



The Queen's Hall
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Parish Clerk: Sam Heynes
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Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held at 7.30pm on 20th January 2022

Present: Mr A Burton (Chairman), Mr P Ceccherini, Mr J Dickie, Mrs A King, Mr S Oversby-Powell, Mr A Podmore, Mr M Sheldon, Mr A Symonds, and Mrs J White

In Attendance: Mrs S Heynes (Parish Clerk) and Cllr R Salisbury (District Councillor)

Public Question Time: None

FC159 To receive apologies for absence.
None received.

FC160 Declarations of Interest.
None.

FC161 To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16th December 2021.
The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2021 were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

7.35pm Cllr Dickie arrived.

FC162 To receive reports from the District Councillor and County Councillor.
Cllr Salisbury provided an explanation of the plan making process. The current District Plan had been adopted by MSDC in March 2018 covering a plan period of 2014-2031. However, the Inspector of the plan had unusually inserted a condition that the plan needed to be reviewed within 5 years of adoption - by March 2023. The work to refresh the plan would take approx. 2 years to complete and the first consultation period had been due to commence in February 2022. If the review was not completed, the District Plan would be deemed 'unsound' and MSDC would lose their housing 5-year land supply (previous Appeal costs have exceeded £3/4m).

At the start of the original District Planning process, MSDC had proposed an annual target of 600-625 houses, with an upper limit determined by MSDC of 800 houses per year. However, the government then introduced a 'duty to cooperate' with neighbouring councils who did not have the space to meet their own calculated need (the 'unmet need') and hence Mid Sussex was required to accept a 1,500 proportion of Crawley's 6,000 target.

Therefore, when the Inspector reviewed MSDC's District Plan he overruled MSDC's proposed housing target and increased this to 865 houses per annum over the plan period, ramping up from a slightly lower number in the first few years.

Furthermore, in 2021 central government issued a new planning White Paper which included a 'standard methodology' algorithm for determining district housing numbers for the country (based largely on demand). This pushed MSDC's target still higher to 1,096 dwellings per annum. This White Paper had recently been withdrawn by

Secretary of State Michael Gove, unfortunately to date the housing targets had not. Districts were also required by government to keep a 5-yearly rolling 15-year look-ahead of the Plan, which meant MSDC needed to understand housing supply up to 2037. So, taking into account the existing allocations, the already on-going allocation review (the site at Hanlye Lane) and the additional housing requirements, MSDC needed to identify locations for 7,000 additional properties to 2037.

As a result, MSDC announced another 'call for sites' for landowners and developers to identify potential housing locations last year. Most had previously been assessed and deemed not viable, but the new targets resulted in another review. The area between Cuckfield and Ansty was one such location that developers had promoted for some time and was now proposed to be allocated as suitable for 1,600 houses in MSDC's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

The SHELAA update had recently been published and consultation had been due to commence in February 2022. This would then have been included in the District Plan review re-inspection.

However, during the last week, two changes occurred:

- the Office for National Statistics published an updated national housing need assessment, which halved the requirement from 6 million to 3 million. It was not known what the regional variation of this would be.
- The government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had issued a statement that the new planning White Paper was 'imminent'.

MSDC had reviewed its position in light of these announcements and determined that progressing the District Plan review with these national policy uncertainties was premature, and therefore paused the process.

Cllr Salisbury explained how the social structure in smaller developments was difficult to manage e.g. doctors, schools, shops etc, as existing infrastructure would be used with the Developer making a financial contribution towards that.

The three major sites identified for new development (including Ansty) were all proffering new infrastructure; the 28 smaller sites would bring a financial contribution to existing services.

It was recognised that a key concern for the Ansty proposal was the additional traffic at the A272 roundabout; the developer had suggested a new link road through the site to mitigate this.

MSDC did not have to accept the plan proposed by the Inspector after the consultation period was over, however if they rejected the housing numbers outlined this would cancel the validity of their District Plan meaning they would lose control over future development within the area.

In summary, Cllr Salisbury recommended that the Parish Council prepare a paper for the formal consultation period once it had reopened to highlight its adopted position on the proposals.

Cllr Salisbury left the meeting.

FC163 To receive a report from the Chairman

Cllr Burton advised that a letter had been sent to Mims Davies MP regarding the ongoing matters at the Buttinghill site, and that in collaboration with Ansty & Staplefield Parish Council opposition to the proposed development south of Cuckfield would be launched.

FC164 To note the Full Council Action List

Action items were noted.

FC165 To approve Bank Reconciliation Statements for November and December 2021

The bank reconciliations statements were reviewed and approved.

FC166 To review and approve the current year to date budget and expenditure for 2021-22

Council reviewed the current year budget and noted the £1,500 forecast deficit for the rest of the year. This would be reviewed throughout the remainder of the financial year.

FC167 To review and ratify the proposed budget and precept for the forthcoming financial year 2022-23

Council resolved to increase the precept by 3% to £241,467, an increase of £0.09 per week for a Band D property. Council noted that the precept demand set by the Parish Council was the only part of the Council Tax collected that would be spent exclusively within Cuckfield.

Due to concerns regarding the forecast financial pressures on residents caused by the significantly increased costs of fuel and heating, and rising inflation, Council felt compelled to limit the increase for 2022-23. However, Council recognised the increasing inflation figure and that it would not be sustainable to maintain below inflation increases to the precept in future years, and that at some point it would be required to 'catch up' to ensure all services provided could continue as expected.

FC168 To review progress made against the Business Plan and agree priorities for 2022

Council resolved that the priorities for 2022-23 would be creating a communications strategy to include tourism, climate change and recycling initiatives, as well as continued work on improvements to Cuckfield Village Hall and the Angela Fox Nature Garden at the Queen's Hall. The Traffic Assessment plans would also be formalised and progressed.

FC169 To consider the proposal for the installation of CCTV at Broad Street toilets and the entrance to the Queen's Hall

Council resolved to accept the quote from Haven Security and proceed with installation of CCTV at the Broad Street toilets in an effort to reduce the levels of vandalism experienced over recent years. They also resolved to proceed with the CCTV to the outside of the front of the Queen's Hall, subject to agreement with MSDC regarding the placement of the camera due to the Queen's Hall being a listed building.

FC170 To consider the application to formalise a footpath across the Observer Field and Play Meadow

Council observed that witness statements which related to this application had not been attached to the paperwork and were also concerned as to why it had seemingly taken nearly 4 years for West Sussex Highways to submit the application notes to the Parish Council. The Clerk was instructed to follow up with WSCC regarding these points.

Council resolved by majority vote for the Clerk to respond to the WSCC consultation request that it had no concerns regarding the historical footpath identified in the paperwork crossing its land known as the Observer Field.

FC171 To consider events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend in June

Cuckfield Bonfire Society were likely to light the Beacon on Thursday 2nd June. Council resolved to form a working party to plan a Big Lunch event as a picnic in the park (on Cuckfield Rec). The Clerk would confirm the licence requirements for alcohol and live music. The working group would be formed of Cllrs Burton, Podmore, Sheldon and White and would investigate having food vendors and

entertainment available. The Clerk would arrange a meeting and invite members of Cucksoc and ISOC to attend.

FC172 To note the refund of £250 offered by Bevec following the issues experienced at the Christmas Street Festival

Council reflected on their disappointment in the event as the sound system provided and snow machine had been completely inadequate. The discount offered of £250 was considered insufficient and so they resolved to recommend to MSDC that they pay no more than £2,500 for the entertainment provided. The Clerk was also instructed to provide feedback to Bevec regarding the event.

FC173 To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting only.

None.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed _____

Future Meeting:
31st March 2022