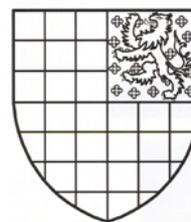


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## ***MINUTES***

Of the **Meeting of Lewes Town Council**,

held on **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

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

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk*); Mrs E Tingley (*Committee Administrator*)

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

**FC2015/88 QUESTION TIME:** 11 Members of the public were present. Five questions had been received which, although not related to items on the agenda, were received and answered. These questions and the answers given are appended to these minutes.

**FC2015/89 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:** Cllr S Murray and Cllr R O'Keeffe declared an interest *in* budget-setting (Agenda item 6b) in that they are both Directors of Lewes Town Partnership, which would be affected by any decision.

**FC2015/90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr A Barker whose wife was recovering from an operation, and Cllr Dr A Bolt who had a childcare commitment. It was agreed that a card and flowers would be sent on behalf of the Council to wish Mrs Barker a speedy recovery. Cllr Addecott had indicated an intention to submit his resignation from the Council. It was **resolved that:**

**FC2015/55.1** Reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are accepted.

**FC2015/91 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1 It was announced that, sadly, on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January the former Chairman of Lewes Twinning Association, Jack Greenaway, had passed away after suffering with dementia. He would be sadly missed by everyone who met or knew him. Jack had touched many people's lives, whether it was as the "village bobby" in Ringmer in the early 1960's, Lewes Little Theatre, Lewes Operatic or Panto, his coach tours or town Twinning. Jack was also made a Citizen of Honour of Blois in 1997. Condolences were offered to his family, and the Mayor and Civic Officer would attend his funeral on 27<sup>th</sup> January.

2 Following the culmination of the Houses of Parliament's year-long banner exhibition '*The Beginnings of that Freedom*', which formed part of the 2015 programme to commemorate 750 years since the Simon de Montfort parliament (1265) and 800 years since the sealing of the Magna Carta (1215), the artworks were to be gifted to organisations across the UK.

Covering 800 years of constitutional history, demonstrating how the UK had built a powerful system of civil rights and representative government, the exhibition featured 18 large-scale banners created by nine artists. Each banner provided a dynamic visual representation of milestone 'moments'. It ran from January – December 2015 in Westminster Hall, during which time it was seen by an estimated 750,000 people. Now that the public exhibition had finished, and following an open call for applications, the banners were to be given to appropriate organisations.

Council was indebted to Cllr Dr Mayhew, who had prepared a successful application for the banner designed to mark the DeMontfort Parliament of 1265, to which Lewes itself had sent two Burgesses. The banner would be hung in the Corn Exchange, alongside

*Continues...*

the wall panels that tell the history of Britain's long struggle for individual and collective freedoms and human rights, which were originally produced by the British Library for its 'Taking Liberties' exhibition in 2008/09.

3 Sussex and Surrey Associations of Local Councils (SSALC), in association with the County Councils of East and West Sussex and Surrey, the 23 Boroughs and District Councils and the South Downs National Park, were to hold a briefing event on the Three Southern Counties Devolution (3SC) initiative on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March in Crawley. The Town Clerk and the Mayor would attend and there was one other place available which, it was agreed, Cllr Catlin would take.

4 A request had been received from Lewes Priory Trust regarding the latest project the Trustees wished to pursue. The success of the Herb Garden had led to the belief that much could be gained by developing a second area as a kitchen garden community project and educational resource. The garden would be located against the west wall boundary to the site, adjoining Priory Cottage. It would displace an unkempt area of self-seeded small trees and shrubbery. The Trust had discussed the removal of the planting with the District Tree & Landscape Officer, who was happy that it was of no landscape value. They had also conferred with the owner of adjoining Priory Cottage, who was supportive, subject to assurances on privacy. Before the Trust began fundraising for the project (which they expected to cost around £7,500) – they sought reassurance that the Town Council (as owner of the site) was happy with the proposal in principle. This was agreed.

5 Further to recent email correspondence regarding support for communities affected by recent flooding; detailed consideration had been given to some form of fundraising event but there were practical difficulties. It was suggested that Members may wish to contribute individually to a collection for Hebden Bridge, a town in West Yorkshire which had recently been flooded. Cllr Barker had pledged £20 and others were invited to add to the fund after the meeting. The Mayor would write to Hebden Bridge Town Council. Cllr Dr Mayhew pointed-out that the town was an appropriate choice, as there were significant historical links with Lewes. Hebden Bridge is part of the historic parish of Heptonstall of which the Prior of Lewes was Rector. The Lord of the Manor of Halifax and Heptonstall was also the Prior of Lewes, who was granted the manor and both parishes by William II de Warenne at the beginning of the 12th century.

6 Members congratulated Cllr O'Keeffe who had recently been awarded an honour (Member of the Order of the British Empire - MBE) in the New Year's Honours list.

**FC2015/92**

#### **MINUTES:**

Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were received and signed as an accurate record.

**FC2015/93**

#### **REFUGEE ISSUE:**

This item was brought forward (originally on the agenda as item 11), as a courtesy to members of the public attending who had a particular interest in the subject.

Council considered a motion (*NOM 022/2015 – copy in minute book*) that a letter be written to the Mayor of Grande-Synthe, near Dunkirk, pointing out that many Lewes residents were very concerned about the conditions being reported in the refugee camp there, and with worsening weather they will deteriorate even further. Some residents of Lewes and other people were attempting to help by delivering aid and supplies, and those volunteers were encountering obstacles and restrictions on permission to enter the camp and help in the way they have been doing in Calais. A short debate followed, with some Members stating the importance that any letter should be couched in sympathetic terms and stressing the need for genuine aid to be given access. It was agreed that this was an humanitarian issue; not a diplomatic one. Consequently, **It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/93.1** The Mayor will write to the Mayor of Grande-Synthe, Dunkirk, France, pointing out that many Lewes residents are very concerned about the conditions being reported in the refugee camp; that some were attempting to help by delivering aid and

supplies, and asking that he use what influence he may have to ensure that those volunteers are permitted to enter the camp and help.

## **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] Transport Working Party 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016:** Cllr Milner presented the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*), when Members had discussed several issues:

*Bus services in Lewes:* Loss of late last-buses had caused difficulties for those working in, or simply enjoying, evening industries *etc* in Brighton and wishing to return to Lewes or beyond. It was acknowledged that these may have been unprofitable to run, but were highly-valued by local people. Brighton & Hove Bus Company had already listened to public feedback on this matter and planned to re-introduce some late buses as soon as regulations allowed, in April. This would return a 12:00am and 12:30am departure from Brighton to Lewes (Malling) Mondays to Saturdays and add a 1:30am departure on Saturdays. April was the earliest possible for implementation. A welcome point was that the late services would not demand premium fares. B&HB would publicize the new services and provide material (leaflets) to allow the Council to assist with this. Members wished to record their thanks for B&HB's flexibility and willingness to adapt to public demand.

*Lewes Railway Station forecourt:* The meeting had reviewed the situation following recent road and bridge improvements. The limited options for waiting taxis caused them to circulate around the town centre and add to congestion and pollution in other areas. They were limited in their ability to respond to waiting passengers and there were conflicts with deliveries and buses replacing rail services at weekends. Parking and waiting restrictions were not enforced, and 60 taxi drivers operating in Lewes were competing for 7 marked spaces. It was said that taxi drivers had not been effectively consulted over the redesigned layout. It was understood that there were discussions taking place between ESCC Highway Dept officers; Lewes District Council's licensing officers, and the Station Manager, and it was hoped that this would extend to representatives of Network Rail. Enforcement was compromised until signage could be approved and it was intended that there should then follow a temporary Traffic Order to regulate the situation for an experimental period. The pending upgrade to the weight limit on the road bridge was expected to help with routing of heavier vehicles.

*Compass Travel bus services:* Interim passenger loading statistics were provided for the services supported by the Council since September 2015, and Members considered these; declaring themselves "tentatively hopeful" that the Council's cash contribution was proving beneficial to the community. Residents had recounted their experiences with these services and communications with Compass Travel; and related the effects of the recent road-closures. The Council had agreed a review of the arrangements in March.

*Pedestrian crossing, Church Lane, Malling:* The Council had considered the issue of the proposed crossing adjacent South Malling School – postponed in 2013 due to effects on the School's eligibility for a crossing ("lollipop") patrol. That situation had since changed, and the School were now keen for the deferred crossing to be built. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) officers had advised that the overall cost had not increased significantly. The Town Council held adequate funds in an earmarked Reserve and ESCC could accommodate this in its 2016 programme, but there was a consideration regarding a potential contribution from ESCC's Community Match fund; although this would involve additional cost and delay. To decide this matter, it had been resolved (FC2015/71.1) that the Traffic Working Party be mandated to make a decision on Council's behalf. There was a brief discussion on various aspects of this project, and subsequently it had been resolved (TIWP2015/13.1) that the crossing be now

commissioned for installation as soon as possible, calling on funds as required from the earmarked reserve identified as P9 in the Council's published accounts.

*Pedestrian crossings:* The matter of crossings in Offham Road (A2029) (two sites) and Brighton Road (A277), adj Montacute Road, had been discussed. A residents' group had submitted a bid for funding to ESCC for a crossing in Offham Road close to the junction with Prince Edward's Road, and it was believed that there would also be funding from s106 agreements associated with approved development at North Street. It was thought that adequate funding was in place for this, and unlikely that a request for assistance would be made to the Town Council. There was a long-standing demand for a crossing further toward the junction with the A275, near to the steps giving access to Wallands School. There was likely to be a request from residents in the near future to support such a scheme, and this was acknowledged by Members.

There was a project in progress, following a petition by residents, for a crossing in Brighton Road (A277) near to its junction with Montacute Road. This would need to be light-controlled due to its location, and it was expected would cost approximately £120,000 to construct, plus design costs. A grant contribution was likely for 50% of this (£60,000) and a private individual was prepared to contribute £35,000. Members had discussed a proposal that the Council might contribute the remaining £25,000. This was considered to be a case deserving recommendation to Council.

Members who were closely-acquainted with individual issues offered brief updates to those matters and Council acknowledged the work of the Working Party. It was suggested that a representative of Sussex Police might usefully be invited to the next W/pty meeting to discuss their recent internal survey on staff impacts on traffic and parking. It was agreed that Cllrs Milner and O'Keeffe would liaise with TC to engage with Network Rail on issues discussed within their sphere of operation. It was further suggested that an invitation might be obtained for a Town Council representative to attend a forthcoming meeting between the District and County Councils. Subsequently **it was resolved that:**

**FC2015/94.1** The Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Working Party held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

**FC2015/94.2** The recommendations of the Transport Working Party of 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are agreed in that the Council will consider further provision toward pedestrian crossings in the town, and specifically a potential contribution of £25,000 to the anticipated project to install a light-controlled crossing in the Brighton Road (A277) near its junction with Montacute Road.

**b] Sussex Community Rail Partnership:** Cllr Catlin gave a brief oral report. Seaford to Brighton Rail Partnership had held their Annual Stakeholder meeting. Extra train stops were now implemented at Southease and SCRPs were to ask for the last trains running in each direction to stop at that station. The Partnership was also pressing for a 23.17 London service to East Sussex to help theatre-goers. There would be an art work competition for the bridge linking the Sussex Downs College Mountfield Road, Lewes, campus to Court Road, involving Priory School and the college. Newhaven children had recently been involved with an art competition to promote railway use which now decorated one of the railway shelters at Newhaven. Work was to commence on a presentation at Lewes station depicting the significance of the Every (Phoenix) ironworks and support was growing for the potential addition of additional levels to increase the capacity of Lewes station carpark.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/94.3** The oral report on the Sussex Community Rail Partnership is noted.

**c] Finance Working Party 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016:** Cllr Rowell presented the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*) and the draft budgets and working notes were projected for live modelling to assist Council in its deliberations.

The Town Council (LTC) faced an enforced increase to precept to simply maintain

budgeted nett expenditure at the present level, due to phased reduction in the grant from the government support scheme. The government had recently indicated that they would *not* extend the referendum policy to include Parish Councils for 2016/17.

It was understood that, in future, Lewes District Council's special expenses recharge in respect of those parks and open spaces transferred to LTC would reduce to balance an increase in parish precept. The draft budgets presented took account of:

- Provision for known/anticipated increases in public Utility supplies, NNDR etc.
- Adjustments for completed and imminent (previously-approved) projects.
- Provision for elements identified in the Council's forward plan.
- Establishment of appropriate reserves for agreed/anticipated projects.
- Provision for anticipated increases in insurance and other overhead costs etc.
- Provision for known increase in employers' pension and NI contribution.
- Refinements of overhead allocation to services and base service cost estimates.
- Recognition of anticipated adjustment to salaries.
- Provision for known and anticipated increases in cost of contracted services.
- Re-establishment of exhausted reserves and continuation of prudent contributions.
- Provision for costs of assets or services accepted through devolution by Lewes District Council, and for necessary transitional costs.
- Fees & charges tariff increase of 3%, rounded to an appropriate value for the service concerned.

It was acknowledged that there was a continuing need to address the proper maintenance of the Council's physical assets and adequately fund continuing services.

The draft budget combined specific amounts for known costs and committed project items, with prudent allowances for reserves, and provided for a flexible response to unforeseen issues. Members recognized that some projects could exceed original "informed" preliminary estimates of cost, and earmarked reserves could be insufficient. The Council's assets had all been taken-on with considerable historic dilapidation, and contexts such as heritage listing status. Projects could be "topped-up" by drawing from the General Fund which; although adequate, would then need to be restored in future years to the levels recommended by government auditors. It was possible that this could drop below an acceptable minimum in the next two years.

With this background in mind, various individual amendments were proposed and discussed in the course of a long and detailed debate. Decisions were incorporated as the meeting progressed; modelled on a spreadsheet and projected for the impact to be immediately considered. Several points caused particular deliberation, and at the end of that discussion the amendments resulted in a precept requirement of £860,072. This represented an increase on the current year of 10.2%, with the actual cost to a Band 'D' household rising to £141.71 per year. This was an increase over the current year of £8.55 per year or 16 pence per week.

Following establishment of these values, a proposal was considered that a further sum of £180,000 be raised through precept to set up a fund to assist those households affected by imminent reduction/withdrawal by the District Council of Council Tax support grants, following government adjustments to the scheme. (*Cllr O'Keeffe declared an interest in this matter, as a close family member was currently in receipt of this benefit*). This proposal caused a further debate, during which the potential hardship to be caused to some families was generally abhorred; but was ultimately not supported.

In consequence of these deliberations, **it was resolved that:**

**FC2015/94.4** The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Working Party held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (*Copies in minute book*), are noted.

**FC2015/94.5** Budgets for estimated operational service expenditure and income and contributions to financial Reserves for the 2016/17 financial year; as discussed and agreed by the Council at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 (*Copies in minute book*), be

approved.

**FC2015/94.6** The balance of £21,000 brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 in the financial reserve designated P3 in the Council's published accounts in respect of a proposed joint project (with the Friends of Lewes) to improve the "Magic Circle", be appropriated to augment the Reserve designated R1 – Town Hall maintenance.

**FC2015/94.7** The total sum to be raised by precept on council tax for 2016/17 be set at £860,072 when anticipated Council Tax Support Grant of £53,128 is accounted-for.

**FC2015/94.8** The Council Plan for major areas of work or projects in 2016/17 considered by the Finance Working Party at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (*Copy in minute book*), is approved.

*Cllr Catlin retired from the meeting at this point due to illness.*

**d] Personnel Panel 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016:** Cllr M Chartier gave a brief oral report on the meeting that had taken place the evening before. The Personnel Party had met and discussed the independent consultant's report on the job evaluation exercise recently conducted. They had assessed detailed implications for individuals and for the Council. The Panel was satisfied that a thorough and professional job had been done, and acknowledged all the recommendations. The Town Clerk would now talk to staff individually regarding implications of the specialist's recommended grade structure. There would be Minutes of the meeting available for the next Full Council meeting. Any changes would be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/94.9** The oral report on the Personnel Panel meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 is noted.

**FC2015/95**

#### **NATIONAL AUDIT FRAMEWORK:**

Council considered this item, which had been deferred from the December meeting:

Notification had been received from The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding changes to the external audit regime for Parish Councils. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 required that from the start of 2017/18 financial year "smaller authorities" – that is all parish and town councils and internal drainage boards, with an annual income of less than £6.5m – must appoint auditors through a 'sector led body' or opt out of such arrangements and appoint auditors locally. The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 enabled the establishment of a sector-led, collective procurement body (SLB) to appoint auditors and manage audit contracts. The National Association of Local Councils was working with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) on the establishment of a SLB to procure audit for the 2017/18 financial year onward.

The new body was to be responsible for procuring audit services and for the management of audit contracts for a period of five years, much as the previous arrangements with the now-defunct Audit Commission. The process was being supported and funded by DCLG.

As at present, the running costs of the new body would be funded from the audit fees charged to smaller authorities, but the overhead was planned to be lower as the SLC would not carry out a number of functions of the former Audit Commission.

The board of the new body would comprise an independent chair, two independent members, and representation from NALC, SLCC and ADA. Secretariat support was to be provided by NALC. DCLG would have observer status, and also review and monitor progress and quality of SLB work.

The SLB will appoint auditors for all those smaller authorities 'opted in' to the new arrangements. A tender process (compliant with European rules and regulations) would be completed by the end of September 2016.

The SLB will procure, deliver and manage the audit contracts, including specification of

contract requirements, management of auditors, recording of all authorities opting in or out, communications and equality management of audit contracts.

Quality assurance of audits/limited assurance engagements will be conducted by a process to be managed through DCLG. The SLB will be charged with monitoring those smaller authorities who decide to 'opt out' and reporting those bodies to DCLG, confirming when they have appointed auditors locally.

All smaller authorities were to be automatically opted-in to the new body and have an auditor procured for them, although a council was entitled to opt out of the new arrangements. The decision to opt out must be through a formal meeting of the council. Those who opt-out but fail to appoint an auditor by the deadline would have an auditor appointed for them

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/95.1** Inclusion within the national framework for Sector-led procurement of external audit services, in accordance with the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 (SI2015/184), is agreed.

**FC2015/96**

**HOMES & WORKSPACES:**

Council considered a proposal (*NOM019/2015 – copy in minute book*) that the Council should form a Home and Workspaces Working Party to explore the possibilities in promoting/providing social housing and improved provision of truly affordable housing for local people, and the potential to promote and improve the provision of inexpensive industrial and creative work premises which will enhance the commercial and economic viability of the town. The recent approval of the Santon/LDC plans for the Lewes North Street Quarter highlighted the continued need for social housing and basic work spaces in Lewes. The group should research the provision of social housing and low-cost commercial space and report with recommendations for action to the council.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/96.1** A Working Party be set up to explore the possibilities for Lewes Town Council in promoting/providing social housing and improved provision of truly affordable housing consisting of Cllrs Ashby; Chartier; Elliott; Makepeace; Milner; Murray (S); O'Keefe and Rowell.

**FC2015/97**

**PUBLIC WiFi INSTALLATION:**

Council considered a proposal (*NOM020/2015 – copy in minute book*) that a public service be provided by installing Wi-fi and broadband accessible throughout the Town Hall. It was suggested that the cost could be funded partly from the financial reserve identified in the Council's accounts at R15 (ICT replacement), and the remainder from the General Fund. Current estimates suggested that it would cost approximately £10,000 to provide wi-fi in every room available for public hire. A local benefactor, who would prefer to remain anonymous, had offered up to £3,500 toward the total cost.

A few years ago council had considered the possibility of providing wi-fi and decided that it could not justify the costs involved. However, technology and society had moved on and it was increasingly expected by hirers of all spaces that there would be Wi-fi available to carry out their business and leisure activities. It was stated that there was clear evidence of demand and unfulfilled aspirations on the part of many hirers. A separate, publicly accessible, system was proposed; not connected to the IT facilities in the town hall offices.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/97.1** Lewes Town Council will improve its service by installing Wi-fi and broadband accessible to public users throughout the Town Hall, with the expected cost of £10,000 to be funded party from the financial reserve identified in Council's accounts as R15 (ICT replacement) which had a current balance of £5,000; with the remainder funded from the General Fund, offset by the anticipated donation of up to £3,500 to public funds by a local benefactor.

**FC2015/98 DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY LEWES:**

Council considered a proposal *NOM021/2015 – copy in minute book*) that Council form a working party with the aim of fostering a ‘Dementia Friendly Lewes’.

The group would aim to increase the number of Dementia Friends within the town, working with local Dementia Champions (who are trained to deliver 45 minute dementia awareness session promoted by Alzheimer’s Society) to formulate a plan of action. This would include contacting various business, faith and community groups, schools and colleges, tourist destinations and travel providers (including local taxis and buses).

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2015/98.1** A Working Party be set up to raise awareness of Dementia, its symptoms and prevalence, and to encourage understanding and support of those living with Dementia. The Working Party will comprise Cllrs J Lamb, I Makepeace, R Murray, S Murray, R O’Keeffe and E Watts.

**FC2015/99 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:**

- a) *Devolution of Parks and open spaces* – There was nothing further to report on Devolution.
- b) *North Street Quarter development* – As a condition of the planning consent regarding NSQ proposals a working group would be set up for the allocation of Section 106 monies, and design of benefits in areas such as recreation. The Town Council would be party to the 106 agreements corporately, and also in its role as the Town Brooks Trust. The Town Clerk would sit on the group and it was suggested that Cllr S Murray be a representative also. It was resolved that

**FC2015/99.1** The Town Clerk and Cllr S Murray shall represent the interests of the Council and The Town Brooks Trust on the joint working group being set-up to administer s106 benefits arising from planning consent for the North Street Quarter.

- c) *Boxing Day Hunt meeting* - Letters had been sent to the Southdowns & Eridge Hunt and Lewes District Council – There had been no response from either party regarding this matter.

**FC2015/100 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:**

- a) The next deadline for grant applications (cycle 4 of 4 2015/16) was Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 with the Panel meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February and recommendations being considered by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
- b) The next Planning Committee meeting was scheduled for: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February at 7:00pm
- c) The next Member’s surgery would be on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 10:00 – 12:00 on the Corn Exchange – Cllr Makepeace would attend.
- d) A meeting of the Communications Working Party would be on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 7:00pm.
- e) The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would meet on 18<sup>th</sup> February.
- f) The next meeting of Council would be on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm – giving a deadline for agenda items to be submitted to TC of noon on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February.
- g) Meetings of the Buildings Refurbishment Working Party; Energy efficient Working Party and newly-established working parties would be advised in due course.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting and invited all present to join her for refreshments in the Mayor’s Parlour

*The meeting ended at 11:05pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....



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**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

From: Nic Watts

We celebrate the fact that Lewes Town Council in its 'statement of corporate objectives' strives to - 'support initiatives that contribute to the economic vitality of the town, especially through the use of local suppliers and producers; ' and that it...

'works with others to maintain, and improve where possible, good environmental quality and promote the sustainable use of local resources;' and that it has a...

'continued commitment to a FAIRTRADE Town status'

We understand that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is likely to threaten the pre-eminence of such policies.

Current EU rules allow for environmental and social considerations in awarding contracts.

Under TTIP public procurement contracts will be opened up to the private sector, meaning that local policies supporting social and environmental goals will no longer be allowed. And that procurement could be far more constrained by price alone – giving multinationals more access to markets at the expense of the local economy and the environment.

This potentially meaning if councils give priority to local providers could be claimed to be 'anti competitive' by multi-nationals potentially triggering lawsuits.

What can the Town Council do to protect its own program?

*Nic Watts*

*19-01-16*

**ANSWER:**

By the Mayor

The Council is required to comply with statutory rules on procurement. Until the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership can be thoroughly assessed it is not possible to answer this question. It is understood that: should the TTIP progress further, the implications must first be considered by the European Commission and this will involve a lead-time of around four years. A number of town councillors are extremely concerned about the likely impact of TTIP upon all kinds of services and standards that we currently take for granted in our community. Because this deal is being negotiated in deep secrecy it is hard to know exactly what the final agreement will look like, but the likely danger areas are already clear from other similar agreements and from the information already released into the public domain. The ability for corporations to be able to sue governments who dare to restrict their profitability, for instance, presents a clear danger to hard won health and environmental protection measures. In order to raise awareness of the dangers associated with TTIP copies of a pamphlet written by John Hilary of War on Want were distributed to all councillors at our last town council meeting.

Tonight's questioners raise important issues for the well-being of our town and so it is important that we do take concerns around the implementation of TTIP very seriously, whether or not they end up impacting directly upon the work of the town council itself. Councillors who have informed themselves hope very much that in due course the town council will take the largely symbolic step of declaring itself a TTIP-free zone, but that, of course, depends upon such a move finding majority support.

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**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

From: Dr. Sonya Baksi

We are fortunate in Lewes that our Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Lewes, Newhaven, High Weald has been ranked amongst the top six best performing CCG in the country. Their stated

policy is to bring services into the community nearer to where people live. They also look to NHS services as the preferred provider.

Since the 2012 Lansley Act, health services are open to competitive tender. The community services for Kent have just been awarded to Virgin Company for the next 7 years. The Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership will bring pressure to bear on increased contracting out and any services that go out to the private sector will not then be able to be brought back into public administration.

How can we in Lewes ensure that our local CGC will remain free to follow its present policy and programme?

*Dr. Sonya Baksi FFPHM, FRCP+CH.  
19.1.16*

**ANSWER:**

*By the Mayor*

The matters raised in this question are not within the ambit of a Parish Council. We have no role in healthcare commissioning, which is a duty of East Sussex County Council. Until the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership can be thoroughly assessed it is not possible to answer this question. It is understood that: should the TTIP progress further, the implications must first be considered by the European Commission and this will involve a lead-time of around four years. A number of town councillors are extremely concerned about the likely impact of TTIP upon all kinds of services and standards that we currently take for granted in our community. Because this deal is being negotiated in deep secrecy it is hard to know exactly what the final agreement will look like, but the likely danger areas are already clear from other similar agreements and from the information already released into the public domain. The ability for corporations to be able to sue governments who dare to restrict their profitability, for instance, presents a clear danger to hard won health and environmental protection measures. In order to raise awareness of the dangers associated with TTIP copies of a pamphlet written by John Hilary of War on Want were distributed to all councillors at our last town council meeting.

Tonight's questioners raise important issues for the well-being of our town and so it is important that we do take concerns around the implementation of TTIP very seriously, whether or not they end up impacting directly upon the work of the town council itself. Councillors who have informed themselves hope very much that in due course the town council will take the largely symbolic step of declaring itself a TTIP-free zone, but that, of course, depends upon such a move finding majority support.

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**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

From: Ann Link

Lewes Town Council made good changes to save energy in 2010 or 2011, in connection with the 10:10 initiative. I wondered how these were progressing, as I have noticed that the front door, which was well draught-proofed, now seems to have a gap and not always to close properly. I expect these things may need maintaining by now, and I also wondered if the Town Hall has, or could get, a control device that shows the temperature and how much power is being used? What further work could be done to save energy and money and reduce climate impacts?

The Town Hall has a tapestry created by Ali Rabjohns with people's pledges for 10:10 about the climate and energy, as leaves on a tree - is this still around?

*Ann Link*

**ANSWER:**

*By the Mayor*

The Council established a Working Party to investigate the energy efficiency of its buildings, and this may involve specialist surveys and investigation of technical equipment. The group was asked to assess the energy efficiency of Town Council properties and make recommendations for improvements, if any, and establish the feasibility of installing energy-generating systems on/in any Council properties.

The Working Party will make recommendations in due course. Agenda and Minutes for meetings are available at [www.lewes-tc.gov.uk/directory.asp?dir=committee](http://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk/directory.asp?dir=committee)  
The tapestry was exhibited briefly at the Town Hall and subsequently returned to its owner.

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**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

From: Indi Carol Angel

As a local resident, I was at the Lewes fox hunt demo on boxing day as a peaceful protestor to uphold the anti hunting legislation that was passed eleven years ago. I hadn't been to such a thing before and was shocked to see what occurred. I would like to ask the following three questions please:

1. Why does the council grant permission for the hunt to go ahead in clear breach of the hunting act.  
(this was not merely a trail hunt, foxes were torn to shreds that day, protestors were attacked, physically, many of us also verbally in breach of the equality act, and the huntsmen were drinking alcohol provided by the White Hart whilst in charge of a horse in a crowded public place. there were other clear breaches of law, many of which were captured on film clearly.
2. Why did the MP, Maria Caulfield turn out wearing a fox fur collar defending the hunt and...  
*[section redacted – potentially defamatory]* ..(ignoring the fact that the law was broken) she has failed to answer these reasonable questions in private correspondence and seems to also be unaccountable.
3. Bearing in mind there is a growing petition signed by 4,000 Lewes residents against the hunt (we intend to grow this petition significantly), and a national statistic of 83% of people being against it, and in light of the numerous breaches to the exciting legislation which is supposed to prohibit this barbaric tradition, and the Lewes MPs obvious stance on it, what is the council's intentions regarding the application they will receive for there to be a hunt on boxing day this year?

Thank you for submitting these. My friends will be present as I will be working but I look forward to receiving a full response.

**ANSWER:**

*By the Mayor*

We are the parish Council for Lewes, and our only role in the Hunt event is as one of the statutory consultees regarding application for the road closure, which are made to Lewes DISTRICT Council and processed by their Planning Department. We are asked for comment along with the Highways Authority (East Sussex County Council) and Sussex Police, among others. We have no powers to grant or withhold permission for any event.

The instances of illegal activity that you cite would be police matters, and you should make your submission, along with any evidence you may have, to Sussex Police.

We have no authority over the Member of Parliament, and cannot comment upon this element of your enquiry.

As to your last question – as noted above, we will not receive any application for 2016 – merely a request for comments upon road closure. The Council's Planning Committee is tasked with responding to such items and will consider its response to any application when presented. The Town Council has asked Lewes District Council to review its process for consultations on such applications, and we await the result of that.

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**QUESTION RECEIVED:**

From: Marina Pepper

I wish to enquire of the council on the progress of matters decided namely fc2015/83.1 and 83.2

*Marina Pepper*

**ANSWER:**

*By the Mayor*

Letters were written and sent (and emailed for speed as it was immediately before Christmas), and neither have elicited a response as yet.