised
- (c) Write to the Charity Commission to outline the concerns in the management and governance of PTT
- (d) Write to Westham Parish Council to seek their views on the removal of Parish Council representation on PTT

The member of the public left the meeting at 8.00 pm and Cllr Lowton retook the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **127. Report on playground maintenance and grants**

Cllr MacKinnon's report had been circulated with the agenda. She made a slight update to report that all playgrounds were now open and that the RoSPA inspection had been completed on 10 July.

The paper contained a proposal to employ an external fund raiser to apply for grants to allow plans to progress for the playgrounds. It was acknowledged that the pandemic made grant funding for projects like this more difficult to obtain, and it was suggested that any external fund raiser be paid purely based on results.

Cllr MacKinnon was thanked for her hard work on this area, and Cllrs Geary, Howard and Turner offered to work with Cllr MacKinnon to explore all funding possibilities.

With this support, Cllr MacKinnon withdrew her original proposal and it was **RESOLVED** for Cllrs Geary, Howard, MacKinnon and Turner to seek potential funding, including exploring any available support from WDC.

#### **128. Report on tacking dog fouling**

Cllr MacKinnon's background paper had been circulated with the agenda and contained a number of recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt these recommendations. Proposed by Cllr MacKinnon, seconded by Cllr Beck and unanimously agreed.

Cllr Lowton added that he had previously requested support with this issue from the WDC Street Enforcement Team and suggested that he revisit this with the District Councillors later in the year, which members agreed with.

#### **129. Black Lives Matter council statement**

Cllr Lowton explained the background to this item, in that a resident had contacted the council to ask their position on this matter following recent events across the world. He stressed that the

council were not offering support for any political movement, and that its position related to reconfirming the council's commitment to inclusion.

After discussion, the draft statement was amended to read:

*Pevensey Parish Council does not support any organisation or movement with a political agenda.*

*It is important, as an organisation committed to inclusion, equality and diversity, that we clearly state the need for everyone to ensure that racism, prejudice or discrimination in any form has no place in our community or in wider society.*

*We cannot be complacent and must stand together to root out racism, discrimination, inequality and prejudice wherever it is found.*

It was **RESOLVED** to agree this statement to be given in response to any questions received.

Proposed by Cllr Lowton, seconded by Cllr Turner and unanimously agreed.

### **130. Council co-option vacancy**

Cllr Lowton reminded members that there was a current vacancy which could be filled by co-option, following the policy adopted earlier in the meeting. However, in the current circumstances, it was proposed by Cllr Lowton, seconded by Cllr Howard and unanimously agreed to defer advertising the co-option until the pandemic situation improves to attempt to attract the highest quality applicants.

### **131. Confirm a litter pick date**

Cllr MacKinnon reminded members that the aim was to hold four litter picks per year, but due to the pandemic none had been possible so far this year. There was a national litter pick coming up, and it was suggested to align to this if possible, to maximise publicity. Council were supportive of this idea and Cllr MacKinnon was asked to confirm a suitable date and inform members.

### **132. Matters arising**

- **Land behind Castle and fruit trees**  
The Clerk stated that Cllr Rabbits had understood the land was not registered. Cllr Beaney had provided the Clerk with some documents and information, and the Clerk would review these and update members.
- **Sale of Holy Rood**  
The Clerk confirmed that a planning surgery was being held on 25 August which she was attending along with Cllrs Lowton and Peasgood, and an update would be provided to council after this.
- **Update on Elm trees in Anderida and potential Dutch Elm disease**  
The Clerk stated that the three elm trees had been infected and a tree surgeon had carried out work today. Cllr Rabbits had suggested an ash tree was also diseased, but the tree surgeon had confirmed this was not the case. The tree warden had been informed of all current matters.

### **133. Correspondence**

The Locum Clerk provided details of correspondence received as below:

- A report from the new club secretary at Pevensey & Westham FC of damaged fencing at the recreation ground (this is being dealt with)
- Resident concerns over parking in Grenville Road, Millward Road and Timberlaine Road relating to visitors to the beach and the potential difficulties of emergency services to access the area if required (the Clerk has provided a response to the resident)

- A report on antisocial behaviour at Wallsend Road recreation ground, which was reported to the police at the time (this has also been reported to the police by the Clerk)
- An email from the secretary of FOPP advising that the grant previously awarded will not be needed this year due to events being cancelled as a result of the pandemic

The Clerk was asked to look at the situation regarding grants, as a number of organisations requirements are likely to have changed as a result of the pandemic and provide a suggestion for the best way to proceed.

#### **134. Matter of Urgent Public Safety (MUPS)**

Cllrs Geary and Turner reported that speeding and traffic through Pevensey High Street through to Westham appeared to be getting worse and if there was any follow up from the County Councillor. Cllr Gibson replied that council had previously agreed to incorporate Westham in any speed reduction measures as this area was also affected.

The Clerk was asked to contact Westham Parish Council to gain their agreement and to follow up with County Councillor Liddiard regarding speed monitoring devices.

#### **135. Chairman's Remarks**

Cllr Lowton thanked the Locum Clerk for his advice and support during over the last three months and welcomed back the Clerk from her maternity leave.

Cllr Lowton also thanked all councillors for their enthusiasm and hard work during the pandemic, including the District Councillors.

#### **136. Orders of Payment**

The payments list had been circulated and noted. Cllr Lowton reminded members that authority for payments was currently through the Chairman of Council and Chairman of the F&G Committee, as agreed in the business continuity measures adopted at the start of the pandemic.

#### **137. Advisory Officers reports**

- **Sea Defences and Water Management** – Cllr MacKinnon reported that she had been unable to attend the meeting held in June. The next scheduled meeting was October.
- **St. Wilfrid's Hall** – Cllr MacKinnon reported that the hall was ready to re-open next week, with two groups set to return, Work was underway to advertise for new users. The hall had received a £5,000 discretionary grant and was looking for future funding for work on the floor, roof, ceiling and electrics.
- **Ethel Wood Community Centre** – Cllr Withey thanked Cllr MacKinnon for her help and reported that the hall had re-opened last week with a few groups attending following social distancing measures, with other to gradually follow. The hall had received a £10,000 discretionary grant and work was now underway to look at the future management arrangements, with the intention to put forward a paper to council in August.
- **St. John's Trust** – Cllr Gibson reported that a meeting has been held last week, and that it had been agreed to spend money on improvements to the forecourts of six dwellings in Rattle Road. Cllr Peasgood reported that the trust may be in line for a windfall related to an overage clause in a piece of land previously sold, and they had appointed professional advisors to deal with the matter.
- **Town Trust** – This item had been covered earlier on the agenda.
- **Sports Club** – This item had been covered earlier on the agenda.
- **WDALC** – Cllr MacKinnon reported a Zoom meeting had been held in June. WDC were again looking for sites for building development as part of the local plan.
- **Memorial Hall** – Cllr Howard reported the hall was up and running fully, with risk

assessments in place. The nursery had returned and there had been some private hires of the facility.

- **Tree Warden** – No report given.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Standing Order 3 (f) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the public and press were excluded from the discussion of the following item.

The District Councillors left the meeting at 9.04 pm.

**124. Review of Clerk's salary (deferred from earlier in the meeting)**

Cllr Lowton had circulated a paper regarding this item and reminded members of the contractual agreements in place regarding salary increments, and that the Clerk had recently passed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) qualification.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendations in relation to salary. Proposed by Cllr Withey, seconded by Cllr Beck and unanimously agreed.

Date of next meeting will be on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, with the format to be confirmed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.08 pm.