

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 9th December 2013 St Georges Church Hall, 110 Eastbourne Road, Polegate at 8.00pm

Present: Cllrs M Cunningham **MC**(Chair), M Clewett **MCI**, H Parker **HP**, J Harmer **JH**, Mrs M Piper **MP**, J O’Riordan **JOR**, Mrs C Berry **CB**, E Board **EB**, Cllrs T Voyce **TV**, D Shing **DS**, Mrs J Voyce **JV** , D Broadbent **DB (12)**

Not Present: G Gibbs MBE **GG**, S Shing **SS**, M Pybus **MP (3)**

5 members of the public

Minute No.	Subject/Resolution	Action
10841	Apologies for absence G Gibbs MBE, S Shing (late arrival)	-
10842	Declarations of interest Cllr D Shing, D Broadbent minute 10852 non prejudicial	
10843	Opportunity for public comment Standing Orders Suspended A resident commented that the acoustics of St Georges Hall made it very difficult to hear what was being said. A resident stated that he wished to see a budget put in for the High Street toilets and the increase in precept as he felt it was important to keep them if possible. Standing Orders reinstated	
10844	Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 25th November 2013. It was resolved that the full council minutes of 25th November 2013 be taken as read and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. The Mayor signed the minutes. VOTE All in favour.	
10845	Mayors Report The Mayor reported that the Dickensian event had raised £415 for St Wilfrids and Children with Cancer Fund. The Mayors tea party was coming up on 16 th December and he would appreciate any helpers on the day.	
10846	Financial Update a) Approval of accounts for payment It was resolved to approve the account for payment to the value of £8234.74 as per the attached sheet. VOTE All in favour	
10847	Reports from representatives of outside bodies a) WDALC report – Cllr Clewett gave a verbal report including detail on changes to permitted development rights, notification of neighbours, 42 days to determine allocations, change of use for offices (56 days approval) Agricultural use changes, changes to High Street premises. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) & S106 (developer contributions), strategic sites and development outside of boundaries and tree works. All of these changes were for a trial period of 3 years where the impact would be monitored and observed. None of the changes had yet affected the Town Council. b) The Twinning report was noted by all present. c) Trading Standards – there was now a National Standard for junk mail and Trading standards were promoting the training of postal workers for vulnerable households (to look out for this type of junk mail and notify the appropriate authorities).	

	Legislation is available (Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008) and signs are being prepared by Trading Standards to clarify that it is a criminal offence to cold call. Resident will be advised to tell the caller to leave and ring the police on the 101 number or trading standards on 0845 4040506.	
10848	Councillors use of Chambers It was resolved that "Councillors wishing to use the Town Council Chambers for meetings/consultations with Polegate Residents on matters related to Polegate and its governance may do so free of any fee" VOTE All in favour	
10849	Annual Town Assembly 2014 a) Date It was resolved that the Annual Town Assembly would be held on 7th April 2014 at 7.30 pm VOTE All in favour b) Venue It was resolved that the Annual Town Assembly would be held in the United Reformed Church Hall, Victoria Road, Polegate VOTE All in favour	
10850	Annual Statutory Meeting 2014 a) Date It was resolved to hold the Annual Statutory Meeting on 19th May 2014 at 7.30 pm VOTE All in favour b) Venue It was resolved to hold the Annual Statutory Meeting in the United reformed Church Hall, Victoria Road, Polegate. VOTE All in favour	
10851	Street Lighting Test Update The clerk had received no further updates from ESCC.	
10852	High Street Toilets Update A councillor commented that the initial comment from Wealden District Council to purchase for £32,000 was high. He referred to a meeting that he had attended. He agreed that £10,000 should be set aside as a budget for the running costs of the toilets. He stated that in his opinion it was a social asset and should be transferred from one council to another. He remarked that the town Council should not have been asked to pay. Another councillor commented that at least £10,000 was needed to make sure that the Town Council could run the service from the next financial year. Many councillors agreed that a sum should be set aside and negotiations take place, but that a purchase price of £32,000 was high. A councillor commented that if the Town Council were to be able to take on this role, this would mean charging the residents for it in the precept, but that it was essential to allocate the approximate funds to be <i>able</i> to make that choice. Many councillors agreed that the toilets should remain open as this is what the residents wanted. A councillor commented that the Town Council did not have all of the facts to make that decision. The clerk clarified that the council need only make a provision for the budget at this stage to carry forward to the final budget meeting on 13 th January when more information would be available. It was resolved to put £10,000 into the figures being carried forward for discussion in January. VOTE All in favour. A councillor commented after the vote that the Town Council would need to consider if they would accept £32,000 or if they would reject taking on the running of the toilets.	

<p>10853</p>	<p>Potential Office Move</p> <p>a) Rescission, allowing discussion of 49/51 High Street A rescission note signed by 6 councillors was received and presented in the background papers with a motion to discuss the potential of 49/51 High Street in the Potential Office Move discussions due to new information becoming available. (The tenants of 51 High Street ceasing their tenancy from 31st December 2013).</p> <p>It was resolved to discuss 49/51 High Street as part of the Potential Office move. VOTE 11 for 1 abstention (D Shing)</p> <p>b) c) d) A councillor spoke on the properties available and the venues available for the meetings and briefly covered issues relating to the best use of the council buildings. He stated that the Town Centre was the best location for the offices and now the tenant at 51 High Street was leaving there was an opportunity that was not previously there to use this part of the building for accessible meetings. He felt that a shop in the High Street was not suitable and that to use 51 High Street would reduce costs in hiring outside halls. He felt this was the most cost effective use of the current facilities for the people of Polegate. He stated that best use of the Wannock site was possibly to maintain ownership but to hand over the running of the building to an incorporated trust, the town council could assist with the provision of grants in some form. This trust of sports and community would go some way to satisfy the residents over perceived development of the site. In principle, he suggested that the Council remain where it was, but pass on this responsibility of the buildings at Wannock to a trust. Another councillor commented that he wished to retain the current offices as an asset in the Town Centre and explore the possibilities of altering 49/51 High Street to suit the access needs.</p> <p>Another councillor commented that the original move to the Town Centre was a sensible one and that it was the best place for the Town Hall. He felt that to redevelop the back office (51) and possibly extend this facility to enable disabled access and possibly toilets would be a good idea. He also stated that it would provide more areas to rent out.</p> <p>Another councillor stated that she felt it was better to maintain the present site in the Town Centre but to keep the alterations to the lowest costs so as to avoid a burden to the council tax payers.</p> <p>Another councillor commented that developing the rear office would lead to 2 rooms that could be hired out and removed a lot of other costs. To install a lift would costs £15,000 to £20,000 minimum depending on the style chosen. He stated that to take on another property (purchase of shop) would have a higher mortgage than was currently being budgeted for, plus the costs of hiring halls would still be required. He stated that to build at the rear office would also be less disruptive to council services and staff. He stated that he was personally against any building at the Wannock site and there was large public feeling against it. If the council did choose that option the process was likely to be a long and costly one.</p> <p>Another councillor stated that he felt alterations at the current site (49/51 High Street) would be the best option to look into and proposed that this was the case with the possibility of</p>	
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having a trust for the Wannock site.

A councillor commented whether you could refinance against the property for the loan. The clerk stated that figures for the loan remained the same as it would go through the Public Works Loan Board. The interest rate being around 5% on average.

A councillor stated that for the interim costs of considering the alterations the budget of £22,000 (ear marked reserve) could be used to finance these costs. Another councillor commented that sum should be included and precepted to pay for these costs. Another councillor agreed that the council should precept for these sums and suggested £16,000 be placed in the budget to do this. A councillor commented that there needed to be enough put aside in the budget to service the hire of halls but more may be needed for planning permission and to commission consultants to determine the best way forward. He commented that this was likely to take some time and that the council should set aside £15,000 to cover these costs of investigating the matter and proposed that this be done. A councillor commented that the council may be capped in future years and that although the percentage for this was about 6.96% this did not equate to a large increase in the amount of council tax per household.

The clerk was asked what all of the budget changes were likely to make in real terms. The clerk stated that approximately the additional sums brought forward from other meetings, the toilets and the drainage and the office move would increase the precept by around 18.04% however this was £11.08 per year on a band D property (lower bands would pay less) and that was around 21 pence per week. Out of over 4100 households the tax base was only just over 2600 which meant that around 1500 houses paid either reduced council tax or no council tax.

b) It was resolved that £15,000 be put forward for discussion at the next budget meeting in January 2014. 9 for 2 against (J O’Riordan, T Voyce) 1 abstention (D Shing)

c) It was resolved that further discussion would take place on alterations/extension at 49/51 High Street and trusts for the Wannock site. VOTE 11 for 1 against T Voyce

A discussion took place on whether the exemption status should be applied for.

d) It was resolved that the clerk investigate and request exemption status on the office section of the buildings at Wannock Road. VOTE 10 for 1 against (Mrs M Piper) 1 abstention (T Voyce)

A discussion took place on whether the council should attempt to rent out the area at Wannock. A councillor commented that even though it was empty there may be someone who wished to hire the area and that he propose the council advertise and monitor the outcome. Another councillor stated that he was happy to advertise it for community use. Another councillor stated that he knew the doctors were short of space and maybe a commercial rent was the best way forward for a clinic or something similar. Another councillor stated that this was a sore subject and that it had been left empty for a number of reasons over the last 4-5 years and that maybe it should be advertised for something commercial that complied with the covenants and

	<p>planning use.</p> <p>e) It was resolved that the clerk begin ad hoc rentals of the Wannock Office for sports, leisure and recreation as per the covenant and the planning use. VOTE 9 for 1 against (Mrs C Berry) 2 abstentions (D Broadbent, T Voyce)</p>	
10854	<p>Budgets Update</p> <p>The clerk stated that the previous meeting that evening had recommended putting forward £7000 into the budget for drainage. It was agreed to put £7000 into the budget for discussion in the new year.</p> <p>The clerk stated that with all of the additional budgets put forward she estimated that this would make a precept of £261,421 which would be a 21.29% increase in the precept which would equate to £13.68 per year, 26 PENCE per week on a band D property less for those with lower bands and reductions/exemptions. These figures would be carried for to the precept meeting on 13th January 2014 for council to discuss, finalise and set the precept. The clerk stated that she would prepare a new budget schedule and send this to councillors as soon as possible.</p>	
10855	<p>Christmas Office Closure Dates</p> <p>A councillor commented that in a year that Christmas day or eve was on a weekend the resolution would need to be changed to reflect this.</p> <p>It was resolved that the office close over the Christmas Period from 1pm on Christmas Eve (or the last working</p>	

	day before Christmas Day if Christmas eve is on a weekend) and reopen on 2nd January (or the following working day should that be a weekend) VOTE All in favour	
10856	Proposed Dates of next cycle of meetings Full Council Precept Setting (latest) 13 th January 2014 Full Council 24 th February 2014 Full Council 31 st March 2014 Annual Town Assembly 7 th April 2014 7.30 pm ¹ Full Council April 28 th 2014 Annual Statutory Meeting (Election of Mayor) 26 th May 2014 7.30 pm ² Business Plan, Buildings & land Joint Committee 30 th June 2014 Full Council 30 th June 2014 Full Council 28 th July 2014 Business Plan, Buildings & land Joint Committee 16 th September 2014 Full Council 29 th September 2014 Full Council 27 th October 2014 Personnel budget 24 th November 2014 Planning budget 24 th November 2014 Full Council 24 th November 2014 Business Plan, Buildings & land Joint Committee 8 th December 2014 Full Council precept 12 th January 2015	

The meeting closed at 9.29 pm

¹ **United reformed Church Hall, Victoria Road, Polegate**

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