

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Special Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th July 2015
Council Chambers, 49 High Street, Polegate BN26 6AL at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs D Watts, Mrs M Piper, D Murray, Ms A Snell, Mrs C Berry, Mrs W Alexander, T Bennett, E Board, B Goodwin, M Falkner, R Shing, S Dobson, D Dunbar (13)

Not Present: - S Shing, D Shing (2)

3 members of the public

Minute No.	Subject/Resolution	Action
11406	<p>The Mayor explained the background to the CQC (Care Quality Commission) reports on both the East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust and the two sites that they currently operate Eastbourne Hospital (which serves the residents of Polegate) and the Conquest hospital. He stated that Eastbourne Borough Council had discussed the matter around 7 weeks ago (prior to the election of the new Council). The CQC inspection is to ensure that the standards are as set by the CQC experts. Eastbourne Borough Council had a special meeting to make a vote of no confidence in the senior management of the hospital. The chief executive is currently Mr Darren Grayson and is the responsible person for operating the hospital. There is also the current chairman Stuart Welling. Eastbourne Borough Council asked for these two men to stand down. The matter had also been raised by various MPs (Caroline Ansell (MP for Eastbourne) Maria Caulfield (MP for Lewes) It was also mentioned in the house of commons and by the under secretary of Health Jane Ellison (MP for Battersea). The Mayor explained that each Councillor had received copies of the CQC reports for the DGH and the Conquest around 2 weeks ago. He stated that they were public documents and was able to download them and look at them. The Mayor invited members of the public to make their comments.</p> <p><i>Standing orders suspended</i></p> <p>A resident commented that although he supported the issue he questioned whether this was the right forum to do discuss the matter. He stated that the Council had failed to mention that it is the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) who are responsible for monitoring health services within East Sussex. He stated that the issue that had been discussed by Eastbourne Borough Council had first been raised by David Tutt who referred to giving support to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He commented that the Mayor as leader of the Council and a conservative that meeting was held on the 22nd May and that the Mayor was at least 6 weeks behind the times. He commented that with other issues within the Town which needed to be addressed he felt that the issue of the hospital which was very important should be done at a level of the County Council where there are special committees who have the authority and the legislation to back them and stated that the Council should not be wasting its time, when other authorities were dealing with this and there are other issues within the Town that the Council should be dealing with.</p> <p>The mayor responded by stating that the Town Council had a duty of care to all of its residents and to make sure the</p>	

residents are made fully aware of those reports. The Mayor stated that present was an active member and chairman of the Campaign for save the DGH, Liz Walke, and he stated that Liz was going to give a small presentation during the meeting. The Mayor also stated that it was within the Council's remit to discuss anything that is relevant to the Town and that the hospital is very relevant because Polegate was within the catchment area of the hospital. He commented that many of Polegate's residents were now having to travel some considerable distance to go for outpatient appointments. The Mayor stated that he did take on board the resident's comments about other committees (being responsible), but that it was within the remit of the Town Council to do so. He stated that many of the other authorities were aware that the Town Council were holding the meeting and they were also fully aware at Government level. The resident's comments were noted and the Mayor thanked the resident for his contribution. The Mayor then handed over to Liz Walke to speak.

Liz Walke introduced herself as the chair of the Save the DGH Campaign. (Started in 2006). She stated that the main part of the campaign was that core services should be at both the DGH and the Conquest; equidistant and available to ALL of the people of East Sussex. Core services being: 24 hour A&E full service; 24 hour paediatric beds; 24 hour consultant obstetrics service; 24 hour acute medical & coronary care beds; 24 hour acute surgical and ITU and high dependency units; to stop any downgrading in maternity or children's services. The reason that the organisation had chosen core services was because they were the services that you would need within 30 minutes and that the Conquest was outside of the 30 minutes from the DGH. The 30 minutes was a guideline laid down by the royal colleges for emergency treatment. Ms Walk welcomed the opportunity to speak at the meeting. She stated that she had attended many ESCC HOSC (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) meetings, she stated that their remit was different. She stated that they had a group of people who looked after the care and in great detail, but when Eastbourne Borough Council put in a motion about the management of ESHCT (East Sussex Health Care Trust) that was welcomed. She stated that the organisation welcomed every single Council who supported them and hoped that every single Council in East Sussex would do the same. She stated that it was very important that the organisation had the full support and that it was cross party (non political), she stated that this was beyond politics and something that everyone should be concerned with. She commented that the CQC report was in some ways quite difficult to understand, she stated that the Care quality report was published on 22nd March from an inspection that took place in September last year. The report was published around the same time as Purdah and that had caused on the main part the delay in being able to take this forward with anyone political. The CQC scored ESHCT overall as inadequate. That is the lowest score that you can be given. This is based on 5 questions: are services at this trust safe? (Inadequate); Are services at this trust effective? (Requires improvement); Are services at this trust caring? (Good) she stated that this was because of the staff who should be commended as the staff results were

amazing considering their working conditions; are services at this trust responsive? (Requires Improvement); are services at this trust well led? (Inadequate). The overall rating for the hospital was inadequate. A & E (requires improvement), medical care (requires improvement), surgery (inadequate), intensive and critical care (good), services to the children and young people (requires improvement), end of life care (requires improvement, outpatients (inadequate). She stated that this was services that are supposed to be single sited and better. She reiterated that this was an independent report. Liz spoke about the conquest scorings (to compare) for single siting services at the conquest. Those services were surgery maternity and family planning were scored as inadequate. Single siting was supposed to be better and make the service safer, this did not take into account travelling time, the only positive in the report was that the staff were caring. It stated that the management was very poor with a bullying culture. Incidents not being reported was considered to be a very serious matter. A normal company receiving a report like this would required the board to resign. As part of their action from this report the campaign group had met with Jeremy Hunt and the clinical commissioning groups although they had had issues during purdah with election candidates (not being able to speak etc) so a lot of the group who were aligned to various parties could not do some campaigning. The campaign group had written to the CQC, and written to and had a meeting with the NHS Trust development authority (the authority that overseas ESHCT). The campaign group had also written to the chief executive of NHS England. The group was also hoping to meet with them. There was another report due out two weeks ago and Liz had found out that it was more likely to be published until September. The campaign group has spoken to the Secretary of State for Health and all of the other authorities that the campaign group had spoken to recommended the best solution to be to put the Trust into special measures. The group would be pushing for the Trust to be placed in special measures as they would be looking for a complete change of management from the top right down. This would help the whole culture of fear and staff bullying. She had been told that trusts that go into special measures started to turn around (and improve). The group want to have an excellent trust which meets the needs of the local population, this local population isn't just Eastbourne (only about 100,000 people in Eastbourne) and has a catchment of over 320,000 which means more people outside of Eastbourne are served by the hospital than inside, but the trust often just use the figures for Eastbourne. Liz stated that this was one of the reasons why it was so important that local Councils outside of Eastbourne say that this is not good enough. The campaign group support the motion by the Town Council and ask that the Council write to the chief inspector for hospitals and the secretary of state for health recommending that ESHCT be put into special measures with all decisions regarding the single siting of essential core services under the current management be reviewed in light of the CQC report which was published in March 2015. The Mayor thanked Liz Walke. He stated that the approx catchment was around 528,000 from the whole of East Sussex. A Councillor asked about the report and commented that usually

they would get one report and then have a time to act on that report and get inspected again. She asked about the second report being delayed.

Ms Walke confirmed that the second report was delayed and the inspection took place on the 23rd, 24th and 25th March (she was unsure of the exact dates). The Councillor asked if she had been given any reason for the delay in publishing the report. Ms Walke stated that she had not but had been told that it was being checked for factual accuracy so it seemed like the trust was challenging the report. The second report was looking at areas where the report identified them as inadequate.

The Mayor clarified to the Council that because there was another report pending the Council could only consider what was in front of them and available in the public domain at this time. He stated that he and many other Councillors had been approached by residents who had some serious concerns over the hospital. He stated that Council could either make a decision on the information currently available or wait until the new report is published.

Ms Walke stated that she felt that the management had let the standards drop to such a low level that keeping the management in place for any time even if an improvement had been made would not change the culture of bullying that was there. She stated that the hospital had had many reports that had been inadequate.

A Councillor asked to clarify who has stated that special measures was the best solution. (*The campaign group has spoken to the Secretary of State for Health and Healthwatch and the local MP*). The Councillor asked who the current management was (Stuart Welling and Darren Grayson). He asked how long they had been in post. He was told that Stuart Welling was just coming to the end of his tenure which had been extended and was currently 5 years. She thought that Darren had been in his post for around 4 years. He asked if they had had similar previous reports. She stated that previous reports had been very well prepared to counteract anything negative. But when anyone independent had gone in, the same result had happened. For example, from staff surveys that happen every year the trusts were one of the worst in the whole country. The CQC reports were scored at exactly the same level no matter where you were in the country. The Councillor asked if this management would have had previous notices before. Ms Walke stated that they would have done. She stated that they had had notices to improve they had improved in that area and then lowered their standard in other areas. (Subsequently that new area had needed improvement and been issued a notice.)

The Mayor commented that he was also a CQC examiner and he was not able to examine any hospitals that he knew. He stated that all examiners were experts in their field. Liz Walke had been told that the CQC report was the best independent report that you could get. A Councillor asked if the people who "employed" these two managers saw these reports how could they justify letting them stay there? If it was a private company and their performance was not good enough how could they be allowed to stay in post. Liz stated that she had asked the same question to the Secretary of State for Health. That is why they needed to independent report to take things forward. Many Councillors thanked Liz individually for all her hard work over

the years. Liz commented that she felt it was vital for the Council to pass a motion and urge other Councils to do the same. The Mayor confirmed that Hailsham Town Council were also likely to take a vote. He stated that he felt all residents deserved to be able to go to be treated and know that they would get good treatment.

A Councillor asked who oversees the special measures and how long were they likely to be enforced for. Liz stated that it was the Chief Inspector for Hospitals. She stated that the timescales varied and quite often the turn around for the hospital happened quite quickly. There was usually a CQC team to inspect the hospital gets extra support which remains until they have significant improvement. She stated that quite often when the hospital goes into special measures the management exit. She commented that you may think that the staff would be worried about going into special measures, when in fact they were just waiting for it to happen. She stated it was outstanding that the staff had scored good under the exceptionally bad circumstances that they were in. A Councillor commented that there were many comments about the staff not being listened to and this was even from a consultant. The Mayor read out a question that had been read in Parliament which mentioned Polegate and the concerns over the trust. The response was that there was a new report out shortly and that the trust was expected to work closely with the regulators and acknowledged the locals concerns.

The mayor summarised that the Town Council should consider whether or not it wished to take a vote and go in the same direction as Eastbourne; whether the Council wanted to wait and take a vote to wait until it had seen the new report which was overdue but likely to be published around September bearing in mind that the findings may show improvements; or whether to make a decision based on the information set before the Council today with the latest publication.

A Councillor stated that as a regulator himself (not with CQC) he accepted the report as presented. He stated that he agreed with the resident. Eastbourne DGH and the Conquest hospital were very important to Polegate residents, he stated that everyone used it or may use it at some point and that he had been born at the DGH. He stated that as the report had shown that the hospital was inadequate he felt that a comment should be made, but that he felt that the Town Council was not a statutory body and therefore he would like to propose that the Town Council write to East Sussex County Council and the Secretary of State because they would be able to assert influence. He also commented that as this was the only information that had been given (the two reports) and improvement notices had been served. He commented that the Town Council did not know what the outcome of the new report was. He commented that a letter would be the best way forward and that it should say, although this is the only information that the Town Council has what are ESCC and the Secretary of State going to do about the situation and although improvement notices had been served the Town Council is not prepared to let it lie. This letter would give them the push anyway. The Mayor commented that the trust had received CQC reports before and that although he agreed with the Councillor, he was there to lay out the facts only; it was not conjecture and not his personal

opinion. He stated it was for the Council to decide after hearing the facts, what it would like to do about the situation. He commented that he felt his role as the Mayor was to make sure that the constituents of the town are represented for all matters and that they are aware of it. He said he was concerned that patients' needs may be dismissed by the comments but they are constituent members of the town. He also commented that as Ms Walke has described the concerns seemed to be Eastbourne centric, but Eastbourne hospital covers a wider area than Eastbourne and Polegate was included in that. He commented that if the Council was to decide not to take this any further forward, then he didn't feel that was performing a very good duty of care (to its residents). A Councillor commented that had not been the intention, others agreed that it had come across that way (as dismissive) Ms Walke asked to speak, but he stated that he would like the Councillors to speak and would come back for her comments after the Councillors had spoken. A Councillor stated that she had spent 3 days reading all of the reports and that she was appalled at its contents including the staff being bullied not being listened to and being in fear of not getting progression if they complained. Many are stressed and have broken down in tears. She stated that she felt the Council could not let this go on any longer and that it was unfair to anyone who may have to go to the hospital. She proposed to go ahead and to vote of no confidence in the hospital management. The Mayor spoke about the number of people that he had had approach him regarding the issues at the hospital at various levels. Some minor issues and some serious and quite major issues. Many of the issues were about travelling distances. A Councillor asked if Ms Walke felt that the report would be significant enough to wait until September before making the decision. Ms Walke stated that she did not think the Council should wait. She commented on a Councillor's comments about only sending the report to ESCC HOSC stating that the committee had already voted no confidence in the trust management (Chief executive and the chair) and they had already acted upon that decision with all that they could do. She felt that that committee would welcome any further support. They did not wait for the second report and they had the opportunity to do so. They felt that they had had enough time to deal with the issues and they had failed. A Councillor stated that he had not intended to come across in that way (dismissive). Many Councillors commented how important the hospital was to each resident. A Councillor stated that the Town Council should represent the residents, particularly in sending letters to the appropriate authority. He stated that he had just had this on one meeting and it been dealt with in that way. The Mayor stated that it was too long to add to the previous meeting for time reasons. A Councillor spoke about morale issues with poor leadership and he felt the trust boards should step down and to remove the management and possibly for the staff to suggest suitable people (suitably qualified and appropriate) for the posts.

Cllr Murray arrived at 8.13pm

He stated that he supported the motion to write to the appropriate authorities with a vote of no confidence in the

senior management of the hospital and ask the chief executive to step down, and proposed an amendment to that motion for the hospital to be put into special measures and for that to include the removal of the chief executive and the chair of the trust. He stated that this would allow extra resources to be pumped into the hospital to help them improve. He felt that a change in the trust membership was necessary and not something to be shied away from. Special measures would also help people realise that the point had been made to people in power. (Secretary of State for Health and the chief executive for hospitals) he stated that he wished to support point 4b and that the Council should take the same lead as Eastbourne Borough Council (and ESCC) but specifically to incorporate the special measures and spread information about the special measures and it being a route to improvement and encourage other Councils to speak out. He added that he thanked those who had brought it to the attention of the Council. A Councillor stated that she was in support of the Councillors proposal (re point 4b and amendments to the motion) as she felt it was the Council's way of showing the Council voice and in a powerful way. She stated that the management needed to change so that the culture changed. The mayor referred to a number of issues and particularly the communication between the two sites. The Mayor proposed that when the vote was taken that the letters be sent to those who have statutory responsibility and also to inform the secretary of state and the MPs (addition to motion) He commented that he was aware that other Councils had expressed an interest in what Polegate Town Council was doing and looking at doing the same. A Councillor proposed a further amendment to add to the letter paying tribute to the staff and medical teams at the hospital . A further addition to the amendment was proposed to add a caveat to the letter that the request was based on the information that the Town Council had currently (and not the forthcoming report.) The caveat should read "the town Council would want to see the further report once published to see if there is any improvement." The original proposing Councillor accepted the additions A Councillor commented that the hospital had problems not just only this management and he recalled problems back to 1989, when there were issues with poor management and the (working) climate being poor. He felt that to change the situation would require a top to bottom clean out of the management. He felt that currently they were not fit for purpose. He stated that he was aware when ESCC discussed the matter, they firmed up the proposed lack of confidence to no confidence. He stated that it was simply poor management and that he was not particularly impressed by the board the chairman or the chief executive. He commented on the number of chief executives that had failed the trust previously and who had been "recycled" to other trusts. The Councillor stated that one of the important things was looking to see who the replacement would be. The mayor commented that the chairman was due to stand down at the end of his tenure which was this year. (July but had been held in abeyance whilst looking for another chair) Ms Walke stated that special measures would still be required to change the culture and the whole management. She stated that this could be the turning point that Polegate Town Council could become a part of.

The mayor stated that the problems were with the rescheduling or services (not staff) and the issue with travelling long distances on poor public transport and roads. A Councillor commented that felt it was good for Polegate Town Council to have a voice on this in the interests of local people. She said that the Council hadn't sat back and not done anything, and in the future the Council could say that it had sat and talking about it and that it cared. The mayor suggested that the other local Councils were already becoming aware as far as Seaford where they were also served by Eastbourne hospital. He proposed that a vote now be taken on the motion that a vote of no confidence be taken in the senior management of the hospital trust and ask for the chief executive and the chairman to stand down with amendments (he had previously reaffirmed the addition of Cllr Boards comments about the letter, Cllr R Shing's comments about ESCC and other bodies and Cllr Watts comment about the caveat). A Councillor asked that as soon as the new report was available that a new meeting could be called and Ms Walke might be able to come and speak to the Council about its contents. The Mayor stated that he did not feel that the other Councils need be informed as it appeared they were already becoming aware and a momentum was taking this forward.

A Councillor agreed with the motion put by the mayor and asked to ensure that the letter detailed the confidence that the Council had in the doctors consultants and staff and paramedic teams. The mayor confirmed this would be included.

It was resolved that Polegate Town Council has no confidence in the senior management of the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and asks that the chief executive (Darren Grayson) and the Chairman (Stuart Welling) stand down and for the hospital to be placed in special measures. A letter to be sent to the Secretary of State for Health, ESCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the relevant MPs, and for it to include a caveat stating that the Council has based its decision on the current information and the Town Council would want to see the further report once published to see if there is any improvement. The letter to also include a comment that the Town Council has confidence in the staff, doctors, consultants and paramedic teams. VOTE All in favour (For Cllrs D Watts, Mrs M Piper, D Murray, Ms A Snell, Mrs C Berry, Mrs W Alexander, T Bennett, E Board, B Goodwin, M Falkner, R Shing, S Dobson, D Dunbar

The Mayor asked if anyone had any further comments now that the vote had been taken.

A Councillor asked how this would be communicated to the residents of Polegate, and it was agreed that a press release be issued.

A Councillor asked about the letter. It was agreed that the letter would be drafted and circulated to all Councillors and be made public after it had been sent off. A Councillor asked if that would be in time for the full Council meeting. The clerk stated that it would not but was likely to be before the end of the week as she was on holiday after that.

A resident asked to speak. He commented that in principle he was fully behind, he spoke about family members being bullied in the ambulance service for which they worked. He said he felt it was surprising that this was not talked about¹. He commented about the National report which came out of the statutory hospitals report. He stated that last year each hospital had to sign up to national policy based on the 7 C's which included care compassion consideration and courage. There is a charter to patients and staff discussed. He stated that the culture was in the national health service generally. He said that you had to be careful not to get rid of one lot to get another lot in. he asked Liz about the 30 min calls for cat A and B calls, which he thought would be far exceeded. He felt that the Council needed a joined up approach. He stated that his point was that we have county Councillors. He stated that he was from the west country and supported unitary authorities. He said that the time that the town Council was spending and the county and the district on this could be used for other matters within the town that the town Council had authority for.

The Mayor stated that he didn't agree as the time spent was practically free as the Councillors had given up their time to have the special meeting and costs were minimal and it was also within the Council's remit to discuss the matter. He also stated that it was not interfering with any of the Council's other business. He also stated that the ambulance service was not being discussed. He stated that the Council were discussing Eastbourne hospital and the trust. He commented that the comments made by the resident had been taken on board, and although the ambulance service was a crucial part of the NHS. He stated that the meeting had never intended to discuss that matter and that Cllr Piper had already commented on the staff and ambulance staff included. He said that he hoped it would satisfy the resident's queries. He invited the resident to speak to him afterwards if he had further questions. A Councillor asked the resident why he was so cross with the Council, and stated that every person present serves the community because they want to. Councillors do not get any money for that. She stated that it did not interfere with any other Council business as this had been a special meeting called by the Mayor for the Council to be involved in the community. She commented that she thought the residents would be pleased as a community that the Council cares. The resident said that he thought the Council needed to be careful if they took up this issue, which he agreed was a worthwhile cause, he said that in terms of equality the Council could then be asked why isn't the Council taking up the case of the poor train service, which the Council had no authority over. He stated that he disagreed with the Mayor about the costs. He said the town clerk would need to type up minutes and distribute them, which was cost and paper cost. He said that he thought the costs of the Council per population was one of the highest. A Councillor stated that this was because many in the town did not pay. He stated that the Council could save on street lighting. He stated that there was a recreation ground that he believed was not being maintained properly. The Mayor brought the meeting back to order. Stating that this was a new Council who had only been in position for a short few weeks and that many things were being done already. He stated that the Council was trying to do the very best for the

	<p>residents of Polegate. He commented that many comments by the resident were very negative but that he would not accept being criticised unnecessarily. Comments were made about attendance and the reasons the resident had not stood for Council.</p> <p><i>Standing orders reinstated</i></p> <p>A Councillor spoke about the past relationship with the previous Councils. He stated that there was a high Council tax but it was because of the low numbers of people that pay the full Council tax. He stated that the new Council were prepared to look at some things.</p>	
11407	<p>Apologies for absence Cllr D Murray (late) Cllrs D Shing (work) , S Shing (work)</p>	
11408	<p>Declarations on Interest None</p>	
11409		

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Signed Mayor of Polegate _____

Date _____

¹ This was not part of the CQC report and therefore not relevant to the discussions taking place.