

**Minutes of a meeting of Council  
held on Wednesday, 4th November, 2020  
from 6.00 pm - 8.25 pm**

**Present:** C Trumble (Chairman)  
M Belsey (Vice-Chair)

G Allen	R Cromie	J Knight
J Ash-Edwards	J Dabell	C Laband
R Bates	R de Mierre	J Llewellyn-Burke
J Belsey	B Dempsey	A MacNaughton
A Bennett	S Ellis	A Peacock
L Bennett	R Eggleston	C Phillips
A Boutrup	A Eves	M Pulfer
P Bradbury	L Gibbs	R Salisbury
P Brown	I Gibson	S Smith
R Cartwright	S Hatton	A Sparasci
P Chapman	J Henwood	L Stockwell
R Clarke	S Hicks	D Sweatman
E Coe-	S Hillier	N Webster
Gunnell White	T Hussain	R Whittaker
P Coote	R Jackson	
M Cornish		

**Absent:** Councillors H Brunsdon, Andrew Lea, Anthea Lea, G Marsh,  
J Mockford, N Walker and R Webb

**1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. A roll call of Members present was taken. The Head of Regulatory Services provided a virtual meeting explanation.

**2. OPENING PRAYER**

The opening prayer was read by the Vice-Chairman.

**3. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.**

The Chairman set out the order and explained procedure for this item.

**1) Question from Ms. Inglesfield:**

Issue: Closure of Clair Hall

MSDC decided to close CH on the basis that “there are many other suitable venues in the close proximity”. The Event and Community Officer of HHTC reported during last week’s E&GP committee meeting that, after communicating with the NHS Blood Donation service and obtaining from them their venue specifications, she was unable

to locate a suitable venue in HH. For my next blood donation, I will travel all the way to Brighton. The complication, time and money involved are prohibitive for numerous HH donors. HH, 35000 inhabitants, unable to host blood donations. What detailed, costed solution do you offer?

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery – Cllr John Belsey

Thank you for your question.

Officers are working closely with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to help that organisation identify alternative local venues for the blood donation service in Haywards Heath. NHSBT has very stringent requirements for venues but I can confirm MSDC has offered our own site at Oaklands. NHSBT are also looking at other venues in the town including certain local schools and the St Francis site and personally I hope they can come to a decision soon as to where they propose to carry out further blood donor sessions in Haywards Heath. To be clear the decision as to venue will be for NHSBT to determine, not any of our local Councils, although we are providing as much assistance as we can in order to aid their decision-making process.

Until a new venue for blood donations in Haywards Heath is available, although you may choose to travel to Brighton, I can confirm to other residents that it is not necessary for anyone to have to travel to Brighton to donate blood. There are regular sessions in Burgess Hill, Hassocks, East Grinstead and Crawley Down, as well as in Crawley and Uckfield, all of which are of course nearer to Haywards Heath than Brighton.

Ms Inglesfield posed a supplementary question. She noted that the Council committed itself to advise Clair Hall users like the blood donation service to help them find a suitable alternative venue in close proximity and asked what is the Council's advice to the other users? The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

## **2) Question from Mr Kenward:**

Issue: Closure of Clair Hall

With many theatres and multi-use venues taking advantage of grants from the Culture Recovery Fund made available from the Arts Council did Mid Sussex District Council apply for, or consider applying for a grant in respect of Clair Hall? and if not, why not?

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery – Cllr John Belsey

Thank you for your question.

This fund was administered by the Arts Council, specifically targeted at supporting music, theatre, dance, combined arts, visual arts, museums or literature. Since 75% of the activity at Clair Hall over recent years has not been of this nature, Mid Sussex District Council decided not to make an application to the Cultural Recovery Fund on the grounds that it was considered extremely unlikely such an application would have been successful and that officer time would be spent more productively on the many other activities and demands placed upon the Council during this pandemic. Given that Chequer Mead Theatre in East Grinstead which does provide a year-round theatre venue made an application which was sadly unsuccessful we remain firmly of

the view that the Council would not have received any funding through such an application for Clair Hall.

However, I am pleased to note that four performing arts companies/organisations registered in Mid Sussex received grants from the Fund totalling over £260k.

Mr Kenward posed a supplementary question regarding revenue. He asked that if Clair Hall was allowed to reopen (managed by whoever), and should the Council also proceed with a plan to open a pay-and-display car park on the site, could the revenue from the car park be invested back into the hall to alleviate the financial burden from the Council that has possibly helped lead to its demise. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

### **3) Question from Mr Shelley:**

Issue: Playing Pitch Strategy

Good evening Councillors, I'm Bob Shelley and I Chair East Grinstead Sports Council. We have, with our sports clubs, participated in, and followed with close interest, the development of the Council's Playing Pitches Study. When will the Study and its Implementation Plan be presented to full Council for adoption, as was recommended in the Scrutiny Committee for Community & Service Delivery report - Agenda item 7 - on 8 July 2020?

Response from Cabinet Member for Community – Cllr Norman Webster

Thank you for your question Mr Shelley. May I start by thanking you and the East Grinstead Sports Council for your involvement and interest in sport and the very real benefits it provides. I believe government recognised these benefits in the early days of Covid lockdown, hence their generous financial support to local sports bodies.

In terms of your question the Council remains committed to investing in local playing pitch provision, not least because of the positive impacts it has on the health and wellbeing of our communities. This is now of course more important than ever.

The Playing Pitch Study is an important evidence base, and I stress evidence base, which supports the Council's direction of travel. It is part of the background work requested by the District Plan examiner, so does not need to be formally adopted by Council.

In fact, the Council is already implementing the objectives and actions in the Study. Some recent examples of which are the introduction of the Club Spark booking system for tennis, the commissioning of pitch drainage surveys, which I know to be a concern in East Grinstead and early preparatory work for the implementation of the Centre for Outdoor Sports in Burgess Hill.

For the benefit of people who might be viewing this meeting, Objective 5 is to create a delivery framework for people and organisations to work together to share skills, expertise, resources and facilities in implementing the Study.

It is planned for the Steering Group to be reconvened in the New Year – unfortunately, this has been delayed as a result of the pandemic. Representation will include: Mid Sussex District Council's Community Services, Commercial Services & Contracts and Planning and a number of national and regional bodies.

Mr Shelley posed a supplementary question asking if the sports community of East Grinstead and wider district can count on the 5 objectives in the implementation plan (which are the 5 things summarised as the way forward) being met and in what sort of timescale? The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

**4. TO RECEIVE A PETITION PRESENTED BY IT'S MAGIC EVENTS, HAYWARDS HEATH COMMUNITY CIC AND USER GROUP CLAIR HALL ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY OF MID SUSSEX WHICH ASKS:**

Ms Wilcox presented the petition as the nominated spokesperson for Tim French MBE who organised the petition. She noted the petition has over 4000 signatures which as a gauge of the level of public concern represents 65% of the ballot papers issued in the 2019 district council election. She welcomed the opportunity for the Council to consider the strength of feeling of residents and urged the Council to review the decision made and alternative options available.

Ms Wilcox challenged the Council's assessment of the state of repair of Clair Hall, and the number and location of alternative venues offered to user groups. She referenced other venues in the District such as Chequer Mead, which have reopened, and queried why it wasn't considered to open Clair Hall in a similar way. Information on S106 funds was provided with a query on why this money had not been used for Clair Hall repair. She concluded that the Council has an opportunity to listen to residents and open active dialogue for a Meanwhile Lease on Clair Hall, registering it as a community asset and keeping it open pending new facilities.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Service delivery acknowledged the petition and thanked all residents who signed it. He reiterated the process that had led to the decision to close the Hall, following the removal of it from the Places Leisure Contract agreed by full Council in August, the Cabinet decision voting for a business case on the regeneration of the site and a new venue and subsequent consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

Discussion was held on the need to prioritise expenditure to assist residents during the pandemic. Against this backdrop, Members considered the cost of repair and maintenance verses limited usage of the Hall both in the current lockdown and prior to its closure in March 2020 noting that to reopen was not an effective use of resources. Comparison was made with other sites that had reopened, not able to generate significant income due to current restrictions on attending. A number of Members urged the petitioners to respond to the public consultation so that work could focus on an exciting new venue that meets the needs of all users.

Councillor Knight proposed a motion that the Council acknowledges the petition but believes that it is not feasible for Clair Hall to reopen. The Council supports the decision to undertake public engagement and consultation to inform the development of a business case for the provision of a modern community facility as part of the regeneration of the site. This was seconded by Councillor Pulfer.

Councillor Eggleston proposed an amendment to the motion that the Council in addition agrees to hold a public meeting regarding the future of Clair Hall as part of the consultation process and that Officers enter into dialogue about the hall's continued use in the meantime, until a new facility is open. This was seconded by Councillor Bates.

Members discussed the motion and amendment. Clarity was sought on what form the consultation would take, and what funds are currently available to be spent on Clair Hall maintenance. Several Members requested that alternative methods are sought to keep the Hall running as there is currently no timescale for when a new facility may be available. It was however noted that no one had approached the Council with a viable proposal for reopening the Hall on a managed basis, and that Council resources would be better spent focusing on the future, by engaging with the community to design a new facility that is fit for purpose.

A recorded vote on the amendment was taken.

16 Members were in favour of the amended motion and 27 Members were against and 1 abstained, so the amendment was lost.

	For	Against	Abstain		For	Against	Abstain
Allen, G.			✓	Gibbs, L.	✓		
Ash-Edwards, J.		✓		Gibson, I.	✓		
Bates, R.	✓			Hatton, S.	✓		
Belsey, J.		✓		Henwood, J.	✓		
Belsey, M.		✓		Hicks, S.	✓		
Bennett, A.	✓			Hillier, S.		✓	
Bennett, L.		✓		Jackson, R.	✓		
Boutrup, A		✓		Knight, J.		✓	
Bradbury, P		✓		Laband, C.		✓	
Brown, P.	✓			Llewellyn-Burke, J.		✓	
Cartwright, R.	✓			MacNaughton, A.		✓	
Chapman, P.	✓			Peacock, A		✓	
Clarke, R.		✓		Phillips, C.	✓		
Coe-Gunnell White, E.		✓		Pulfer, M.		✓	
Coote, P.		✓		Salisbury, R		✓	
Cornish, M.	✓			Smith, S.		✓	
Cromie, R		✓		Sparasci, A.	✓		
Dabell, J.		✓		Stockwell, L		✓	
de Mierre, R.		✓		Sweatman, D.		✓	
Eggleston, R.	✓			Trumble, C.		✓	
Ellis, S.		✓		Webster, N.		✓	
Eves, A	✓			Whittaker, R.		✓	

A recorded vote was taken on the original motion which was carried with 27 Members in favour, 11 against and 6 Members abstaining.

	For	Against	Abstain		For	Against	Abstain
Allen, G.		✓		Gibbs, L.		✓	
Ash-Edwards, J.	✓			Gibson, I.		✓	
Bates, R.			✓	Hatton, S.		✓	
Belsey, J.	✓			Henwood, J.			✓

Belsey, M.	✓			Hicks, S.		✓	
Bennett, A.		✓		Hillier, S.	✓		
Bennett, L.	✓			Jackson, R.			✓
Boutrup, A	✓			Knight, J.	✓		
Bradbury, P	✓			Laband, C.	✓		
Brown, P.			✓	Llewellyn-Burke, J.	✓		
Cartwright, R.		✓		MacNaughton, A.	✓		
Chapman, P.			✓	Peacock, A	✓		
Clarke, R.	✓			Phillips, C.		✓	
Coe-Gunnell White, E.	✓			Pulfer, M.	✓		
Coote, P.	✓			Salisbury, R	✓		
Cornish, M.		✓		Smith, S.	✓		
Cromie, R	✓			Sparasci, A.		✓	
Dabell, J.	✓			Stockwell, L	✓		
de Mierre, R.	✓			Sweatman, D.	✓		
Eggleston, R.			✓	Trumble, C.	✓		
Ellis, S.	✓			Webster, N.	✓		
Eves, A		✓		Whittaker, R.	✓		

## RESOLVED

The Council acknowledges the petition but believes that it is not feasible for Clair Hall to reopen. The Council supports the decision to undertake public engagement and consultation to inform the development of a business case for the provision of a modern community facility as part of the regeneration of the site.

### 5. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30 September were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### 6. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA

With regards to any potential discussion on leisure centres, Councillor Bates declared a personal interest as he is a leisure centre member.

### 7. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

### 8. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman acknowledged that a significant number of nominations had been received for the Mid Sussex Applauds Awards and that the way to acknowledge the winners is being reconsidered in light of lockdown restrictions.

He welcomed back Councillor Coote who had recently been unwell and sent regards to Councillor Walker who is recovering from illness.

## **9. IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS FOR DOG CONTROL.**

Councillor Boutrup moved the item noting it was the three-year renewal of the original Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) agreed in 2017. The item was seconded by Councillor Webster who, in response to questions raised by Members, confirmed that no fines had currently been issued, and no authorities granted to Parish Councils as no Parishes had made a request. He noted that the Rangers focus their work on maintenance of the countryside estate working with volunteers and contractors to raise education on the subject. Targeted enforcements can be made if Rangers receive reliable specific information on sites.

Discussion was held on the areas that the PSPO's covered and it was confirmed that the dog fouling PSPO covers the whole District whilst the other PSPO's cover Mid Sussex District Council assets only.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations which were agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

Council noted the contents of the report and agreed to the adoption of the Public Spaces Protection Orders as set out in Appendix 1.

## **10. MID SUSSEX DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT.**

Councillor Laband moved the item noting that the document provided an example of best practice and had been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth. Councillor MacNaughton seconded the item noting that it was important to set a standard for Developers to see the design expectations required in Mid Sussex.

Discussion was held on comments made during the Scrutiny stage which do not appear to have been included in the final version, such as cycle parking at employment sites, biomass energy source and the types of trees suitable for planting. It was confirmed that information on cycle parking was taken into consideration by Officers and deemed not necessary to include, as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report. The table on p.10 however has been amended to show the applicable requirements for all new buildings. The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that Officers responded during the Scrutiny Committee with reasons why proposals may not feature in the final draft. He agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Henwood's queries, particularly relating to suitable trees. He also noted that the document is a supplementary document that cannot rule on every subject however it does not preclude separate promotion of other positive design aspects such as biomass energy sources.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation which was agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

That Council:

Adopts the Mid Sussex Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications.

## **11. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader acknowledged that the Country was entering a second lockdown from midnight 4 November 2020 and thanked residents for their efforts in keeping Mid Sussex in Tier 1. He noted that the lockdown will have a significant impact on residents, Council services and finances, reiterating that people should stay at home, gatherings should not occur, and most businesses may need to close. He confirmed that leisure centres must close at the Government's request but that playgrounds can remain open and will be cleaned weekly.

The Leader confirmed that the WSCC Community Hub will remain open 7 days a week and the Government will provide financial support, with the Council due to receive discretionary funding in excess of £2m to support businesses.

With regards to rough sleepers, the Leader confirmed that the Council is awaiting Government guidance and will respond when it is finalised. Work will continue to support the homeless to source emergency accommodation. The Council has also recently been successful in a bid for Government funding for additional long term affordable accommodation for homeless people.

In response to a Member's concern around possible home firework displays, the demand on emergency services and harm to animals, the Leader said he would look at suitable communications to remind residents to be careful and considerate relating to fireworks and bonfires.

## **12. REPORT OF CABINET MEMBERS, INCLUDING QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.1**

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader highlighted the recent agreement by the Council to accept a bid for land at Bolnore Road for the purpose of building residential properties. This will generate a £1.25m capital receipt with 50% affordable houses on site. She declined to comment on the result of a planning permission decision raised by a Member in relation to a site on Paddockhall Road.

Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

The Cabinet Member confirmed that work was being continued to draft an Economic Covid19 Recovery Plan. He noted that several grants are currently available including Micro Business Grants with an incentive for apprenticeship, alongside a £300k Covid19 Recovery grant to help businesses facing additional costs as a result of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member drew Member's attention to a new campaign to 'Bring Christmas Home' launched by the Council inviting all businesses to register on a directory to promote local shopping over the Christmas period. He also noted that Covid19 safety measures in local highstreets had been reassessed in October and deemed suitable to remain in place.

Cabinet Member for Customer Services

The Cabinet Member encouraged Members to help share the message that the Revenues and Benefits Team and the Housing Needs Team are available to assist if people are struggling to pay bills or facing other financial hardship. Free independent debt advice is also available.

She provided an update on the Council's Full Fibre Gigabit Project which is progressing well with 8km laid so far and due to be completed in Spring 2021.

#### Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member has circulated information to Members on the September statistics for Leisure Centres and will provide the October results in due course. He noted that garden waste collection services are projected to continue through the current lockdown period and recycling centres run by West Sussex County Council (WSSC) will also remain open. He acknowledged that a pilot of food waste recycling has paused but that work is continuing with Serco and WSSC with a service waste redesign proposal due in the new year which may include food waste. He announced that Mid Sussex District Council will be launching a small waste and electronic equipment (WEE) recycling project over the coming weeks with information provided to Members and residents.

#### Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member reiterated that Covid19 recovery grants are available for the local community, and the Council has been able to add to the generous amount pledged by the Government.

He thanked residents for following Government guidance to stay safe during the pandemic. During the second lockdown, WSSC will lead on support for the clinically extremely vulnerable and will operate the Community Hub. The Wellbeing Team will provide localised support. The Hub is anticipated to pro-actively contact over 4000 residents that have previously sought help. Environmental Health Officers are working with the Director of Public Health at WSSC to use track-and-trace information to contain and control local outbreaks.

Council run health courses such as weight management and smoking cessation continue, and Sport England has funded 50 spaces on a 12-week exercise programme. Officers are also working to ensure that Armistice and Remembrance Day can be acknowledged in line with current Government guidelines.

#### Cabinet Member for Housing

The Cabinet Member confirmed that at the end of October, 126 units of affordable housing were delivered across the District, with 91 for rent and 35 for shared ownership.

Regarding rough sleepers, he reiterated that Council is awaiting Government guidance on requirements to bring them in during the second lockdown. If not required by Government, the Council is considering the capability to still bring them in and an expected grant for winter funding to bring them in may be enable the Council to facilitate this.

A Member highlighted the Cabinet Member's response to the Governments Planning White Paper and hoped the response could be more widely publicised.

**13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE  
10.2**

None.

The meeting finished at 8.25 pm

Chairman