

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

AMENITIES AND TOURISM COMMITTEE – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2023 at 7.00pm

Cllr J Belsey (Chairman)
Cllr Hughes (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Visser* (Town Mayor)
Cllr Ody (Town Mayor)

Committee: Cllrs Farren, Gibbs, Mockford, Peacock*, Pond*

* = absent

** = attended by Zoom (this does not constitute attendance of the meeting)

Others Present: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Community & Tourism Manager

131. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none

132. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were noted from

Cllr Peacock	away
Cllr Pond	Unwell

133. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations

134. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the 8th June and authorise the Chairman to sign them

135. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Fountain - planning is permission approved, now waiting for installation. The Society are planning an opening event. The Clerk has picked up again with MSDC re the agreement to pass the responsibility for the ongoing maintenance. Also thanks were given to EG Society for their endeavours to bring it back in to use.
- Millenium clock: The chair was pleased to say back in place and working

136. TOURISM REPORT

Alice updated the Committee, highlighting the merchandise sales and seeking of new sponsors.

She then referred to the guide and map asking the committee what they wished to do regarding new commissioning of maps going forward.

It was asked if the maps were out of date, hill place farm is not included, for example.

It was commented that people do go online now, maybe we should leave this for a further period and see where the demand for physical maps will go. There was felt to still be a need for maps for visitors and we need to ensure that maps of the town centre are needed.

RESOLVED: To defer for 12 months and to see in the meantime whether sponsorship may be possible from estate agents or others.

The remainder of the report was noted

137. ESTATES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

The Clerk advised as to the vandalism at the East Court play park and advised we do not have CCTV that carries that far. As it is a children's play park we need to assess the damage before we can allow it to be used. New equipment which has been mindlessly vandalised is very disappointing.

It was commented that the toilets are also an issue as the constant vandalism for the toilets becomes a neverending issue as to the costs for constantly repairing and keeping open. The Chairman thanked the staff in the team for their hard work and response to the public comments and complaints as to public realm.

The report was noted

138. BURIAL SERVICES

The Town Clerk referred to the reports and particularly the responsibility over the memorials and the reasons why this has come forward. The Vice Chair made reference to the recent visit. She commented on the warnings that the council have already put out regarding the identified monuments that need attention. There was additional comment as to the thoroughness of the report and the work that Sarah and John have carried out.

RESOLVED: To adopt the policy in the report with immediate effect, for use in the cemetery.

RESOLVED: To approve the steps as laid out in the report to complete the process of removing the Badgers from the QRC.

Harry was thanked for all of his hard work on Queens Road Cemetery, and Sarah wished well with completing the project.

139. FREE USE OF MERIDIAN HALL

Committee were supportive of the job fair event and wanted to be involved therefore to offer to sponsor the event rather than offering a discount or free use would be an option which the committee would support.

RESOLVED: Not to offer a discount but instead to recommend to F&GP committee that the Council sponsor the event through the appropriate budget so as to result in the event being a free hire.

140. EVENTS

The Chair introduced the item and said that we were not really in the position to have a Christmas market this year but was please that the arrangements for the Big Reveal has moved forward. The Clerk was asked to update on the effect these events have on staff time. The Clerk clarified that events need supporting by all if they are to be successful and that staff come with a cost. If they are at a weekend event they are not then in the office for other duties. It was said that the Christmas Market has not been here for a few years and that it could come back next year at a wow, a big event which adds to the Christmas period, rather than something which looks a bit sad as we are not able to get a lot of support in stalls or resources.

It was commented that trying to put something together for next year would be better and to get a head start on other events. Maybe we could work with twinning or other groups to do something a bit different to add to the festive events in 2024.

RESOLVED:

- 1 To approve that a Christmas market should be organised for 2024 and to leave the lights switch on at the Big Reveal for the time being.
- 2 Committee approved the outline of the events but now to include a Christmas market also

141. D DAY 80TH

The Chairman introduced the item, there was much enthusiasm for the commemoration and to consider that the community is fully involved.

There will be further discussions before the next meeting with the idea to finalise the programme for the day. There was interest in including the schools and choirs to make it a very inclusive event through the generations.

There was concern as to the budget being adequate and to ensure that the costs were known and the finances in place going in to 2024.

The Clerk also asked whether a projection on to the East Court building (if not too expensive) for the whole week from East Court Live to the Friday would be of interest. This was favoured if it could be afforded.

RESOLVED: To approve the DDay 80th outline but to continue discussion until the next meeting to be able to finalise the programme. Accepting that the budget needs to be adequate and some items may need booking to secure the date.

142. ST MARGARETS LOOP

The Chairman read a report from West Sussex County Councillor Jacquie Russell

I had a meeting with both the Cabinet Member and Director of Highways at lunchtime today, where they gave me the County Council's position on this matter and their proposition going

forward to help support the Town Council to realise its ambition to create a woodland walkway along St. Margaret's Loop.

In response to my concern regarding any duty of care by Highways, the Director of Highways outlined that it is not uncommon for bridges to be owned by other organisations, provided the County Council has carried out its due diligence i.e. obtained the requisite insurance and inspection documentation from such owners. They are comfortable with this position with respect to a duty of care to road users on roads that traverse such bridges.

In terms of the outcome of the recent inspections, the Highways Director outlined that for the County Council to simply adopt the bridges, this would cost the authority £180k for immediate repairs, £200k per bridge commutable sum to cover ongoing risk. Total cost approximately 600k.

The Highways Director fully acknowledged that the Town Council would not be in a position to put up this kind of money so he proposed the following:

That the Town Council instruct a consultant with a specialism in bridge structures and converting old railways to come up with a scheme and demonstrate how this scheme will be funded. He said that Highways would be happy to work with the Town Council in terms of technical support, advice and guidance to help bring any scheme to a conclusion, but the cost of putting the scheme forward would have to be met by the Town Council.

If the Town Council were able to put forward a viable scheme and demonstrate how this will be funded for consideration by the County Council, then the County Council would consider the scheme and ultimately investing in the adoption of the bridges to enable the scheme to progress.

He then made some proposals around the project to take this forward.

Cllr Russell was thanked the clear explanation and coming in timely for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1 The Clerk be instructed to contact RPL to ascertain the current position and their agreement to the overall land transfer and the county proposal
- 2 Go ahead with the retaining wall survey,
- 3 Approach land logical to see if they can provide the plans and if so a what cost, and if not then we go out to tender for the plans to be drawn up.

143. ST BARNABAS HALL

The Chairman introduced the report and thanked the offices for all their work on this. The work is envisaged to be competed around the end of the year/ early January.

RESOLVED: To delay the opening of the hall to the public until the work has been completed to insulate.

144. COMMUNITY BONFIRE

The committee noted the report.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 20.03.

Signed
Chairman

DRAFT