**Meeting of Midhurst Town Council took place on**

**Monday 26th February 2024 at 7:30pm in**

**Midhurst Town Council Offices, Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst, GU29 9DQ**

**MINUTES**

**Present**: Cllr D Fraser, Cllr A Lambert, Cllr G McAra, Cllr D Merritt, Cllr P Piper and Cllr R Watts (Chairman).

**In attendance**: S Hurr (Town Clerk), M Haywood (Deputy Town Clerk), County Councillor K O’Kelly, District Councillor H Burton, and two members of the public.

**C/134/23 Chairman’s Announcements:** The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

**C/135/23 Apologies for Absence:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs Facer, Travers and Coote. County Councillor O’Kelly had sent an apology explaining he would be late for the meeting.

**C/136/23** **Declarations of Interest:** None

Meeting halted for Public Participation Session

**C/137/23 - Public Participation Session:** Phillipa McCullough from the Midhurst Vision Group, confirmed that work on The Grange Project (land at the rear of The Grange building which provides a walkway to Grange Road) will begin on Monday 4th March 2024. The plan was circulated at the meeting.

Meeting reconvened.

**C/138/23 - Minutes of the Previous Meetings (and actions):** The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were proposed by Cllr Piper, as a correct record, seconded by Cllr Merritt, agreed by all present and adopted.

**C/139/23 - Matters Arising from those Minutes:** None.

**C/140/23 Finance, Asset, Community and Environment Committee**: The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2024 were proposed by Cllr Lambert as a correct record, seconded by Cllr Piper, agreed by all present and adopted.

**C/141/23 Planning and Infrastructure Committee**: Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were proposed by Cllr Merritt as a correct record, seconded by Cllr Fraser, agreed by all present and adopted.

Cllr Burton arrived at the meeting

**C/142/23 Plans for Cemetery Maintenace and Improvements.**

Cllr Watts reported that some concerns had been raised regarding the current condition of the Cemetery and confirmed that plans have been put in place to improve the appearance of the grass and hedges. It was noted that the Garden of Remembrance has been much improved.

**C/143/23 Councillor Co-Option.** Cllr Watts invited Mrs Cathy Gilson to address the Town Council regarding her application to be co-opted as a Councillor.

Following a short debate, and vote; it was agreed that Mrs Gilson should be invited to join the Town Council.

**Action:** Cllr Watts to invite Mrs Gilson to join the Town Council.

County Councillor O’Kelly arrived at the meeting.

**C/144/23 Report from County, and District Councillors.**  Reports from Cllr O’Kelly and Cllr Burton had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Burton further reported that Hyde Housing Association has agreed to regenerate homes and return properties that were previously for sale to social housing stock. Cllr Burton also raised concerns that rural businesses were not receiving sufficient support from Chichester District Council regarding economic development, and she wished to improve this situation. Cllr Burton also added that dog warden support within the district was being reviewed.

Cllr McAra sought clarification regarding whether funding is being targeted at Chichester city parks rather than rural parks. Cllr Burton agreed to research this matter and report to a future Council meeting with any relevant information.

County Councillor Kate O’Kelly confirmed that she was pleased that officers from West Sussex County Council had agreed to meet Town Councillors to discuss the new appointment system at Bepton Road Recycling Centre. The Chairman reported that this meeting will take place at the Town Council offices on Monday 4th March at 10.30am, should other Councillors wish to attend.

**C/145/23** **Reports from Outside Meetings**

Cllr Watts reported that Cllr Coote and he had attended an online All Parishes Meeting, and presentations from the meeting had been circulated to Councillors.

**C/146/23 Matters of Report:** Cllr Fraser drew attention to the closure of Hays Travel in Midhurst which is disappointing for the town.

*The Council entered a closed session for the next item which was to consider the quotations received from contractors for the proposed works to Lilac Cottage. This was proposed by Cllr Merritt, seconded by Cllr Fraser and agreed by all present.*

Closed Session.

**C/147/23 Lilac Cottage Update**

End of Closed Session.

**C/148/23 Date of Next Meeting:** 7.30pm, 25th March 2024

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Signed………………………………………………………… Dated……………………………………….

Chairman