



Draft Minutes of Extraordinary Full Council held on 23rd March 2020

Meeting commenced at 12.03pm

Minute	Action
3264	Attendance: Cllrs Baxter, Thornton, Aulton, Nicklen, Derham (Cllr Mansfield listening on telephone) Cllr Glynn Davies arrived 12.10pm Clerk : C. Stephenson
3265	Apologies : Cllrs Mear, Boggis Non attendance or apologies : Cllr Vimpany
3266	Contingency arrangements for Sompting Parish Council during coronavirus outbreak. The Clerk had previously circulated some proposed arrangements to all councillors prior to the meeting. These were each discussed in turn as follows : a) Parish Council's currently have no authority to deal with council/committee meetings by email, post, phone or virtually. Government advice is awaited on how to deal with this during this time. This is particularly important v.v. the Annual Council Meeting which at the moment must be held in May each year to comply with current Government legislation. NALC/SALC are currently lobbying the Government on this matter. NALC's advice is if the council does make decisions out of committees at the time, it is unlikely they will be challenged legally in the future given the exceptional circumstances. Agreed. b) To deal with this, extend delegation of Council decisions to the Clerk in consultation with Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of relevant Committee as and when necessary during any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus. Such delegation to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents. Agreed. c) The Council has been advised that, at this point in time, this year's financial closedown and end of year Internal Audit will be undertaken remotely by both companies. Formal Government advice is still awaited regarding these and this year's AGAR submission and external auditor arrangements. Agreed d) Councillors discussed and agreed to close the Harriet Johnson Centre to the public and the public conveniences on Sompting Recreation Ground from Tuesday 24th March 2020 until further notice in the interests of public health and safety. e) The caretaker/cleaner will continue to work at the Harriet Johnson Centre and public conveniences deep cleaning each room, painting, maintenance work until further notice. Agreed

Sompting Parish Council's mission: " To help foster a Sompting community which gives people a reason to be proud and engaged with the area we all live in"

- f) The caretaker will visit the Harriet Johnson Centre and public conveniences on Sompting Recreation Ground periodically to ensure all is safe and secure in the event of total closure. **Agreed**
- g) Offer office staff the opportunity to work from home with a requirement they monitor their emails remotely. Any staff who continue to work at the Harriet Johnson Centre (until such time as there is an instruction to close entirely and/or to stay at home) only one member of staff will be in an office at any one time and a rota, to be agreed between individual members of staff and the Clerk in this instance. The Clerk will have access to emails and other correspondence when working remotely. The latter currently being arranged. **Agreed.**
- h) Arrangements will be made to divert telephone calls to the Clerk's mobile line while the Harriet Johnson Centre is closed. **Agreed**
- i) The Groundsman/Conservation Officer will be asked to assist/cover for the caretaker/cleaner if necessary and visa versa. **Agreed**
- j) Invoices will continue to be processed by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk on a weekly basis. **Agreed.** Clerk to provide update reports to all councillors on Finance Committee, including end of year report i.e. income and expenditure up to and including 31st March 2020.
- k) In the event of the Payroll Company being out of contact, staff will continue to be paid the same amount as the previous month until such time as the Payroll company is operational again. **Agreed**
- l) Should there be a need to call an emergency meeting, all tables, chairs, handles etc will be cleaned, chairs will be placed at 1 metre distances apart, papers are already sent out electronically, length of meetings will be kept to a minimum. **Agreed**
- m) Where meetings are inquorate, urgent decisions will be made by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Council and Chair of that Committee, all other decisions will be held over to next meeting. **Agreed**
- n) Planning applications will be dealt with by email during this period. An agenda will be prepared as now and sent to councillors on Planning Committee who will then be required to log in to the Adur and Worthing Councils website to view the applications and then email any views they may have back to the Assistant Clerk/Clerk who will co-ordinate the council's response based on comments received. **Agreed**

Other Council matters

- o) Defer proposed public consultation on revised Neighbourhood Plan. In the meantime, the Clerk and Chair will continue to source the necessary maps etc ready for public consultation later in the year. **Agreed**
- p) Cancel this year's Sompting Festival 17th – 19th July 2020. **Agreed.** Might be possible to do something on History Day (September) or around Christmas time instead this year. Cllr Nicklen proposed spending remaining unspent grants budget to help individuals who may be struggling however councillors felt that, besides this being outside the current criteria, it would be difficult to set up and manage. Instead Cllr Baxter proposed that some of the remaining grants budget be allocated to Lancing and Sompting Foodbank by way of a grant, who are desperate for any help they can get with more and more Sompting residents presenting themselves each day. Cllr Mansfield asked if any help could be given to the homeless but after much discussion, councillors felt a) ADC/WBC would be finding ways to help homeless people funded by Central Government and b) that they would like to see this money go to Sompting residents. Therefore, it was **agreed** to allocate a grant of £750 from the Grants budget to the Lancing and Sompting Foodbank to help them in these exceptional circumstances and offer them space in the Harriet Johnson Centre for the storage of supplies if needed. Cllr Baxter to liaise with them and notify the Clerk if this offer is needed.

- q) Cancel further meetings on Malthouse Meadow both working group meetings with partners and further work on site which require others to be present. In the interests of limiting the risk to staff, councillors and the public, it was agreed that Cllr Glynn Davies would contact all MM volunteers and advise them of this decision. In the meantime, some of Groundsman/Conservation Officer's time to be allocated to plant as many remaining trees as he can and if any councillors wished to plant some trees they can, adhering to social distancing rules and using their own tools and at their own risk. Cllr Glynn Davies to advise ADC/WBC accordingly as their land. **Agreed.**
- r) Councillors were asked to acknowledge there may be a reduction in income during 2020/21 as a result of cancelled bookings for room hire etc and that this may well require the Council to revisit the budget for the year 2020/21 in the light of any losses in coming months. **Noted**
- s) Where bookings are cancelled for parties e.g. weddings, birthday parties etc, refunds will be offered if no alternative dates are suitable. Where bookings are cancelled for regular groups eg calligraphy, dance, yoga etc, it is suggested their monies will be held over in credit to when the classes start again. **Agreed**

Communications Strategy :

- t) Regular updates, contact details etc to be posted on the council's website, Parish noticeboards and Cllr Baxter will update Facebook on matters relating to Sompting Parish Council and its buildings and services to include Parish Council offices operating hours, contact details; reduced access to the Harriet Johnson Centre; bookings current/future ; help and advice as it becomes available etc.
- u) Adur and Worthing Councils, all Parish, District and County Councillors, MP, staff, suppliers, contractors, partners e.g. EPIC, Sompting Big Local, Sompting Estate, Sustainable Sussex etc will be notified of arrangements for Sompting Parish Council and any changes in arrangements during this time.
- v) Continually monitor any bookings currently in the diary over the coming months with a view to cancelling any bookings/classes/groups for as long as the Harriet Johnson Centre remains closed to the public. To date, all bookings have been cancelled up to the end of April 2020
- x) Agreed arrangements and contact details will be posted on the gates to the Harriet Johnson Centre and public conveniences until further notice.

Cllr Derham left the meeting at 12.50pm

3267 **Date of next meeting** - to be advised by the Clerk in due course

Meeting closed 12.55pm

Signed Chairman of the Council

Dated