



## Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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 and L Wallraven

Sharan Brydon, Assets & Projects Manager

Paul Quanstrom, Temporary Senior Projects Officer

Georgia Raeburn, HR & Governance Manager

There were 11 members of the public in attendance.

### CS31/03/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Rutland.

### CS32/03/24 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests.

### C33/03/24 Public Participation

Speaker	Statement
Resident A	<i>Regarding agenda item 4, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to discuss the parking difficulties at South Hill Barn that the growing visitor numbers have caused. Expressed concerns that those visiting are often taking a photo and going again, with no reason to stay or spend. Queried why not direct visitors to The View, with refreshments, facilities and ample parking. Expressed concerns about the consequences of national / international social media campaigns that encourage visitors. Requested that the Town Council consider an informal meeting, such as that arranged for the Lewes Local Plan, to monitor and respond to the ever-evolving issue. Queried if a councillor could be given tourism as part of their portfolio, so the public have a dedicated point of contact. Flagged that</i>

	<i>repairs are needed to the footpath from South Hill Barn to the Coastguard Cottages and concerns that this is not currently accessible to those with mobility issues. Suggested that, as a part of the 'Miles without Stiles' route, the Town Council may wish to consider how to enhance the picnic area and encourage those with mobility issues to visit, such as through accessible tables and chairs. Suggested that an employed bid writer would enable access to external funding to improve accessibility and Hope Gap Steps too.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.
<i>Resident B</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 4, wanting to speak as a local tour operator across the South Downs. Confirmed that they had sent a letter to the Committee expressing their concerns about the proposed height barrier at South Hill Barn and the impact this would have on their tours that are carried out by their fleet of three 16-seater minibuses rather than coaches. Provided the Committee with an overview of their 10-year old company, its goals of showcasing the South Downs and Seven Sisters, the awards won, other partners worked with, and the most popular tours which brought 6,000 people to enjoy South Hill Barn's views last year. Confirmed that the tours are always small, sustainable groups and employ guides from the local area, as well as contributing to the local economy. Confirmed that a height barrier would impact on older guests and travellers with limited mobility. Welcomed if the Town Council wanted to discuss this matter more and thanked for their time and consideration.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.

*(7.12pm - Councillor C Bristow entered meeting)*

<i>Resident C</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 4.1, expressed concerns relating to access to the Martello Changing Places facilities being by Radar key and this making it a target for vandalism and theft of the expensive equipment on site.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.

<i>Resident D</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 6 and representing the Vanguard Way Association, encouraged the Town Council to look at repairing the Hope Gap Steps where possible. Explained that the Vanguard Way runs through Seaford and forms a large part of the King Charles III footpath. Added that the Association would be looking to consult on the future of the Chyngton Brooks project, which would see the Vanguard Way be redirected over other land with risks of water surges of low-lying land, including a small segment of Town Council land.</i>
Town Council Response	Confirmed that the Chyngton Brooks project has been initiated by National Trust, with the plan to breach a couple of points of the public bridleway to the west of the Cuckmere River to allow flooding. Confirmed that the Town Council is liaising with the National Trust to clarify the ownership of the land in question.
<i>Resident E</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 6, queried if the Town Council was aware that a marine licence would be required since the base of the steps are below the high-water mark. Suggested that the Town Council ensure it is submitting as much design and application information as possible to Natural England to help with the pace of the process. Queried if the Town Council would be looking at the National Trust's prefabricated steps at Birling Gap, to ensure a design of a durable nature. Asked if anything is currently done to protect the moon carrot wildflowers onsite from walkers.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.
<i>Resident F</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 4.8, raised concerns about conflicts of interests with the awarding of previous concession contracts. Queried why existing vendors are not given right of first refusal. Expressed concerns with the concession scoring matrix and the fact that the price scoring is done proportionately meaning that there is more weighting on price than on quality and type of offering. Suggested that a fixed flat fee would enable tenders to be assessed purely on merit. Shared that following; an unsuccessful bid in 2024 and asking</i>

	<i>for feedback, they received an anonymised copy of the scores of all applicants.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution.
<i>Resident G</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 4, queried what the reason was for the Town Council doing away with successful businesses that have invested heavily and will be losing their livelihood. Expressed concerns that a successful business poses much less risk than a new smaller business. Shared concerns that a concession has broken its contract by not opening when it should be. Sought clarity as to whether the same company had been awarded more than one concession in the recent process.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for their contribution and confirmed that it would not be appropriate for the Town Council to respond specifically to these.
<i>Resident H</i>	<i>Regarding agenda item 4, confirmed that the iconic view of the Seven Sisters is actually outside of the town and district boundary and that the privilege of that view comes with its difficulties. Thanked the Committee for having an item on the agenda to look at interim measures at South Hill Barn. Confirmed that the recent meeting with residents and councillors, including representatives of other local authorities, saw Lewes District Council agreeing to fund a survey by East Sussex County Council to do a highways report on the traffic in Chyngton Way. This report would allow the County Council to evaluate the traffic on the road. This will complement the survey being carried out by the Town Council. Confirmed that the South Downs Local Plan is looking at regenerative tourism and it is hoped that the Lewes Local Plan will go that route. Queried if Seaford Head would consider having local ambassadors on site to aid with visitor experience and education? Expressed concerns that coach parking is causing problems on the streets around South Hill Barn, although recognising that there are positives such as having toilet facilities and regulated drivers. With regards to the specific</i>

	<i>measures set out in the report, shared concerns that additional car parking would be on land covered with designations, they did not understand the proposals for signage but did suggest the use of QR codes so this is accessible in other languages. Offered to share the traffic survey that residents had undertaken. Queried if monitors / marshals onsite would help. Requested an informal meeting take place so discussions on parking can take place involving residents.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked all residents and groups that have undertaken surveys and shared the data, which will aid with bringing together a plan.

### **CS34/03/24 Projects & Facilities Update Report – March 2025**

The Committee considered report 166/24 informing the committee on progress and actions relating to the Town Council's assets and services.

The Chair reminded that Committee received some written submissions that have been received from the public.

Members discussed ensuring the Seaford Christmas Magic date compliments other local events, the success of 2024 Seaford Christmas Magic and the need for budgetary considerations, Martello Changing Facilities consultation dates and format, Christmas Lights and the financial viability of rental versus purchasing, South Hill Barn Working Group's work reviewing the traffic issues at the Barn site and consideration of the public comments made at the meeting, the safety of the pitch surround barrier of the football pitch within The Crouch, and the work undertaken to review the access method for the Changing Places unit.

**CS34.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**CS34.2** It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the 2025 Seaford Christmas Magic event being held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

**CS34.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that works continue to investigate the interim measures set out within the report to help with parking congestion at South Hill Barn in summer 2025.

**CS34.4** It was **PROPOSED** to **DELEGATE** power to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Community Services and Councillor Representative to Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve Management Committee and Chair of South Hill Barn Working Group, to agree the interim measures to be taken forward at South Hill Barn; the **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

*(7.54 to 8.01pm – a short break was held whilst nine residents exited the meeting)*

### **CS35/03/24      Community Services Income & Expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

The Committee considered 164/24 informing the Community Services Committee of income and expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

Members discussed that the Christmas Magic Group would review the budgeted income and expenditure figures, the request from a bank signatory for a breakdown of the event costs, the positive impact of the engagement work and partnership approach with Christmas Magic, options to review the future format of the Christmas Magic event and the income generation, repairs within the Crouch play area and plans for the remaining budget, and quotes being obtained to carry out repairs to the Town Council's bus shelters.

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

### **CS36/03/24      Hope Gap Steps Update and Next Steps**

The Committee considered report 165/24 providing an update on the on the progress of work undertaken to date and the proposed next steps to continue this work assessing the medium to long term solution with Hope Gap Steps.

Members discussed making sure to consider a full options appraisal with longer term solutions and being mindful of this with any short to medium actions that could be, liaising with the National Trust to seek any recommendations on expert firms used, liaising with stakeholders and getting the necessary permissions including the Marine Management Organisation.

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

*(8.23 to 8.28pm – a short break was held whilst one member of the public exited the meeting)*

### **CS37/03/24      Relocation of Compostable Toilet Units**

The Committee considered report 167/24 updating the Committee Community Services Committee on the relocation of the Compostable Toilet Units and seek approval of the specific location.

Members discussed the security of the toilets, the attraction of motorhomes / overnight camping, the level of accessibility to the proposed path / ramp to the toilet units, concerns about introducing toilets onsite and the costs of provisions given the level of usage, timescales for reviewing the toilet provision within the Crouch, and ensuring instructions for toilets in multiple languages / pictorials.

**CS37.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**CS37.2** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the compostable toilet unit being relocated to South Hill Barn will be placed outside of the courtyard area, on the grassed area adjoining the West Barn.

**CS37.3** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the recommendation not to relocate one of the compostable toilet units to The Crouch.

**CS37.4** It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the second compostable toilet unit is also placed at South Hill Barn.

### **CS38/03/24 2025 West View Beach Huts Scheme**

The Committee considered report 176/24 updating the committee on delivery of the West View Seasonal Beach Huts and seek approval of a new flat rate daily hire.

Members discussed the success of the previous beach hut scheme and daily hires, definition of 'a day' and the logistics of management onsite, siting of the huts and avoiding a chicane on the promenade, and the location of the seasonal beach huts and whether permission can be sought to move these further up the prom.

**CS38.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report

**CS38.2** It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** a new daily hire structure for all eight beach huts for the peak and off-peak seasons.

### **CS39/03/24 Town Council Projects Log as at March 2025**

The Committee considered report 174/24 presenting the Committee with the Town Councils Project Log as at March 2025.

Members discussed the format of presenting the project log going forwards and linking this with the Town Council's Strategic Plan, progress with the Fields in Trust designations and Lewes District Council being encouraged to consider this for The Downs site.

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

### **CS40/03/24 Community Services Committee Overview**

The Committee considered report 175/24 providing an overview of the Committee's activities ahead of the introduction of the new committee structure in May 2025.

**CS40.1** It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

**CS40.2** It was **PROPOSED** to **AGREE** to pass a motion of thanks to all current and former members and officers of the Community Services Committee – including the Climate Sub-Committee - for their role in driving and supporting the work of the Committee; the **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

*Councillor M Wearmouth*

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Chair of Community Services