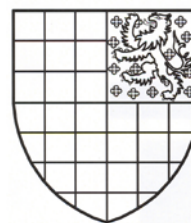


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider Communications & public engagement, held on **Tuesday 6th February 2018** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **2:30pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs A Ashby; S Catlin; H Jones; I Makepeace; S Murray; R O'Keeffe and A Rowell

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*). Mr Simon Turner and Mr Neil Turner, *NTD Internet Solutions Ltd*

ComWP2017/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN: Cllr Makepeace was elected to Chair the Working Party for the 2017/18 year

ComWP2017/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies had been received from Cllr Watts, who was working. No message had been received from Cllr Elliott.

ComWP2017/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

ComWP2017/04 QUESTIONS: There were none

ComWP2017/05 MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2016 were received and signed as an accurate record.

ComWP2017/06 NEW WEBSITE: The meeting welcomed Mr Simon Turner and Mr Neil Turner, of NTD Internet Solutions Ltd, attending to introduce the draft website (as work-in-progress) and seek feedback on structure and design. The presentation showed the relative prominence of key elements and their relationship to other features, such as listings of committee papers accessible through both a "Committees" page or a calendar, and photographs and short biographies of Councillors accessible through a "Who's who" or through committee lists or ward maps. The early pages were designed to introduce the Council and what it does (and does not) do. Members welcomed the overall style and fundamental structure of the site, and made contributions during the presentation to suggest alternative levels of prominence and relative importance of some aspects. Several pages were populated with blank text to show layout, which would be replaced with updated articles, and there was a need for more variety in photographs (a potential source of photographs was identified for investigation). Some items were discussed that represented content, rather than structure, and it was accepted that these would evolve once the Council took editorial control of its new site.

There was some particular discussion on the options for such things as scrolling news items on the homepage, and the advantages and disadvantages were explained. Active features were not generally advisable, as they were considered to be too problematic and often conflicted with other features. The new site would allow simultaneous posting of items to Facebook and Twitter, and there was discussion as to the most appropriate presentation of these. Mr Turner advised that the design being demonstrated had been optimized for presentation and would automatically reconfigure to adapt for viewing on different devices. Some functions showing listed documents needed to be reconfigured, as the presentation was not considered attractive. NTD would populate the currently blank pages with material from the Council's current website

TC advised that there would be implications (as yet unclear) arising from the upcoming General Data Protection Regulations.

Key amendments asked-for were:

- > Re-order Councillors alphabetically by surname on Who's Who page, with no need to use Wards as a reference. Similar listing on the Wards page showing

three column listings.

- > Re-order presentation of “Who’s Who” to place Councillors at head of listing.
- > Amend colour-coding of wards on map page if possible – these were considered likely to be misinterpreted as political party indicators.
- > Correct mis-spelling of Cllr Makepeace’s surname.
- > Present PDFs in a more user friendly fashion.
- > Populate pages with text from existing site.
- > Replace Wischhusen with Catlin.

It was agreed that the amendments could be made quite quickly, and TC suggested that the site could ‘go live’ by the 31st May; allowing time for LTC staff to revise content and take ownership of the site.

Members thanked the NTD representatives for their presentation and looked forward to further developments

ComWP2017/07 SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS:

Social media training: It was suggested that Members might receive training in use of Social Media. It was contended that individual Members were able to freely use social media of their choice provided they followed the Council’s Communications Policy and observed all applicable protocols and regulations, such as the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. Staff would receive training as required for their roles, but member training in this area was relatively unhelpful. It was proposed that Member training in social media should be put to Council as a recommendation, but this was not supported by the majority of Members present. Members recognized that they could ‘re-Tweet’/re-post official Council output. Staff would be dedicated to this in due course, and the context would feature prominently in the imminent assessment of Council activities demanded by the General Data Protection Regulations.

It was suggested that inviting a young student to a future meeting may be helpful in advising how young people might be better engaged with the Council, and this was welcomed. Staff would approach local schools and Sussex Downs College accordingly.

Presentation of spending/budgets: There was general agreement that presentation of figures could be made more easily digestible by use of well-designed graphics. A case in point was a design presented by Stone Parish Council (Kent) on their website, which had won an award for its clarity. This was discussed at some length and acknowledged to be, in essence, a simple task to invite and assess potential contractors to produce artwork. Members agreed to research designs which they felt appropriate, to offer as examples when briefing designers who may wish to bid for the work. This was considered desirable, but was ultimately a matter for Council to decide. This would be recommended.

Other forms of communication: The Newsletter was discussed, and it was noted that the new website would offer wide distribution of newsletter-style items, which may cause reconsideration of the need for printed Newsletters. It was recognized that many people did not engage with digital media, and Members saw a future for some printed versions. Historically, LTC had produced three editions each year in-house, in low numbers, for collection from a few key ‘pick-up points’ in the town. One edition – usually a greater number of pages, and containing annual report items – was professionally printed and directly distributed to all households. It was agreed that this edition would continue to serve a useful purpose, and it was noted that distribution should not use plastic packaging.

Communications Officer: It was suggested that LTC might need a Communications Officer, but the majority agreed that this was not appropriate at present. This raised a discussion about the structure of the modern local Press, their general approach and treatment of press releases. TC suggested that it would be a simple matter for

him to seek at each meeting a confirmation of those items that Council wished to publicize in a dedicated Press Release, and he would introduce this. Members were welcome to submit to TC or Asst. TC, draft copy for suggested articles at any time or to seek advice on material of their own.

ComWP2017/08 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Council will be asked to note the proceedings of this meeting, and the principles and matters discussed.

It was agreed to recommend engagement of a graphic designer as described above.

ComWP2017/09 There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their contribution. *The meeting closed at 4:30pm*

Signed date

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