

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Town Council** held on **Monday 23rd January 2006** in the Council Chamber, 49, High Street, Polegate, at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs. J. Harmer (Town Mayor), Mrs. C. Berry, G. Carter, M. Cunningham, M. FitzGerald, G. Gibbs, Mrs. D. Joy, R. Martin, Mrs. V. Morson, Mrs. M. Piper, Mrs. I. Scarborough, Mrs. J. Voyce, T. Voyce and B. Winn.

Also present: Barry Knights – Town Co-ordinator, County Councillor Stephen Shing, Press 1

7008 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barber and Mrs. Coleman.

7009 Declarations of Interest in any items on the agenda
No declarations of interest were declared

7010 Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 12th December 2005 and the Budget Meeting of the Council held on Monday 16th January 2006.

6982(a) The Town Clerk advised that he has now made some enquiries about software packages for the accounts and would be discussing SAGE with the Auditor

6995(b) The Town Clerk advised that he had not yet arranged a meeting with the Internal Auditor and asked if the Council wished all members to meet with him or a smaller group. It was resolved that:

The Personnel Committee plus the lead Councillor for Financial Matters meet with the Internal Auditor

6982(a) It was reported that no reference was made in the minutes to the approval of accounts for payment and it was agreed that this should be added to the minute **6995(b)** to read “cheque numbers 104961 to 104969 with the associated vouchers were presented to the Council. Payment was authorised except for cheque number 104965 which was deferred pending clarification of two points with the Council’s solicitor.”

The minutes were then agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

7011 Youth Services Report

The Town Clerk advised that because a meeting is to be arranged with Hilary Lewis, the Youth Development Services Manager, it had been agreed that there was no reason for a Youth Services representative to attend this meeting although it had been hoped that an update report would have been received; but it hasn’t. This was noted and it was resolved:

to have a Special Meeting of the Town Council to meet with Hilary Lewis on a Monday Evening.

7012 Tree Warden’s Report

The Town Clerk advised that the Tree Warden had nothing to report on this occasion. It was resolved:

To ask the Tree Warden for some report next time.

7013 Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda

- a) **Adshel Bus Shelters** – The Town Clerk advised that he has asked for clarification that the shelters will be installed by the end of March but so far has not received a reply. Noted.
- b) **Network Rail and the condition of the land adjacent to Black Path** – The Town Clerk presented a letter from Network Rail advising that the works to the trees and clearance of vegetation has been carried out. Members were aware that the dangerous trees had been removed and that some vegetation had been cleared but that there is still a lot of rubbish alongside Black Path, and a follow-up letter is required. It was also reported that the Town Mayor intended to invite a representative from Network Rail to the Annual Meeting of Electors.
- c) **Bus Shelter in Hailsham Road** – The Town Clerk circulated a letter from Stagecoach relating to the bus shelter and stop in Hailsham Road and that they have written to East Sussex CC regarding the siting of the stop and shelter. There has been no response from the other bus operators at this time. Noted.
- d) **British Legion Club – licence application** – The Town Clerk reported that the Club has made a revised application to which the local residents hold no objection to, on the understanding that there is a review process which can be brought in to play if the Club steps outside of its licence. As the Council had opposed the original licence application in full support of the residents, the Town Mayor and the Council’s representative at the original hearing had agreed not to continue opposition to the revised application and that the District Council has been informed.

7014 Financial Matters

- a) **Internal Audit Report** – It was resolved:

To defer the adoption of the Audit Report until the Personnel Committee has met with the Internal Auditor.

- b) **Report of the Accounts Panel** – Cllrs. Cunningham and Martin reported that they had inspected the cash book and bank reconciliation to the end of December 2005 and that everything is in order. Noted.
- c) **Financial Monitoring – Quarter ended 31st December 2005** – The Town Clerk presented the monitoring statement together with details of the more significant variances and answered members’ questions. In view of the pending purchase of accounting software the Town Clerk was advised to look at Capita’s SIMS system.
- d) **New Financial Regulations** – The Town Clerk presented revised and updated draft Financial Regulations for consideration. Because it was not clear how the new regulations vary from the previous it was resolved:

that the Town Clerk re-presents them at the next meeting, highlighted to show the important matters requiring approval and annotated to show how they vary from the existing.

- e) **Accounts for Payment** – The Town Clerk presented a schedule of payments for approval of the Council. It was proposed, seconded and resolved:

that the payments as listed be approved for payment.

- f) **Approval of subscription renewals outside of the Town Clerk’s delegated authority to pay** – The Town Clerk reported that two subscriptions due 1st January were greater than 5% above last year’s subscription rate and therefore needed Council approval for payment. They are International Tree Foundation, £20 to £25 (25%) and Society of Local Council Clerks, £130 to £175 (35%).

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that the revised subscriptions be approved for payment.

7015 Access to Council Owned Land

The Town Mayor reported that he had hand delivered the Council's letter to the owner of the property concerned over Christmas. The Town Clerk reported that there had been no response to the letter. In the circumstances there seems to be no alternative but to erect a fence to protect the Council's land and it was resolved:

to erect a 4 foot high chestnut stake and wire or Chestnut pale fencing on the Council boundary and to monitor its condition on a monthly basis.

7016 Communications from the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor reported on various functions that he had attended as Town Mayor

7017 Reports from County and District Councillors

Cllr. Martin reported that the result of the review of the Gilda Resource Centre has been made public today. It is good news for the centre and its long term residents as it is proposed that the unit remains open by converting 8 beds into a transitional unit jointly with the Eastbourne Downs Primary Care Trust. Cllr. Mrs. Scarborough asked Cllr. Martin if he could forward her a copy of the report.

Other matters reported included: -

The work ongoing at the Cophall Roundabout - traffic lights installation

Additional dropped kerbs for use by the disabled at High Street/Old Drive

There is a new number for reporting Highway faults - 0845 60 80 193

Speed Camera Signs - which led to a request for some in Hailsham Road

Particularly nasty graffiti in the public conveniences in the High Street

Cllr. Shing had prepared a written report which had been circulated to all

Councillors. Members were concerned that Cllr. Shing was not liaising with the

Town Council, Cllr. Martin or the Police and that the report he had made relating to additional PCSO resources being used to tackle anti social behaviour within

Polegate was a PR disaster. It was proposed that Polegate Town Council writes to

Cllr. Shing requesting him to liaise with Cllr. Martin and the Town Council before he releases any press statement relating to Polegate in the future.

Cllr. Shing and a representative of the press arrived at this point - 8.48pm.

The Town Mayor suspended Standing Orders to enable Cllr. Shing to speak.

The matters spoken about were then related to Cllr. Shing, to which Cllr. Shing replied that his duty was to his constituents, not to Polegate Council. It was then pointed out to Cllr. Shing that he has also written to residents of Stud Farm indicating that they will get improved access to and from the A27 but that this is not a decision he can make and will lead to disappointment. Members were in agreement that as a matter of courtesy Cllr. Shing should advise the Town Council about letters and press releases he is sending out. Cllr. Shing responded by stating that he does not get everything that he has asked for from the Town Council and that he is not invited to speak at Polegate Town Council Meetings.

Standing Orders were reinstated

7018 Update from Lead Councillors and Working Groups

- a) **Polegate Partnership** – Standing Orders were suspended – Barry Knights reported that the grant for the planting of Hailsham Road has been approved. He also reported that the fair version of the completed health check has been given to Rochelle for review and that by next week the group members will have received the final copy and a start can be made on the action plan. It was agreed to give copies to Cllrs. Mrs. Berry and Mrs. Piper.
Standing Orders were reinstated
- b) **Christmas Lights** – Cllr. Mrs. Morson reported that the judging had been completed and that letters have been sent to the shops. The presentation evening has been arranged for 9th February at 7.00pm. and invitations have gone out. She said that alternative lighting schemes are going to be considered next year
- c) **Wannock Road Recreation Ground Playground – redevelopment** – This matter was referred from the Budget Meeting. It was resolved:
that the group be formed by Cllrs. Mrs. Morson, Mrs. Piper, Gatrill and Voyce.
- d) **Quality Council Working Group** – in response to a question, the Town Clerk advised that a meeting had not yet been held

7019 Matters dealt with as “urgent”

The Town Clerk reported that the only matter dealt with this way was the decision to not object to the revised license application by the Royal British Legion Club, which has already been dealt with.

7020 Town Clerk’s Report

- a) **Bring Forward Schedule** – The schedule was presented and points were raised and clarified as necessary. The Web Site meeting has been arranged for Monday 6th February and the meeting with the Youth Services manager will be arranged for the next available Monday.
- b) **Vandalism Report** – there had been no additional matters noted on the schedule but the Town Clerk reported that over the weekend the door to the gents’ toilet at the Pavilion had been kicked in and damage caused to the hinges and handles. Fortunately Ken has been able to repair the damage, and it has been reported to the Police.
- c) **Bus Shelter in Farmlands Way** – The Town Clerk reported that a vehicle had collided with the Bus Shelter in Farmlands Way damaging the roof and pushing it sideways. Ken had cleared up the broken glass and taped it up. It is safe. The manufacturer’s engineer had visited last Friday and an estimate for repair is expected in the next day or two. The Council’s insurer has been advised.
- d) **Car Parking Area at 49/51 High Street** – The Town Clerk presented three quotes for the infilling of the area where the container stood and creating a ramp to the rear of the car park as follows:

	Infilling	Ramp
Hailsham Roadway Construction	£1220.00	£965.00
May Gurney	£ 850.00	£2,400.00
Nicholls Bros.	£ 320.00	£640.00

It was resolved:

- i) To complete both jobs using Nicholls Bros.
- ii) To investigate what can be done with making the steps at the side of the site safer – renewing the white paint at the edges as a temporary improvement
- iii) To investigate lighting the area for evening meetings

- e) **A22/27 state of land between Mile Oak and Cophall** - The Town Mayor reported that a letter has been sent to Interroute asking for some maintenance work to be carried out on this stretch of Road as it is always looking very untidy.
- f) **Victoria Road widening - suggestion from the Public Meeting** - The Town Clerk advised that he has written to the County Council asking for their views but as yet has only received an acknowledgement. This matter will be raised at the next Strengthening Local Relationships meeting which has been rescheduled for 8th February. It was also suggested that other roads could also be looked at, e.g. Gilda Crescent.
- g) **Summer Planting** - The Town Clerk presented two quotations for the 2006 summer planting scheme, there being only two local suppliers. Quotes were received as follows:

Europlants (last year's supplier)	£4708.50
Glendale Grounds Management (2004 supplier)	£4661.00

Members were concerned that last year there seemed to be no co-ordination of colour schemes and in future would like something that shows up better - purples and pinks and silvery leaves, e.g. Standing Orders were suspended and Cllr. Shing was asked where Willingdon's were supplied from.

Cllr. Shing was unsure.

Standing Orders were reinstated

It was proposed, seconded and resolved:

To contract with Glendale Grounds Management for the supply and maintenance of this year's summer planting and for the Town Clerk to liaise with the supplier to ensure that the planting scheme provides plants which stand out.

7021 Correspondence requiring some action

- a) **Wealden DC - budget consultation workshop** - The Town Clerk presented the letter of invitation and it was agreed that the Town Mayor attends if he is able and otherwise Cllr. Martin would represent the Town Council as well as being invited in his own right as a District Councillor
- b) **Southern Rail re toilet facilities on the Station** - The Town Clerk circulated a response from Southern to the request for the Company to consider providing toilets on the Station. The response shows that Southern do not have the inclination or the funds and consider that because trains have toilets there is no need for them on Stations. However they would consider it if the Town Council contributed towards a scheme or if we could suggest other forms of finance. Members were not in favour of contributing and reiterated that members of the public do complain about the lack of facilities at Polegate Station especially in view of how busy it is, the problems with toilets being out of action on trains and the situation facing passengers when trains are delayed or cancelled. It was resolved:

to write to Southern again pointing out these additional reasons for the provision of facilities and to copy the letter to the Town's MP

7022 Correspondence for noting only

- a) **East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2004/5** - The report is in the office for perusal. Noted.

- b) **Eastbourne Downs Primary Care Trust - re. Black Path Nursing Home** - a copy of the letter received by the Town's MP, Norman Baker, in response to the Town Council's concern over the loss of NHS interest in the Home was distributed to all members. It was agreed that the statement made in the letter about the Health Service's needs being met at the Kestrel Home in Eastbourne was challenged as the initial assessment placed transport links, access to shops and services and flat landscape as being priority needs which Black Path has but Kestrel does not. It was resolved:

to write to the Chief Executive of the Trust seeking an answer to these points.

- c) **East Sussex Pension Fund - Report and Accounts 2004/2005** - The report is in the Office for perusal. Noted
- d) **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - Discussion document on "Standards of Conduct in English Local Government - The Future"** - The Town Clerk advised that this lengthy document is the result of the recent consultation which the Town Council did contribute to. It identifies what the Government plans to do in response to the consultation but giving an opportunity to comment on the proposals. It was agreed that to respond to the document would be a waste of time but it was agreed to copy relevant sections of interest to Councillors.
- e) **East Sussex CC - Revised bus services** - The Town Clerk reported on revisions to bus services from 6th January which did not affect services through Polegate but that the office has received many requests for new timetables and an order has been placed with the County Council. Noted.

7023 Dates of the next cycle of meetings

Full Council	27 th February 2006 (Note change at request of the Town Mayor)
Planning Committee	as and when necessary

7024 Resolution

It was proposed, seconded and resolved 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.

Cllrs. FitzGerald and Mrs. Morson left at this point. 9.50pm.

7025 Confidential Matters

- a) Press releases and other sensitive material
- b) Council Offices - lease of premises
- c) Personnel Matters