

## UNADOPTED

### POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6 November 2006 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. G. Carter (Town Mayor), S. Barber, Mrs C Berry, Mrs E Coleman, M. Fitzgerald, G. Gibbs, J. Harmer, R. Martin, Mrs V Morson, Mr M Piper, Mrs I Scarborough, Mrs J Voyce and T. Voyce

Press: 1

Public: 4

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The Mayor welcomed councillors and members of the press and public to the meeting and advised that there would be an additional item on the agenda. He then introduced Mr Terry Brown, Senior Projects - Capitals, ESCC and Mr Andrew Seaton, Capital Strategies for Children's Services, ESCC who would be addressing members with regard to a proposed Children's Centre.

#### **7312 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Cunningham and Mrs Joy.

#### **7313 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs. Mrs Scarborough, Mrs Coleman and Martin declared a non prejudicial interest in the Children's Centre due to their connection with the school.

#### **7314 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 September 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2006 were agreed as correct and signed by the Mayor.

#### **7315 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 October 2006**

**Minute nos. 7293 and 7296** - it was agreed to take these two items into confidential section.

**Minute no. 7288** - Pelham Homes - page 8, paragraph 4, it was agreed that the wording should read 'it would not therefore require Phase 11 to finance it' and the minute was altered accordingly.

**Minute no. 7284(b)** - it was agreed that the wording should read 'It was noted that at least 3 defibrillators are promised in the town' and the minute was altered accordingly.

## **7316 Matters arising from the Council meeting held on 2 October 2006**

a) **Queen's Award for Voluntary Organisations** - members were advised that unfortunately it had not been possible to complete the nomination forms within the timescale allowed as a considerable amount of research was involved and statements required from third parties - noted.

## **7317 Children's Centre**

It was proposed, seconded, and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow Terry Brown and Andrew Seaton from ESCC to address the Council.

### **STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED**

Members were advised that ESCC proposed to provide a Children's Centre in Polegate. This would be one of 28 Centres which are planned to be established across the county by March 2008. These Centres provide a range of services to support families with children up to the age of 5. Parents with young children often find it difficult to travel to different places and so offering a variety of activities from one Centre makes it easier for families to access the services they need. The intention is to provide a local facility for local people and experience has shown that the majority of users live within 'pram pushing' distance. Services that are delivered from the Children's Centres vary from area to area but include parent and toddler groups, play sessions, baby clubs, yoga for pregnant women, baby massage, story sessions, small cookery groups, advice on parenting. Most activities take place between 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. to fit in with parents who have school-aged children.

The grassed area to the rear of the Oakleaf play area, currently used for informal football, had been identified by ESCC as a suitable site particularly as it was adjacent to the local junior school, and plans had progressed almost to the planning application stage. Therefore ESCC would like to revise the arrangements currently in existence with the Town Council which would involve ESCC taking back the informal football area but leaving the area housing the static play equipment intact. This was the only suitable site in the town and County could not offer an alternative area for informal play to replace that being taken up by the provision of the Children's Centre.

The building would be a modular type clad in brick and drawings were circulated showing the proposed design and layout. However it was pointed out that the layout could be subject to alteration. The existing fence would need to be moved to accommodate the entrance to the Centre. It was confirmed that this would be done at no cost to the Council. Additional parking spaces would also be provided for staff at the Centre which should be ready for use by September 2007.

A query was raised with regard to security for the building. Members were advised that intruder and fire alarms would be installed but there is no provision for cctv coverage.

The suggestion was also raised that perhaps ESCC would provide an additional piece of equipment for the existing play area which would prevent football being played in this area which was surfaced in bark chippings.

It was also queried whether the Centre could be used as a Youth Club, however, it was clarified that as funding was for the lower age spectrum this would not be possible.

A question was raised as to how the project was being funded. It was clarified that funding was received from central government into the County Council capital programme but that the money had to be used by March 2008. It was not part of the school budget.

It was then proposed, seconded and agreed by all that the proposed Centre would be a benefit to the community and a reasonable use of the land.

The Mayor then thanked Mr Seaton and Mr Brown for their presentation and reinstated Standing Orders.

## STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

### **7318 Financial matters**

a) **Accounts for payment** - following clarification of three items, sign for Tookey's being part of the sponsorship arrangement, membership renewal Zurich for LCAS, Health & Safety and Wannock Centre quarter date payments, the accounts were agreed.

It was also resolved to ask the RFO to show salary and travel expenses separately.

### **7319 Adoption of Minutes of Standing Committees**

a) **Personnel of 11 September 2006** - the Chair of Personnel presented the minutes and there being no matters raised, proposed that they be adopted. This was resolved unanimously.

### **7320 Communications from the Town Mayor**

a) **Remembrance Service** - members were reminded that the Remembrance Day Service would be held on Sunday 12 November 2006 at 10.30 a.m. at St. John's Church. A reminder note had already been circulated to all councillors.

b) **Budget** - members were reminded that the budget would soon come under consideration and therefore any ideas or suggestions for inclusion need to be submitted to the office or to the Mayor.

**c) Letter from Cllr. Mrs Scarborough** - the Mayor advised members that he had received a letter from Cllr. Mrs Scarborough in August requesting a leave of absence for personal reasons but had not brought it before Council as he believed it to have been within his jurisdiction. He offered his apologies to members for the error and sought agreement to amend the respective minutes. This was agreed by all.

#### **7321 Notification of matters dealt with as 'urgent'**

**a)** Members were advised that due to vandalism it had been necessary to call in a roofer to carry out urgent repairs to the pavilion roof - noted.

#### **7322 Town Clerk's Report**

**a) Vandalism report and response from police re. ongoing incidents** - noted.

The Council's Police Liaison representative reported that meetings had been held with the police who were aware of the problems in the town, particularly in the High Street on Friday evenings and the culprits had been identified. There had been an increased police presence in the town and Polegate's exPCSO had been on active duty over the weekend as overtime. Insp. Brown had tried to put as many resources as possible into the town to resolve the problems but if there is a serious incident elsewhere then he has to deploy accordingly. The CCTV in the High Street is effective if it is in the right place at the right time. Members were also advised that there were two separate groups causing problems in the town and not all the troublemakers were from Polegate, some being from Eastbourne, Hailsham and the surrounding areas. It was recommended that a Public Meeting be called for the police to attend to give people the opportunity to raise their questions and concerns at first hand.

Cllr. Mrs Berry stated that she was in the High Street last Friday evening (3 November) and whilst there were plenty of youths, she saw no police. Neither did she see evidence of any police in the High Street on Saturday. Traders felt that they had no support from the police. The CCTV cameras apparently pick up all the commuters but not the youth in the High Street. One particular person who is known to everyone is always there day or night. She also requested that the police liaison representative provides more information as things were happening and unfolding so that councillors were better informed. It was felt that information was not being shared. The Police Liaison representative responded that she felt she had always reported back to Council on a regular basis and pointed out that she in turn was not always advised on incidents as they happened in the town. As it would seem that there was dissatisfaction with the way in which the liaison role was being carried out, the liaison representative declined to continue any further in this position and her resignation was duly noted.

Another member said that at 7.00 p.m. on Friday evening he saw a group of about 30 youths and what was particularly alarming was that he also saw a group of five youths with a crate of beer, and they were definitely not 18 years of age. It was also noted that there was a large group of youths in the Wannock Road Recreation Ground. The police were informed and attended to move them on. Concerns were raised generally regarding the lack of policing, police response times and the lack of any real action to resolve these issues which were getting completely out of hand.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow a Shop Manager to speak.

#### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

Members were advised that in many instances young people were stealing goods, even crates of beer, they just walked into shops and walked out with items and it was not a case of shopkeepers selling alcohol to youngsters under 18. Friday evening was terrible, one youngster deliberately smashed a car up, the police were phoned on three occasions but did not turn up until after 11.00 p.m.

The Mayor thanked the shop manager for the input and reinstated Standing Orders.

#### STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

Following further general discussion it was resolved that a strong letter should be sent to the police stating that the situation had become completely unacceptable and requesting that a zero tolerance policy be implemented in respect of all anti social and abusive behaviour, criminal damage, graffiti, shoplifting and theft etc. in the town. In addition the police to be invited to attend a public meeting so that shopkeepers, traders and local residents can have an opportunity to ask questions and put forward their point of view first hand.

The police liaison representative was then asked if she would reconsider her decision but declined to do so. It was then proposed that Cllr. Martin take on this role but the suggestion was not taken up.

**b) Skatepark** - members were advised that the District Council had agreed to reinstate weekend litter picking at the skatepark - noted.

**c) Youth Development Worker** - it was noted that the youth development worker had left as she had found a full time position and that interviews were currently being held for a replacement. The position was being covered by a senior worker until a new person was in post.

### **7323 Reports from District and County Councillors**

There were none.

### **7324 Christmas Lighting Scheme**

A meeting of the working group had been held on 13 October 2006 at which a report from the structural engineer had been discussed. The report identified additional works to 42 High Street that would need to be carried out before the fixing plates could be installed. This involved the provision of restraint straps to the gable and timber noggins between the rafters. The group had agreed to obtain quotes for the work and if at all possible to provide the transverse in time for Christmas. Should this not prove possible, then at least the fixings would be in place for next year.

Posters for the 'Best Dressed House' competition had been prepared for display in the notice boards and in shop windows with prizes of £50.00, £25.00 and £15.00 vouchers for the winners.

A letter had been prepared for distribution to traders and shopkeepers inviting them to enter the 'Best Dressed Shop' competition with a prize of a bottle of wine for the winners.

Judging to take place on 18 December 2006 at 5.30 p.m. and a presentation evening to be held on 8 February 2007.

### **7325 Partnership Action Plan**

It was proposed that as the action plan involved personnel issues it should be discussed under confidential section. This proposal was seconded and agreed by all.

### **7326 Electric Blanket Testing**

Unfortunately no members were available to attend the evaluation meeting, however, it was noted that the testing session had resulted in a failure rate of 48 percent.

### **7327 Audit Report and Recommendations**

The internal auditor's letter of 4 October 2006 was referred to and it was noted that the year-end report had not been discussed at the Council meeting of 2 October 2006 as it had not been presented in its entirety. However members had now had opportunity to peruse the report. There was general agreement that no Risk Assessment had ever been carried out and therefore a Risk Management Report has not been adopted.

It was also noted that various other recommendations had been made in previous audit reports and it was therefore resolved that the Assistant Town Clerk, the Acting RFO and the Internal Auditor should look through the audit reports supplied during the year and bring to Council's attention what items have, and have not, been carried out.

### **7328 Parish Boundary Review**

The draft Order was noted.

### **7329 Buildings Working Group**

It was reported that the group had carried out an inspection of Council owned property and had noted items that needed attention. These were either now in hand or had already been resolved. They had also inspected the fencing at Wannock Road Recreation Ground and a report was awaited from EDF in respect of the overhead cables prior to any recommendation being put forward.

A query was raised regarding the whereabouts of the festival signs. It was confirmed that they had been stored for a number of years and having gone rusty had eventually been disposed of.

### **7330 A22/A27**

It was reported that no action had yet been carried out by the Highways Agency to rectify the outstanding problems highlighted in minute no. 7216 and ten streetlights were still not working on the A22. The streetlights had not been working since January 2006. However efforts were still being made by councillors to get the remedial works implemented as soon as possible.

On a more positive note members were advised that the works to enclose the footbridge across the bypass were scheduled to commence on 13 November 2006 and that Polegate was acting as a pilot project which, if successful, could see other bridges in the area also being enclosed.

### **7331 Correspondence**

**a) Willingdon AFC** - as the existing goalposts were now unsafe to use, Willingdon AFC advised that the club was willing to purchase new goalposts but were looking for some assurance that they would be able to play on the pitch next season; otherwise it would not be a viable financial outlay. During discussion it was pointed out that the condition of the pitch at the end of last season was not very good and that broken roof tiles on adjacent properties had not been replaced. It was also mentioned that the club had been asked to contact Mr Morson to agree use of the pitch prior to matches and this had not happened. However, it was agreed that Willingdon AFC had generally been good tenants of the ground and it was subsequently proposed, seconded and agreed that they could have use of the pitch next season (2007/2008) subject to the following conditions:

- A copy of the Club's insurance cover to be provided
- The ground is left in good condition at the end of the season
- Broken tiles etc. as a result of play or practice to be dealt with without delay

It was also proposed, seconded and agreed by all that Mr Morson be co-opted to act as the Council's pitch inspector, that the club should make contact with Mr Morson prior to each match and that his decision would be final.

**b) Partnership working with Probation Service** - in response to a request by the Probation Service for suggestions for suitable environmental work projects, it was proposed, seconded and agreed to suggest cutting back of the grass and vegetation at Grand Parade and the Esso Garage and litter picking throughout Polegate.

**c) Sussex Police Public Meeting** - the date of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006 for the next meeting to be held at the Council Offices in Crowborough was noted.

**d) Temporary road closure - Polegate Level Crossing** - it was noted that the level crossing would be closed for essential repairs from 11.00 p.m. Saturday 11 November through to 06.00 a.m. Monday 13 November 2006.

**e) Fire Authority Risk Management Plan** - Cllr. Harmer agreed to peruse this document and comment if appropriate.

**f) Changes to bus services** - there were no changes to bus services affecting Polegate - noted.

**g) East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre** - letter of thanks for financial assistance - noted.

**h) CCTV cameras** - Sussex police advised that it would not be possible to reconfigure the cameras as this would restrict their operational effectiveness - noted.

### **7332 Dates of the next cycle of meetings**

Full Council	11 December 2006
Planning	as and when required

### **7333 Resolution**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all that owing to the confidential nature of the next business to be transacted the press and public be excluded from the rest of the meeting.

Cllr. Gibbs left the meeting at 10.00 p.m.