

HAILSHAM FORWARD

Stakeholder Group Meeting

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 10.00AM ON 1 AUGUST 2014 AT
THE DIPLOCKS HALL, THE DIPLOCKS, HAILSHAM

Attendees:

Peter Sutcliffe: Hailsham Trust
Tammy Mill: Hailsham Trust
Rob Slater: Federation of Small Businesses
Anton Bree: Chairman Hailsham & District Chamber of Commerce
Irit Meyer - representing St Marys Walk
Jeremy Shepherd - representing St Marys Walk
Jan Townsend: Tomorrow's People
Jenny Seale: Hailsham Farmers' Market
David Turton: Hailsham Farmers' Market
Ralph Olesen: The Link Hailsham
Cllr Amanda O'Rawe: Hailsham Town Councillor
Cllr Nick Collinson: Wealden District Councillor
Cllr Nigel Coltman: Hailsham Town Councillor
Cllr Paul Holbrook: Hailsham Town Councillor
Cllr Jo Bentley: Hailsham Town Councillor
Cllr David White: Hellingly Parish Councillor
Cllr Bill Bentley: East Sussex County Council
Nigel Hannam: Wealden District Council
Michelle Gray: Wealden District Council
Suzanne Collins: Hellingly Parish Council
John Harrison: Hailsham Town Council
Mickey Caira: Hailsham Town Council
Michelle Hagger: Hailsham Town Council
Terry Hall: Hailsham Town Council

Also in attendance Councillor Nigel McKeeman: Wealden District Council - Streets Ahead Project.

1. Election of Chairman:

Cllr Coltman was proposed and seconded to be chairman of the Hailsham Forward Stakeholder Group for the coming year. There were no other nominations. The meeting voted unanimously to elect Cllr Coltman as Chairman for the year.

2. Introductions and Apologies:

Cllr Nigel Coltman thanked everyone for attending and invited all those present to introduce themselves to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:
Peter Sabine: Representing Mr Charles Hendry MP
Steve Wennington: Hailsham & District Sports Alliance
Mr Charles Hendry MP
Carolyn Fogg - Tomorrow's People
Kay Coxon - PPDG
Sgt Mark Ritchie: Sussex Police
Phil Matthews: Hailsham Community College
Lee Hawkins: Job Centre Plus
Cllr Roy Galley: Wealden District Councillor

3. Notes of meeting held on 2nd May 2014:

The notes of the meeting held on 2 May 2014 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising:

MASHH - Councillor Jo Bentley highlighted the consultation that had taken place in recent months and that feedback on the draft plans for the town centre roads, was mostly positive. The next step on the town centre project was for the Lead Member at East Sussex County Council to agree and sign off the scheme in September and then if accepted start the works in early 2015.

Wealden District Council - Car Park Review - Nigel Hannam updated the meeting on the review. He stated that public consultation on the car park orders will take place soon and be held over three months. It was anticipated that the orders will be put into place in early 2015 and will link into the MASHH project as far as possible.

Community Forum Project - Councillor Collinson reported that the Forum was building momentum with new ideas and input from the community groups coming forward at each meeting. He confirmed that the Hailsham Street Market will be providing a stall at each market for the groups to use to promote what they do. This was to start at the next market on 2nd August. Councillor Collinson thanked Michelle Hagger for co-ordinating the group. The next Forum meeting will take place at St Mary's Church Lounge at 6.00pm on 5th August.

St Mary's Churchyard - Councillor Coltman outlined details of the meeting held between the Executive Team and representatives of the Church looking at the potential to make the churchyard a public open space in the centre of Hailsham. This included dealing with disabled access issues via the existing gate entry points and steps from Vicarage Field and how to relocate, or lay flat grave stones. Councillor Bill Bentley asked if there was funding for the project? Mickey Cairra advised the meeting that the Church has some funds that are available from a bequest and will be looking for additional funds to help pay for the project as it moves forward over the next couple of years.

Safety & Security - Councillor Collinson advised the meeting that a pub-watch scheme had been established in Hailsham and the first meeting of the scheme had recently taken place.

Town Centre Cycle Storage Facility - Nigel Hannam reported that the new cycle storage facility was 75% built on the old toilet site in Vicarage field.

Constitution - Councillor Coltman asked if anyone had any further amendments/comments on the constitution issued to all Stakeholders following the last Stakeholder meeting? There were no comments put forward .

5. Review of the Plan for Hailsham:

Councillor Coltman introduced the latest Plan for Hailsham that was circulated with the agenda. He stated that the Executive Team had reviewed the Plan at its last meeting and the Team had agreed that all the actions were important for Hailsham and as a result did not produce a priority listing for these action points.

Councillor Collinson commented that there was work happening on most of the action points and the only "outstanding" project was the Hailsham Lottery. Councillor Coltman highlighted the fact the Hailsham Forward was not the delivery agent for most of the priority actions, but was the linkage, stimulating action by the relevant organisations or agency.

Councillor Jo Bentley asked that Environment Hailsham join the Stakeholder Group as they provide much of the town centre floral displays. The Group agreed to the inclusion of Environment Hailsham in future meetings.

Anton Bree confirmed that the Chamber of Commerce were arranging some remedial works to the front of the empty Downland Carpet shop as part of the Chamber's work to reduce the number of dilapidated buildings in the town centre.

Councillor Jo Bentley asked if these premises were going to be redeveloped as it had put forward a planning application for works. Anton Bree stated that the owner did have plans but these would not see any work on the frontage for some time and on this basis the Chamber would get on with the work as soon as possible.

Councillor Bill Bentley made reference to the employment and training action point on the Plan and stated that whilst the unemployment rate in Hailsham had fallen to 2% this was high compared with the overall rate of 0.9% for Wealden. He suggested that more needs to be done to find out what skills gap there is, especially on the industrial parks in the town. He advised the meeting that he was looking to put together a £100,000 bid to the local enterprise partnership to fund training and skills to meet the local needs of employers and get local people into work. He suggested that Hailsham Forward should be part of this project which would include work to establish what skills gap exists locally.

Councillor Bill Bentley asked if a permanent site had been found for the Street Market gazebos. Mickey Cairra advised the meeting that no site had been found to date and the Executive Team would continue to work on a solution and thanked the owners of Vicarage Field for allowing the gazebos to be stored on an empty shop.

Councillor McKeeman commented that the action "Communication with parties both inside and outside of Hailsham" was a good point and something that the Street Ahead Project would be working on. He confirmed that the Streets Ahead Project would help to get the message out to the whole of the Wealden District.

Councillor Bill Bentley suggested that the fire to the pier in Eastbourne could have a negative effect on Hailsham as visitors could be put off visiting Eastbourne and the surrounding areas, but opportunities for business may arise from those businesses who are unable to trade as a result of the fire.

Councillor Collinson advised the meeting that more businesses from the industrial parks will be added to the Town & Shopping Guide in the near future together with details of the local community groups.

6. Update Report on the work of the Executive Committee:

Website:

Councillor Collinson asked for the website to be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Signage:

John Harrison updated the meeting on the proposal to have brown tourist signs on the A22 directing traffic into Hailsham. He stated that the Pavilion, Hailsham Parish Church and Freedom Leisure do not meet the requirements to have the appropriate symbol displayed on the brown tourist sign. He suggested that this will need to go back to the Town Council's Business Enterprise Committee for further discussion.

Councillor Bill Bentley suggested looking again at using private land to position the directional signs.

Shop Fronts:

Councillor Bill Bentley asked if the damaged vinyl rap on the old Sovereign Meat shop was going to be replaced. Mickey Cairra confirmed that he has received replacement pieces that will be installed in the near future.

Town & Shopping Guide - Community Group Listing:

Ralph Olesen asked if a hard copy of the guide can be produced and made available for those who do not use smart phones. Michelle Hagger is in the process of putting the community list together and will produce a hard copy of the list that will also be sent out to all new residents as part of the Hailsham Town Council welcome letter.

7. Appointment of additional members to the Executive Team:

The following nominations for the membership of the Executive Team were received and agreed by the meeting.

Hailsham Town Council: Councillors Coltman and Holbrook
Hellingly Parish Council: Councillor White
Wealden District Council: Councillor Collinson
East Sussex County Council: Councillor Bill Bentley
Chamber of Commerce: Anton Bree
Federation of Small Businesses: Rob Slater

The remaining places will need to be continually reviewed to find suitable members for the Executive Team. This includes a young person's representative and it was suggested that Hailsham Community College are contacted.

8. Any Other Business:

Councillor McKeeman stated that he was impressed by the diverse range of involvement of Stakeholder representatives at the meeting and as part of the Streets Ahead project wanted to demonstrate to other Wealden towns what can be achieved; and asked if he can invite other town representatives to the meeting. This was agreed by the meeting.

David Turton advised the meeting that farming in East Sussex was very much limited to sheep farming as other livestock and arable farming was no longer economically viable. This was limiting the amount of local produce available for farmers' markets and reducing the size of the Hailsham Farmers' Market. He suggested that the Hailsham Livestock Market Site could be used more, including a food festival.

Councillor Collinson suggested that Wealden could look at this in the future as it was arranging a food festival at Pevensey Castle in August.

Councillor White asked if anyone was aware of a venue that could accommodate a boxing club 80 x 30 in size. The Club if established would provide a place for young people to use and help cut down anti-social behaviour. The Firstfields site in London Road and Roebuck Park have already been suggested but may not be suitable. Anton Bree said that he may have a suitable location if the club can be located on the first floor.

Councillor White commented that feedback should be given to Wealden in respect of the Site Allocation Plan 6,000sqm of retail space in Hailsham town centre. This could involve the redevelopment of the Quintin's or Vicarage Field and a review of the Conservation Area? More retail space will be required as there will be a 37% increase in population from 2005 to 2027. Both the Executive Team and Hailsham Town Council have provided feedback to Wealden.

Anton Bree confirmed that the Chamber had responded to Wealden suggesting that larger retail units were required to complement the smaller High Street shops.

Councillor Bill Bentley commented that the whole of the towns' retail space should be reviewed.

It was acknowledged that Hailsham town centre could not sustain pure retail and that the way forward was for leisure, pleasure and some retail.

The next meeting will take place around the end of October.