

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE** meeting held on **Wednesday 18 April 2018 at 7.30pm**

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Frances Gaudencio (Chair), Ian Weir, Georgia Cheshire, Judith Foot and Peter Gibbons.

Clerk: Ian Cumberworth

**PRC17/51 APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Sue Hatton and Kate Bailey.

**PRC17/52 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:** None declared.

**PRC17/53 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 as previously circulated were accepted.

**PRC17/54 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

There were no members of the public present.

**PRC17/55 CLERKS REPORT**

**55.1 Pensions Discretion Policy** Members were advised that the current policy document set out in Appendix A was originally adopted by Council on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and is required to be reviewed annually. Members were informed that it is a requirement of the WSCC pension scheme for the policy to be reviewed and to provide evidence to County that the policy has been formally considered and reviewed by members.

Members sought clarification on a number of points and identified some minor typographical issues that required amendment. The Clerk agreed to undertake these. Members **RESOLVED** to agree that the current policy should be retained.

**55.2 Risk Management** The Clerk informed members that the register had been reviewed and updated to reflect the current risk profile of the Council. Members were requested to consider the revised Risk Management Register set out in Appendix B which forms part of the Council's governance framework to gain assurance that risks are being effectively identified and managed. Members discussed a number of risks in detail and sought clarification on various points which the Clerk responded to. Members were satisfied with the clarification and **RESOLVED** to approve the revised Risk Register for 2017/18.

**55.3 Asset Register** members were invited to consider the Asset register which was set out in Appendix C which had undergone a fundamental review in 2017/18. As part of this review Hassocks Parish Council assets have been plotted onto a software package 'Parish Online' which is a Geographical Information system. This has allowed the Council to record specific locations where its assets are sited on a series of maps of the parish, in addition a programme of physical asset inspections have been undertaken to establish the condition and identify where any remedial work is required. The starting point was the previous asset register however at times it has proved challenging as not only were some of the descriptions inconsistent but some of the records were incomplete. A suite of photographic images of the Council's main assets has been established, and this record will form the basis of informing the insurance

market testing process. The document continues to be developed and work is being undertaken to finalise it, however significant progress has been made in the last year to bring this record up to date. Members raised a number of queries regarding specific assets and ownership issues which the clerk addressed, some of which related to the description being used in the register. Members were informed that where relevant officers had used existing descriptions that had previously been used on the historical asset registers to provide an audit trail. Members specifically sought clarification on ownership/responsibility for Talbot Field. Members were advised that the land is owned by the Council but managed by Trustees made up of representatives of Hassocks Parish Council, a number of issues relating to the status of the trust are currently being reviewed by the Clerk.

Members expressed their thanks for all the work undertaken by the officers to bring the Asset register up to date and the use of technology to do so and **RESOLVED** to approve the Asset Register.

**55.4 Data Protection** Members were advised that although Data Protection has been in place for many years the law is changing on 25 May 2018 therefore the Council will be required make a number of adjustments to comply with the new arrangements and how we manage and exchange information and retention of personal information. The Clerk informed Members that the Parish Council does not currently hold a large volume of personal data however we will need to manage this in accordance with the new changes. The potential impact for the Council is the requirement to:

- Register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO)
- Consider appointing a Data Protection Officer – the advice at present is that it has to be someone independent of the organisation and have the relevant knowledge. In light of this requirement a number of private companies are offering their services for a fee to fulfil the role of Data Protection Officer.
- Develop a website cookie policy, this is incorporated within the proposed privacy policy set out in Appendix E.
- Review our Data Protection Policy which is set out in Appendix D
- Ensure appropriate consent notices for the retention use of personal information.

The Council is currently in the process of undertaking a data audit to establish the level of personal data held, its purpose and the legal basis, authority to hold this information. It was reaffirmed that the Council does not hold a significant level of personal information. Members were asked to consider the proposed Data Protection Policy (Appendix D) and the Privacy Policy (Appendix E) Members were also advised that NALC had made representations to Government of the unfair burden and the additional costs that this revised legislation will have on Parish Councils. However based on the current definitions within the legislation the Council is required to comply. Members discussed the possible impact of the legislation on Parish Council business. However also acknowledged the need for the Council to comply. Members were asked to consider the revised Data Protection Policy and the proposed Privacy Policy. Members **RESOLVED** to agree the Data Protection Policy and the Privacy Policy.

**55.5 Communications Policy** Members considered the current policy and it was generally accepted that this had been effective in co-ordinating press releases. However it was proposed to make one amendment, to delete the current section A 'Regular news or information updates'. Subject to this amendment it was **RESOLVED** to approve the amended Communications Policy

**55.6 Business Plan** Cllr Gaudencio updated members on the progress of the finalisation of the Business Plan and the work which has recently been undertaken with Cllr Foot .Some preliminary engagement has commenced and some elements of the plan are already in progress. Efforts have been made to streamline the document further and it is proposed to circulate a copy to all Members of Policy Resources and Communication Committee in due course. The intention is that the final document will be uploaded onto the Council's website shortly after the Annual Meeting. Members agreed the proposed approach.

**55.7 Tracker/action list** – Members noted the actions taken to date and agreed to Cllr Judith Foot joining the Staffing Committee.

**PRC17/56** Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chair for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

Policy Resources and Communications were referred to the public consultation regarding the Adastra Park Masterplan which is about to be undertaken. This was considered and agreed at Full Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018. Members were advised that the Policy Resources and Communications Committee have a responsibility is to oversee consultations. The item was duly noted

#### **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors will be referred to the Confidential Agenda. If any members of the public or press are in attendance they will be requested to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.

#### **PRC17/57 STAFF MATTERS**

**57.1** Members were advised that three members of staff were entitled to receive annual increments this year. Members AGREED to the individuals receiving the increment progression in accordance with their terms of contract.

**57.2** Members were informed that at present the National annual pay offer by the government has yet to be formally accepted but it is anticipated to be 2% for 2018/19 and a further 2% for 2019/20. Members AGREED that the national pay award be applied once formal notification of the settlement has been received and backdated to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 in accordance with contracts of employment.

**57.3** Members noted that the Annual Pension Statement is currently being prepared

**PRC17/58 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** 22 May 2018

The Meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chair..... Date.....