



Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee on Thursday, 30th May 2024

Held at the Council Chambers, 37 Church Street, Seaford, BN25 1HG on Thursday 30th May 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors M Wearmouth (Chair), C Bristow, S Dubas, O Honeyman, R Honeyman, S Markwell, J Meek, I Taylor and L Wallraven
Adam Chugg, Town Clerk

Louise Lawrence, Head of Assets, Projects & Services

Georgia Raeburn, Governance Manager

There were 13 members of the public in attendance.

CS01/05/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Ali and G Rutland.

CS02/05/24 Disclosure of Interests

Councillor L Wallraven declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 as the Vice-President of Seaford Lifeguards.

CS03/05/24 Public Participation

Speaker	Statement
Resident A	<i>Regarding agenda item 12 and the temporary arrangement of the Seaford Lifeguards hut, expressed their shock at the lack of communication with the lifeguards in relation to the Martello Toilets refurbishment and queried the revision to the building design. Expressed concerns about the proposed location, temporary building and its associated risks, and electric and water supply. Requested that the Committee consider housing the volunteer lifeguards within the refurbished Martello Facility.</i>

	<p><i>Regarding agenda item 5, requested that the Town Council publish a schedule of grass verge cuts and also urged the Committee to ensure cut and collect features in the contract.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding agenda item 5, and following an email sent to Town Councillors, queried the Martello Toilets redesign and one long bench being replaced with two benches, requesting that this change be reversed. Furthermore, whilst understanding the need for improvements at Place Lane toilets, asked why the Town Council would collaborate with the District Council on this when the Town Council does not own the toilets. Linked to that, asked for an update on a decision on South Street Toilets.</i></p> <p><i>Requested a written response to their queries.</i></p>
<i>Resident B</i>	<p><i>Relating to agenda item 8, expressed concerns about the struggle to access information around the management of Seaford Head, as one of the Town Council's main assets and the lack of regular updates and continuity of information on its management. Suggested that the Committee is not in a position to make a decision about what should be done onsite and postpone the report pending further information to support it.</i></p>
<i>Resident C</i>	<p><i>Relating to agenda item 8, expressed concerns that there may be a continuation of a right of way at Hope Gap Steps and a legal obligation for the Town Council to care for the facility. Does not feel that closure of the steps and a right of way is acceptable due to: the right of tradition, it being a popularly frequented area for the Seven Sisters including with international visitors, interrupt tourism money brought to the town, and the need for clear safety notices of getting cut off by the tide. Endorsed what had already been heard at the meeting and asked for clarification and urgent action in restoring the facility.</i></p>
<i>Resident D</i>	<p><i>Regarding agenda item 8, confirmed that there had been no attempt to fix the steps, preserving access to the rock pools teaming with wildlife and complementing the option of using</i></p>

	<p><i>South Hill Barn as an educational centre. In addition, expressed concerns about the beach being a safety point for walkers and kayakers if cut off by the tide. Feels that people will climb up and down whether closed or not. Quoted the Beachy Head to Selsey Bill management document, stating that funding should be available for repairs. Queried if a feasibility study on repairing the steps has been completed and costed.</i></p>
<p><i>Resident E</i></p>	<p><i>Regarding agenda item 8, stated that as a right of way, the steps should not have been closed without permissions being sought. Stressed that the steps and beach are an important amenity of geological interest and a tourist attraction, which the Town Council should be supporting. Stated that there has been custom and practice of maintaining the steps, that this should have happened to prevent the steps becoming dangerous and that the Town Council should have allocated funding towards this.</i></p>
<p><i>Resident F</i></p>	<p><i>Relating to agenda item 6, providing an overview of their concession offer for the local community, its sustainable approach and providing local employment. Shared concerns around not scoring enough points in the recent tender exercise and requested that the Committee considers ways to enable them to continue to trade, as they meet the need of residents and visitors to use the seafront safely and if unable to trade, would have to shut their company down.</i></p>
<p><i>Resident G</i></p>	<p><i>Relating to agenda item 8, read on behalf of another resident, expressed dismay at the steps not being repaired. Shared the numerous times they have seen people stranded on the beach and the loss of the steps providing real danger for this occurring. Stressed that this is a unique and valuable area for rock pools, marine life and geology. Questioned if the filming revenue is ringfenced to maintain the area, quoting the income in the previous two financial years. Urged that whilst the SSSI designation protects the landscape, this need not be exclusive of responsible enjoyment of the area.</i></p>

<i>Resident H</i>	<i>Regarding item 10, thanked the Committee and officers for the report being on the agenda following lots of time going into this. Stressed that they are in attendance to answer questions if that will help, including with the location. Shared the support that has been received for an inspirational design, raising awareness of plastic pollution and commemorating Clare Sumner's legacy.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked all residents for their contribution and confirmed that their comments would all be considered during the relevant agenda items.

CS04/05/24 Community Services 2023 - 2024 Year End Financial Report

The Committee considered report 15/24 presenting the 2023-2024 year-end financial position of the community services committee.

Members discussed the surplus funds and their transfer to General Reserve at year end, how filming income is utilised and this helping offset the management costs for the Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve, and the use of projected costs or year to date actuals to aid councillors with understanding the financial performance of the Committee.

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

CS05/05/24 Community Services Committee Overview 2023-2024

The Committee considered report 17/24 providing the Committee with an overview of its activities and achievements during the 2023 - 2024 municipal year.

Members discussed the grass verge map that identifies areas of responsibility for cuts, the District Council's trial of a bin with a wildlife flap and the need for clearer messaging the Town Council's project for new bins to be installed and utilising the District Council's guidance on this, the less complimentary feedback received in relation to the compostable toilets, and the feasibility of doing cut and collect of grass verges including considering financial implications and a better understand of the impact on soil quality.

The Committee had an in-depth discussion on the Bönningstedt concession, the applicant not being successful, how to support applicants in this process and ensure it is equitable, consideration of best value with the concession opportunity, and considering the possibility of bringing a report to June Full Council to consider the circumstances of the Bönningstedt concession.

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

(8pm – three members of public exited the meeting)

CS06/05/24 Projects & Facilities Update Report – May 2024

The Committee considered report 16/24 informing the Committee on progress and actions relating to Seaford Town Council's assets and services.

Members discussed the complaints about the compostable toilets and this linking to the number of toilets available as we enter peak season rather than the cleaning, which has been of a good standard and frequency. Members discussed the urgency of multiple agencies coming together to resolve cleaning and condition issues with the Place Lane Toilets.

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

CS07/05/24 Town Council Projects Log as at May 2024

The Committee considered report 21/24 presenting the Town Council's Project Log as at May 2024.

Members commended the Projects Log and amount of work. Members discussed how the projects are prioritised and this being operationally-driven, the new bus shelters and liaising with the County Council on input into the design and environmental considerations, the inclusion of the rainbow bench in the log, the status of the Martello Entertainments Area and financial contributions towards this, safety and waste signage on Seaford Head at Cuckmere Beach, the lack of bus shelters in Bishopstone, and the partnership approach with Seaford Christmas Magic and the Town Council taking a larger role in enabling and engagement.

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

CS08/05/24 Hope Gap Steps Closure

The Committee considered report 19/24 updating the Committee on the ongoing closure of Hope Gap Steps due to health and safety reasons and discuss facilitating the Town Council considering the permanent future of Hope Gap Steps.

Members discussed the health and safety grounds for keeping the steps closed, the requirement of other authorities to give permission before any works can take place, the option for obtaining quotes for the work in order to get the steps open, the complexity of the situation given the large range of interests onsite, considering a phased approach and feasible ways in which to get steps open in the shorter term and consider longer term access and design, the possibility of using a wooden overlay as a shorter term option, any public right of way status on the steps, the need to scope out with the various stakeholders,

considering the seasonal priorities of the Town Council's projects, the public frustration as a result of the closure and the urgent need for greater communication, the residency of a colony of the rare potter bees in the cliff face, the need for all evidence put down in a balanced way by all stakeholders to be examined by the Town Council on behalf of the community,

It was **PROPOSED** to **CONFIRM** the Town Council will leave Hope Gap Steps closed for the summer 2024 season whilst it gathers information ahead of considering short, medium and long term assessment for a more sustainable solution. The short term stage to be to commission an expert to identify what the issues are and what solutions are available for presenting to the other stakeholders to ascertain permission likelihood and timeframes, reporting back to this Committee at 6, 9 and 12 months; this **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

(9.26pm – eight members of the public exited the meeting)

(9.26 - 9.31pm – a short break was held)

CS09/05/24 2024 Seahaven Pride Event

The Committee considered report 20/24 seeking approval for a grant in kind to Seahaven Pride, should they acquire charity status ahead of the 2024 event.

Members discussed the importance and positive impact of this event, considering avoiding the setting of a precedent, other pride events within the Seahaven area and other towns support of this, and ensuring a system that is able to fairly consider access to and requests for grants in kind.

CS09.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the Town Council offering a grant in kind for the 2024 event as per report 20/24.

CS09.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an official statement of the Town Council's being released.

(9.43pm – Standing Order 3t was suspended to enable the meeting to exceed three hours)

CS10/05/24 Plastic Free Seaford Bench

The Committee considered report 23/24 presenting details of the proposal for a Plastic Free Seaford memorial bench on the seafront.

Members discussed the admirable work of Plastic Free Seaford to drive forward this piece of work, the continued discussions around location of the bench, the bench design and materials used, the postponement of the Memorials Policy and impact of this, the possibility of the Town Council introducing a plastic receptacle on the seafront, and the legal impact of allowing use of Town Council land for a third party's asset.

CS10.1 It was **PROPOSED** to **APPROVE** the installation of the memorial bench on Seaford Promenade; this **MOTION** was **NOT CARRIED**.

CS10.2 It was **PROPOSED** to **DEFER** consideration of this to the September Committee meeting, requesting that further consideration be given to the design, location, function and the legality of using, and tenure over, the land; this **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

CS11/05/24 Seaford Storm Boards

The Committee considered report 18/24 updating the Committee on the management arrangement for the Seaford Storm Boards.

Members discussed the signage and the Environment Agency having financial responsibility of the boards.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report and support the new management arrangements in place for the storm boards along the Seaford promenade.

CS12/05/24 Temporary Arrangements for Seaford Lifeguard's Hut report

The Committee considered 22/24 providing an update on the temporary arrangements for the lifeguards hut on Seaford seafront.

Members discussed it not being feasible to house the lifeguards within the new Martello Facility, fresh water supply and wastewater, and apologies to the lifeguards for not having identified a solution at the point of designing the Martello Facility.

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

The meeting closed at 10.28pm.

Councillor M Wearmouth

Chair of Community Services