



**HAYWARDS HEATH  
TOWN COUNCIL**

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**15<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

To all Councillors,

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a **MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL** to be held on **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020** via Zoom Video Conferencing at **7.30pm** when the following business will be transacted. Please use the following Zoom link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82887839493?pwd=NDg2T0tIL3ZndkloQmlzRld0Y2J0dz09>

Yours sincerely  
**Steve Trice**  
Town Clerk

**A G E N D A**

1. Town Council Prayer
2. To note any apologies for absence.
3. Public Forum - *Members of the public are invited to ask questions or raise issues which are relevant and are the concern of this Council. A period of 15 minutes is allocated for this purpose. Notice of intention to address Council should be given to the Clerk by noon of the day of the meeting.*
4. Declarations of Interest
5. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020. **(pages 3 - 9)**
6. To dispose of any business outstanding from the last meeting
7. To note the Mayoral Engagements and any announcements.
8. To receive and consider and adopt the Resolutions of the following Committees. **(pages 10 - 11)**
  - a) Planning Committee held on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
**MINS. 49 – 57**
  - b) Planning Committee held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
**MINS. 58 – 66**
  - c) Planning Committee held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
**MINS. 67 – 74**

- d) Environment and General Purposes Committee held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

**MINS. 19 – 29**

- e) Policy and Finance Committee 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**MINS. 22 – 35**

9. To consider West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) Value for Money Review of Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils. **(pages 12 - 15)**
10. To consider and make representation on the National Association of Local Council on Standards public sector survey. **(page 16)**
11. To consider a report that seeks ratification of the Mayor's Christmas Appeal as recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee. **(page 17)**
12. To consider any urgent items the Mayor has received.
13. To consider exclusion of Public and Press.

This meeting is being held under the provisions made on the 4 April 2020, when the government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely.

*'During this meeting the public are allowed to film the Committee and officers only from the front of the public gallery, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. **Any items in the Exempt Part of the agenda cannot be filmed.** If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.'*

**Town Mayor** Cllr Alastair McPherson

**Town Clerk** Mr Steven Trice

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020**, which was held virtually by Zoom under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020.

**Councillors: Christopher Ash-Edwards**

**Richard Bates**

**Clare Cheney \*\***

**Rachel Cromie**

**Sandy Ellis \*\***

**Christopher Evans**

**Howard Muddin**

**Stephanie Inglesfield**

**Matthew Jeffers**

**James Knight**

**Clive Laband**

**Jack Langley**

**Alastair McPherson**

**Richard Nicholson**

**Mike Pulfer**

**Sujan Wickremaratchi**

**Apologies\*\* Absent\***

**Also present, 17 Members of the public.**

**The Town Mayor asked for each Member to confirm that they were present, which is reflected above.**

**42. Council Prayer**

The Town Council prayer, which was read by Town Mayor Cllr Alastair McPherson.

**43. Apologies**

Cllr C. Cheney – holiday.

Cllr S. Ellis – holiday.

**44. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020, without comment, were taken as read, confirmed as true and duly signed by the Mayor.

**45. Declarations of Interest**

None

**46. Public Forum**

Mr Nigel Allyson Ryan spoke in relation to items 9 and 10, future of Clair Hall, on the agenda. Mr Ryan stated that, having enjoyed many an evening at Clair Hall, it was very sad that Clair Hall would be closing. However, in his opinion, being a resident of Haywards Heath for over twenty-five years and having worked/currently working within in the arts, it was a great opportunity. He felt that the closure should be used as way

of developing something new, something vibrant and something exciting for the Town. Living in Haywards Heath it is seen as a commuter town, but this needed to change so it can be seen as a destination where people will want to come to. The Town does not have a proper theatre, an art gallery or a cinema, so now is the time to look forward and see what can be provided for a growing Town. As the District Representative on the Royal Society of the Arts, working in schools and with established artists it is sad to see that there is nowhere for these people to perform or displays of their work. He has passion for what could be done and really hopes that something can be done to provide a venue in the wake of Clair Hall closing.

**47. To Dispose of any Business Outstanding from the Last Meeting.**

It was noted on the matter of 'Black Lives Matters' discussed at the last meeting of the Town Council, a Mayor's Forum would be held focusing on the issue of diversity and equality.

The Clerk's update for the application for funding for a 20mph zone (Butlers Green Road Roundabout to Birch Hotel Roundabout) was deferred as the application required needed to be ready to go, and it seem to have been pre-selected. It was noted that the process had not been wasted as the wish of the Town Council was now on the radar of West Sussex County Council.

**48. Mayor's Engagements and Announcements.**

The Town Mayor, informed Members that due to the circumstances we find ourselves in, that his diary is very quiet, but at a social distance he had laid a wreath for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain with the Haywards Heath 172 Squadron Air Cadets at Western Road Cemetery, and observed a two-minute silence for Merchant Navy Day at the Haywards Heath War Memorial. The Town Mayor added that he and the Town Clerk continued liaisons with Haywards Heath Mutual Aid who had currently moth balled their operations, apart from the Emergency Food Hub, at a monthly meeting to see how things are progressing and how the Emergency Food that was operating and how they are managing the food they are holding. In closing the Town Mayor promoted his forum, which would focus on Equality and Diversity, to which leaders of the community had been invited so to see what the Town Council can do to help them and what they can do to help the Town Council.

**49. To receive and consider adoption of the Resolutions of the following Committees:**

(i) Planning Committee - **MINS. 25 - 48**

The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Planning Committees, dated 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - **Mins 25 – 32**, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 - **Mins 33 – 40** and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 - **Mins 41– 48** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

(ii) Environment & General Purposes Committee - **MINS. 10 - 18**

The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Environment & General Purposes Committee dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 **Mins 10 - 18** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

Policy & Finance Committee - **MINS. 12 - 21**

(ii) The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 **Mins 12 - 21** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

#### **50. Remembrance Sunday and School Remembrance Service.**

The Town Clerk presented a report that recommended alternative arrangements for this year's Remembrance Sunday service and a suggestion of how to honour the pending retirement of Reverend Ray Smith from St Wilfrid's Church. Members noted the unfortunate need to scale down this year's Remembrance Sunday service to a small contingent of six because of the Covid-19 restrictions in place. It was questioned if there was a need for the Town Council to be represented at church services across the Town that morning also. The Town Clerk responded by saying no, as normal practise would be for all Councillors and Staff to be at the Ward Memorial because that is all the Council's resources would allow. Furthermore, local churches were subject to a restriction of numbers. In noting those attending in the group of six as suggested, it was asked if a place became available that thought be given to diversifying the group. This was deemed to be a sensible suggestion, but there was a reminder that those present are the usual people who have supported the Town Council for many years with the service. Generally, the Town Council reserved its right to change its position on the event itself and the decision on the alternative arrangements were being made in line with changes to Government advice. However, the Town Council was being asked to cancel the normal arrangements for the service with the best alternative option on the advice and legislative basis at the time of the meeting. Then Members without question supported the move to purchase Reverend Smith a token of the Town Council's appreciating for his service and it was moved that thanks be recorded for his service of 24 years to the residents of the Town, and indeed Haywards Heath generally.

Members **RESOLVED** to,

- a) **Cancel the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade and the Schools' Remembrance Service 2020.**
- b) **Agree, with the right to change on legislative advice from the Government, an alternative manner in which to hold this year's Remembrance Sunday Service maintaining the rule of six.**
- c) **That the Town Council make an acknowledgement to Reverend Ray Smith for his service to the Town to the maximum of £100 from the hospitality budget.**

#### **51. Motion (1/2020) by Cllr Michael Pulfer regarding the Town Council's position on the future of Clair Hall**

Cllr Pulfer presented his motion as follows, which was seconded by Cllr Laband, which read,

*To note the possible permanent closure and demolition of Clair Hall and to welcome the Town Council's inclusion in re-establishing modern community facilities.*

At this point Cllr Bates moved a technical amendment with the additional wording to be considered and was seconded by Cllr Inglesfield, which read,

*That Haywards Heath Town Council recognises that Mid Sussex District Council, as part of the Haywards Heath Regeneration Masterplan intends to replace Clair Hall. That Haywards Heath Town Council feels Clair Hall can still operate as at present, subject to Covid-19 restrictions until a new complex has*

*been agreed. That a different form of management is needed to facilitate events at Clair Hall when it opens again*

At this point a matter of order was raised on the amendment, but the Town Mayor allowed the amended motion to move forward with the Town Clerk.

Those who spoke for Cllr Bates amendment made the following points. It was felt that the degree of consultation with the community had been dismal and there had been little scrutiny on the decision made to close the building, which was echoed and opposed by the 2,000 plus signatures plus petition made. It was then stated that not providing a new and superior facility was contrary to the Mid Sussex District Plan and Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan. This was on the basis that no replacement had been provided, nor even funded, along with no tangible business plan being put forward or land allocated for such replacement. It was felt that the reasoning of Covid 19 for the closure was not acceptable as the pandemic was a short-term problem. The expenditure of one million pounds quoted, stated to be over twenty years, needed to be spent so that meant the word 'opportunity' for a new facility could be progressed. It also was felt questionable that the utilisation rate of the hall was 50%, as it was claimed that bookings have been turned away. It was thought that the hall should stay open, whilst investment and a credible plan was looked into for a new hall, which needed to be developed in consultation with the local community so that the educational and cultural facility could continue to run in the meantime for the residents of the Town.

Those against the motion felt that pouring money into a building that had been closed for six months and now was 'deemed not to be fit to reopen' was not prudent and a focus should be on the replacement of a new hall. It was suggested that the Town deserved better on the grounds that the hall was built for use as by all members of the family, but now it is very clear that if residents wanted to see a show, they look elsewhere first, as people do not want to sit in an uncomfortable venue with poor acoustics and with poor ancillary facilities. It was also felt that the hall was not doing its job, with the declining numbers and 30% of users being from yoga classes. Whilst not dismissing such an activity, it does not promote the desired usage of the hall. Under the point of Covid-19, it was countered that the effects of a pandemic will not be temporary as the financial effect and social repercussions will be long lasting with people's way of life changing forever, which will bring a new way of living along with a need to socialise more locally. A new facility should accommodate changes to people's habits when travelling to undertake their recreational activities around arts and culture, as people may not choose to travel into London or Brighton. It was felt generally the pandemic puts the future of Clair Hall into perspective and the need for a new facility. Furthermore, prolonging Clair Hall's operation may be worthy, but the required maintenance including of asbestos and the chance of legionnaires disease should not be risked. The language used about Covid 19 being temporary was a contested again, as it was felt that no-one will know where we will be in the next month, or year, so opening a building, whilst many other more substantial venues are closing, to promote crowds to gather would not be prudent. It was felt if these were ordinary times then there may be merit in looking at re-opening, but these are not in ordinary times. It was felt that the down time being experienced gave the opportunity to provide a modern facility, as social distancing may be around for many years to come so there was a need to look at how to use the space Clair Hall offers and make the new facility more flexible, profitable and a safer place to go. So, when residents/our children look back they will see that a future proofed hall was provided through forward thinking and community engagement. In summary, of those against the motion, it was felt a creative, forward thinking and future proofed building was

needed and not to have a prolonged opening, which would result in the same conversation being had in 5-10 years' time, so a better facility for a better Town could be provided, and not a facility that need more tax payer's money spent on it. With this a **recorded vote was taken:**

**With four votes in favour of the amended motion, namely Richard Bates, Richard Nicholson, Stephanie Inglesfield and Jack Langley and ten against Chris Ash-Edwards, Rachel Cromie, Christopher Evans, Howard Muddin, Matthew Jeffers, James Knight, Clive Laband, Alastair McPherson, Mike Pulfer and Sujan Wickremaratchi**

This resulted in Members returning to the original motion,

Discussion then continued and again it was felt that Clair Hall was no longer fit for purpose with uncomfortable seating and compromised viewing. It was felt that smaller bookings could be accommodated across the Town in other venues that were crying out for hirings and revenue. This was supported by a statement that a community facility was needed, which needs be to inclusive for all community needs and to support the next generation. Investment was needed in a modern facility, which was inviting for family and friends to be able to meet together and be able to enjoy arts and culture.

It was stated Cllr Bates did not state that he wanted to see the building put elsewhere. It was also felt it was disappointing that as the mover of the alternative motion he was not given the chance to speak at the end of debate. In addition, concerns were raised about blood donation appointments, which were still deemed to be being held at the Clair Hall, but they were not being cancelled and/or people were being re-directed out of the Town and not being able to attend when the need for such was crucial. Clair Hall's immediate future was the crux of the amended motion as it had not been thought about, and this point was rather missed in the previous debate. It was felt that the original motion being debated said nothing.

All were reminded what Cllr Pulfer's motion read that the Town Council was pleased to note that Mid Sussex District Council were finalising the Town Centre Masterplan, which would include commissioning work for the regeneration of modern facilities in the Town Centre with Haywards Heath Town Council being a major consultee. It was then stated that a very strong message should be sent to Mid Sussex District Council from the Town Council that it absolutely must provide new facilities and the Town Council would not settle for less. It was felt that the Town Council would not be doing its job if this was not done. With regards to the point about blood donation it was not a Town Council role to issue residents with information and the mover of the amended motion as a District Councillor should be able to access such information.

It was stated that Clair Hall, granted, is not the greatest venue, but it is much easier to demolish something than plan for something new, and there is no plan to replace. The good words said went to people's hearts, but it was felt that they are 'pie in the sky' with no funds in the bank, no signature on paper to build a new hall then it will not be believed. It was picked up on that Covid-19 has changed things for ever including the finances of local government and there was no money to build a new hall. As a result, that the Clair Hall should be kept going, as the cost is known. Once the money and commitment were in place then the project can move forward, but all that was being heard was promises being made.

It was felt a long-term view was needed and it was countered that it was stated that there was no money to build a new hall. In fact, all of the conversation was around what can be put in place, not to just service our community, but it must serve our local business in what will be a very hard recession. Everyone needed to unite to ensure timely delivery of a community facility that all the community will feel they have ownership of.

It was felt that there was clear inconsistency in the arguments as it was being said that a new state of the art facility was needed for Haywards Heath to bring people together, but there was no money to keep the existing facility open. There was only one way forward that could be seen was to demolish Clair Hall and build residential flats and build a new Clair Hall from the funding received from the development. However, there is no certainty or plan and so there needs to be an open and honest dialogue about such. So, it was noted that the proposed option is a car park, which was documented seemed to be a well thought out plan against nothing on table for a new hall. Again, it was stated that the loss of Clair Hall was directly against the policy of the Town Council's Neighbourhood (10.5 policy L1), which was voted to resist the closure of Clair Hall until an alternative exists.

It was felt disappointing that, in line with the number of social media comments, that more people were not with the Town Council for the meeting, but the well-informed comments from Mr Ryan were welcomed. It was felt that focusing on the cost was misleading and re-opening the existing defunct building would be pouring money down the drain. There could be no support for continuing a substandard venue that is not sustainable, unfit for purposes, past its sell by date and that the public have decided to vote overwhelming with their feet, not to use. It was felt that there was continued support for development that provides sustainable facilities for the Town. These objectives are embedded in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the Town Council's Destination Haywards Heath document. It was felt that the matter has become a political football and there should be a focus on providing a better facility for the Town, so everyone should be heartened that all Town Councillors support the need for such.

The Town Mayor felt that it was an emotive subject and felt that it had been for years and stated that new management options and alternatives had been discussed since 2017 as part of the Destination Haywards Heath document. He said that coming from an active background in the arts personally along with his family it was exciting being Mayor in a time that the Town was finally talking about the future of Clair Hall and the arts and cultural offering in the Town. He felt that if he was told that the Town was losing its theatre and creative space, he would be worried, but that was not case. He was a huge supporter of the arts and the community and had enjoyed many events at Clair Hall and will be sad to see it go. It was felt it was not the state of the arts facility the Town deserves and it had been depressing to see such a venue being underutilised. The Town needs community space where everyone wants to go to, and Haywards Heath needs to be a destination, and where Clair Hall has served the town well a new facility is now needed.

It was felt that change could be unsettling and along with progression would take time. It was not about Clair Hall closing; it was about what will open instead. He called for residents to tell him what they want from a new facility and felt that the time is right, in the current climate, for there to be a pause in the arts and cultural provision for the Town so that the future of Clair Hall be looked at.



In summary of debate, it was about the future and the past and the Mayor thanked those who had spoken and expressed their views. It was felt there is a need to look to the future and what is best for Haywards Heath. Does the Town stay with what it knows, or aspire to better things? Many arguments have been made but whatever the outcome of the vote on the motion it was hoped that all can come together and work together for the good of the Town.

At the end of discussion, a **recorded vote was taken**

**A recorded vote was taken with ten votes for the original motion, namely Chris Ash-Edwards, Rachel Cromie, Christopher Evans, Howard Munding, Matthew Jeffers, James Knight, Clive Laband, Alastair McPherson, Mike Pulfer and Sujan Wickremaratchi and four against Richard Bates, Richard Nicholson, Stephanie Inglesfield and Jack Langley**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the possible permanent closure and demolition of Clair Hall and to welcome the Town Council's inclusion in re-establishing modern community facilities.

**52. Mid Sussex District Council Consultation – Clair Hall Asset of Community Value**

There were no objections made to the request of Haywards Heath Community Interest Company's request that Clair Hall be made an Asset of Community Value, then,

Members **RESOLVED** to make no objection, therefore no comment on the application made by Haywards Heath Community Interest Company to register Clair Hall as an Asset of Community Value would be made.

**53. To consider any urgent items, the Mayor has received.**

None

**54. Members RESOLVED to exclude the public and the press.**

None.

Meeting Closed at 9pm

**Committee Meeting: Full Council**

**Report of:** Town Clerk

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020

**Subject:** Minutes of Committee Meetings

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to receive and adopt the resolutions of the Council's Planning Committee, Policy and Finance Committee and Environment and General Purposes Committee.

**Summary:**

2. The Committee Chairmen will each move 'the reception and adoption' of their relevant Committee meeting resolutions. These resolutions relate to the Planning Committees held on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 - **Minutes 49 – 57**, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and - **Minutes 58 – 66 and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 - Minutes 67 – 74**, Environment & General Purposes Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – **Minutes 19 - 29** and Policy and Finance Committee 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – **Minutes 22 - 35**.

**Members are recommended to;**

**(a) Adopt the resolutions of the Council's standing Committees as laid out under points 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this report**

3. Planning Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – **Minutes 49 – 57 resolutions;**

MIN. 56 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to ratify the recommendation of the Planning Working Group, without amendment, thus enabling the Town Clerk to submit the Town Council's response to the MSDC Regulation 19 Submission Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document consultation.

4. Planning Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – **Minutes 58 – 66 resolutions;**

MIN. 65 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to (Street Naming for Residential Development at Former MSDC Beech Hurst Depot, Bolnore Road) accept the developer's suggested road name of Longheath.

5. Planning Committee, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – **Minutes 67 – 74 resolutions;**

Nothing to report other than the planning application comments.

6. Environment & General Purposes Committee 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - **Minutes 19 – 29 resolutions;**

MIN. 23 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to respond to the issues raised at America Lane Allotment site and;

- a) Instruct a review of the bank of the stream adjacent to The Hollow.
- b) Ascertain the cost of resurfacing of the drive way/hard standing area of the Allotment site so the works can be considered in the 2021/2022 budget setting process.

MIN. 24 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to authorise the Events and Community Officer to investigate sources of funding for the proposed Mayor’s Christmas Appeal.

MIN. 25 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to resolve the actions of the Environment Working Group.

MIN. 26 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to adopt an Environment Code of Conduct for Haywards Heath Town Council.

7. Policy & Finance Committee 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 - **Minutes 22 – 35 resolutions;**

MIN. 26 - to RESOLVE the recommendation to recommend to Full Council for approval, the list of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

MIN. 27 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to

- c) defer a grant of £750 to Haywards Heath Tennis Club towards capital costs for a new Clubhouse on the basis that it had been noted that the project was delayed.
- d) award a grant of £500 to St Peter and St James Hospice towards material and tutors for online sessions for isolated families.
- e) award a grant of £250 to UK Harvest towards running costs.
- f) defer award of a grant of £500 to Grove Garden Charitable Trust towards the purchase of a metal shed on further investigation by the Town Clerk and Chairman.
- g) award a grant of £250 to Hope towards weekly drop-in sessions for Bentswood Hub parents.

MIN. 28 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to adopt the Committee timetable for the Council year 2021/2022.

- MIN. 29 – To RESOLVE the recommendation that as the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to,
- (a) Increase the hire costs for the Town Hall, by 3% for community hirers and 3% for commercial hirers.
  - (b) Increase the annual percentage rise to Cemetery fees by 3%.
  - (c) Increase the annual percentage increase in allotment rental fees by 3%.
  - (d) To again freeze Wedding fees at £360.

MIN. 30 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to adopt the refreshed Town Council Publication Scheme document with the additional offer of documents being available by PDF, via email, free of charge.

MIN. 31 – See item 10 of this agenda.

MIN. 32 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to adopt the Town Council’s inward investment document (Sponsorship Brochure).

MIN. 33 – To RESOLVE the recommendation to note the review of the Town Council’s Statement of Control and Internal Audit Plan.

**Committee Meeting: Meeting of Full Council**

**Report of:** Town Clerk  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
**Subject:** West Sussex Association Local Council (WSALC) 'Value for Money Project', which is a review of the services offered by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC).

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider membership of a third-party organisation.

**Summary:**

2. Members are asked to consider West Sussex Association Local Councils (WSALC) 'Value for Money Project', which is a review of the services offered by Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC), which was commissioned by WSALC without notice to Member Councils. Furthermore, decisions are required in relation to voting on special motions to be heard at the WSALC Annual General Meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, along with consideration of a questionnaire circulated by WSALC.

**Recommendation(s):**

- a) **To note that Cllr Matthew Jeffers holds a vote for the Town Council at the West Sussex Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 as appointed by Annual Full Council.**
- b) **To authorise Cllr Michael Pulfer to use the Town Council's second vote at the West Sussex Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 2nd December 2020.**
- c) **To resolve Town Council, using the votes under A and B, to support the special resolution motions A – D as laid out in point of 13 of this report that will be heard at the West Sussex Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 2nd December 2020.**
- d) **Note the questionnaire that has been circulated by West Sussex Association of Local Councils in relation to the 'Value for Money Project' and give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to complete the questionnaire on behalf of the Town Council.**

**Background:**

3. The Town Council is a member of WSALC who pays SSALC (along with East Sussex ESALC and Surrey Councils SALC) to provide training and advice for Councils who form part of the National Association (NALC) as the county association. There is also a local District-level group, the Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils (MSALC). The Town Council's representative is Cllr Jeffers, as appointed by Full Council with

voting rights on MSALC and WSALC. It has now also been noted that each member Council actually has two votes (this has never been an issue before as matters have always been somewhat uneventful for what has always been a very stable and well supported organisation) so resolution b) asks that Councillor Michael Pulfer be authorised to hold the second vote at the upcoming Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and a possible EGM in January/February 2021.

4. On the 18<sup>th</sup> August, an email was received from the CEO of SSALC, explaining that a communication would be forthcoming from WSALC. An email from WSALC duly arrived on 25<sup>th</sup> August with an enclosure (Appendix A), which all Members have duly received directly from the Town Clerk with a considerable amount of background information on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020. There was a delay in information being shared, but there was, and is still is a considerable amount of confusion around the WSALC review as SSALC is taking its own internal review, which was halted due to the pandemic. Members for balance have seen the rationale laid down by WSALC, which was only sent around a couple of months after the review was commissioned and advanced not as an aide memoire, but for the need to undertake the review.
5. In relation to the general confusion please also note that the Town Clerk had an email outstanding for over sixty days, and fifteen other Councils have requests into WSALC, with only one response being made after a complaint was made to the Information Commissioner. This response was made in an open letter addressed to the Clerk of Felpham Parish (incorrectly addressed) to their questions, so I asked if this response covered my questions and got a response 'yes it does'.
6. The aforementioned emails and further communication that Members will have seen from WSALC led to a wide range of questions being asked of WSALC by Parish/Town councils across the County and has caused a considerable amount of angst. These questions have included concerns about the cost of a new staff member and the commissioning of Professor Copland to undertake a review, and whether any West Sussex Councils had been consulted.
7. Finally, there were questions about the rationale for this expenditure, which is thought to be in the region of £10,000 on a review, when the three County organisations comprising SSALC had already started a strategy review for that organisation that has commenced in November 2019 and as said, paused for COVID-19, but was about to recommence. Strangely, there is also limited reference to this matter being discussed at the WSALC Board meeting and discussions are being held in private.
8. The timings of this work by WSALC is not helpful and unnecessarily expensive. Any decision or EGM to consider the findings will be made after the Town Council has agreed its' budget for 2021/22 and certainly not before the December/January Committees have been held. Although the outcome of the report that has been commissioned is unknown, it would seem that the direction of travel of the Board is to seek to break away from SSALC, and WSALC has recently gone as far as possible to, in writing, pre-determine itself of a split. Whilst any split would almost certainly see the loss of the economies of scale and breadth of support/membership, it would also more

than likely result in the break-up of SSALC. West Sussex has the most Parish and Town Councils.

9. It is incomprehensible as to why WSALC would move in this way, and spend Parish/Town Council funds to do so, without consulting its Members. At a time of great strain on the nation, reflected at parish-level, WSALC would appear to want to focus on what are personal agendas. This is not a priority of the Town Council, even though the SSALC Strategy Review by itself, at the appropriate time with minimal costs, is welcomed and would hopefully involve consulting parishes. It can never be said a review of service is not welcome, but this review has been handled terribly.

### **WSALC Questionnaire**

10. Please note a questionnaire has been circulated to Town/Parish Councils in West Sussex for completion. It must be noted that the questionnaire was approved by the board not the independent consultant and has major gaps within it. It is also stated that a minute number for the completion of the questionnaire is required.
11. It has been questioned that in it, is in effect, a Freedom of Information request. The time and resource to respond to this questionnaire is considerable? To my, and fellow Clerks minds, the information is already held by WSALC or SSALC. In a similar vein, most Clerks do not think that this is something they should take to Council as most of the questions are simply matters of fact. To this end, Members are more than welcome to review the 50 questions, but it is recommended that the Town Clerk completes the questionnaire.
12. The survey is so skewed with loaded and leading questions that it is indefensible. Fellow Clerks have written and have made many pertinent points and flagged up omission on this, but it is therefore suggested that Councils should regard any findings as nearly irrelevant. Why questions about satisfaction with SSALC current service having not been included is extraordinary.

### **Special Resolutions Moved by Motion - West Sussex Association of Local Council's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 2nd December 2020**

13. The ill feeling by numerous West Sussex Councils has been such that the following resolutions led by Councillor representatives of Bolney Parish Council and Aldingbourne Parish Council have been tabled on the Agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, which the Town Clerk recommend that both votes available to the Town Council are used to support.
  - a) **Special Resolution in respect of the Current value for money study.**
    - It is **RESOLVED** that the Company Directors cease to progress the current value for money study.
  - b) **Special resolution in respect of the current strategic review.**
    - It is **RESOLVED** the Company Directors work constructively with SSALC to conclude the current strategic review which includes a value for money element.
  - c) **Special resolution in respect of future engagement of Parish Councils in West Sussex.**

- It is **RESOLVED** the company Directors establish a clear mechanism for engaging Parish Councils in West Sussex in studies that fall outside of the SSALC operational framework.

d) **Special resolution in respect of the position of chairman and vice chairman of WSALC.**

It is **RESOLVED** that the current Chairman and Vice Chairman of WSALC stands down.

### **Town Clerk's View**

14. As the Town Clerk has previously suggested it is suggested that the WSALC review is ill timed, has not taken into account the views of West Sussex Councils in its implementation and in the present climate is a waste of time and money where stability is needed in our sector. Furthermore, the departure of WSALC from SSALC, to the Town Clerk's mind, would be a disaster for our sector locally, incur more costs and provide lower/unplanned services and will make our links to NALC very complicated. The Town Clerk is also worried about the capacity of WSALC as they have not been able to reply to simple email requests and indeed communicate to the West Sussex Clerks in a clear and coherent manner. In the Town Clerk's opinion, WSALC have actually been dismissive of our opinions and been quite arrogant in the way they have treated professional officers whose interests they believe are protecting the Parish/Town Councils.

15. Members are also reminded of the Town Clerk's role with SSALC as paid trainer of new Clerks. Members are also reminded that WSALC/SSALC/NALC are there for the Town Council not the Town Clerk who has the Society of Local Council Clerks for support.

### **Financial Implications**

16. The Town Council pays a subscription of circa £3,300 per annum to WSALC/NALC and they go hand in hand and cannot be split. Members must also note that leaving Membership of such needs 6 months notice and renewal is in May.

### **Legal Implications**

17. **None**

### **Town Clerk**

**ITEM 10**

**Committee Meeting: Meeting of Full Council**

**Report of:** Town Clerk

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Subject:** National Association of Local Council on Standards public sector survey

This consultation was circulated to All Councillors by email on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

It can also be found under the additional document link below this agenda on the Town Council website.



**Committee Meeting: Meeting of Full Council**

**Report of:** Town Clerk  
**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
**Subject:** Town Mayor's Christmas Appeal

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**Purpose of this Report**

1. To ratify the recommendations of a standing committee.

**Summary**

2. The following report is asking that Members ratify and support a Town Council Appeal for Christmas 2020, which has been developed by the Mayor and officers. Where it is not normal that a recommendation is specifically heard by Council unless it is a budgetary, or process matter and Committees have delegated powers, this appeal will be a Town Council, as the collective, appeal with the Town Mayor spearheading such.

**Recommendation(s):**

**Members are recommended to ratify the recommendations of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and;**

- a) Support the Town Mayor's Christmas Appeal**
- b) Allocate a maximum of £1,500 from unrestricted reserves to meet the overarching project costs as laid out in the financial implications of this report.**

**Background**

3. All of the background information can be found under item 10 of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and under resolution 31, which was unanimously supported by the Committee as per the recommendation of this report.

**Financial Implications**

4. The current project cost equates £2,488 for a total of 622 bags.
5. £1,000 of external funding has been secured, Members are recommended to allocate a maximum of £1,500 from unrestricted reserve to support the project, which will reduce in need if further sponsorship is confirmed.

**Legal Implications**

6. The Town Council can launch such an appeal under the General Power of Competence, which the Town Council meets the criteria of as exercised and resolved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 under minute 17.

**Town Clerk**