

HAILSHAM FORWARD

Stakeholder Group Meeting

NOTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 10.00AM ON 13TH
OCTOBER 2017 AT
THE DIPLOCKS HALL, THE DIPLOCKS, HAILSHAM

Attendees:

Mickey Caira: Hailsham Town Council
Ben Pratt: Hailsham Farmers' Market
Richard Grocock: Environment Hailsham
Dermot Clarke: DWP
Jackie Akehurst: DWP
John Harrison: Hailsham Town Council
Terry Hall: Hailsham Town Council
Irit Meyer: representing St Marys Walk
Jeremy Shepherd: representing St Marys Walk
Jan Townsend: Community Representative
Cllr Chriss Triandafyllou: Hailsham Town Council
Cllr Nigel Coltman: Hailsham Town Councillor
Cllr Gavin Blake-Coggins: Hailsham Town Council
Christian Letschka: Hailsham Town Council
Cllr Nick Collinson: Wealden District Councillor

1. Introductions and Apologies:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited attendees to introduce themselves to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:

Nus Ghani MP
Cllr Gerard Fox ESCC Councillor
Cllr Roy Galley: Wealden District Councillor
Rev David Farey: Vicar of Hellingly and Upper Dicker
Alice Matthews: Sussex Community Development Association
Steve Wennington: Hailsham Active
Hellingly Parish Council
Cllr Amanda O'Rawe: Hailsham Town Councillor
Trina Mayson: The Now! Charity Group Ltd
Clive Soper: Federation of Small Businesses
Kay Birch: Wealden CAB
Michelle Gray: Wealden District Council
Marina Briggishaw: Wealden District Council
Nigel Hannam: Wealden District Council

Phil Matthews: Hailsham Community College
Cllr Bob Bowdler: East Sussex County Council
Steve Scott: Advice on the formation of C.I.C.
Ralph Olesen: The Link

2. Notes of meeting held on 14th July 2017:

The notes of the meeting held on 14th July 2017 were agreed as an accurate record, with one amendment, to note that the meeting was not the AGM as stated.

3. Matters Arising:

The Chairman commented on the changes to the town centre and the work being undertaken to try and protect the new footways with the use of planters/bollards. He also mentioned that ESCC are considering civil parking enforcement for the whole of Weadlen, this would take up to two years to put into place if agreed and could see traffic wardens in Hailsham Town Centre.

4. Update on the Work of the Executive Team:

Formation of Community Interest Company

Mickey Caira highlighted the work undertaken to date to bring the papers to the meeting for a decision on the formation of a CIC.

Shop Fronts

Mickey Caira highlighted the investment made by several town centre businesses in the past year demonstrating the positive impact to the town centre.

Town & Shopping Guide

Mickey Caira confirmed that the Guide is maintained to ensure that it is up-to-date. The Guide includes all the businesses in the town centre, some of the industrial parks, details for many of the local community groups and the Hailsham Heritage Trail.

Hailsham Street Market

Mickey Caira highlighted the on-going issues of the low number of traders. This will be discussed later the agenda.

Events

The Chairman highlighted the successful events held during the summer and thanked those who have contributed.

Hailsham Card

Mickey Caira stated that the scheme has expanded recently in Hailsham with the number of participants doubling during the past year.

Pop-Up Shop

Mickey Caira stated that there have been many tenants using the shop since its launch in the spring and is now fully booked for the remainder of the year. Councillor Collinson stated that the rent is £100 per week and the Chamber of Commerce are looking to extend the project for the future. He also stated that one of the intentions for the facility was to bring market traders to the pop-up shop and then into a shop within the town centre.

Community Forum

Councillor Collinson commented that the Community Forum had been a great success for Hailsham Forward and more importantly for the town. He wanted to thank Michelle Hagger for all her hard work in getting the forum to where it is today.

Industrial Parks

Mickey Caira highlighted the parking, access and egress issues on the Diplocks Industrial Estate. He confirmed that the Executive Team have requested that the Town Council make an area of unused open space, adjacent to the industrial estate at the Country Park end of the estate available for car parking to help alleviate some of these issues. The Town Council have agreed in principle for this land to be used for car parking, however, there are many issues to overcome before the area could be used for car parking.

5. Formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC).

The Chairman posed the question does Hailsham Forward want to move to a formal partnership under a CIC.

Mickey Caira introduced the Memorandum of Association (MOA) as circulated to the meeting. He highlighted one error on the front page with the word “no” that should read “not”. He stated that if the meeting voted to move to a CIC then the MOA would be checked for any more typo’s, before being presented to the regulator. He highlighted the benefits of moving to a CIC. These are mainly financial, including the potential to save on the £2,000 business rates bill for the Street Market and access to funding not available currently, as the Town Council is acting as an accountable body to the partnership, which excludes many of the funding opportunities.

Councillor Collinson highlighted the achievements of the partnership to date and the benefits of the partnership being “outside” of the Town Council although with the support of officers of the Council.

Questions were raised in respect of how much the Town Council will support the project in the future if it moves to a CIC. Mickey Caira confirmed that it would be down to the Council to confirm its commitment in officer time to the project, at any time in the future. John Harrison suggested that there may need to be a formal agreement between the Council and Hailsham Forward on the level of officer time provided by the Council and what the Council wants Hailsham Forward to provide.

Irit Meyer questioned the potential for additional costs in moving to a CIC such as audit fees. Ben Pratt stated that these are only around £200 for the

Farmers' Market. Councillor Collinson suggested that a local accountancy firm may offer a competitive rate to assist the partnership in the future.

The Chairman asked if the meeting wanted to support the move to a CIC. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Hailsham Forward forms a CIC under the terms of the Memorandum of Association (MOA) as presented to the meeting. (note: none of the officers of Hailsham Town Council or the DWP took part in the vote).

6. Confirmation of the First Set of Directors of the CIC

Mickey Caira highlighted the need for the members of this meeting to agree to the appointment of the first set of directors of the CIC; as all directors must be approved by the members (current stakeholders) and the names must be available in the submission of the MOA. Jeremy Shepherd questioned if the current stakeholders can legally do this before the CIC was set-up. Mickey Caira could not answer the question, so the meeting agreed that, subject to the legal position, all current members of the Executive Team will be offered to become directors in the CIC and in the meantime the Executive Team will make the application to the Regulator and continue with their work.

7. Hailsham Street Market.

Mickey Caira highlighted the on-going issues with the lack of traders at the Street Market and asked the meeting to agree that the Executive Team can review the market and implement changes without referring to the Stakeholders at its next meeting in January 2018. He explained that the market operates from January to December and any changes should be made before the market re-opens in January and therefore before the Stakeholders meet again.

Councillor Collinson stated that the market has been successful in the past and has also allowed the local community to use the market. He questioned whether the market needed to be more business focussed.

Irit Meyer commented that retail is down across the country and this will have an impact on the market. The internet is the main competitor with companies like Notonthehighstreet.com.

Suggestions to be considered by the review to be carried out by the Executive included:

- focus on traders that can supply what is not available in Hailsham town centre, such as clothing
- regular music at the markets to make them more attractive.
- Review of the price of the market stalls
- Need to complement what is available in Hailsham town centre

Dermot Clarke stated that EDEAL are looking to support start-up businesses that could include market trading and he will advise them of the potential opportunity to trade at Hailsham Street Market.

Councillor Blake-Coggins has been speaking to market traders from other markets to try and encourage them to trade at the Street Market. He has a cloths trader interested but they would require at least three stalls to accommodate their stock. Mickey Caira confirmed that there is no problem with a trader having three stalls at a normal market. The only issue would be at event market where it is more difficult, but not impossible to accommodate one trader in three stalls.

Irit Meyer stated that she is willing to provide short term tenancies at St Mary's Walk to help encourage new traders into Hailsham, to try before making a longer-term commitment.

The Chairman asked the meeting to consider the proposal by Mickey Caira to allow the Executive Team to review and implement any changes to the Street Market following the review. The meeting voted unanimously to allow for the review and any identified changes, but not to close the market.

8. Future Dates for Meetings.

The date of the next meeting will be notified in due course. It will be sometime in January

9. Any Other Business:

None.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and their input to the meeting.