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Community House,
Meridian Way,
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East Sussex,
BN10 8BB.

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council meeting held in the Anzac Room, Community House on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Debbie Donovan (Chair), Cllr Wendy Veck (Vice Chair), Cllr Nikki Fabry, Cllr Nick Evans, Cllr Mary Campbell, Cllr Sue Griffiths, Cllr Kiera Gordon-Garrett, Cllr Sherral Wood, Cllr Paul Davies, Cllr Aimee Harman, Cllr Ian Alexander, Cllr Cathy Gallagher, Cllr Isobel Sharkey, Cllr Lee Ashby-Parkin, Cllr Simon Studd, Karina Gordon (Youth Mayor), Katelyn Harber (Deputy Youth Mayor).

Officers: George Dyson (Town Clerk), Zoe Polydorou (Meetings & Projects Officer), Kevin Bray (Parks Officer), Zoe Malone (Responsible Financial Officer).

6 members of the public were in attendance.

C1303 MAYOR/CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:31, read out a statement on Civility & Respect, went through the Fire Procedures, asked that mobile phones be put onto silent, informed members that the meeting is being recorded, went through some upcoming events, informed Council that Community House will be closed from 1pm on 24th December 2024 until 2nd January 2025, with a partial closure until 20th January 2025, reminded Council about the need for confidentiality for items under a confidential session, and asked for a 30 second moment of quiet for reflection before the meeting commenced.

C1304 PUBLIC SESSION. *Members of the public may ask questions on any relevant Council matter.*

A member of the public spoke in support of Max Rosser being co-opted onto Council under item C1308.

Another member of the public spoke in support of the proposed boxing event being considered under item C1309e(iii).

C1305 TO APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies, Cllr Cheta was absent.

C1306 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

C1307 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 29TH OCTOBER 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Sharkey

Seconded by: Cllr Veck

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 29th October were agreed and adopted.

C1308 TO CO-OPT A COUNCILLOR TO FILL THE CASUAL VACANCY IN WEST WARD

The Chair informed Council that one applicant had come forward for co-option, Mr Max Rosser. Mr Rosser was present so introduced himself to Council and answered some questions from members.

It was proposed that Max Rosser be co-opted to fill the casual vacancy in west ward.

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths Seconded by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett
The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

Mr Rosser and the Town Clerk signed the declaration of acceptance of office, and Cllr Rosser took his seat as a Councillor.

The Chair changed the order of the following items to consider the Civic & Community Events Committee section first.

C1309 TO RECEIVE MINUTES, RATIFY ACTIONS & RECEIVE REPORTS ON URGENT MATTERS:-

e. Civic & Community Events Committee:-

i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 10th September 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Evans

The meeting minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

ii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 12th November 2024

The Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

iii. To consider a request for a boxing show in Centenary Park

Cllr Veck introduced the item and gave some background information regarding what had already been discussed through Committee.

The Council discussed the proposal, highlighting the need to consider appropriate risk assessments, compliance with the Purple Book, not clashing with the PTC summer fair, need to obtain a TENS licence from LDC, concerns over parking and marshaling arrangements, but also the desire to support the event.

The Chair suspended standing orders at this point.

The member of the public who requested this item spoke to confirm that the provisional anticipated cost of a ticket would be £25.

The Chair reinstated standing orders.

It was proposed that the Council agree in principle that the event can go ahead, and that Officers be tasked with agreeing terms and charges with the organiser.

Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority, with one member against.

3 members of the public left at this point

a. Planning & Highways Committee:-

i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 24th September 2024

ii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 22nd October 2024

iii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 7th November 2024

iv. To receive the meeting minutes of the 19th November 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

The meeting minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

v. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 3rd December 2024

The Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

b. Policy & Finance Committee:-

- i. To receive the financial report, authorise payments and signing of Bank Reconciliation statements**

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Veck

The Council **agreed** to authorise the payments and sign the bank reconciliation statements.

- ii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 17th September 2024**

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Gallagher

The meeting minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

- iii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 26th November 2024**

The Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

- iv. To adopt a Biodiversity policy**

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

The Council **resolved** to **adopt** the biodiversity policy.

- v. To adopt a revised members allowances policy**

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander

Seconded by: Cllr Gallagher

The Council **resolved** to **adopt** the members allowances policy by majority, with 9 in favour, 1 against, and 6 abstentions.

c. Personnel Committee:-

- i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 16th July 2024**

- ii. To receive the meeting minutes of the 15th October 2024**

Proposed by: Cllr Gallagher

Seconded by: Cllr Donovan

The meeting minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

- iii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 3rd December 2024**

The Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

d. Leisure, Amenities & Environment Committee:-

- i. To receive the meeting minutes of the 3rd September 2024**

Proposed by: Cllr Sharkey

Seconded by: Cllr Evans

The meeting minutes were **agreed** and **adopted**.

- ii. To note the draft meeting minutes of the 29th October 2024**

The Council **noted** the draft meeting minutes.

C1310 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM CLLR GALLAGHER, CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

Cllr Gallagher summarised the information in the report, highlighting that we're now just waiting for the HRA screening to come back. There was a brief discussion about maps that had not been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting, however, some printed copies were available. The Steering Group will meet once the screening comes back to discuss that and the maps.

C1311 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PROGRESS ON THE HUB PROJECT

C1312 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROGRESSING THE HUB PROJECT

Items 1311 and 1312 were considered alongside each other. Cllr Gallagher introduced the report associated with item 1312. The Council discussed the matters relating to the Hub, particularly the public consultation, CIL bid, previously agreed works, and building surveys.

It was proposed that the Council proceed with the replacement of the roof, heating, and solar panels, as per the CIL bid, by preparing the Pre-tender notice and Invitation to tender in line with the provisional timescale provided by the LCC associate.

Proposed by: Cllr Evans Seconded by: Cllr Griffiths

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority with 14 in favour and 2 abstentions.

It was proposed that the Council expand and enhance the public consultation with a view to working on another CIL bid for future improvements to the Hub, but that this should not impede the current agreed works and that the consultation be led by the PR Officer, with support from a community development organisation if necessary.

Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Griffiths

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

It was proposed that the current TFG continue to work towards the PTN, and that newly co-opted Cllr Rosser be added to the TFG.

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander Seconded by: Cllr Sharkey

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

C1313 TO NOTE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr Donovan reported that she is coming off the Residents Association as the representative, and Cllr Davies will take up this position.

C1314 TO NOTE OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The Council **noted** the overview of complaints received.

1 member of the public left at this point.

C1315 TO NOTE THE COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RECORD

The Clerk informed Council that due to there being 2 meetings on the day that the attendance record was generated, there is a slight inaccuracy with the record, however, the updated version can be seen on the PTC website.

The Council **noted** the attendance record.

C1316 TO AGREE THE 2025/26 BUDGET AND PRECEPT DEMAND

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) introduced the options for the budget and several members added their thanks to the RFO for the additional work on the budget options.

There was a lengthy discussion on the options, primarily debating between option 1 (9.6% increase or £1.37 per month for a Band D property) and option 3 with an amendment to provide a room hire reduction for a group (resulting in an 8% increase equivalent to £1.14 per month for a Band D property).

It was proposed that the Council agree option 1 of the budget report, resulting in a precept demand of £963,719.

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

It was proposed that the Council agree option 3 of the budget report, resulting in a precept demand of £949,719.

Proposed by: Cllr Alexander Seconded by: Cllr Davies

A recorded vote was requested.

In favour of option 1: Cllr Evans, Cllr Harman, Cllr Ashby-Parkin, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Gordon-Garrett, Cllr Veck, Cllr Rosser, Cllr Wood, Cllr Studd, and Cllr Griffiths.

In favour of option 3: Cllr Fabry, Cllr Alexander, Cllr Donovan, Cllr Sharkey, Cllr Davies, Cllr Gallagher.

By a majority vote of 10 against 6, the Council **resolved** to **agree** to option 1, representing a precept demand of £963,719.

C1317 TO RECEIVE VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE FOLLOWING TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (TFGs):

a. Youth Engagement

Cllr Sharkey gave an update on the progress that the TFG has been making, and will circulate a spreadsheet to all Councillors this week for comments about work that is taking place with youth.

b. Morrisons Development

The Town Clerk gave a brief update about the current situation with the Meridian Centre managing agents, who seem to be doing a good job. Cllr Davies informed the Council that the MP, Chris Ward is having weekly meetings now with Morrisons who will be putting a revised planning application into LDC soon.

c. Public Rights of Way

Cllr Campbell gave an update about the work of the TFG, noting that it is slow work but progress is being made.

d. Meridian Walk

Cllr Donovan informed Council that the Meetings and Projects Officer is now involved with the project and that by January the TFG should have the Points of Interest identified.

e. Communications, Advertising, and Promotion

The Meetings and Projects Officer updated Council about the work that the Public Relations Officer has been doing.

f. Sussex Nature Recovery

Cllr Gordon-Garrett informed Council that there is no further update from this TFG.

C1318 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 7.30pm.

C1319 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett

The Council **resolved** to **exclude** press and public from the remaining items on the agenda.

The Parks Officer, RFO, and remaining public left at this point.

NOTE: In accordance with Standing Order No. 3(d) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, the public and press are excluded from the discussion of the following items.

C1320 TO NOTE THE COUNCILLOR TRAINING PLAN

The Clerk introduced the report and explained that training opportunities would be made available to all Councillors, and that this will be progressed through the Personnel Committee.

The Council **noted** the report.

C1321 TO NOTE A REPORT RELATING TO COMMUNITY HOUSE FLOORING

The Clerk summarised the report which the Council **noted**.

C1322 TO RATIFY THE DECISION OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RELATING TO SECONDED OFFICER ROLES

The Town Clerk summarised the report and gave some background to the item that was discussed at the recent Personnel Committee meeting, the Meeting and Projects Officer then gave further insight into the seconded roles.

It was proposed that Council ratify the decision of the Personnel Committee to offer to make the seconded roles permanent.

Proposed by: Cllr Donovan

Seconded by: Cllr Rosser

The Council **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 21:43.