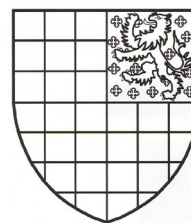


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider Communications & public engagement, held on **Thursday 22nd November 2018** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **7:00pm**.

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]*).

ComWP2018/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN: Cllr Murray (S) was elected to Chair the Working Party for the 2018/19 year

ComWP2018/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies had been received from Cllr Watts, who was working. No message had been received from Cllr Elliott.

ComWP2018/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

ComWP2018/04 QUESTIONS: There were none

ComWP2018/05 MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2018 were received and signed as an accurate record.

ComWP2018/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

The Council's new website was projected on screen and the present position with regard to 'snagging' items and outstanding content was reviewed. TC explained that there were technical issues regarding the operation of visual 'buttons' designed to allow visitors to sign-up to mailing lists, and also to the "Contact Us" page which should accept e-mail messages and forward them to the Council's Reception address. The contractors were actively engaged with the Council's IT services and broadband providers to resolve these, which appeared to relate to transmission security protocols.

Documents related to past meetings of Working Parties *etc* were systematically posted and cross-linked to appropriate reference pages, and enhancement of some entries was undertaken as opportunities arose. Documents and information required by law were in place, and appearance and functionality would be improved in due course.

Cllr Makepeace expressed dissatisfaction with the site, and suggested that it should more closely emulate one of the parish council sites originally viewed as a reference. It also did not offer many features which she felt were essential. It was explained that the design and appearance had been presented to the Working Party and approved in February. Members had been given ample opportunity then to present ideas for content, and many entries now being suggested were, in fact, already in place.

There followed a lengthy discussion as to possible future content, and it was acknowledged that the site was flexible and could accommodate many of the suggestions in due course. They could not, however, be described as essential and accorded priority over other Council projects.

It was noted that the 'Community links' entries on the old website had evolved over years as local groups and organizations had asked to be featured and provided details, and it was likely that the same pattern would be seen with the new site. Some of the suggestions being made were good ideas that could ultimately enrich and enliven the site, but some would involve unacceptable prominence of other bodies' affairs.

A graphic design was in-hand to depict the financial structure of the Council, although the figures for 2019/20 would soon be agreed. New Ward boundaries

were established with effect from May 2019, and new page designs would be needed to reflect these.

Cllr Makepeace proposed that staff resources should be deployed to develop the site and social media activities far more quickly. It was recalled that the suggestion of dedicated staff had been considered as recently as the last meeting and not agreed by the majority. TC again described the priority of the website as being relatively low in the context of the Council's planned activities and other factors. Other Members considered that there was an attractive and functioning site, which should soon move on from technical snags. They felt that deadlines were impractical, and enhancements and additions could await the normal course of business.

There followed a brief discussion on the responsiveness of local newspapers to occasional press-releases, and the function of the *Mailchimp* feature in distributing newsletter material.

ComWP2018/07 CONCLUSIONS:

Council will be asked to note this meeting, and the principles and matters discussed. All Councillors are reminded to encourage community groups with which they may be connected to provide details for the website 'Community links' pages.

ComWP2018/08 There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their contribution.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Signed date

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