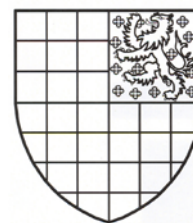


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## ***MINUTES***

Of the **meeting of Lewes Town Council**,  
held on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

**PRESENT** Councillors A Ashby; J Baah; A Barker; R Burrows; S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier (*Deputy Mayor*); W Elliott; J Lamb; I Makepeace; Dr G Mayhew (*Mayor*); M Milner\*; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; T Rowell and E Watts\*.

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer & Asst. Town Clerk*) and Mrs E Tingley (*Committee Admin.*)

*Observing:* Ms V McLachlan (*Finance Officer*) Ms J Dean (*Customer Services Officer*) and Mr B Courage (*Town Ranger*)

**FC2016/72** **QUESTIONS:** 7 Members of the public were present.

A written question had been received from the Pells & St. John’s Neighbourhood Association in relation to a recent public consultation about the Pells Recreation Ground. The question; together with the answer given, is appended to these minutes.

**FC2016/73** **DECLARATIONS of INTEREST:** Cllrs M Chartier, J Lamb, R Burrows and R O’Keeffe all declared an interest *in* item 6c (Grants Panel) on the agenda in that they were affiliated to certain organisations to which grants were recommended.

**FC2016/74** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr A Bolt who had a family commitment and Cllr H Jones who was working. **It was resolved that:**  
**FC2016/74.1** The reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are accepted.

\*Cllrs Milner and Watts had indicated that they may arrive late, due to complications in travelling from work in London.

**FC2016/75** **MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

a) Canon Moatt was unable to attend the meeting but wished to pass-on his best wishes to everyone for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

b) The Mayor thanked all those who had attended Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday and also thanked the Town Hall Keeper, Mick Larkin, who had showed his collection of military memorabilia to a group of around sixty Wallands School pupils.

c) Thanks were also given to all those who collected on behalf of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, where a record amount was collected in Lewes this year.

d) The Mayor thanked the staff who had participated in the late night shopping event, when a record amount had been collected for the Mayor’s good causes.

e) Thanks were noted, to those who attended the Civic Carol Service on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

f) Lewes Concert Orchestra would be performing in the Town Hall on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

g) The Mayor’s event ‘First World War Lewes Music Hall’, a patriotic evening of musical entertainment, would be held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Tickets were available from the Town Hall priced at £20 or £10.

h) A lecture entitled ‘The Men and Women who didn’t return’, on those who died in WW1 but are not named on Lewes’s war memorial, would be held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 at 2.30pm. Tickets were available from Fiona.

i) A presentation by the specialist conservator who would be working on the Council’s paintings as part of the ‘Our Pictures’ Project would be held at 7:00pm on Thursday 12

*Continues...*

January 2017.

j) The St Mary's Pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk' would be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

k) Lewes Youth Sports Awards had been presented by the Mayor to young people who had achieved well in sport at a very well-attended event at the Town Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> December. Thanks were given to Cllrs Barker and Murray for organisation of the Sports Awards.

l) Members had a copy of a letter from Maria Caulfield MP regarding Neighbourhood Plans and her commitment to supporting communities across her constituency in upholding local decision making. Mrs Caulfield had also been in talks with rail workers unions and the Govia Thameslink Railway company, and was continuing her calls for the Government to intervene in rail strikes that were affecting the South East.

**FC2016/76**

#### **MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were received and signed as an accurate record. *(Copies distributed with the Agenda contained an error which had subsequently been corrected in the record copy.)*

**FC2016/77**

#### **WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:**

*Members were reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which has covered issues that deserve attention by the Council, should ensure that TC is aware of this before the Council's next meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Reports on all activities of the organization are not expected.*

The next two items were brought forward on the evening's agenda as most of the public attendees were present in connection with them.

a) *North Street Quarter s106 Play & Recreation group 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016:* Cllr S Murray gave an oral report on this meeting. The main issue for the group had been to look at the feedback received from public consultation 'drop-in' events which had been held on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November. Both events had seen a good turnout with a wide cross-section of people being involved, and questionnaires had also been completed on-line. Members had been furnished with a copy of the consultation summary with their agenda papers. The consultants would now work on the comments received and these ideas would go forward to the next phase of consultation which would most likely run at the end of February 2017.

Following questions **it was resolved that:**

**FC2016/77.1** The oral report on the North Street Quarter s106 Play & Recreation Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 is noted.

*Cllr Milner joined the meeting at this point*

b) *Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016:* The minutes of this meeting were presented by Mr Ian Linton (Chair LNPSG), who also gave an oral report. Mr Linton reported that the group were heading towards identification of sites for 400 houses, whereas a target of 220 had been set by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). It was considered that 27% of these could be affordable homes. The group had been concentrating on 'brownfield' land. The latest draft plan had been received back from the consultants and still needed some work but was close to a final form for public consultation. The date for public consultation had necessarily been put back by some weeks but the deadline set by the SDNPA would be met. Publicity was important for the consultation, and it was anticipated that this would involve Viva Lewes, Lewes News, a leaflet drop to houses/businesses in the town and on some local buses. Mr Linton suggested to Council that a small parcel of land owned by the Town Council adjacent to Malling Community Centre could, potentially, be identified for a self-build project for around 5 homes. This would need to be considered formally by Council, and this would be introduced at its next meeting.

Following questions **It was resolved that:**

**FC2016/77.2** The Notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

*Cllr Watts joined the meeting at this point*

c) *Administrative Structure Working Party 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016:* Cllr Chartier presented the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*) and drew Members' attention to pages 2 & 3 which had 9 recommendations which he urged Members to support. These changes, if agreed, would take effect in the next Municipal Year. It had been submitted that the inspiration for the original motion giving rise to the Working Party, was a perception that some Councillors and constituents had concerns regarding the extent of forward notice of meetings and the accessibility for making views known, and misunderstanding as to the technical status of a Working Party compared with a standing committee. Others had commented that this was not, in fact, a common belief. The motion had proposed a fixed schedule of meetings, published annually; and amalgamation of several working parties into, effectively, standing committees.

There had followed a general discussion. TC had explained the legal distinctions to the various organs of a Council, and noted that the labelling of Working Parties was consciously chosen to reinforce the concept of meetings at which detailed work would be done, as opposed to simply debate. Each meeting should be clear as to its remit and level of delegated authority, and this was usually rehearsed on the agenda before items of business. A title was not really important and legal status was not a matter for concern, as any court would interpret Council's intentions should such circumstances ever arise. Agendas and notifications were usually announced significantly further in advance than technically required. One member had wisely commented that it was the 'quality' of a meeting that was paramount. Council had, in 2005, recognized the benefits of dealing with issues wherever possible involving all Members at meetings of Council (based upon debate informed by prepared information/reports etc) and delegating more time-consuming or complex considerations to working groups that would break down bulk information into salient detail and bring forward recommendations. The principle was intended to give short timescales and these groups were not expected to meet more than once or twice before completing their task. There was a suggestion that there could be fewer full Council meetings with no impact upon effectiveness. It was important to distinguish between the cabinet system, or 'Westminster model', that prevailed in principal Councils. There was no legal basis for this in parishes but, in any event, it was widely considered to be fundamentally undemocratic. Some Members felt that there were too many meetings in total, and did not like the ad hoc principle that they were called when necessary, preferring an annual schedule published in advance. Members who had experienced both models: a fixed-schedule of standing committees and an ad hoc system of working parties noted several benefits of the present model, compared with the earlier system. The number of meetings was, they considered, not excessive and a table distributed with the agenda showed an average of 50 meetings per year across the past five years, with many tasks completed with a single meeting. TC advised that whatever schedule might be published, however far in advance, it was always likely that some Members would be unable to attend a meeting for reasons arising at short notice. Similarly; a date fixed in advance meant that unforeseen/new business for the Council, or external factors affecting it, could not be so flexibly addressed. It was also acknowledged that public attendance was usually for a specific purpose, and this was influenced more by Agenda content than date. There were other side-effects as fixed dates limited the availability of rooms that might otherwise be hired-out, and flexibility for staff was compromised. There had followed some discussion as to the practicalities such as room availability and it was suggested, as an example, that a Panel such as Audit (with a principally internal focus) could meet in TC's office. TC pointed-out that whilst six Members could be accommodated; the public actually had a legal right to attend all meetings and this must always be allowed-for - his office did not offer that capacity.

There was interest in how other Councils were structured, and it was agreed that a further 'fact-finding' meeting in the New Year, would usefully look at examples. It was commented that they would each be unique, both in structure and the underlying reasons for it. TC would obtain information from a selection of the larger parish Councils, and background on their designs.

There followed an analysis and discussion on particular areas of operation as described in the original motion; the implications for each of forward scheduling, and potential amalgamation of functions or remits. Members were clear that they did not seek change for its own sake, and carefully considered aspects such as the likely length of meetings, given any particular remit, and any constraints imposed by external factors (*eg* changes to Audit regime; annual government finance reviews *etc*). Whilst further work was envisaged for the new Year, this gave rise to a number of suggested amendments for immediate recommendation to Council, some of which had been decided by vote.

After a brief debate, **it was resolved that:**

**FC2016/77.3** The Minutes of the Administrative Structure Working Party meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

**FC2016/77.4** Recommendations arising from the meeting of the Administrative Structure Working Party on 16th November 2016, are agreed as:

1. *Traffic/transport matters:* As this working party continues to work-through relevant issues not falling within the remit of the Planning committee, and further reactive work in this area (driven by external factors) is anticipated, it should continue. One date should be fixed in the calendar for the municipal year, with subsequent meetings *ad hoc*. **Agreed**
2. *Commemorations and significant events:* This working party has a remit confirmed by Council to 2019, and is 'driven' by a number of external factors. One date should be fixed in the calendar for the municipal year, with subsequent meetings *ad hoc*. **Agreed**
3. *Buildings repair and management:* There is a need for flexibility in the immediate future, as repair/refurbishment projects were underway. Longer term – it could be helpful to extend the remit of the working party to include aspects of buildings (and land) management, especially as Malling Community Centre will come back into direct management after its refurbishment and further land acquisitions are in prospect. It was anticipated that the whole context of land & buildings management would change for the Council in the next few years and the matter would be revisited as required. For the forthcoming year, it should be retitled "Buildings & land management Committee", and assimilate the remit of the current Energy Efficiency Working party but NOT that of the All Saints Steering Group, which should remain unaltered. Two dates should be fixed in the calendar for the municipal year, with subsequent meetings *ad hoc*. **This proposal is referred back to the Working Party for further consideration.**
4. *Communications:* This working party should fix four dates in the calendar for the municipal year, related to the publishing cycle of the Newsletter, with other meetings if required. **Agreed**
5. *Finance:* This working party was currently awaiting decisions by Government affecting the forthcoming year's budget. It usually required only one meeting in any year, but this was never certain. A similar situation could arise in any year, and it was agreed that flexibility was important. One meeting should be scheduled for December each year, with the exact date to be determined according to circumstances. **Agreed**
6. *Audit:* This was affected by a prevailing, externally-imposed, audit regime and this was subject to change in any year. Flexibility was therefore desirable, although internal functions to address assurance matters could be on a fixed programme. This Panel should set its meetings for the third week following the end of a financial Quarter, with actual dates to be confirmed. **Agreed**

7. *Personnel Panel*: This should meet at least twice each year. **Agreed**
8. *Lead Members*: These roles were never intended to reflect the executive roles as at a principal council, but rather as 'champion' or 'spokesperson' in key areas. It was considered that these are now superfluous and should be scrapped. **Agreed**
9. Other meetings, such as occasional liaison with Friends of Lewes and Pells Pool Community Association should continue *ad hoc* as now. **Agreed**

d) *Liaison meeting with Pells Pool Community Association (PPCA) 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016*: Cllr Chartier presented the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*). The Chairman of the PPCA, Mr Conrad Ryle, had presented his Chairman's report for the 2016 season at the pool, noting that in many ways this season had been the most successful to date. This was helped by better than average, but not exceptional, weather.

Extended opening hours had been operated; with adult-only early morning sessions from 7am to 9am every week day and general public sessions from 10 am to 7 pm every day except Tuesdays from June to September. This was possible due to improvements made to the plant room in the previous two seasons. The water quality had held up very well despite heavy 'bather loads' over an extended period. PPCA publicity through social media and conventional methods had led to many more customers than in previous seasons and an increase in the number of 'serious swimmers' who came to the pool in all weather conditions. PPCA were, he reported, now in a very strong financial position.

Community involvement continued with a series of evening sessions lead by Brighton Triathlon club. The pool was hired out to individuals and local organisations for evening gatherings throughout the season. There had been a successful concert featuring Lewes Orchestra and the annual 'Midsummer Madness' concert raised around £4,000 that was split between the 'Starfish' youth music project and Landport and Malling summer play-schemes. A sponsored swim for the Macmillan charity went ahead as last year, with final figures for this still awaited. PPCA had also installed a writer-in-residence - Tanya Shadrick - who had a positive influence on the pool and provided some good publicity.

Mr Ryle recorded an enormous debt of gratitude to Phil Ransley, the PPCA's pool manager, who had built up many weeks of overtime working over the season. The Association were reviewing staffing structure for next season and sought to employ a full time permanent deputy manager and provide part time contracts with overtime options for life-guards. There had been a few occasions when a strict entry rotation policy had been operated, in order to maintain safety standards, and customers had sometimes waited for up to an hour to get in. This was most problematic on Tuesdays when the pool was hired out until mid-day by the 'Pells Paddlers' group. This was to be reviewed.

Now that the North Street development was about to commence, all were hopeful that the planned development of the kiosk could take place within a two or three years. PPCA had funds set aside for contribution towards that project. More immediately, however, the paddling pool was in need of work, with cracks and areas of degradation to the concrete tank and the coping stones and surrounding slabs in need of re-bedding. The Association had researched refurbishment or replacement of the paddling pool and had obtained a quotation for building a replacement pool that included providing a filtration system and a 'beach like' gentle slope into one side of the pool, which was affordable with existing funds. This could be in place for next season, and would be a very positive visual indication of the successful partnership between the Town Council and the PPCA.

Mr Ryle went on to describe in detail the PPCA's proposal for improvements to the Paddling pool and surrounding area. This would re-shape the pool and tile it, with improved slabbing to the surround and incorporating the adjacent area as a leisure space with provision for supervising adults. There would be separate filtration to the water and a secondary refreshment area. Quotes had been obtained and this project would cost £40,000 and could be completed for the 2017 season. PPCA did not seek financial support for this, but were asking the Council for permission to proceed.

Councillors had warmly welcomed the season's report, and the paddling pool improvement proposal and **agreed** to recommend that Council granted permission.

This report was welcomed and **it was resolved that:**

**FC2016/77.5** The Minutes of the Liaison meeting with Pells Pool Community Association on Lewes 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are noted, and permission is given for the Association to make improvements to the paddling pool and surrounding area as described at that meeting.

**FC2016/77.6** Thanks are recorded to the Pells pool Community Association for their hard work, vision, and continued commitment to the Pool.

e) *Grants Panel 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016:* Members considered Report FC011/2016 (*Copy in minute book*) containing the recommendations for payment of grants for the third (of four) cycle of the year. A question arose as to the adequacy of the budget provision for grants, given the noted increase in amounts requested and changes in the type of organization making applications. TC explained the flexibility available to support the principle of an under- or over-subscribed grant budget in any year. Members noted that the financial grant programme was an extremely valuable contribution to the quality of life in the community, and something of which the Council could be justifiably proud.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2016/77.7** Grant payments recommended in Column G of the appendix to Report FC011/2016 are approved

**FC2016/78**

#### **INTERIM REPORT of the INTERNAL AUDITOR:**

The Internal Auditor had visited the Council recently and subsequently presented his interim report for the year 2016/17 (*copy in the Minute book*). Once again he had commented that Council policies and procedures were robust and fit for purpose, and he had no areas of concern. Members' attention was drawn to a salient recommendation regarding the value of the General Fund, which followed a similar comment in his earlier assessment at the previous year-end. It was estimated that the General Fund value would be around £250,000 at year-end, which was considered "a little low for a Council of this size". It was advisable that this Fund was maintained between three and four-months' of anticipated gross expenditure – approximately £295,000 - 395,000 at present values. The Finance Working Party should be mindful of this when setting budgets and precept for the coming year.

There were some questions, mainly seeking clarification of various points. In answer to a fundamental misunderstanding regarding one reference, TC explained that the Audit Panel reviews nominal ledger entries and verifies reconciliations made in the course of routine business. The auditor is not the Council's accountant - the role is to investigate, test, and comment upon the robustness; accuracy; effectiveness and appropriateness of the systems and procedures that are in place - his findings inform Members, who may then confidently certify each statutory annual return and annual accounts. A suggestion was made that both Internal and External Auditors might be invited to a future meeting of the Audit Panel. TC explained the position of the remote, government-appointed, External auditors and their likely response to such a suggestion. The Internal Auditor, commissioned direct by the Council, would be available but this was unusual and not part of the agreed service contract. TC pointed out that, coincidentally, the Internal Auditor was also retained by the County Association to provide all finance training. As Mr Mulberry would certainly be asked to provide an in-house 'tailored' training session at some point in 2017, he could be asked to cover any areas upon which Members might wish to concentrate.

Subsequently **it was resolved that:**

**FC2016/78.1** The Interim report of the Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2016/17 (*copy in Minute book*) is noted.

**FC2016/79**

**Member's intercession:** Cllr Milner noted that he understood two issues were being pursued at Lewes District Council, which had not been brought to the Town Council for review despite being important to the town. He wondered why colleagues who also

served on the District Council had not indicated these. One was a consideration of the use of pesticides in grounds maintenance operations, and the other was future use of the former Turkish Baths. He expressed frustration that these were only two examples where, he said, practical issues were too-often overlooked in favour of “rumour-mongering”, “internal fighting” and “pedantry”. He passionately exhorted colleagues to address their service to the community more positively.

## **FC2016/80 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS**

- a) *Assembly Room/Corn Exchange roof repairs:* The works were still ongoing.
- b) *Malling Community Centre refurbishment:* The managing surveyors were prepared to go out to tender on 9th January with invitations to seven Architects’ practices, with a return date of the 3rd February 2017. The assessment of these would be brought to Council via its Buildings Working Party.
- c) *Website replacement:* TC had spoken to two of the prospective providers of a new website selected by the Communications Working Party, with a third meeting scheduled the following week.
- d) *Government consultation on 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement:* TC quoted from correspondence he had received that morning regarding the recent technical consultation by Government, which had proposed an extension of referendum principles to ‘higher spending’ Parish Councils. Following consideration of the responses the Government had decided to defer the setting of referendum principles. However, the Government had issued a challenge to Town and Parish Councils to demonstrate restraint when increasing precepts that were not a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities. The Government would keep the level of precept set by Parish Councils under review and may introduce referendum principles in the future. The Government was also to consider ways in which increases might be made more transparent to the local tax payer.
- e) *Mr Richard Penn –Personnel Panel –* Cllr Barker, as Chairman of the Personnel Panel, advised Council on a proposal which had been requested from Mr Penn, to assist in establishing an appropriate performance review. The process suggested would be :  
*May* - a meeting of the Panel to set agreed objectives. These would be agreed by negotiation and would reflect the Council's objectives and proposals for change/development. This annual meeting would also consider a report by TC on achievement of objectives set the previous May.  
*September/October* - a meeting of the Panel to consider a report on progress against the agreed objectives and whether any change was necessary as a result of unexpected events. The consultant’s role would be to facilitate the process and act as the 'honest broker' ensuring fairness and objectivity in the process throughout.  
The process would begin with an initial review of present position *etc* in early 2017.

### **It was resolved that:**

**FC2016/80.1** The review of performance, as suggested by Mr Richard Penn and described to Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016, is agreed. Estimated costs of around £3,000 per year, with a first-year cost for an initial review to be effected from early 2017, at £1,750, are accepted.

- f) *All Saints Centre* – The aged gas boiler at the centre had failed a safety inspection and had been taken out of service. A number of portable electric heaters had been hired temporarily and a new boiler would be installed before Christmas.
- g) *Devolution* – TC would be writing to the Chief Executive and Leader of Lewes District Council asking them to rescind LDC’s bar on devolution of Malling Recreation Ground and Landport Bottom, once the Council’s retained solicitor confirmed that their latest proposals for conditions of exchange (as offered to Newhaven Town Council) were acceptable.

**FC2016/81 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT**

- a) The next Planning Committee would take place on Tues 20<sup>th</sup> December at 7:00pm.
- b) A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting would be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7.00pm.
- c) *Office closure for the Christmas period 2016:* The Town Hall offices would be closed from 12.00 noon on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December and re-open on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 at 9.00am.
- d) The next Member’s Surgery was scheduled for Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2016 – 10:00am – 12:00pm in the Yarrow Room – Cllrs Catlin and Chartier volunteered to attend.
- e) Finance (Budget) Working Party would meet at 7.00pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in the Council Chamber.
- f) The Audit Panel would meet on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016.
- g) The next Council meeting would take place on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017, with a deadline for agenda items to reach TC by noon on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January.
- h) The next deadline for grant applications: (cycle 4 of 4 2016/17) was Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The Assessment Panel would meet on Wed 15<sup>th</sup> February with recommendations being considered by Council at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017.
- i) Meetings to be arranged: Buildings Working Party (follow-on); Personnel Panel.
- j) A Dementia Friends session would be held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 1:00pm in the Yarrow Room.
- k) With regard to the matters to which Cllr Milner had referred earlier in the meeting, involving Lewes District Council in which the Town Council may have a role, Cllr O’Keeffe stated that she would be bringing items to Council at its next meeting (26<sup>th</sup> January 2017). These were: current public petitions/campaigns on future use of the former Turkish Baths, and use of pesticides by grounds maintenance contractors.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting and invited all present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments *The meeting ended at 9:15pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....





**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

"Can you confirm that the Town Council will respect and act on the views expressed by a very large majority of respondents to the recent public consultation about the Pells Recreation Ground: in particular, to resist pressure from the developer to add a further gate on the eastern boundary of the ground, which would create a throughway across the ground, undermining its essential character and compromising the safety of children within it?"

John Webber  
Chair of the Pells & St. Johns Neighbourhood Association

**ANSWER:**

The Town Council is really delighted that so many people responded to the initial consultation on the Pells area and Malling playing fields. The initial findings have been shared in the agenda for tonight's meeting and the Council intends to take full account of all views expressed when making decisions about land it owns. It is recognized that recent public 'drop-in' events and questionnaires are a first phase of wider consultation and Council will be interested to see final assessments when this is completed. Clearly there will be 'pressure' from the developers, as well as local residents and other interested parties, but the Council will take a balanced view of any alterations to the area which may be proposed, seeking to act in the best interests of the whole community. It should be remembered that the Pells is an asset which serves a wider community and will also serve the community which will eventually inhabit the new homes immediately adjoining it in the new North Street Quarter. Council has already noted the early surveys and independent specialist report which indicate a high priority should be given to retention of the site's informal nature.

Furthermore the Council is represented on a steering group at which all interested parties have places and which is also taking seriously the results from public consultations. It is to be hoped that a consensus will be reached on what should be done to protect and enhance the Pells area and Malling playing fields.

*Cllr Dr G Mayben  
Mayor of Lewes 2016/17*

**A supplementary question was asked at the meeting:**

"Does the Council appreciate that respondents to this survey came from far & wide across Lewes and furthermore, they represent views that are likely to be shared by future generations of users of the playground including those who will occupy the new development?"

The Mayor answered by giving the assurance that all comments were welcome and would be taken fully into account. He noted that the matter would be addressed later in the meeting, and offered to bring the item forward for consideration earlier in the evening.