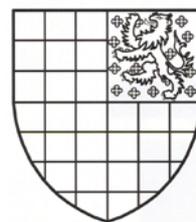


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## ***MINUTES***

Of the **meeting of Lewes Town Council**,  
held on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **7:30pm**.

**PRESENT** Councillors A Ashby; J Baah (*Deputy Mayor*); R Burrows; S Catlin (*Wischhusen*); M Chartier (*Mayor*); W Elliott; H Jones; J Lamb; I Makepeace; Dr G Mayhew; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; and E Watts.

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

*Observing:* Mr B Courage (*Town Ranger*) and Ms Anna Kerbst (*trainee – visiting from Stadtverwaltung Waldshut-Tiengen*)

A minute’s silence was observed for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.

**FC2017/14** **QUESTIONS:** There were none. 4 Members of the public were present.

**FC2017/15** **DECLARATIONS of INTEREST:** Cllrs J Lamb, S Murray, I Makepeace and R O’Keeffe all declared an interest *in* item 6c on the agenda (*re* Grants Panel recommendations) in that they are all affiliated to one or more of the applicant organisations. Cllr O’Keeffe also declared an interest *in* item 6f in that she is a Trustee of Citizens’ Advice Bureau.

**FC2017/16** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs A Barker, Dr A Bolt and M Milner who all had work commitments and Cllr T Rowell who had another appointment (unspecified). **It was resolved that:**

**FC2016/42.1** The reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are noted.

**FC2017/17** **MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

a) The Mayor welcomed Anna Kerbst who was visiting from the Council of Lewes’s twin town, Waldshut-Tiengen, as part of her work-experience programme. This was Anna’s second visit; having spent a week here in August 2014.

b) Public consultation on the ‘pre-submission draft’ of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan (known as Regulation 14 stage) would end on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June. The Mayor asked all present to refer friends; family; neighbours; acquaintances etc. to [www.lewes4all.uk](http://www.lewes4all.uk) with encouragement to view the draft Plan and complete the response questionnaire.

c) An invitation had been received to respond to a consultation on disposal of a school playing field.

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) proposed to dispose of its interest in land at the Pells Church of England Primary School when it closes at the end of the Summer term 2017. The school playing fields were not required for further recreational use and had been declared surplus to County Council requirements by ESCC’s Lead Member for Resources. The playing fields measured 8,522m<sup>2</sup> and ESCC would like to dispose of them; noting their obligation to obtain best value in line with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. To ensure that no other opportunities for the use of the playing field have been overlooked, and as part of the process for obtaining consent for disposal, the County Council needs to consult with stakeholders, including the head teacher, governors and parents of pupils of any schools within a certain radius which have less than the minimum recommended playing field area. They were seeking the Council’s views and those of Lewes District Council.

The Town Council’s comments (a “corporate” view) about the proposed disposal were

*Continues...*

invited by the end of the consultation period, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Members were invited to send any individual comments to TC, to arrive by 7<sup>th</sup> July to allow time for collation.

**FC2017/18 MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 were received and signed as an accurate record.

**FC2017/19 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.*

**a) Meeting with Compass Travel 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017:** Cllr Mayhew reported that 11 Members were present at the meeting with Mr Chris Chatfield, the Chief Executive of Compass Travel. Mr Chatfield had shared commercially-sensitive information at the meeting which demonstrated that the operating costs of a number of routes outweighed the income that could be raised, and showed a demographic profile of travellers that could never be profitable. It also indicated that if subsidies were dispensed-with and the number of buses reduced, with only one operating in Lewes, Compass could actually make profit. This suggested that Compass Buses were running as effectively as they could with the limited income that they receive. There had followed an interesting and informative discussion regarding the operations of local buses; including the relative economics associated with different types of vehicle and the scheduling of outlying route way-points. Mr Chatfield offered to arrange for Members a private tour of the routes on a Compass bus, to experience the day-to-day problems faced by drivers, and this was gratefully accepted.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.1** The oral report of the meeting with Compass Travel, held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017, is noted.

**b) 'Railfutures' meeting 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017:** Cllr Catlin reported that there would be a timetable consultation running from 26<sup>th</sup> June until 27<sup>th</sup> July for the 2018 timetable. It was hoped that the Council would respond to this consultation. The Brighton to Ashford service would be run as two sections with a change of train at Eastbourne. No new stock would be available on the Seaford or Coastway services, or to supplement the diesel services to Ashford. Some new stock would run on the Uckfield Line. There would be no immediate change to the Seaford service; however, Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council still support the campaign for the last train to stop at Southease, to service the Youth Hostel (both directions). The next meeting of Sussex Community Rail Partnership was scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> July.

**it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.2** The oral report on the Railfutures meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 is noted.

**c) Grants Panel recommendations 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017:** Members considered report FC001/2017 (*copy in minute book*) containing recommendations for payments of grants for the first cycle (or four) for the year 2017/18.

**it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.3** The grant payments recommended in report FC001/2017 (as shown in column G of the appended table) be approved.

**d) Audit Panel 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017:** The minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*) were presented. The Panel had considered routine financial monitoring, with detailed information (*copies in minute book*) following the end of the final quarter of the financial year 2016/17. This included:

*Budget monitoring update* – this showed actual expenditure and income values as posted to

the Council's *Sage* accounting system for all transactions processed in the year. There was some discussion on salient points of detail, and TC responded with reference to the identified sources. Apparent variations were related to known events, such as specific payments in respect of works and purchases, or perceived 'overspend' which would be attributable to Reserves in the final accounts were prepared at year-end. There were no items of concern. Cllr Elliott queried some items in the copy of the nominal ledger report he had requested: TC provided explanations and undertook to provide further transactional detail for three which were not immediately obvious from the ledger, following the meeting.

*Auditor's report for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017:* Members were interested to read the final report of the Internal Auditor for the past year, and pleased to note that he had once again reported satisfaction with all aspects of the Council's governance and had completed his section of the statutory annual return. TC was asked to clarify a comment regarding 'transparency regulations' which, he explained, related to a revised reporting regime affecting presentation of the land and asset register. The Auditor had repeated a warning, made in his November interim report and in the previous year, that the General Fund (unallocated reserve) was "a little low". He went on to describe mitigating factors, but noted he would expect to see general reserves now increase toward the "reasonable" level of 50% of precept conventionally recommended.

*Annual accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017:* Members perused the annual accounts booklet ('subject-to-audit' status) which was prepared to accompany the statutory return. A typographical error was noted, for which discovery TC registered his thanks, and there was a general discussion regarding the distinctions in local government accounting as compared with commercial enterprises.

*Buildings Working Party decision:* Cllr Rowell had asked for review by the Panel of a decision taken by the Buildings Repairs Working Party (on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016). He had raised this with the Working Party itself at the subsequent meeting, and the matter had subsequently been reported to Council. At the previous audit Panel meeting (19<sup>th</sup> January 2017) time pressure on some members had meant that it was agreed to defer this item. With his notification of absence for this evening's meeting, Cllr Rowell had asked that this be again deferred to the next meeting of the Panel.

*Oversight as required by the Governance & Accountability Code of Practice:* TC introduced the file of periodic bank reconciliations, for review of the scrutiny already conducted. The Chairman appended his signature to verify this in each instance.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.4** The Minutes of the Audit Panel meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

**e) Annual Town Meeting 2017:** The Minutes of this meeting were presented (*copy in minutes book*) and **it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.5** The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting, held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

**f) Citizens' Advice Bureau:** Cllr R Murray, the Council's representative on the CAB, related salient points from the recent annual meeting. Statistics on the activity of the bureau were presented (*copy in Minute Book*) which analysed the profile of Lewes clients and the problems with which CAB had assisted. Subsequently; **it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.6** The oral report on activity of the Lewes & Seaford Citizens' Advice Bureau for 2016/17 is noted.

**FC2017/19.7** The Council wishes to record its appreciation and thanks for the work done by Lewes & Seaford Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**g) Lewes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (LNPSG) update:** Mr Ian Linton, Chairman of LNPSG, reported on this item. The draft Plan was currently at Regulation 14 stage with a six week public consultation closing on 21<sup>st</sup> June. The number of online

questionnaire responses was steadily building and more than 250 people had attended the walk in event at the Town Hall in May. The presentation by the Council's consultants, Feria Urbanism, at the walk in event was available on the [www.Lewes4all.uk](http://www.Lewes4all.uk) website. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Planning Committee were meeting that same evening to consider their response and Mr Linton read to Council a paragraph from the report being submitted by their Director of Planning:

*"We commend the Neighbourhood Planning Group in preparing such a comprehensive and innovative plan that covers such a large area with a diverse character. The progression of the Lewes Neighbourhood Development Plan (LNDP) to Pre-Submission stage is an important milestone, the result of a considerable amount of hard work by the steering group on behalf of the Town Council. The Lewes NDP group should be congratulated on preparing a distinctly 'Lewesian' Neighbourhood Plan. The Pre-Submission draft addresses issues that have clearly been identified as a priority for Lewes including the need for low cost housing as well as preserving the working character of the town. The draft plan is also innovative in its approach to protecting the environment by including policies on natural capital and ecosystem design responses for allocated sites."*

Mr Linton then talked about Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money and prompted that ideas would be needed on how CIL money could be applied.

The Group proposed a tribute in the Neighbourhood Plan to Dr Colin Tingle, a tireless and dedicated member of the LNPSG who had recently passed away and were aware of ideas such as an annual award on Eco-systems/Bio Diversity. It was agreed that ideas on a dedication to Dr Tingle should be discussed at the imminent Commemorations Working Party.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2017/19.8** The oral report on recent work by the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is noted.

**FC2017/20**

#### **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT:**

Council received the final report from its retained Internal Auditor on the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The audit had been conducted in accordance with current best practice and statutory guidelines. Areas covered included:

- Financial Regulations & Standing Orders
- Risk Assessments
- Budgeting Process
- Proper Bookkeeping – review of the use of the Sage Package
- Income
- Salaries
- Assets
- Annual Accounts
- Trust Information

**FC2017/20.1** Lewes Town Council notes the report of Mulberry and Co (*a copy is included in the Minute book*) on their Internal Audit work for the Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

**FC2017/21**

#### **ANNUAL RETURN & ACCOUNTS:**

Members received report FC002/2017 (*copy in minute book*) which presented the requisite accounting information and draft Annual Return for approval as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (S12015/234).

The relevant pages of the Annual Report were appended to the report. It was required that Council resolves its approval of its Annual Governance Statement (section 1, p2) prior to approval of the Accounting Statements (section 2, p3).

The accounting statements had been certified by the Responsible Finance Officer, and the certificate by the Council's independent Internal Auditor (p5) had been signed. He indicated that he had no concerns, and his final report was also presented to the meeting. The Internal Auditor's work; regular reports of the Audit Panel, and occasional reports from other sources, were the instruments by which the Council assures itself that all responsibilities are satisfied.

Consequently, **it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/21.1** Lewes Town Council approves the Annual Governance Statement shown at section 1 of the statutory annual return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

**FC2017/21.2** Lewes Town Council approves the accounting statements on the statutory annual return and supporting documents as required for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, for submission to Messrs PKF-Littlejohn LLP, the Audit Commission's appointed External auditors.

**FC2017/22 CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT 2017/18:**

Members considered report FC003/2017 which dealt with the assessment of risks associated with the operations and functions of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year (*a copy is included in the minute book*). The report explained the principles of the annual assessment and the concepts of tangible risk (*eg physical risks associated with a swimming pool*) and intangible risk (*eg risks associated with publications*) and summarized the annual evaluation. This year's review had taken account of 276 risk elements within 37 functions/areas of operation. Not all were relevant to LTC, but scores had been awarded to 237 risk elements, and there were 5 salient points, all related to third-party management arrangements for Malling Community Centre. Mitigation was effected by close contact with the managing agents, Malling Community Association, and appropriate insurance.

A summary report extract was appended; the full report being available on request to TC with full details available if required. **It was resolved that:**

**FC2017/22.1** Lewes Town Council notes the Corporate Risk Assessment report, reference FC003/2017 (*a copy is included in the Minute book*) and the summary table of assessed risks for 2017/18 appended to it.

**FC2017/23 COUNCILLORS INDIVIDUAL DUTIES:**

Report FC004/2017 (*copy in minute book*). was received, which advised changes requested by Members to their allotted individual duties. The effects of these were shown in an appended table Following a brief discussion **it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/23.1** The individual responsibilities for Members for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year shall be amended as:

Members Individual Duties:

*Planning Committee*

Cllr Elliott's resignation from this duty is noted.

(No replacement, as eight Members still served and Council had not stipulated a complement for this Committee.)

*Grants Panel*

Cllr Watts resignation from this duty is noted.

Cllr Ashby and Cllr Catlin be appointed to the Grants Panel

**FC2017/24 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017:**

Council considered a proposal (*NOM 006/2017 copy in minute book*) that it should support an annual event to observe the International Day of Peace on 21<sup>st</sup> September, and to ask the Town Council's Commemorations Working Party to look at the details of such an event.

It was suggested that: whilst it was right to support the many events and dates associated with the First World War, it is equally important to recognise the need to promote peace and peaceful solutions to the world's problems.

The International Day of Peace ("Peace Day") was observed around the world each year on 21<sup>st</sup> September. Established in 1981 by unanimous United Nations resolution 36/37, the General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to "*commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.*" Furthering the Day's mission, the General Assembly augmented the original resolution in 2001, fixing the date on 21<sup>st</sup> September. Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and to contribute to building a culture of peace.

The theme of the 2017 Day of Peace would be "Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All". This is based on the TOGETHER global campaign promoting respect, safety and dignity for everyone forced to flee their homes. TOGETHER brings together the organizations of the United Nations System, the 193 member countries of the United Nations, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and individual citizens in a global partnership in support of diversity, non-discrimination and acceptance of refugees and migrants.

After some debate, **it was resolved that:**

**FC2017/24.1** Lewes Town Council will support an annual event to observe the International Day of Peace on 21<sup>st</sup> September;

**FC2017/24.2** The Town Council's Commemorations Working Party is asked to look at the details of such an event.

#### **FC2017/25 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS**

- a) An update on progress with the Annual Plan was distributed (*copy in minute book*). TC highlighted salient points regarding each element.
- b) *Town Hall works update:* Agreement had been reached with Barclays Bank regarding the placement of scaffolding on their land to facilitate the Corn Exchange roof repair. This work could now proceed without further delay.
- b) *Malling Community Centre project update:* Architects were preparing design options, and these would be displayed at the Centre when completed, with the public able to make comments prior to a meeting of the Council's Working Party which would seek to finalize the design. This was likely to be in August.
- c) *Devolution of Malling recreation ground and Landport Bottom:* Whilst there was no significant progress on devolution of Malling Recreation Ground by LDC, the Council's solicitor had agreed with the District Council's legal officers that the Highdown allotment site, comprising part of the joint land-holding at Landport Bottom, should be treated separately as it fell into a category of land which should have transferred to the Town Council in 1974. This would require formal designation with HM Land Registry, and this was believed to be underway.
- d) *New website:* the selected contractor had advised of a delay before they were able to address the Council's project, caused by commitment to other contracts, and this was likely to be around six weeks.
- e) *Financial trends:* TC had distributed a paper showing trends in operating expenditure across service cost-centres over several years. This was submitted periodically to the Audit Panel, but was thought likely to be of interest to other Members.

#### **FC2017/26 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT**

- a) A tour of Compass Buses local routes would be conducted for Members on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June – meeting the bus at the bus station at 10:00am. Host would be Mr Joe Beckley, Compass Travel's Operations Manager.
- b) Commemorations Working Party would next meet on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at

2:00pm in the Yarrow Room.

- c) Public consultation on the 'pre-submission' draft of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan (known as Regulation 14 stage) would end on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Members were asked to refer all contacts; neighbours, acquaintances *etc* to [www.lewes4all.uk](http://www.lewes4all.uk)
- d) The next Planning Committee would take place on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 7:00pm.
- e) The next Member's Surgery was scheduled for Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10:00am – 12:00pm in the Corn Exchange – Cllrs Catlin and O'Keeffe volunteered to attend.
- f) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would meet on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July – 7:00pm in the Council Chamber.
- g) The Transport Working Party would meet on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 7:00pm in the Yarrow Room.
- h) The next Council Meeting would take place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July at 7:30pm, with a deadline for agenda items to reach TC by noon on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July.
- i) Meetings to be arranged are: All Saints Steering Group; Buildings Working Party (Architects presentations – at Malling Community Centre); Personnel Panel; Admin Review Working Party.
- j) The next Dementia Friends lunchtime drop-in sessions would be held between 12:30 and 1:30 in the Yarrow Room on the 14<sup>th</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> September.
- k) The next deadline for grants applications: (cycle 2 of 4 2017/18) was Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The Assessment Panel will meet on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 with recommendations being considered by Council at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting

*The meeting ended at 9:20pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....