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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## *MINUTES*

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

*NB if a record of voting was requested, this is shown in a table appended to these Minutes.*

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors E Allsobrook; S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; J Daly; J Lamb; D Lamport; L F Li (*Deputy Mayor*); J MacCleary; Dr G Mayhew; R Murray; S Murray; R O'Keeffe; A Price; J Stockdale and Dr M Turner (*Mayor*)

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer and Asst. Town Clerk*) L Symons (*Mace Bearer*); Ms E. Martin (*C'tee Administration*); Canon R Moatt (*Chaplain*)

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

Canon Moatt gave a short address in which he acknowledged the pace of technological change in society, noting advances which had altered modern sport and attitudes to sportsmanship, and recognizing that this could be a 'double-edged sword' for human society.

**FC2014/30 QUESTION TIME:** There were none.

**FC2014/31 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Chartier declared an interest *iro* recommendations by the Commemorations Working party, in that he is Chairman of the Sussex Archaeology Society.

**FC2014/32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs Eiloart who was unwell and Cllr Milner who had a family commitment. There had been no word from Cllr Dean.

### **FC2014/33 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a) The Mayor and Mayoress would present a Concert to mark the centenary of the outbreak of WWI performed by LGB Brass in the Town Hall on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July at 3pm.
- b) The Government had announced that parish councils would soon be permitted to send agendas electronically; ending a budgetary burden on councils and enabling them to benefit from 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. Stephen Williams MP, minister for Communities and Local Government (CLG) had said recently "I am pleased to be able to confirm that this Department will soon be introducing secondary legislation that will allow all councils to circulate agendas electronically where the recipient has given permission for this."
- c) Sevenoaks Town Council had submitted a proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act for return of a system to provide a percentage of the Business (Non-Domestic) Rates to Parish Council to be used for the benefit of economic growth in the locality. A decision was due on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2014. They had asked that fellow parishes register their support on the Government's "Barrier Busting" website and so-far over 420 supporters had done so. It was **agreed** that Lewes Town Council would be happy to support the proposal.
- d) The South Downs National Park Authority was committed to maintaining an

*Continues...*

open and regular dialogue with the Parish Councils in the National Park. They wished to share information, update on key opportunities and highlight particular issues which may require a collaborative approach to resolve. The Park Authority had recently published a Partnership Management Plan and had begun work on developing a single Local Plan for the South Downs. This would be an ideal opportunity for LTC to meet to discuss these important documents and any other matters which may require our attention. Past meetings had been held at the Town Hall, however with their recent move to the new South Downs Centre the SDNPA would be pleased to host the meeting on this occasion to give everyone the opportunity to see the new facilities at Midhurst. However, given recognized transport problems; they would be happy to hold the meeting at the Town Hall if preferred. Whilst there was interest in seeing the SDNPA headquarters, it was **agreed** that on this occasion they be asked to meet in Lewes Town Hall.

e) The Lewes Branch of the British Legion had invited the Town Council to participate in a wreath laying ceremony and service at the war memorial on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August between 10.30 and 11.30am, to commemorate the fallen of WWI. The Mayor would lay a wreath on behalf of the Council. This would be a ceremonial event- robes and hats would be worn- and it was hoped that as many Members as possible would attend on behalf of the Community.

f) The Mayor announced that long-serving member of the Council's staff, Emma Martin, would become Mrs Tingley when she married Dave, her partner of over 20 years, on 29<sup>th</sup> August. Daughters Saskia and Hannah would be bridesmaids. Members gave a round of applause and wished her, and her husband-to-be, future happiness.

FC2014/34

#### **MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014 were received and signed as an accurate record.

FC2014/35

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

Members were reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which had covered issues that deserved attention by the Council, should ensure that TC was aware of this before the meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Reports on all activities of the organization were not expected.

a) *Commemorations Working Party 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014:* The Minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*) were received and Ms Edwina Livesey attended, representing Sussex Archaeological Society, to answer questions and elaborate upon the item related to the 'Skeleton 180' project. Cllr Turner also described some proposals related to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of twinning with Waldshut-Tiengen (W-T) including an exhibition by well-known Lewes artist, Peter Messer, who had been invited to display his work in Tiengen. It was intended that transport and accommodation costs be supported jointly by the Lewes and W-T administrations.

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

**FC2014/35.1** Minutes of the meeting of the Commemorations Working Party held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

**FC2014/35.2** The recommendations of the Commemorations Working Party held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 (*copy in minute book*) are agreed as:

Council agree to support an extended party of representatives to attend the *Chilbi* festival in Waldshut-Tiengen between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2014, and share costs of an exhibition in Tiengen by Lewes artist Peter Messer.

That a budget of £4000 be approved for the Commemorations Working Party to arrange events to commemorate the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War in 1914, drawn

from the Commemorations Reserve.

That a contribution of up to £3000 be made towards the 'Skeleton 180' project involving further investigation of skeletal human remains held by Sussex Archaeological Society.

b) *Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014*: Cllr S Murray presented the notes of this meeting and reminded Council that there would be an open day on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014 to offer further opportunities for engagement with the process, by representatives of community groups.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2014/35.3** The notes of the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan Steering group meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014 (*copy in Minute Book*) are acknowledged.

FC2014/36

**ARTWORK CONSERVATION:**

Council considered a Motion (*NOM 007/2014 – copy in Minute Book*) that Lewes Town Council initiates a project to produce an appropriate booklet devoted to the significant artworks (oil and watercolour paintings) held by the Council, similar to the *Civic Insignia & Plate* booklet published in 2011. Further; it was suggested that the potential be investigated for an extended project involving specialist conservation works to major paintings held by the Council, and improved public interpretation material and access to view, plus a 'legacy project' where descendants of individuals depicted in the paintings, who have a Lewes connection, were traced and their links recorded by some permanent means. Cllr O'Keeffe registered a potential interest in that her partner was a potential contractor for parts of the proposed work.

If the model used for the well-received *Civic Insignia & Plate* booklet were to be followed, a high quality publication on the subject of the major paintings should be possible for approximately £2,000, and would continue a long tradition of such informative publications by the Council since its earliest incarnation as a Borough. This entailed close-up photographs and printing on premium quality paper stock with all research and copy preparation being carried out by Councillors and staff, with specialist assistance where necessary.

Should this be contemplated, it was obviously sensible to ensure that the paintings were presented well, and any cleaning or repair had been undertaken before photography. Consequently; an initial survey of thirteen significant paintings, had been carried out by specialist paintings conservators, and results suggested that several required repair of some sort, and most were dirty and should be cleaned. Assessment ranged from a relatively straightforward cleaning process for some; to skilled replacement of missing sections where paint has been lost from some oil canvasses. One; the very large *Visit of King William 4<sup>th</sup>* hanging in the Assembly Room, needed re-lining and several repairs and was very vulnerable to further damage if the surface was not consolidated. Should a project be agreed, more detailed assessments would be needed. Two programmes were suggested for each painting: one for the minimum recommended work, and one for all recognized defects to be rectified. Costs were, in aggregate, £30,700 and £46,900 respectively but with the caveats that specialist handling and transport would be required in addition, and further defects may be found on deeper scrutiny.

An informal approach had been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, who indicated that such a project may be eligible for grant, especially if the works were followed by extended interpretation and public access. It was suggested that where links could be established between living descendants and individuals appearing in the paintings, this could be the basis for a very interesting cultural project, and this elicited much interest. As an initial 'guesstimate', based upon the sums already estimated with some clarity, a complete project could be mounted for between £80,000 and £90,000 and this might attract grant of up to 90%. This could entail the Council funding less than

£9,000 to produce an enduring addition to Lewes's local cultural resource.

Councillors Chartier, Mayhew and Turner were willing to provide historical research expertise and assist in coordinating such a project.

Following consideration **it was resolved that:**

**FC/2014/36.1** Lewes Town Council supports the Motion (*NOM 007/2014 – copy in Minute Book*) that:

a) Lewes Town Council will initiate a project to produce an appropriate booklet devoted to the significant artworks (oil and watercolour paintings) held by the Council, similar to the *Civic Insignia & Plate* booklet published in 2011, and;

b) The potential is investigated for an extended project involving specialist conservation works to major paintings held by the Council, and improved public interpretation material and access to view, plus a 'legacy project' where descendants of individuals depicted in the paintings, who have a Lewes connection, are traced and their links recorded by some permanent means.

**FC2014/37**

#### **CARBON OFFSET INITIATIVE:**

Council considered a Motion (*NOM 008/2014 – copy in Minute book*) proposing that Lewes Town Council make a financial contribution to the Eastbourne United Nations Association initiative to offset Carbon emissions by providing tree saplings and wood-burning stoves to rural schools in Eastern Uganda.

Following a discussion in which a range of views were expressed it was generally agreed that Council should not do this as an organization, but that Members, if they so wished, could make a personal contribution. Put to the vote, **it was resolved that:**

**FC2014/37.1** The proposal (*NOM 008/2014 – copy in Minute book*) that Lewes Town Council make a financial contribution to the Eastbourne United Nations Association initiative to offset Carbon emissions be NOT agreed.

**FC2014/38**

#### **LOCAL BUS SERVICES:**

Council considered a Motion (*NOM 009/2014*) regarding proposed changes to bus services used by Lewes residents. It was proposed that a councillor be nominated to co-ordinate a town council response to the consultation which was currently on-line. There was a general discussion of the issues raised and **it was resolved that:**

**FC2014/38.1** Lewes Town Council expresses its concern about proposed changes to bus services used by Lewes residents. It believes that the reduction in services and the proposed increase in prices will cause social, economic and environmental damage. Cuts to bus services inevitably lead to greater isolation for those who rely on them. Twenty percent of households in Lewes District do not have access to a car. Forcing those that have cars to use them will only lead to increased traffic and all that brings with it: pollution, traffic danger, travel delays and pressure on car parking. Local shops and services such as libraries are likely to suffer.

**FC2014/38.2** Cllr Susan Murray be nominated to co-ordinate a town council response to the East Sussex County Council consultation on bus services; currently on-line.

**FC2014/39**

#### **ANNUAL REPORT**

Members considered a draft Annual Report on the activities of the Council in the 2013/2014 year (*a copy of which is included in the Minute book*). **It was resolved that:**

**FC2014/39.1** Publication of the Annual Report on the Council's activities during the 2013/2014 year, as presented to the Council meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014, be approved (*copy in Minute book*).

**UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:**

a) *North Street Quarter/Pells* - Members were advised that Santon, the developer, had held further meetings with local residents and defined preferred options for flood defence structures adjacent Pelham Terrace. They would include in their imminent planning application proposals for low 'Dutch Dam' wall-within-wall structures. The planning application was unlikely to be submitted before Autumn as Santon and their partners, Lewes District Council, had paused to allow recently-emerged groups to discuss ideas for aspects such as cultural/creative work space and affordable housing.

b) *Devolution*. - Clerks of the five towns in Lewes District had met with the District Council recently to establish the current value of costs of ground maintenance *etc* and to discuss mechanisms for any transfers of ownership.

c) *Building repairs* – Specialist consultants planned to conduct detailed surveys shortly, involving close inspection of Town Hall window frames and the precise constitution of mortar joints *etc*. A site visit of Malling Community Centre would be arranged when various individuals returned from summer holidays.

d) *New legislation* – TC introduced several items of recent legislation that would impact upon the Council. He summarized key elements such as :

Local Government Transparency Code 2014 – increased requirements for publication of accounting detail and routine 'public interest' items.

Queen's speech items: Infrastructure Bill - possible implications for Landport Bottom – Planning law amendments; Land Registry requirements; Energy (Fracking) Governance of National Parks Bill (potentially direct elections for Parish representatives, and miscellaneous relaxations)

Electronic agenda publication, as mentioned earlier.

Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 – access to meetings; recording and broadcasting etc – these were draft Regulations, and no implementation date was known. Councils must follow the statutory guidance (the 'Practitioner's guide') which was updated and detailed several new requirements *eg* more detail required to be countersigned, such as routine bank reconciliations.

**NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:**

a) The next Members surgery would be held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> August in the Corn Exchange from 10am – 12noon. Cllrs Turner, R Murray and S Murray volunteered to attend.

b) The next Planning Committee Meetings would be on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August at 7pm in the Yarrow Room.

c) The deadline for Grant applications for the next cycle was Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August, with the assessment Panel meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> August and recommendations being considered by Council on 28<sup>th</sup> August.

d) The next Council Meeting would be on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30pm with the deadline for submissions to the Town Clerk of proposed items for the agenda being 12 noon on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August.

e) Dates would be confirmed for meetings of various Working Parties and liaison groups.

f) Newsletter articles would be gratefully received, as soon as possible.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed, and invited those present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments.

*The meeting ended at 9:05pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....