Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 28th May 2020 at 7.30 pm via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing.

Members Present:

Cllr Stephen Hand (Retiring Chairman)	Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn (Chairman)
Cllr Allan Brown (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Tony Lank
Cllr Peter Griffiths	Cllr John Lowman
Cllr Rodney Jackson	Cllr Claire Majsai
Cllr Seth Jee	Cllr Duncan Ranger
Cllr Martin Machan	Cllr Julia Shorrocks

Also Present: Cllr Joy Dennis (WSCC), Cllr Alison Bennett (MSDC), Sarah Groom (Clerk to the Council) & Andy Beams (Interim Finance Officer)

The retiring Chairman of Council Cllr Stephen Hand chaired the meeting until the new Chairman Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn was elected. Cllr Hand thanked everyone for supporting him in the role of Chairman for the last five years and as Vice-Chairman for the previous three years. It had been an honour and a privilege to serve the parish Council but now was the right time for a new Chairman.

C20/21.001 To elect the Chairman of the Council and receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman of the Council. Members received one nomination for the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year, proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Ranger, and there being no other nominations, Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn was duly elected Chairman of the Council. Cllr Llewellyn will sign the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman of the Council following the meeting, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council ELECTS Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn as the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.**

The Chairman of the Council, Cllr Llewellyn, extended his thanks to Cllr Hand on behalf of the Parish Council for leading the Council with such clear direction for the last five years and under whose leadership the Parish Council had achieved so much and extended its services to include Hurst Meadows, the woodlands, Court Bushes, the Village Centre and Millennium Gardens.

C20/21.002 To receive and record apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received before the meeting and accepted from Cllrs David Evans, Michael Avery and Bob Sampson.

C20/21.003 To receive and record declarations of interest. There were no declarations of interest.

C20/21.004 To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council and receive the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman of the Council: Members received one nomination for the Vice-Chairman of the Council, proposed by Cllr Lank and seconded by Cllr Ranger, for the ensuing year and there being no other nomination Cllr Allan Brown was duly elected Vice-Chairman of the Council. Cllr Brown will sign the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman of the Council following the meeting, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council ELECTS Cllr Allan Brown as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.**

The Chairman of the Council, Cllr Llewellyn, extended his thanks to Cllr Lank, on behalf of the Parish Council, for his excellent work in supporting the Chairman of the Council in the role of joint Vice-Chairman for the preceding year, together with Cllr Brown.

C20/21.005 To elect Councillors to serve upon the Council's Committees, Panels and Working Groups and to elect Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each. Members considered the membership of the Council's Committees, Panels and Working Groups. Each Chair agreed to continue in their role, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the list of membership and Chairs of the Committees, Panels and Working Groups for 2020/2021 and each Committees, Panel and Working Group will elect their Vice-Chairs at their next meetings.**

C20/21.006 To appoint Council representatives to other organisations for 2020/21. Members considered the list of Council representatives to other organisations for 2020/21. The role of representative to on the Horsham and Mid Sussex HAMSVA is to remain vacant. The role of representative to the St George's Millennium Garden Trust is to be deleted from the list as it is no longer relevant. Cllr Shorrocks wishes to remain the representative on the St Lawrence Fair Committee. The Clerk will ensure Cllr Evans is receiving the Green Circle Network Steering Group correspondence, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES and ADOPTS the list of representatives on other organisations for 2020/21, as amended.**

C20/21.007 To receive and accept the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2020: Members reviewed and agreed the minutes and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2020.**

C20/21.008 To consider whether to adjourn the Meeting in accordance with Standing Orders to receive questions from members of the public in attendance: Members considered whether to adjourn the meeting in order to receive questions from members of the public in attendance. There were no members of the public present as part of the video conferencing meeting, although an invitation had been made on the published agenda for the public to join the meeting.

C20/21.009 To receive verbal reports from Representatives of other Authorities: The following reports were received as follows:

C20/21.009.1 Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC): Cllr Bennett reported the following key points:

i) The green waste collection service had now been reinstated and to let her know of any issues.
ii) The group of vulnerable residents being shielded in Mid Sussex numbered 5,194. MSDC are using multiple data sets (including assisted waste collection clients) to identify a further 4,000 vulnerable residents who may be self-isolating and require additional help.
iii) Business grants are being rolled out.
iv) Tennis Courts have been opened to the public but play areas remain locked.
v) MSDC is concerned about rough sleepers, of which 9 have been housed and three declined any assistance. Numbers requiring emergency accommodation is increasing and is only likely to increase due to the serious economic downturn. There is also a delay in new social housing coming forward and Section 106 agreements may be looked at possibly renegotiated accordingly.
vi) With a major reduction in its income streams from e.g. car parking, MSDC is predicted to receive £6.5m less in income for 2020/21 or a £14m net loss. MSDC is therefore bringing a revised Corporate Plan and budget review to its September Council meeting. Useful documents for its 1 June 2020 Cabinet meeting are already on the website.

The Chairman thanks Cllr Bennett for her report and the speed at which she had responded to the Parish Council's last questions. The Chairman reported Court Bushes play areas was unlocked as of that morning. Cllr Shorrocks expressed concern for the people who would be struggling and unable to pay their rent/mortgages and the likelihood of repossessions on a scale seen in the 1990's and was there anything MSDC could do to help. Cllr Bennett explained the Council tax hardship scheme and hope for more social housing to become available but she will respond more fully in due course. Cllr Jackson highlighted the likely loss of a significant number of jobs supporting Gatwick airport as another threat that will have a major impact.

(The meeting paused for five minutes at 8pm to recognise the final night of the national Clap for Carers initiative.)

C20/21.009.2 West Sussex County Council County (WSCC): Cllr Joy Dennis had previously circulated a very full report, sent to all members for their information. The matters expanded upon at the meeting were:

i) There has been confusion over the dates of the advertised one-day closure of Hurstpierpoint High Street by South East Water and Cllr Dennis will clarify the dates but thinks they should have said 22 May to 3 June, although they started on 27 May;
ii) Cllr Dennis reported there will also be power connection works at the end of June between Aberton Fields and Pitt Lane in Hurstpierpoint.
iii) Cllr Dennis reported there will also be drainage works in College Lane in July for approx. 4 days.
iv) Cllr Machan reported a road closure on 24 and 25 Jue at 118 High Street for a water connection.
v) Cllr Jackson reported South East Water's concern over the high demand for water and request to reduce our water consumption e.g. in the garden.
vi) Cllr Dennis also highlighted the wild-fire warning from the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
vii) Cllr Machan enquired about the current position of the fostering service. Cllr Dennis reported that families have been nervous taking new children due to the lock-down and no new families are coming forward. Likewise, more children needing fostering, almost double the normal number, so WSCC are concentrating hard on this issue.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Dennis for her very comprehensive report in advance of the meeting and enquired further regarding the pressing issued mentioned by Cllr Dennis in her report. Cllr Dennis explained that WSCC may have a £85m shortfall in 20/21 and they will need to review their priorities and what can be achieved.

C20/21.09.3 Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils & West Sussex Association of Local Councils: Cllr Jackson reported that WSALC had held a zoom meeting that morning:

i) All but two small parish councils in West Sussex have been holding video conferencing meetings.
ii) Some on-line training is also now available.
iii) They have been feeding into the West Sussex Local Resilience Forum.
iv) No MSALC meetings had been held recently.
v) There is no additional money available for parish councils not even to support the extra costs for keeping public conveniences open, even in key tourism areas.
vi) There was a perceived increase in rural crime and Sussex Police are focusing on it.

vii) The Clerk was receiving regular updates from the National and Sussex Associations of Local Councils.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Jackson for his report. Cllrs Dennis and Bennett left the meeting.

C20/21.010 To receive the minutes and where appropriate, consider the recommendations of the following Committees and Panels: The committee chairs introduced each set of minutes, which the Council was asked to receive and adopt, and where appropriate, consider the recommendations:

C20/21.010.1 Planning & Environment Committee (7 May 2020) Cllr Machan was happy to take questions but there were no recommendations for Council to consider.

C20/21.010.2 Finance & Governance Committee (21 May 2020) Cllr Llewellyn explained that all the Committee's recommendation were items on the main Council agenda below.

C20/21.010.3 Strategic Policy and Resources Panel (Held on 27 April, 4 May, 11 May & 18 May) Cllr Hand explained that the Panel had been meeting "virtually" weekly since 16 March to remain focused on supporting the community during the lock-down, including giving the Food bank a new home at the Village Centre to ensure it was able to operate. Cllr Hand thanked Cllr Majsai and the team for ensuring a third leaflet with up to date information for those without internet access was distributed to every household in the parish and that a good presence was being kept on the Council's Facebook page and website. Cllr Brown and Llewellyn had been ensuring our estate and facilities were protected and that those works able to be completed were carried out. Cllr Llewellyn had also been monitoring the financial impact of the coronavirus on the Parish Council. The Clerk was thanked for organising the Panel meetings. There were no recommendations for Council to consider

Cllr Shorrocks enquired further about the complaints received from residents of Marchants Close with regards to the parish Council opening up the access into Hurst Meadows. Cllr Brown explained two emails had been received and replied to. Since the opening of that entrance, the Close has received a disproportionately large number of pedestrians and dog walkers because of the lock-down. The residents have been kept informed since then, of the works to lay the new path in Hovel Field and our contractor was able to engage positively with people during the works.

RESOLVED: That the Council RECEIVES the minutes of the following Committees and Panel:

i. **Planning & Environment Committee (7 May 2020);**
ii. **Finance & Governance Committee (21 May 2020); and**
iii. **Strategic Policy and Resources Panel (27 April, 4 May, 11 May & 18 May).**

C20/21.011 To consider and agree the Income and Expenditure for Year Ending 31 March 2020. Members considered the final set of Income and Expenditure figures for Year Ending 31 March 2020, with the explanatory notes, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES AND ADOPTS the Income and Expenditure for Year Ending 31 March 2020.

C20/21.012 To consider and agree the Internal Audit Report Letter dated 15 May 2020. Members considered the Internal Audit Report Letter dated 15 May 2020 from Mulberry & Co. including the audit findings for action. The Chairman highlighted the key messages from the Internal Auditor as: the systems are well established; it is clear the Council takes its responsibilities seriously; the systems are fit for purpose; and the Governance and Accounting Statements are ready to be signed off by the Council. Following an explanation and discussion, each of the finding was agreed, subject to requesting an amendment of the comments under Transparency Code (to imply shortcomings rather than failures), by the Internal Auditor, it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES the Internal Audit Report Letter dated 15 May 2020, noting the findings that require action, subject to an amendment of the comment under Transparency Code.**

C20/21.013 To consider and agree the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2020. Members consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2020 ensuring it accurately presents the financial management of the Council as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and it was:

> **C20/21.013.1 RESOLVED: That the Council AGREES AND ADOPTS the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 and AGREES that it be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.**
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> **C20/21.013.2 RESOLVED: The Council AGREES AND ADOPTS the Accounting Statement 2019/2020 and AGREES that it be signed by the Chairman and the Responsible Finance Officer.**
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> **C20/21.013.3 RESOLVED: The Council AGREES AND ADOPTS the period of public inspection of the accounts as 15 June 2020 to 24 July 2020.**

C20/21.014 The Council is asked to note any information items, correspondence received or requests. There were no items to report.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.

Chairman