



Seaford Town Council

Report 66/17

Agenda Item No:	7
Committee:	Council
Date:	19 th October 2017
Title:	Clerk's Report
By:	James Corrigan, Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To update Councillors of key developments that the Town Clerk has been involved in since the last Clerk's Report on 20 th July 2017.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

1. To note the contents of the report.
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1. Information

- 1.1 **Outstanding Freedom of Information Act requests, complaints and compliments**, since the last Council meeting there have been twelve Freedom of Information Act requests; eight in respect of a former employee, two in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan and two in respect of disabled access provision to services. Most requests could not be complied within in full due to personal data and pre-publication exemptions.
- 1.2 There have been no official complaints but a number of informal complaints again in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, there have been several complaints about the presence of motorhomes and caravans on the seafront, not about any activity from the occupants merely the presence. There has also been a complaint about some overgrowth around a bench which the Councillor's contractors had been asked to address in good time but unfortunately did not happen.
- 1.3 There have been compliments in respect of a variety of Council activities including the Seaford In Bloom efforts, the new beach huts, The Shoal (including flowers for a member of staff) and the process being followed to design the new skatepark.
- 1.4 **Press release and communications**, since that last Clerk's Report there have been 18 press releases issued to over 20 press organisations and to several hundred residents who have now registered to receive all communications from the Town Council. The press releases covered a diverse range of subjects from the launch of the new beach huts for sale and the Mayor's Garden Trail, to taking home your litter from the beach.
- 1.5 The engagements on social media have been very high with some posts receiving over 12,000 views. An excellent newsletter has just been produced and work will start soon on a Council tax leaflet to be distributed with Council tax bills in April.
- 1.6 **Staffing update**, as Councillors are aware the recently adopted new staff structure has been implemented with several internal changes involving the office team. A

copy of the new allocation of roles and responsibilities has previously been circulated to Councillors. As a result of the new staff structure the Council has welcomed three existing members of staff on a permanent basis, namely Simon Andrews (Finance Assistant), Sue Treadwell (Administration Assistant) and Nathan Sutcliff (Assistant Greenkeeper). This was just reward for the excellent contributions all three have made to the Council since commencing work for the organisation. We have also welcomed on a part-time basis a new Responsible Financial Officer, Karen Singleton.

- 1.7 The View has now got a full complement of chefs with the appointment of Kamila Konopka and Joshua Pingram to work alongside Head Chef, Nelson Prudencio. Natasha Naylor has also been appointed as a second Supervisor. All have settled in well and are performing very well for the business. Currently The View is in the process of recruiting a new Assistant Manager, which is proving difficult, as well as a new position of Apprentice Chef.
- 1.8 Unfortunately, Craig Williams (Projects & Facilities Manager) has tendered his notice and will be leaving us shortly. By the time the Council meeting takes place hopefully his successor will have been appointed, as second interviews have been scheduled at the time of writing.
- 1.9 **HR Support**, following the re-organisation, the Town Clerk and Executive Support Officer will be developing a new induction, training and employee support programme and management systems. A Councillor programme will similarly be developed in due course.
- 1.10 **Councillor Development**, several internal training sessions have been organised as part of the ongoing programme of Councillor development. These have included two sessions for the Planning & Highways Committee on Tree Preservation and more recently on the Highways Section of East Sussex County Council and its role in responding to planning applications.
- 1.11 For all Councillors there have been several training sessions. This started with a site visit of the Town Council's main sites including the new beach huts, The Salts, The Crouch, South Hill Barn and The View and Seaford Head Golf facilities. The next session on Council Strategies and updates took place on 31st July covering many areas including; the Staffing Review, the Neighbourhood Plan, implementation of the Seafront Development Plan, implementation of The Salts Development Plan, developing the Business Plan for The View, developing targets across the Council, progressing Planning Applications to bring in capital receipts and developing a five-year budget and alternative business budget.
- 1.12 The training session on 7th September covered the National Association of Local Council's guide for Councillors "The Good Councillors Guide". Latterly a session was organised for 12th October on the Code of Conduct which was expertly delivered by the Monitoring Officer and Assistant Monitoring Officer from Lewes District Council (LDC).
- 1.13 **Central Management Team**, the Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, Finance Manager and Projects & Facilities Manager will be working together to develop a new Central Management Team meeting programme and review internal governance to provide better quality control systems but equally reducing bureaucracy whilst increasing autonomy.
- 1.14 **Budget Setting**, officers and budget managers are creating the draft budgets already. It is anticipated that a draft three-year budget will be available for all Committees. It

is also planned to draft aspirational budgets based on business performance as well as the standard clear projections that can be made for other budgets.

1.15 This will include budgets for businesses such as The View, Seaford Head Golf Course, the Seafront and capital sales based on targets. This type of budget is target driven so cannot be used to determine the budget proper and consequently the Precept, as there are no guarantees aspirational targets will be achieved.

1.16 **Office premises** for Seaford Town Council; further to previous updates on the proposals to look for alternative suitable accommodation for the Town Council, East Sussex County Council has published its library review report, which did not mention any possibility of the Town Council and County Council working closer together to deliver the library and other services from the existing library. However, since this report discussions have been ongoing with which County Councillor Boorman has been assisting. As a consequence, a further meeting is due to take place imminently to explore all potential options.

1.17 **Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL)** the new system of collecting funds from new developments came into place within Lewes District in 2016. The funds collected from new builds however constructed since this date is due for its first distribution on the 28th October. Following enquiries, it has been revealed that the funding Seaford Town Council will receive on this date is £9,000. Similar to capital receipts this funding has to be spent on certain capital projects. As Seaford Town Council has many capital projects over the next 18 months this should not present an issue. Ultimately with this type of funding if it is not spent within a reasonable time the developer can request its return. Whilst there is not definition of reasonable time the previous time period for Section 106 funding was typically five years so a similar period would be reasonable. This will be a welcome addition to the Council's finances as no provision was made for this income as the level is so unpredictable.

1.18 **The View support**, The View Brainstorming team was established in June and has met three times to come up with solutions to issues and plans for the maximising of business at The View. This team is made up of the General Manager and Finance & Events Assistant from The View, Finance Manager, Executive Support Officer, Projects & Facilities Manager and Town Clerk. This has proved very successful and has brought about a number positive changes. The level of support in terms of hours from the Town Clerk has significantly reduced as the General Manager, Craig Nicol, establishes himself and continues with his excellent start to managing the venue.

1.19 **Seaford Head Golf Course support**, is required from time to time to assist with issues such as planning challenges to the tee signs, dealing with residents complaining of thistles and looking at ways to save time to allow more time to be given to the essential jobs on the course. Also monitoring the monthly financial performance at the course and meeting with the Golf Professional and Head Greenkeeper to assess the finances. The issue of new warning signs along the cliff edge are being investigated; full risk assessments are being conducted.

1.20 **Leases updates**, the Council has been tidying up all its land holding information and registrations but there is a significant amount of work still to do in this regard. The leases that were requiring attention are all now complete or progressing towards completion. Those that are complete include Seaford Museum and more recently (since the last meeting of the Council) Seaford Head Nature Reserve, the first ever lease with Sussex Wildlife Trust.

1.21 The leases outstanding but nearing completion are;

- (a) Old Town Hall Lease - Engrossments going out today with Statutory Declaration and Notice.
- (b) Crouch Bowling Club – Lease going out this week.
- (c) Arts@the Crypt – Awaiting receipt of signed lease by tenant, sent out 3rd October.
- (d) Seaford Rugby Club – Awaiting comments on draft lease from Rugby Club.
- (e) Community Gardens (The Crouch) - Sent engrossed lease for signature on 18th August and awaiting return.
- (f) Seaford Cricket Club - Awaiting response from Cricket Club on draft lease.

1.22The Executive Support Officer, Georgia Raeburn, is doing some excellent work to finally drill down into all the Council's land ownership and ensure that everything is in order. Even now anomalies from the past are being discovered, all of which do take some time to put right. The intention is that at the end of this project all land registrations will be in order, all deed packets will be properly collated and indexed and the Council's digital mapping system, Parish Online, will be fully up to date and include all Council assets, thanks to the self-trained efforts of Projects & Facilities Supervisor, Emily Piper.

1.23**Litigation**, the claim against a former employee for overpayment of wages has progressed and has been defended with a counterclaim made. The drawing up of the defence and response to the respondent's defence has taken up a significant amount of officer's time as all old files have had to be revisited to secure all relevant facts. Additionally, to enable the matter to proceed correctly solicitors have now been appointed to handle the matter for the Council. There will remain the requirement for additional officer support as the case hearing nears. It is likely that officers will be required to give evidence at the hearing also.

1.24The pending claim in respect of a former tenant at Hurdis House has not progressed. The bundle of evidence needing reviewed includes several boxes of documentation; a volunteer has offered to review this once time permits. The claimant however has not been in touch for a little while.

1.25A possible claim for compensation that has arisen due to the development of The View and impact on a business is being negotiated at present with a view to bringing a potential settlement offer to the Council as soon as possible.

1.26The potential claim from the Council's landlords at 37 Church Street has now been settled and a £2,500 reduction agreed to the figures presented to Council on 20th July.

1.27**Neighbourhood Plan**, the Neighbourhood Plan has gone through a lot of issues over the recent past but the team have managed to make significant progress. This has inevitably taken up a significant portion of the Clerk's time with further work still to be carried out by the Clerk. Thankfully an end product is in sight however, with the draft Plan and non-technical study and supporting documentation appearing elsewhere on the agenda to enable adoption of the draft Plan to take place and public consultation to commence.

1.28In addition to the extra support for the Neighbourhood Plan in general, a lot of support has been given to attempt to resolve outstanding issues with the section in the Plan devoted to Green Spaces. This has been reviewed and re-written several times. The latest incarnation is still not complete at the time of writing but will have been circulated prior to the meeting.

1.29**Planning matters**, the Council has dealt with many "run of the mill" planning applications that Seaford Town Council now expertly responds to thanks to the input of Planning Officer, Geoff Johnson, and the training provided to the Planning &

Highways Committee, as well as the amazing dedication of its members who faithfully view all planning applications in such detail. In addition, there have been several significant planning matters to deal with that have been responded to. These include the Newlands development; an objection letter has just been sent to the Secretary of State who will have to consider the matter in view of the Sport England objection. Significant effort has been put into addressing resident's concerns surrounding the lack of action at the Talland Parade development, indications are that this pressure has paid off and action is imminent.

- 1.30 In addition to dealing with third party planning applications the Town Council has been making its own applications. It has successfully secured outline planning approval for The Holt before selling the site for £169,500; £29,500 more than budget. An application has just been submitted for the new Martello toilets with one imminent for the land off North Way and another for the land at Southdown Road.
- 1.31 The impact of extra work on the Neighbourhood Plan has been that **The View Business Plan**, whilst very close to completion, is not yet totally complete. Preliminary discussions have taken place with stakeholders including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Golf & The View Committee. The preliminary draft does indicate positive projections for the venue especially with some minimal capital investment which will generate a return on investment in a short period of time, with increased profits thereafter. Once the draft is complete it will be shared with Councillors and included on the agenda for the Council meeting on 26th January 2018.
- 1.32 **Design of the Martello toilets**, there has of course been a significant amount of effort put in to design the Martello Toilets that meet the needs of all stakeholders. A report appears elsewhere on the agenda to hopefully agree to a final design of this much requested facility.
- 1.33 **Review of Seaford Development Plan**, as with any project plan, changes occur as the plan is progressed and implemented. This is especially the case where you are not in control of all factors. As a part of the new governance systems referred to above in section 1.5, the new plan will be tested by all officers to ensure it is as robust as possible. There are a number of changes to accommodate in the plan including price changes, excess income from land sales, a VAT charge to be levied on beach hut sales, the up to date position of beach hut sales and any other changes to the plan which have emerged as it has progressed and will continue to progress over the coming months.
- 1.34 The implementation of the plan is progressing well and will be reported separately to the Community Services Committee. It is worth noting that thanks to a letter to E.ON (the organisation constructing the Rampion Wind Farm off the coast) from local resident Sylvia Dunn, that a Rampion telescope is due to be installed adjacent to Frankie's Beach Café in the next few weeks. This fits in with the plan and will be a fantastic new feature.
- 1.35 **Review of Strategic Plan**, as with the above it is good practice to review key strategic plans as work progresses the implementation of the plan. During recent recruitment interviews it has been a common theme that applicants have viewed this plan and complimented the Council on its clarity and measurable goal setting. An ongoing review is taking place with all relevant officers. As this is an interim review it is not planned to fundamentally change the direction of the strategic plan simply to review the delivery dates and allow for the recent changes in the staff structure to be
- 1.36 **Housing Surgery at Seaford**, many Councillors are aware of the recent withdrawal of the housing surgery in Seaford. As a result of the issues raised by Councillors,

members of the public and the Tourist Information Centre staff, the Town Clerk contacted LDC multiple times eventually resulting in several meetings to discuss the issues around this service. It is recognised that LDC is having to make financial savings however, after listening to the feedback, LDC this week indicated that the housing surgery will be reinstated imminently.

1.37 Attendance at events, the Town Clerk recently attended the East Sussex Association of Local Council's annual conference together with Councillors Brown and Lower and Planning Officer, Geoff Johnson. Councillor Wallraven in her capacity as Mayor officially opened the event.

1.38 The Conference was held at The View for the first time; the event itself was a success but equally it did highlight some of the weaknesses in the design of The View which have already been addressed in the draft business plan. Fortunately, some of these can be relatively cheaply addressed, some require more investment. The conference itself was very useful and notes from it have been shared with Councillors.

1.39 On 11th October, LDC held its annual Parish and Town Council Conference, which the Clerk and Planning Officer attended as well as Councillors Wallraven and Lower. This was extremely informative and consisted of a number of presentations from various sections of LDC including the Chief Executive Officer with a brief overview of the financial constraints that LDC is operating under, and Neighbourhood First which is an exciting new initiative to deal with all front-line issues through a small team of officers based largely on the street, dealing with everything from noise nuisance to complaints about crime hotspots. There was also a presentation on the new waste recycling scheme being rolled out across the District and the progress on the new Local Plan. Finally, there was a session on Dementia awareness. Once the slides have been supplied these will be again shared with all Councillors.

1.40 Community Talks, the Town Clerk has been invited to speak at two events of late, namely Seaford Film Club and Seaford Probus Club. As with all the recent talks that have been given to several similar groups the opportunity is taken to let residents know what Seaford Town Council is doing for the town. The response is always very positive with most residents being surprised by just how much the Town Council does.

1.41 Finally, since publication of the agenda the Town Council has been approached by an artist with a request to place a **large art sculpture** temporarily at Bönningstedt Parade. The details of this are supplied separately at Appendix A. This is classed as an event for officer decision but in this case it has been decided that before making the decisions Councillors will be consulted before doing so.

2. Financial Appraisal

There are no financial considerations as a result of this report.

3. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is James Corrigan, Town Clerk.

Town Clerk



Report 66-17 Appendix A

Request to place The Tempest. The Shore art sculpture at Bonningstedt Promenade

The following request has been received from local artists Louise Turner and Brian Mander to place the above sculpture at Bonningstedt Promenade on a temporary basis.

The Tempest. The Shore. Is a sculpture conceived by the artist Brian Mander in 2016. It is comprised presently of one hundred reinforced concrete tetrahedral forms, each weighing approximately one hundred kilos. The final sculpture will eventually amount to two gross or two hundred and eighty eight pieces. This number is in reference to a line of Ezra Pound's 1920 poem, 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', in which he rails against the insurmountable flood of philistinism of the 'modern age'. They take their form from the geometric concrete tetrapods which are industrially manufactured and placed in vast interlocking piles along coastlines to protect against coastal drift and shoreline erosion. They are also piled in the sea as a method of island building.

Brian Mander said, "The essential narrative of this sculpture began a couple of years ago when I chanced upon a small shattered and weatherworn stone figurine in a local flea market. I was immediately drawn to this forlorn and broken likeness of a child, being instantly taken back to the catastrophic moment when my son was born, grey and lifeless due to an unexpected natal trauma. This discarded object was for me loaded with emotional potential and so I bought it with the intention of reanimating the child within the context of a larger sculpture, raising issues about the weight of responsibility we bear, and the duty of care we have as parents towards our most vulnerable offspring. Coincidentally as I began to conceive the sculpture, photographs began to emerge in the media of drowned refugee children washed up on the beaches in Greece and inevitably the themes of the work broadened significantly. The tetrapods are symbolic of extended territories, demarcation of boundaries, structures of indifference, and of compassion. The armatures of these tetrapods are formed by multiple cast variations of the child sat on a bell or buoy, enfolded, harnessed or bound with rope, or something like an umbilical cord. This can be read as protecting the children by raising them out of the waves, magical water babies riding the surf on the backs of fishes, or caught up in flotsam of discarded and entangled fishing gear threatening the safety of the children. I appreciate the threads and ideas might be difficult to disentangle and therefore troubling to some who find themselves emotionally adrift on an ocean of inchoate thoughts on life and death but I believe art possesses a transcendent quality when it stands us on the boundary of chaos and order, symbolised by the tempest raging against the firm shore, revealing conflict and demanding resolution, expressing without compromise the suffering and the tragedy, the joy and the passion, that life is".



