



Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee on Thursday, 5th December 2024

Held at the Council Chambers, 37 Church Street Seaford, BN25 1HG at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors M Wearmouth (Chair), I Taylor (Vice Chair), S Ali, C Bristow, S Dubas, O Honeyman, R Honeyman, S Markwell, J Meek, G Rutland and L Wallraven

Steve Quayle, Interim Town Clerk

Lucy Clark, Responsible Financial Officer

Sharan Brydon, Assets & Projects Manager

Georgia Raeburn, HR & Governance Manager

There were seven members of the public in attendance.

CS22/11/24 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

CS23/11/24 Disclosure of Interests

Councillor L Wallraven declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Vice President of Seaford Lifeguards.

CS24/11/24 Public Participation

Speaker	Statement
Resident A	<p><i>Agenda item 4.2 – Hope Gap Steps</i></p> <p><i>Expressed that the steps are an incredible, valuable resource that provides access to some of the UK’s richest marine habitats. As a natural reef, this is a huge educational resource but access is needed to allow this to happen.</i></p> <p><i>Confirmed that the rock pools are only accessible from the steps but not Cuckmere River.</i></p> <p><i>Shared that they had witnessed a large rescue this summer, where medics used the closed steps to attend this.</i></p>

	<p><i>Posed three questions to the committee, relating to whether an expert has been used to identify the issues and solutions, how many times officers have met with Natural England to discuss construction of cliff side steps, whether the Town Council has contacted National Trust and used their experience of freestanding steps as seen at Birling Gap. Expressed that they are committed to ensure access is reinstated and decisive action taken by the Town Council</i></p>
Town Council Response	<p>Thanked the resident for their contribution.</p>
Resident B	<p><i>Agenda item 4, point 7 - Concessions</i></p> <p><i>Thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak and confirmed that they were here as concessionaire and a Seaford resident.</i></p> <p><i>Explained that they were advocating for a fair resolution to challenges surrounding the newly refurbished Martello Café in recent months. Since opening, they have experienced major challenges and that this has had a major impact on a new start up business – during key summer months - and the financial viability of this.</i></p>
Town Council Response	<p>A point of order was raised and the Chair confirmed that public participation must relate to an agenda item to comply with Town Council policy.</p> <p>Thanked the resident for their contribution.</p>
Resident C	<p><i>Agenda item 4.2 – Hope Gap Steps</i></p> <p><i>Shared that Hope Gap Steps represent a doorway to the beach and rock pools for children, somewhere to picnic, explore and sit, good for mental health and used by local artists, as well as the Hollywood film ‘Hope Gap’.</i></p> <p><i>Shared that despite no direct access, the steps are still used by an awful lot of members of the town. Does not think townspeople know enough about what going on and if more public awareness is required.</i></p> <p><i>Is aware of the tensions with looking after the wildlife but feels this and the health and safety risks can be managed.</i></p>

	<i>Hopes the Town Council protects an iconic part of the landscape, bears in mind the emergency access and does not close the steps.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution and confirmed that all points would be addressed during discussion later in the meeting.

CS25/11/24 Projects & Facilities Update Report – December 2024

The Committee considered report 117/24 informing the Committee on progress and actions relating to the Town Council’s assets and services.

Members discussed Martello Changing Places Toilets and the trial of access by Radar key, Seaford Christmas Magic and a report back to this Committee, the ongoing maintenance of overgrowth at High & Over, Hope Gap Steps (the timeline of work on Hope Gap Steps, liaison with Natural England, options for access to the beach, diagnosis of the issues with the steps in order to explore repairs options, understanding of the restrictions of the SSSI before a structural engineer is engaged to look at the steps), the success of the dog waste bin project and the public communication to raise awareness of this, the possibility of a replacement bin at Blatchington Pond, and repair works on the East Street Town Council noticeboard.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

CS26/11/24 Town Council Projects Log as at December 2024

The Committee considered report 116/24 presenting to the Community Services Committee the Town Councils Project Log as at December 2024.

Members discussed the public toilets projects including toilet cleaning, the proposed living bus shelters and previous consideration of this by Full Council at the 28th March 2024 meeting, the Bishopstone bus shelter vandalism, an update on Fields in Trust, an update on The Crouch Working Group and how this will progress to reach a resolution on this, the provision of a new Seaford Lifeguards post on the seafront, an update on motorhome parking, the rainbow bench project, the use of grazing to tackle overgrowth at High & Over and specific land ownership boundaries onsite, the grass cutting on green spaces and urban verge cutting, an update on the defibrillator at Bishopstone. The Committee thanks was given to the public, SCIP and officers for their hard work to deliver the lantern parade at Christmas Magic.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report and the project log as presented.

(7.52pm to 7.57pm – a short break was held and all members of the public exited the meeting)

CS27/11/24 Community Services Income & Expenditure up to 31st October 2024

The Committee considered report 119/24 presenting the Community Services Committee of Income and Expenditure up to 31st October 2024.

Members discussed the income and expenditure figures year to date, the swimming pool budget and an upcoming meeting between partners, the breakdown of sports pitch hire, the D-Day budget and whether the underspend could be earmarked, the budget for VE Day in the 2025 – 2026 financial year, and when the pitch hire fees will be reviewed.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

CS28/01/24 Community Services Draft 2025-2026 Budget Report

The Committee considered report 115/24 presenting the draft Community Services budget for 2025 – 2026 for consideration by the Committee.

Members discussed the level of council tax increase, the lease and ownership of The Crypt, the Crouch Gardens hire charges including the football pitch and the possibility of supervision during hires, and the urban grass cutting contract and the difference between geographical and methodological changes.

Thanked the officers for the detailed budget report.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** the draft 2025 – 2026 Community Services budget to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration.

CS29/11/24 Exclusion of the Press & Public

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public **BE EXCLUDED** from the meeting during the discussion on the remaining items of business for the reasons as set out on the agenda.

CS30/11/23 Richmond Road Car Park EXEMPT

The Committee considered exempt report 118/24 recommending to Full Council to rectify an administrative error resulting in the legal transfer of Richmond Road Car Park from Lewes District Council to Seaford Town Council in 2005.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that Full Council agrees to the transfer of ownership of Richmond Road Car Park back to Lewes District Council under the General Disposal Consent 2003.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Councillor M Wearmouth
Chair of Community Services

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