

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th July 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 MUNDIN
Stephanie Inglesfield
Matthew Jeffers
James Knight
Clive Laband
Jack Langley
Alastair McPherson
Richard Nicholson
Mike Pulfer
Sujan Wickremaratchi**

Apologies Absent***

Also present, Ms Emily Carr, Mrs M Baker, Mr Andrew Sturgeon (RFO) (part of the meeting) and Cllr S Hiller (part of meeting).

Before the meeting commenced Ms Emily Carr made a presentation to the Town Council on her proposals with regards to anti-racism in Haywards Heath and the role of the Town Council in the process. The proposal can be found in the associated documents below these minutes on the Town Council Website. As back ground an introduction to the proposal Ms Carr stated that she appreciative the opportunity to be able to speak and have a dialogue on the matter, but it was only the beginning of a journey with the community. And the pledges made by the Town Council needed to be sustained and honoured through the Council words and actions. Ms Carr also took a moment to thank the Cllrs who had taken time out to respond to her email personally and asked Member what they were doing in their position of power and influence, to do the right thing, and be actively anti-racist. Ms Carr stated that she was not speaking on behalf of nor able to speak on behalf of people of colour nor to make comment on such or speak on experiences that she had not had. She was simply there to use her white privilege to stand in solidarity and to promote action. She felt that the Town Council needs to review its internal policies, the 10 point plan UNESCO plan (to see what is in the Town Councils jurisdiction) and the way it externally acts within the community, review what it puts on social media and look at how Town Events can be more inclusive. It was also felt that twin hatted Members should take these issues into the WSCC and MSDC.

In response the Mayor thanked Ms Carr and hoped the responses she had received from Councillor has started to build a picture the Councils stance on the matter she raised. The Mayor also commended her for challenging the Town Council on such an important issue.

Cllr McPherson then stated that; *Haywards Heath Town Council stands united against every form of discrimination, racism and injustice. The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has reminded us once again that we cannot and should not tolerate racism in any form or from any person. Furthermore, Haywards Heath Town Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment. It aims to ensure that in its recruitment, employment, business practice and service delivery, no employee or member of the public will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of gender, marital status, domestic circumstances, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion, creed, politics, age, disability, sexual orientation or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements without*

justifiable cause. In context of the Town Council the way this matter can be seen is at three levels,

- *The first level is at an individual's level. As alluded to earlier it is hoped you now have an idea of where we are as a group of individuals, when it comes to our thoughts regarding the racism question and the need for change.*
- *Second level is looking at the internal perspective of Town Council policies and training. In the Town Council we have Equal Opportunity and Equality and Diversity policies that are reviewed every year. We will undertake a review and update these policies and also review and upgrade where necessary the training of our employees and councillors with respect to Diversity and Inclusion, and Racism.*
- *On a third level, Town Council's external perspective. As a proactive Town Council, we are keen to engage with our community groups when it comes to the issues within our town. It is vital for young people to learn about their own history, regardless of race and background and they should have access to truthful, non-discriminative education. The need to improve and broaden education and tolerance for all children around these subjects is crucial and will play a vital role in helping us dismantle any systemic racism in our society, but the Town Council would hasten to add that education provision is not the remit of this level of local government. Our MP has raised this with the Secretary of State for education recently, and we wait to hear any news on this issue in the coming months ahead.*

Education and development should be a continual aspiration for all of us and with this in mind the Town Council would like to propose the setting up of a 'Community Conversation' Forum. This will be a platform for invited community leaders, individuals and groups to come together and discuss issues that affect our town. The Town Council's aspiration would be for those attendees to engage and return to their groups with new ideas and thoughts that could lead to a wider level of engagement and understanding. The Town Mayor would lead on this strategy and aim for the first meeting to be set up for September/October with a title very much geared around the discussion we are having now. With regards the paper presented, the Town Council want to pick up on some points.

- *The Town Council too believe in open dialogue and discussion on all issues within our councils and public.*
- *And the Town Council too agree with your sentiment, 'as a white person of not having to face discrimination because of the colour of my skin', which is why this is a real opportunity to reflect on our thoughts and the interventions the Town Council could make, with regard racism.*

Other Matters

- **Social Media Presence and Website** - we will review our postings.
- **Town Days to promote inclusivity, antidiscrimination and celebrate cultural diversity**- there is an established committee to discuss this for 2020/2021 - Food and Culture element of Spring festival already being discussed.
- **Inclusive community schemes and multicultural celebration learnings** - the Environment and General Purposes Committee to look into through its event planning later in the year.
- **HHTC to encourage local libraries** – this will be discussed with WSCC directly as not in the Town Council's remit.
- **10 Point plan of action to fight racism on the municipal level** - Policy and Finance Committee to deliberate at an appropriate time.
- **Twinhatted MSDC/WSCC Members** -.Cllrs to discuss 10-point plan with colleagues for West Sussex adoption and lobby for change

Finally summing up and returning to the initial question 'what can we do at this pivotal moment in history' there is still a lot to do including training, reviewing policy, The Town Council will set up the Community Conversation forum in late September/October.

Ms Carr was asked if she had any question relating to the response made by the Town Mayor and if any Members had anything to add to the conversation. There were none so Ms Carr left the meeting.

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

23. Council Prayer

Members stood for the Council prayer, which was read by Town Mayor Cllr Alastair McPherson.

24. Apologies

Cllr R. Cromie – personal commitments.

25. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 11th May 2020, without comment, were taken as read, confirmed as true and duly signed by the Mayor.

26. Declarations of Interest

None

27. Public Forum

None

28. To Dispose of any Business Outstanding from the Last Meeting.

None.

29. Mayor's Engagements and Announcements.

The Town Mayor, informed Members of the sad news of the passing of Mrs Claudette Furminger who had served as a Town Councillor for four years 2007-2011 who had fought a long-term illness. Since the last meeting the Town Council had continued to support the Food Hub with Covid-19 Mutual Aid Haywards Heath and there was good level of food stock if required in the future. It was noted that there had been thanks from the Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity for the donation grant made by the Policy and Finance Committee to provide monies for a project in memory of the Dame Vera Lynn, who had sadly passed away. The Mayor added that his engagements had, as to be expected, remained low due to the difficult circumstances the Country found itself in, but he had been uploading blogs and made statements and announcement on Facebook with the assistance Maria Horne, who he thanked and who had developed a wonderful new website for the Town Council. Getting out and about where he could he had been able to visit Specsavers and work with Haywards Heath Business Association to set up shop local and support business campaign. Finally, the Mayor thanked the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and all Members of staff for their efforts over some very difficult months and it was noted they should be gradually returning to the office in August/September.

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

(i) Planning Committee - **MINS. 1 - 24**

The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Planning Committees, dated 26th May 2020 - **Mins 1 – 8**, 15th June 2020 - **Mins 9 – 16** and 6th July 2020 - **Mins 17– 24** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

- (ii) Environment & General Purposes Committee - **MINS. 1 - 9**
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Environment & General Purposes Committee dated 22nd June 2020 **Mins 1 - 9** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

- (ii) Policy & Finance Committee - **MINS. 1 - 11**
The reception and adoption of the resolutions of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 29th June 2020 **Mins 1 - 11** were moved, seconded and agreed by Council.

31. Equality and Diversity Policy and Equal Opportunities Statement Review.

Members noted the Equality and Diversity Policy and Equal Opportunities Statement as presented and without comment,

Members **RESOLVED** to re-affirm, through the annual review, the **Town Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and Equal Opportunities Statement Review for 2020/2021.**

32. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2020 - Internal Audit Report 2019/2020

Members noted that the Internal Auditor had signed off the report of Town Council for the year ended 31st March 2020 and made no comment. Without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the year ended 31st March 2020 - Internal Audit Report 2019/2020.

33. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2020 – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020

Noting full compliance by the Town Council to the Governance Statement Members made no comment and then,

Members **RESOLVED** the year ended 31st March 2020 – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020.

34. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2020 –Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/2020.

In noting that the Accounting Statements balanced and had been agreed and signed off by the Internal Auditor Members made no comment and then,

Members **RESOLVED** the year ended 31st March 2020 – Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/2020.

35. Policies and procedures for the safe re-opening of the Town Hall in light of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

In introducing the item, the Town Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for undertaking a monumental piece of work for the Town Council. The Town Clerk in turn then thanked all of the Town Hall staff who had supported him every step of the way and who had signed off the documentation to confirm that they were happy and understood the procedures. The Town Clerk added that procedures were aimed at making the Town Hall safe for staff, visitors, hirers and Councillors when it re-opened and explained how the Town Hall would look and what was being put place to meet Covid-19 safety requirements. This included a mandatory requirement for track and trace information for hirers of the Town Hall to be provided to officers before the hire takes place. The Town Clerk made reference to a question asked of him prior to the meeting in relation to salary payment arrangements for any member staff who had to self-isolate for any reason. It was noted with the technology embraced during lockdown that office staff could work from home and that there would have to be leniency with the Groundstaff. It was noted that two Members of Groundstaff had been tested and the results were turned round in 48 hours with their working bubble closed down whilst waiting for

results. Thanks, was echoed by Members for what was a comprehensive and thorough document and a further question was asked, if a paragraph would be included in the document regarding the use of thermometers as it was understood from the Town Clerk's update they had been purchased. The Town Clerk said he would add a paragraph, but caution on their use was raised another Councillor due to guidance stating that individuals may be caught out if they had a temperature from exercise, stress or another incidence on the way to the Town Hall, which gives a false reading on any symptoms. It was asked whether there would be any form of catering on site in line with the procedure. The Town Clerk responded that there would be no food and drink making facilities in the coming months and that the kitchen is only open for access to to the Jubilee Room. Furthermore, not many weddings had catering at the Town Hall. In closing the Town Clerk stressed that if there was a health and safety issue the Health and Safety Executive would be at his door, but the Town Council needed, as the collective body, to take ownership of the procedure and adopt them. With this,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

- a) **adopt the Return to Work Policy, Risk Assessment and Hirers information form**
- b) **note that documents would be subject to change on Government advice and practical experience, which will be undertaken by the Town Clerk.**
- c) **note that all track and trace personal data would be held for 21 days, which would be reflected in GDPR and Data retention policies.**
- d) **Allocate £10,000 of funding from unrestricted reserves to allow the Town Clerk, within his delegated powers and within Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, to manage the cleaning and day to day management of the Town Hall.**

36. Memorial Bench and Tree to be placed on Muster Green.

Without comment and objection Members welcomed both requests and unanimously,

Members **RESOLVED** the **placement of memorial tree and bench on Muster Green.**

37. Victoria Park – Draft Masterplan.

Members considered the consultation, as presented in the agenda, made comment and asked that the following points and matters be raised in a representation formulated by the Town Clerk,

- With regards to the removal of the South Road hedge, there was general support and enthusiasm for the removal on the grounds that it would open the park up and welcome the wonderful vista of the park and the South Downs. There was note of the historical objection to such from residents, but it was felt times had changed so it would be interesting to see the feedback gathered from the consultation from residents.
- The Town Council supports any form of sustainable planting and wild flower beds, which will be important if the hedge is removed.
- Members wished to see the introduction of pop-up electric points for events in the park.
- Members would like to see a water station(s) to promote the filling of bottles and reduction in plastic waste.
- Thought to be given to refuge and recycling, as there is a historic problem with bins overflowing and KFC wrappers etc. Increase capacity of bins with

re-cycling options would be welcomed along with a review of the collection frequency.

- It was queried if enough thought had been given to disabled users in wheel chairs and those with other disabilities? Have local access groups been consulted on the plans? Thoughts around a sensory garden etc.
- The revisiting of the idea of the placement of a Christmas Tree as previously requested by the Town Council was requested.
- New play equipment was welcomed as it was deemed that the current equipment was dated and in need of replacement.
- The formalisation, improved access, pathways and thinning of trees in the plantation was also welcomed as the area is rather cut off from the rest of the park, is not very welcoming, and sometimes lends itself to anti-social behaviour.
- Improved drainage on the pitch was welcomed as there have been problems when hiring the park for Town Day during inclement weather.

Members **RESOLVED** to **instruct the Town Clerk to make representation on the Draft Victoria Park Masterplan in line with the body of the minute above.**

38. Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct Consultation

Members considered the consultation, as presented in the agenda, and felt that the Model Code of Conduct was a good document and an improvement of what is currently in place. However, the following points and matters were raised that would be included in a representation formulated by the Town Clerk,

- The Code of Conduct where it tries its hardest does not meet the need of the Town/Parish Sector and is more aligned to principal authorities.
- The Code of Conduct does not have much teeth in regulating Councillors and does not aspire to mandatory training.
- Sanctions are missing, and it is left that without a sanction/consequence for a Councillor's action, or indeed in general life, there is no point in such a Code of Conduct.

Members **RESOLVED** to **instruct the Town Clerk to make representation on the Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct Consultation in line with the body of the minute above.**

39. 20mph zone from Butlers Green Road Roundabout to the Birch Hotel Roundabout

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had been made aware that there was will to put forward a representation to its principal authorities that the Town Council would like to see a 20mph zone in the aforementioned area of the Town and was asked to prepare a report for consideration. In addition, it was noted that West Sussex County Council was about to launch round two of the 'Covid 19 Safer Places Fund', which was being led by the Cabinet Member for highways, which could potentially fund the zone. However, to put matter into perspective regarding the funding the Town Clerk informed all that the first round of funding attracted 245 applications with only 7 being taken forward. The Town Clerk then asked for Members comments as the recommendation before the Council was made on what he was led to believe the position on the matter and required Members leadership on the way forward. It was the stated by the Leader of the Town Council that matters had moved forward slightly since the report was written so he proposed a change to the wording of the recommendation, which a was seconded as follows;

To note the aspiration of Haywards Heath Town Council to place a 20mph zone between Butlers Green Road Roundabout to the Birch Hotel Roundabout and

if appropriate apply to West Sussex County Council for the second tranche of the Covid 19 Safer Places fund.

It was also noted that the 20mph had been an aspiration in the Town Council's adopted Destination Haywards Heath document. It was asked where the wish for the change to the Town Centre came from and there were worries about the length of the 20mph zone because there were many roads feeding onto the zone from higher speed roads. It was felt that traffic calming would be better. At this point Cllr Wickremaratchi apologised for not declaring an interest as Senior Advisor to the West Sussex Cabinet Member for Highways so he made this known. He then added that he had a number of residents who had made representations from Franklyn on the speeds in the area so there seemed to be a will for such changes and he fully supported such. The Leader welcomed this support and added the reasoning for the length of the zone was to try and supported elderly accommodation along Butlers Green Road who have limited crossing points to get to the Town Centre. All Councillors were urged to look at the 20 plenty campaign, which talks about the benefits of traffic calming and the environmental benefits of having a slower stretch of road. The safety perspectives of the project were then promoted along with the fact that South Road should not be used as a short cut for motorists against the relief road. It was stressed that it should not be badged as a limit but a zone as zones are proven to reduce speed and are easier for the police to manage. It was hoped the idea, if implemented, would promote cycling, healthier styles and support the Town so to be a better place to visit and hopefully make the Town Centre more economically viable. In addition, as the plan would be in place under Covid 19 restrictions, the Town Council would be able to see if the zone worked or not. With the Leader of the Town Council re-reading his change to the recommendation, which again was seconded,

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to.

note the aspiration of Haywards Heath Town Council to place a 20mph zone between Butlers Green Road Roundabout to the Birch Hotel Roundabout and if appropriate apply to West Sussex County Council for the second tranche of the Covid-19 Safer Places fund.

40. To consider any urgent items, the Mayor has received.

None,

41. Members RESOLVED to exclude the public and the press.

None.

Meeting Closed at 9.01pm