

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and General Purposes Committee** held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

**M. Jeffers (Chairman)**  
**S. Ellis (Vice Chairman)**  
**R. Clarke**  
**J. Dwight**  
**J. Hayden**  
**J. Knight**  
**H. MUNDIN**

Apologies \*\* Absent \*

**Also present: Mr Andrew Sturgeon (RFO)**

**35. Apologies**

J. Hayden – work commitments.

**36. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment and General Purposes Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

**37. Substitutes**

None.

**38. Declarations of Interest**

Item 10, Cllr Ellis declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Haywards Heath in Bloom Committee.

**39. Matters Arising**

None

**40. Town Council Events 2017**

Members were presented with a report that outlined the Council's proposed core events programme for the 2017/2018 financial year, given the opportunity to review suggestions for additional events along with a rationale for events that were not to be continued. Members were agreeable to the first part of the report and resolved that the Council continues to organise and expend monies on the following events: - Spring Festival, Town Day, Christmas Festival, Haywards Heath Marathon Leg (Mid Sussex Marathon) and Remembrance Sunday. It was also agreed that the Council be involved in the Greater Haywards Heath Bike Ride but there would be no financial burden to the Council only staff time. Members then approved the suspension of the Carers event and agreed that monies be diverted to Haywards Heath Dementia Alliance's 'Virtual Dementia Tour' and to continue to assist with the Haywards Heath Play Day in conjunction with MSDC. In doing so Members were reminded that if they wished to undertake any further events during the year it would result in the need for a larger reserve budget, which was noted to be very limited for the next financial year, and consideration would be required by the Committee on the funding and the allocation staff resources. It was then agreed not to increase the budget, but to look at funding and sponsorship opportunities to help finance the events programme. During debate the following matters were raised for actioning by officers;

- A review should be undertaken on the PA used at Remembrance Sunday.

- That the Town Council enquire whether the Lindfield Bonfire Society would be willing to help marshal the fireworks at the Christmas Festival.
- That sponsorship, in light of a diminishing reserve for events, be pursued with the Orchards Shopping Centre (potentially via MSDC as the new owner) and Churchill Retirement.

In closing Members thanked the Community Liaison Officer and all of the Town Hall staff for their commitment towards Town Council and third party events

**Members RESOLVED to;**

**Approve the Council's 2017/2018 events programme as presented (Spring Festival, Marathon, Town Day, Christmas Festival and Remembrance Sunday) with amounts available for the Haywards Heath Dementia Alliance 'Virtual Dementia Tour' and Play Day.**

**41. Environment and General Purposes Committee Budget**

Members were presented with the proposed Environment and General Purposes Budget for 2017/2018. The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) took Members through each budget heading welcoming questions as each budget heading was considered. Members noted that the net budget for the Committee was 16.2% more than that agreed for the 2016/2017 financial year. Income was budgeted to rise by 8.5% whilst expenditure was to rise by 12.7% above that in 2016/2017. Members agreed the budget without any change being made to the proposed budget levels. During debate the following matters were raised for discussion and or action by officers;

- Members noted the income from burials and were advised, and agreed, that the large reserve of monies be held to maintain Western Road that would soon become a closed Cemetery. Discussion also moved on the urgent need for a new Cemetery and the Clerk was asked to write to MSDC again to stress the importance of the new Cemetery off Hurstwood Lane coming forward.
- Members noted and welcomed the increased budget to enable the progression of a scheme to upgrade Town Council street lights.
- It was asked if the Queen's Birthday plaque photograph has been sent to Sir Nicholas Soames. It was noted that a second attempt was to be made after the original was deemed not be good enough.
- It was noted that the hanging basket issue had been resolved, but the planters on South Road were not working very well and had been subject to vandalism.

The remainder of the budget was agreed in line with narrative presented in the budget included in the agenda.

**Members RESOLVED to;**

**Agree the Environment and General Purposes Committee Budget for 2017/2018 and to resolve that it be included in the Town Council's budget, which will be presented to the Policy and Finance Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017.**

**42. Residents and Non-Residents Cemetery Fees**

Members considered a report that presented a policy to formalise the Council's Cemetery fees policy and the process for making decisions on whether a deceased's family is charged single rate residents fees or quadruple non-residents fees for interments. This decision was currently made by the Town Clerk if the Assistant to the Clerk's initial decision was challenged based on a very simple policy. Discussion turned to the policy that the Town Council was using to determine whether a person would be subject to a single resident fee or quadruple non-resident fee. It was noted that in line with current procedure

the current policy was stringent and a decision was based upon whether an individual resided in the Town at the time of their death. If not, they were charged quadruple fees unless their absence from the Town was on the grounds that the care they needed was not available within Haywards Heath. In this situation, the Town Clerk had discretion over the matter. It was contested that this part of the policy was unfair in some instances and should be reviewed, as the Town Council could be seen to be precluding an individual from being buried in Haywards Heath who have lived in the Town for a significant part of their life, or contributed to the Town, or indeed still had family in the Town. This statement was challenged because it was noted that anyone could be buried in Haywards Heath, but they have to pay non-resident fees. This view was backed up the fact the Town Council had received large numbers of non-residents fees over the last couple of years even though the Town Council had raised its fees considerably for non-residents. However, with this in mind the part of the policy was still challenged and questioned. Suggestions then began to be discussed on how an addition to the proposed overarching policy could give more flexibility for challenges to the quadruple fee policy. At this point, the Clerk stated that he was concerned about the course of action being suggested, and recommended against any change or additional wording to the policy. This was on the grounds that many decisions had been recently to uphold the current policy and that it would cause significant issues in deciding on the level of fees, with each request having to be reviewed individually and the family of the deceased being able to provide proof of residency. or the contribution, which could take time, in a situation where time is not normally of the essence. Reference was made to a past case heard by the Council and concern was again raised about the way it was handled and how other Members of the Council approached the matter. The Clerk also stated that what was being proposed was contrary to what the Policy and Finance Committee based its Cemetery fees policy on for the 2017/2018 year. However, the Clerk added that Members ultimately make the decisions and if Members were minded to add to the policy recommended by the Assistant to the Clerk that an addition/amendment could be made by motion, at this point, Cllr Knight put forward a motion to add the following clause be added to the policy in relation to non-resident fees.

“That discretion can be made by the Town Council if the deceased had lived in the Town for a considerable time or contributed significantly to the Town, which could be proven by the applicant’s family, they would be buried at single rate fees.”

The Clerk felt that words ‘considerable’ and ‘contributed significantly’ were words open to challenge and there was no way they could be quantified. This view was supported by the mover of the motion and the committee, so the motion wording was revised and tabled by Cllr Knight, seconded by Cllr Dwight and unanimously agreed by a vote by the Committee, against the recommendation of the Town Clerk.

**“That discretion can be made by the Town Council if the deceased had lived in the Town for a twenty-year period, which could be proven by the applicant’s family, they would be buried at single rate fees.”**

Moving forward the Clerk re-stated that the challenges to the policy would rise and the proof would be very difficult to assess. Members decided that a panel be delegated the task of reviewing case by case requests for a single rate burial. It was then agreed that any three of the Committee could be delegated to assist the Clerk with decision making. The Clerk said that this would have to be done very quickly and Members would need to be on hand to discuss the matter. The Clerk pointed out that it would not be in order to make retrospective decisions or challenge recent decisions. The Clerk closed the matter by informing Member that the Policy, with the agreed additional wording, would go as an agenda item to Full Council in January, with this,

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council;  
**A Residents and Non-Residents Cemetery Fees policy with a wording change to the criteria for the allowing of single rate resident’s fee to**

**be allowed for individuals who lived outside of the Town at their death, as per the wording contained in the minute above.**

- 43. Town Fund – 100 Years Anniversary of Western Road Cemetery**  
Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to;

**Allocate up to £1,000 of Town Fund monies towards a fitting tribute to mark the 100-year anniversary of Western Road Cemetery.**

- 44. Haywards Heath War Memorial – List of Buildings of Special Architectural Interest or Historic Interest – Consultation.**

Members welcomed the consultation and fully supported the move to 'list' the Haywards Heath War Memorial as Buildings of Special Architectural Interest or Historic Interest and hoped for a positive response from the Secretary of State.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

**Instruct the Clerk to inform Historic England of the Council's support for the listing of Haywards Heath War Memorial as a Buildings of Special Architectural Interest or Historic Interest.**

- 45. Community Liaison Function of the Council (CLO)**

In the absence of the Community Liaison Officer, due to a family matter, the Clerk advised Members to contact her directly with any questions they may have, which would be reported back to the next meeting of the committee.

Members **Noted** the Report.

- 46. Haywards Heath in Bloom Committee**

Cllr Ellis updated on the activities of the Haywards Heath in Bloom Committee. Members noted that plans were progressing for the hanging basket project and display at the Spring festival with a grant pending to be submitted to Mid Sussex District Council. It was also noted that the Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames had accompanied Cllr Ellis to a local Care Home to see the projects that were being undertaken with the In-Bloom Committee.

**Members Noted the update of the activities of the Haywards Heath in Bloom Committee.**

- 47. Urgent Items**

None.

Meeting Closed at 9.54pm