

Midhurst Town Council

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

**Monday 13th May 2024 at 7:00pm in**

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

**MINUTES**

**Present**: Cllr D Coote, Cllr Fraser, Cllr A Lambert, Cllr McAra, Cllr D Merritt, Cllr P Piper, and Cllr J Travers (Vice-Chairman) and Cllr R Watts (Chairman)

**In attendance**: S Hurr (Town Clerk) and M Haywood (Deputy Clerk)

**C/001/24 Election of Chairman:** Cllr Watts confirmed that he was content to continue in the role of Chairman of the Town Council and there being no other nominations, Cllr McAra proposed that Cllr Watts was re-elected, which was seconded by Cllr Merritt, agreed by all present and Cllr Watts was duly elected as Chairman for 2024-25.

Cllr Watts signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk.

**C/002/24** **Election of Vice-Chairman:** The Chairman invited nominations for Vice-Chairman and Cllr Travers confirmed he was content to continue in the role of Vice-Chairman of the Town Council and there being no other nominations, Cllr McAra proposed that Cllr Travers was re-elected, which was seconded by Cllr Piper, agreed by all present and Cllr Travers was duly elected as Vice-Chairman for 2023-24.

Cllr Travers signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk.

**C/003/24 Apologies for Absence:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs M Facer, C Gilson and County Councillor K O’Kelly.

**C/004/24** **Declarations of Interest:** None

***Meeting halted for Public Participation Session***

**C/005/24 Public Participation Session:** No members of the public were present and no questions had been presented to the Council.

***Meeting reconvened.***

**C/006/24 Report from County, and District Councillors.**  A report from County Councillor K O’Kelly had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was noted that this was similar in part to the previous month’s report (see appendix one). District Councillor H Burton had not submitted a report on this occasion.

**C/007/24 - Minutes of the Previous Meetings (and actions):** The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2024 were proposed by Cllr Piper, as a correct record, seconded by Cllr Merritt, agreed by all present and adopted.

**C/008/24 - Matters Arising from those Minutes:** The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Mr Neil Sore regarding completing a form for co-option to the St Anns Hill Working Group as a resident, and this would now be prepared for both Mr Sore, and also for Mrs Jeanette Sutton who would continue in this role.

**C/009/24 Finance, Asset, Community and Environment Committee**: With regards to the minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2024, these were due to be proposed, seconded, agreed and adopted at the next meeting of the Town Council, but a revision of the current regime for adoption was discussed later in the agenda. Please see item C/011/24below.

**C/010/24 Planning and Infrastructure Committee**: Minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2024 were proposed by Cllr Watts as a correct record, seconded by Cllr Travers agreed by all present and adopted. With regards to the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April which were due to be proposed, seconded, agreed and adopted at the next meeting of the Town Council, but a revision of the current regime for adoption was discussed later in the agenda. Please see item C/011/24below.

**C/011/24 Review of Committee Meeting Minutes Adoption: Confirmation of Committee Membership:** The Chairman explained that the current regime of Committee Minutes (Planning and Infrastructure Committee, and Finance, Assets, Community and Environment Committee) being approved and adopted at full Council was an unnecessary duplication, as Committees could approve and adopt their own minutes. The Chairman suggested that going-forward, the minutes were approved and adopted within the relevant Committees, with minutes circulated to all Councillors, and an opportunity to seek clarification regarding matters from those minutes included within the full Council agenda. The suggested revised regime was proposed by Cllr Travers, seconded by Cllr Lambert, agreed and **resolved** by all present.

**C/012/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

**C/012/24.1 Section 1: Annual Governance Statements to be read, agreed and signed, by the Chairman and Clerk:** The Clerk read aloud the Governance Statements, and with positive responses recorded for each statement, they were proposed for signature by the Chairman and the Clerk by Cllr Travers, seconded by Cllr Coote and agreed by all present and were duly signed.

**C/012/24.2 Section 2: Accounting Statements to be reviewed, agreed and signed, by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer:** The Accounting Statements were reviewed and proposed for signature by the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer by Cllr Piper, seconded by Cllr Merritt and agreed by all present and were duly signed.

**Actions:** The Clerk to submit the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24 and display the Notice of Public Rights form on the appropriate date.

**C/012/24.3 Internal Auditor’s Report and Recommendations**: The Internal Auditor’s Report had been circulated prior to the meeting, with a short Clerk’s report outlining the key recommendations and provision of an action plan, which was proposed as agreed by Cllr Piper, seconded by Cllr Watts and agreed by all present.

**Action:** The Clerk to progress the Action Plan.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that all expenditure including delegated expenditure and written notes of each working group meeting agreeing expenditure, must be presented to the relevant Committee or full Council.

The Chairman reported that the auditor had at the previous audit recommended an increase of the Fidelity Guarantee due to the amount of funds held at any one time in the bank account. The Chairman reported that an increase from £150k to £300k, would add an extra £324.24 to the insurance premium. The Chairman proposed the Fidelity Guarantee was increased to £300k, which was seconded by Cllr Fraser and agreed by all present.

The Clerk reported that the revised Model Financial Regulations had been recently published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and these would be reviewed and revised for adoption by the Council in due course.

**C/013/24** **Confirmation of Committee Membership:** The Chairman reported that the regime of all Councillors sitting as members of all Committees would continue going-forward, and this would be reviewed at a later date.

**C/014/24 Sub-Committee Membership and Working Groups (Staffing, Cemetery Sub-Committee, Lilac Working Group, and St Ann’s Hill Working Group):** The Chairman reported that the only change was that Cllr Merritt would not continue as a member of the St Ann’s Hill Working Group.

**C/15/24 MTC Representation (Town Trust, Ognells, Pest House, Midhurst and District Police Liaison Forum, and Guide and Scout Hut Committee):** The Chairman reported that the only changes were that Cllr Lambert would represent the Council on the Midhurst and District Police Liaison Forum, and at the current time the Council would not be represented on the Guide and Scout Hut Committee, and this would be reviewed as necessary.

**C/16/24 Dante Update:** The Chairman reported that he had met with Harvey Tordoff, from The Midhurst Society leading the Dante statue project. Quotations had been obtained from two installation companies and a third was awaited. The installation celebration was in the early stages of being planned, which would include an extract from the Divine Comedy being read aloud. Consideration was currently also being given to fixing a brass plaque to the stone plinth which would provide a QR Code to source information, potentially linking to the Council’s website.

**C/17/24 Tank Traps (Brickworks Development):** The Chairman reportedas expected by The Midhurst Society, Bellway developers at the Brickworks development had uncovered twenty plus tank traps (concrete cylinders) dating from WWII. These were part of the town’s history and Bellway had offered to relocate the items. The Chairman proposed that in principle the Council express support to the Society to identify suitable location/s for the tank traps, which was seconded by Cllr McAra and agreed by all present.

**Action:** The Chairman to confirm the Council’s support regarding the future of the tank traps with the Midhurst Society.

**C/18/24 Review of Actions**: None

**C/19/24 Reports from Outside Meetings:** Cllr Travers provided an update regarding Pendean Quarry, which is owned by Cemex UK, confirming the transfer of waste would continue until September 2025 and the site then restored as a nature reserve with planted areas and permitted paths.

**C/20/24 Matters of Report:** The Chairman reminded all Councillors that the Annual Town Meeting hosted by the Council would take place the following evening (14th May 2024) beginning at 7.00pm.

***Closed Session***

The Chairman requested that the Council hold a closed session, which was proposed by Cllr Travers, seconded by Cllr Fraser and agreed by all present.

**C/21/24 Staff Matters and Agency Work**

***End of Closed Session***

**C/22/24 Date of Next Meeting:** 7.30pm 24th June 2024

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.

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

Chairman