

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Environment and General Purposes Committee 1st October 2024.

Nick Chapman (Chair)
Alison Rees (Vice Chair)
Anne- Marie Cooke
Sandy Ellis
Stephanie Inglesfield
Deanna Nicholson
Duncan Pascoe
Leila Wilson**

Apologies** Absent*
Also present: Town Clerk

13. Apologies

| Member | Reason |
|--------------|---------|
| Leila Wilson | Holiday |

14. Public Participation

Sujan Wickremaratchi thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and made comment about Item 9 – Mural at Haywards Heath Station. He stated that while he does support artwork, it needs to be in the right place. He said he has concerns because the bridge by the station is quite old and the brickwork is very specialised brickwork. Several years ago, when he was a Councillor, the Council wrote a letter to Network Rail to clean up the bridge and relocate the pigeons, because it was in a worse state than it currently is. This took about 5 years for Network Rail to complete, although the issue with the pigeons was not resolved. The brickwork was done by former Mayor Richard Goddard grandfather's company, making it about 90 years old. He stated that the bridge is currently quite clean. He said the nearby bridge in Wivelsfield, which has murals on both sides is in a terrible state and he did not want the same thing to happen in Haywards Heath, or for the brickwork to fall into disrepute. He raised a query of whether it would be better to improve the lighting under the bridge instead of adding the artwork. He also stated that he was concerned about what long term maintenance and upkeep costs would be for the mural and what costs to the taxpayer would be, as well as what road closure costs would be during painting of the mural. He stated that overall, in Haywards Heath a wonderful job has been done to keep the place looking nice, especially the fantastic green spaces. He thanked Haywards Heath in Bloom and the Council groundstaff for arranging this.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the Environment & General Purposes Committee dated 1st July 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

16. Substitutes

None.

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

18. Receive a report from the ECO

The Town Clerk presented the report on behalf of the ECO. Cllr Pascoe thanked the ECO, Imogen Wilson, for organising the Town Day event, one of the most well

attended events. Cllr Inglesfield congratulated the ECO on her organisation and said that the day was more than just about charities raising money, it was about them connecting with the community. Cllr Chapman said following feedback from last year, would it be possible to wrap some of the gifts for the Leave No One Behind at Christmas project and queried the costing of this. The Town Clerk stated that this was not a costing issue but a resources issue. It was noted that Councillors would be invited to join in the wrapping on a date to be confirmed. Cllr AM Cooke suggested getting community groups such as the Guides involved. Cllr Ellis suggested it would be nice if community groups involved could write a note to go in each parcel they wrapped. Cllr Pascoe suggested notes and comments could be written at the Christmas Festival on 23rd November and a call for volunteers could go out there.

The Town Clerk highlighted the Social Media issues raised in the report, confirming that the Council current uses Facebook, X and Instagram and the uses of these would be reviewed. He stated that since Twitter had become X regulation on the platform had dropped and inappropriate content had become more prevalent. He noted that the ECO is considering other options, including reducing X content and using different platforms. Cllr Nicholson suggested closing the Council's profile on X completely as engagement figures were low.

Members **NOTED** the **ECO's report and the proposed event dates of 2025/2026.**

19. Receive a report from the Projects Officer regarding interaction with local schools.

The Town Clerk presented report on behalf of the Project Officer. He stated that the e-newsletters were planned to encourage engagement with the Council and that alongside schools these could be sent to other youth community groups such as the Cubs and Brownies. He noted that council agendas are now being put onto Council social media to further encourage engagement. Cllr Nicholson suggested that Councillors could go into schools and tell them what the Council does. Cllr Inglesfield said she did this at Bolnore School with other councillors and this was a very good experience for the children. The Town Clerk noted that the Cubs will be doing a mock Full Council experience with the Mayor on 3rd October 2024.

Members **RESOLVED** to **adopt a Newsletter Policy for communication with Schools/Colleges in the Town.**

20. To receive a motion from Cllr Inglesfield regarding the organisation of the annual Holocaust Memorial Day 2026 onwards.

Cllr Inglesfield presented her report stated that the Holocaust Memorial Day had been marked since 2001. This had previously been done in Haywards Heath, before being stopped and restarted by the local Amnesty International branch. She stated that at other councils such as Burgess Hill, Holocaust Memorial Day is run as a Council event like Town Day. She stated that it is a well-documented event and this makes it very impactful, as it shows what happens when minorities are not protected. She stated that the Holocaust involved the 'traditional' minorities but society changes and new minority groups are changing, which we must be aware of. She said that it is important for generations to come to know what happens when we do not take care of the rights of minorities.

Cllr Rees asked about what the event would look like. Cllr Inglesfield described the current format which involved; children and young people attending the War Memorial, schools displaying their art at the Town Hall and talks from a guest speaker.

Cllr Ellis requested if future Holocaust Memorial events could be videoed and put out into the wider community via Social Media and schools, display what is being done in the town and show Haywards Heath highlighting the importance that history must not be repeated.

Members **RESOLVED** to make National Holocaust Memorial Day a formally organised Haywards Heath Town Council event from 2026.

21. To consider making an application to Networks Rail to place a mural under the bridge at Haywards Heath Railway Station

The Town Clerk stated that there was a meeting between Cllr P Lucraft, Cllr Bates and Network Rail and Southern Rail, which this motion was born from. Cllr Inglesfield suggested for costings a sponsorship opportunity would be the way forward. Cllr Ellis said that the community should continue to celebrate the town's history and that Haywards Heath was built by the railway and brickwork is important, it is a form of art. She stated that she had previously tried to get better lighting around the bridge, similar to the viaducts in Brighton, which are fully lit up and illuminated without their structure being touched. Cllr Ellis stated that she strongly objected to the bridge being painted on as there are plenty of other places for the community to come together to make art. She stated that it was a lot of money to get the bridge cleaned and repointed and the then painted on top. She further said that the issues on the bridge are not fully resolved; water stills flows down the walls and young pigeons still roost under the bridge and often get run over. She said that enhance lighting would potentially stop pigeons coming in and that, while she thinks there should be some artwork, perhaps a better location would be the disused advertising hoarding opposite the station. Cllr Nicholson said that she thought putting a mural under the bridge would be unsuitable as the ongoing issues with running water would mean mould could ruin the mural, She stated that while she appreciated the historic brickwork, the station is not an attractive area entrance to Haywards Heath as people just see the advertising. She stated that something there like lighting could cheer up the area. Cllr Pascoe suggested that a working group could look into lighting instead of a mural, but the Arts and Culture board could also be involved with enhancing the area surrounding the bridge. Cllr AM Cooke we should improve that area as a link. She stated that local businesses could be approached for financial support, including the Network South East community fund. Cllr Ellis suggested that the Council could work with the greening people to flower that up the area around the station and that the Council should put investment into the whole Station Quarter, as they have a duty to engage the community if we are going to paint a Victorian structure. She also suggested that Network Rail should be part of the process if the Council are looking to improve the station area. Cllr Pascoe stated that there was a County Council Plan for the Station Quarter, although he was unsure what stage it was at. Cllr Chapman stated that he had concerns about the safety of any painting under the bridge as it is a high traffic area. Cllr Elli suggested that Section 106 monies could be spent on improving the Station Quarter.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Arts and Culture board look into the mural project and or other enhancements within the area of the railway bridge and surrounding area progress with.

22. To consider a motion from Cllr Ellis that requests that the Town Council holds public consultation in line with the Pavement Licensing Policy

Cllr S Ellis requested that an audit of placement of bins be undertaken, as bins in Haywards Heath may be inappropriately placed, causing rubbish to be strewn around – especially as there are no bins at the station. She stated that there are also no seats or benches by the station and litter around the station nearly impacted the In Bloom

entry. She requested that the bins in the parks and green spaces are also taken into consideration.

Cllr Inglesfield highlighted the area around KFC and rubbish piling up. The Town Clerk stated that this was discussed at a Town Centre Police meeting where it was noted that one of the main issues is that young people loiter in these areas as something to do as KFC and The Orchards both have free Wi-Fi with a good reach. He added that The Orchards had had to turn their Wi-Fi off overnight to dissuade children from loitering, The Town Clerk confirmed that there is a bin list already, which can be reviewed. Town Council has a list of all the street furniture which is slowly being placed on an app.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend that a town wide audit should be conducted in regards to litter bins and their locations in line with Mid Sussex District Council's Pavement Licensing Policy consultation.

23. To consider a request from West Sussex County to place Electric Vehicle Charging points on Muster Green along Muster Green North.

The Town Clerk stated that a County wide EV charging project was being undertaken, which is why this request had been received. Cllr Inglesfield queried the efficiency of charger points being put in this area as the parking was always full with commuters. Cllr Nicholson stated that while she supported electric vehicles, the Muster Green area is inconvenient and inappropriate, as the charging points will be inaccessible as the parking is full with commuters. Cllr Inglesfield suggested that more charging points could be put in Orchards. Cllr Ellis stated that she did not support the introduction of charging points on Muster Green, which has a green flag, as this could cause more congestion in the area. She suggested that charging points could be put into the car park at the Harvester as this is a large car park and would not cause any congestion, as well as encouraged people to use the facilities. She further suggested that perhaps local supermarkets could install some charging points. Cllr Chapman suggested the Dolphin could be a charger site, however Cllr Rees suggested Dolphin car park is also very limited already.

Members **RESOLVED** to refuse West Sussex County Council permission to place Electric Vehicle Charge Points on Muster Green on the grounds of the detriment to appearance of the Green and that there were more suitable locations around the Town.

24. To consider the introduction of a Community Events grants programme
Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend the Policy and Finance Committee that a Community Event Funding programme be introduced that would be managed by the Environment and General Purposes Committee

25. South and South East in Bloom

Cllr Ellis stated that groundman Andy would be attending the Britain in Bloom Manchester event to pick up any award received. She also stated that a Christmas litter pick had been planned for the Christmas period with Sam at Glendale, with a date to be confirmed.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the update.

26. Urgent Items

Cllr Chapman queried the progress of the damaged railing at the War Memorial with the Remembrance Day event approaching. TC confirmed that the ironmonger had confirmed this would be fixed before the event.

Meeting closed at 8.22 pm