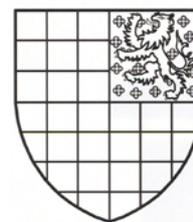


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the **meeting of Lewes Town Council**,
held on **Thursday 25th August 2016**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

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

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

Observing: Ms V McLachlan (*Finance & Administration Officer*)

FC2016/40 **QUESTIONS:** A written question had been received From Mr Newell Fisher as to any reply received to the Council’s letter to government on rail service disruption. The question and the answer given are appended to these minutes. Other questions had been submitted by Mr J Stockdale regarding the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan, but rejected by the Mayor. This gave rise to a heated discussion, with some Members insisting that the rejection was not acceptable. The Mayor explained his reasoning at length, and advised that he had given a comprehensive explanation to Mr Stockdale and suggested he refer his enquiries to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting scheduled for the following week; advising that any remaining questions thereafter would be welcomed at the September 29th Council meeting. TC offered support for this advice and Cllr Murray, who was Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, elaborated further. Nonetheless a demand was voiced that the ‘technical’ grounds for rejection be noted in the minutes; in consequence of which it is stated: that the questions had been considered to fail the test [*Standing Order 1(d)*] that a question or evidence submitted shall be in respect of an item of business included in the Agenda.

FC2016/41 **DECLARATIONS of INTEREST:** Cllrs Chartier, Makepeace, O’Keeffe and Watts declared an interest regarding Crowd Safety at Lewes Bonfire Celebrations [item 7 on the agenda], as they were all members of Bonfire Societies.

FC2016/42 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllrs Barker and Jones who were away on holiday; Cllr Lamb who had a work commitment, and Cllr Milner whose partner had recently had a baby. Cllr Dr Bolt had suffered a recent bereavement. **It was resolved that:**

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

Members wished to record their deepest sympathy to Cllr Dr Bolt on her recent loss.

Members wished to record congratulations to Cllr Milner and his partner Leila on the birth of Kit – a brother for Rex.

FC2016/43 **MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

a) The Mayor thanked everyone who participated in the bowls match at the Castle on 30th July 2016.

b) The Mayor had recently opened the annual parish ‘Chilbi’ festival in Waldshut-Tiengen where he met the new Oberbürgermeister, Dr Philipp Frank. During his visit, the Mayor attended a memorial honouring those who had lost their lives during the two World Wars. The Mayor had also been involved in the laying of a cobble stone, a commemoration which is taking place throughout Europe to remember the Jewish and other deportees who were sent to extermination camps during the war.

Continues...

- c) Heritage Open Day would be on Sunday 11th September 2016 with tours taking place at 10am, 12pm and 2pm given by Mike Chartier with help from Philip Pople and Ashley Price
- d) The annual Allotments Show would be held on Sunday 18th September from 2 – 4pm.
- e) A letter had been received from the Friends of Chernobyl's children thanking the Town Council for supporting the children's visit this summer and offering the facilities at the Town Hall.
- f) A Dementia Friendly Lewes awareness-raising session would be held on Monday 19th September at 12pm in the Yarrow Room, Town Hall. All were welcome.

FC2016/44

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2016 were received and signed as an accurate record.

Cllr Rowell asked that his suggestion, voiced at the end of that meeting, of Diversity awareness training for Members be specifically mentioned and TC agreed to note this.

FC2016/45

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) *Commemorations Working Party 27th July 2016:* Council considered the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*). The meeting had noted that Council had extended the Working Party's mandate to 2019 and supported, in-principle, prospective events that had been recommended.

Lewes Light Festival: Graham Festenstein and Phil Rose, organizers of the Lewes Light Festival (LLF), had given an illustrated presentation outlining the inspiration for the Festival, analysis of the 2015 event, and plans for an extended festival for this year. The original inspiration had come from the UNESCO International Year of Light 2015, including initiatives at Chartres and Lyon in France; a world-renowned annual event at Alingsas in Sweden, and projects in Durham and London. The 2015 Lewes festival had been shortlisted for a prestigious international award.

There was an in-depth discussion and the guests elaborated upon some of the financial options for the project. Enormous support was already secured from within the lighting industry, such as donation/loan of equipment worth over £250,000, and expertise. Funding for some artistic elements was in place, and more was anticipated, but it was difficult to attract grants *etc* for fundamental but mundane elements such as insurance.

The Festival had a number of ancillary benefits as a practical education tool, as it addressed curricular elements of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) and offered opportunities in the teaching of dramatic arts, theatre and event management *etc*. Mr Festenstein, a professional engineer, was a 'STEM Ambassador' and Mr Rose was Head of the Production Arts faculty at Sussex Downs College (SDC), a lecturer, and founder of Lewes Youth Theatre. SDC students had produced elements of the 2015 festival and acted as guides through the town. It was proposed that this guide element of the festival would be expanded and would result in a number of trained young people who would be knowledgeable about the history of their own town and who could pass-on such knowledge and enthusiasm. Part of a bid for Heritage Lottery Fund grant was to link to a Lewes local history project with local schools and SDC. There were also plans for a discrete wildlife-themed installation on Landport Bottom.

As an aside; it was noted that energy consumed to present the 2015 Festival had amounted to less than that required for a single floodlit football match.

The working party agreed that it would be a very worthwhile event; helping tourism and including a training aspect helping young people. The LLF was also hoping to present a photographic exhibition in the foyer of the Town Hall. They were seeking funding from

several other sources. It was agreed that Council should be asked to agree a budget of up to £5,000 from the existing earmarked Reserve fund (*balance b/fwd at 1st April 2016 £14,005*), to be spent on the 2016 LLF at the discretion of the Working Party.

100yrs since commencement of 1st World War: There was general discussion on:

- A proposed extension of the popular “lightbox” project featuring photographs from the Edward Reeves Archive in illuminated boxes. The organizer was designing a programme of photographs of local people who served in WW1, to be mounted in the windows of their original homes. A parallel academic scheme to catalogue the Reeve archive of glass photographic plates had not attracted Heritage Lottery Fund funding and was deferred. There was a proposal to involve young people in a coordinated torchlight procession, to culminate in a ceremony at the War Memorial.
- The effect of the war on society at home and development of universal suffrage – working men, and women, being temporarily enfranchised in 1918 and the following Womens’ Suffrage movement. This was also a time of development in the Trades Union movement.
- Lewes Old Grammar School had mounted a production of “Oh! What a Lovely War!” in the Assembly Room, and it was proposed to discuss repeat performances in 2017, perhaps coordinated with an inter-school writing competition across the town.
- The Mayor was considering the organization of a Music-hall styled event in February 2017.
- There was a brief discussion regarding the research Dr Mayhew was conducting for the Council into names on the War Memorial. It had been previously acknowledged that the “missing names” provided by the Royal British Legion would almost certainly prove to have been omitted originally for a particular reason; and lack of space, plus the recent upgrade to the heritage listing status (to 2*) may prove an obstacle to additional names.
- There was a general re-affirmation that marking the peace was the favoured theme.

It was resolved that:

FC2016/45.1 The Minutes of the Commemorations Working Party held on the 27th July 2016 are received and noted. (it was noted also that: resolved following the *oral* report on this meeting given to Council on 28th July, a budget of up to £5,000 had previously been agreed, drawn from the existing earmarked Commemorations Reserve fund (*identified in that council’s accounts as R7 - balance b/fwd at 1st April 2016 £14,005*), to be spent in support of the 2016 Lewes Light Festival at the discretion of the Commemorations Working Party)

b) *Building repairs Working Party 1st August 2016:* Council considered the minutes of this meeting (*copy in minute book*) *Malling Community Centre:* Brian Johnson and Mrs Liz Allsobrook had attended, representing the Malling Community Association; formerly the long-term tenant and currently the Council’s managing agent for the Centre. The Working Party reviewed the history of the building and earlier work to prepare for the refurbishment of the Malling Community Centre (MCC). A professional structural survey had been carried-out, and current and prospective users of the Centre had been surveyed - with the results indicating the scope of the redesign that should be undertaken. Meetings with users and local residents had also discussed ideas to integrate use of the area of open space adjoining, immediately West of the building. Architects had provided some outline design ideas, and an informal inspection by a professional quantity surveyor had produced an estimate of the order of costs to be anticipated. Council had established a financial reserve (R10) which would yield £263,000 in 2016/17 and it was expected that additional funds would be available for specific elements/aspects of the refurbishment from external grants schemes and perhaps from ‘s106’ contributions arising from the planned North Street Quarter development. The project offered an opportunity to incorporate sustainable energy conservation/generation techniques and other

innovations.

The consulting engineers who had managed the recent Town Hall refurbishment had offered to assess the project further, having previously informally given the services of a surveyor, and Members agreed that this offer should be accepted. This would lead to a draft design brief for approval by Council and a building contract that could be offered through tender, and would help establish a project timetable which minimized impact on current users.

Town Hall façade and other works: Members noted that the refurbishment works were complete and a short list of ‘snagging’ items was being addressed. The fire alarm system works were underway and would take a further three weeks.

Assembly Room and Corn Exchange roofing: Scaffolding was underway, and the recovering of the roof surfaces would follow once this was completed.

All Saints Centre: Although not specifically within the remit of the Working-party, Members considered any building-related matters affecting the All Saints Centre. There were no known issues with the building, which was in generally good repair.

The Working Party asked the Town Clerk to consult with BLB Surveyors regarding the Malling Community Centre refurbishment project. The group would meet again once initial advice had been received, to move the project to the next stage. Current potential sources of grant funding would be researched.

Following some questions and answers, **it was resolved that:**

FC2016/45.2 The Minutes of the Building Repairs Working Party held on 1st August 2016 are received and noted.

FC2016/45.3 The conclusions of the Building Repairs Working Party held on 1st August 2016 (*copy in minute book*) are noted, and the remit of the Working party is extended to include repairs to the All Saints centre as required.

c) *East Sussex Assoc. of Local Councils – Councillors Commission 12th August 2016:* Councillor S Murray gave a brief oral report. Cllr Murray had attended this meeting, in Staplehurst, Kent, on 12th August 2016 which had assembled parish council representatives from East Sussex and Kent. The meeting had been organised by the respective County Associations and Professor Colin Copus of De Montfort University Leicester; who was leading research on the roles of Parish Councils and Councillors and advising a Parliamentary Select Committee. The meeting had covered issues of the role of a Councillor in the local community, the contribution councillors make, decision making and understanding about local government, and inspirations to offer candidacy. Some questions were asked regarding the constitution of ESALC and the Lewes District Association of Local Councils and TC advised.

FC2016/45.4 The oral report on the East Sussex Association of Local Council meeting with the Councillors Commission on 12th August 2016 is noted.

FC2016/46 CROWD SAFETY AT LEWES BONFIRE CELEBRATIONS:

Members considered report FC009/2016 (*copy in the Minute book*) which apprised Members of a request by Lewes District Council for increased contribution to the costs of crowd safety stewarding Lewes Bonfire celebrations.

In October 2010, the Council had considered the matter of crowd safety at Lewes Bonfire. Many improvements in crowd management had been introduced in the recent past and were considered successful, but independent surveys commissioned by Sussex Police and the Bonfire Society Group had identified risks continuing at specific points within the town. Further measures to accommodate the outstanding areas of risk were thought to be relatively straightforward, and Lewes District Council (LDC) had proposed an additional to its existing contract with a professional event management company to provide more trained stewards to ensure public safety at specific locations. That organization specialized in crowd marshalling services at very large events, including Brighton & Hove City *Pride* day, and had established their professional credibility with all

parties to Lewes Bonfire and were considered a preferred partner.

Although neither Council was the principal organizer of the Bonfire celebrations, they are both statutory bodies with an interest in the events and it was considered that in the event of injury to the public a court may well impute some responsibility to mitigate any risks that could reasonably have been anticipated. The Town Council had asked to be more closely involved in Bonfire preparations and this had been welcomed. It was suggested that the Town and District Councils might act as partners to retain the services discussed. The additional services had been evaluated by the contractor at around £7,000 and it was proposed that the two councils share this cost equally. It had been resolved (FC2010/66.1) that Lewes Town Council would contribute up to 50% with a maximum of £3,500, toward the cost of additional marshalling.

Despite several refinements to the service provided, no increase had been requested by the District Council since the original value was set. Whilst LDC has absorbed extra costs over previous years they now asked that the Town Council consider an increase to its contribution, as the original intention was for the two councils to share the cost.

The cost of the stewards has slowly increased over the years and in 2015 the cost was £12,000. As the event in 2016 would fall on a Saturday, anticipated visitor numbers were in the region of 50-60 thousand. In order to provide the necessary crowd safety measures it was understood that there was likely to be an increase of £4,000 bringing the total cost to £16,000.

The additional costs in 2016 were in relation to stewarding the entire length of School Hill from the Boots/Old Library Corner to the War Memorial. The 'soft barrier' rope technique would be continued as this had worked well in recent years. Records showed that in 2009 76 security staff were deployed. In 2015 the event fell on a Thursday and 137 security staff were used. This number would increase this year, nearly doubling the number engaged originally in 2009. LDC did not anticipate that the Council would be in a position to contribute half of £16,000 but would be grateful for any increase. The Town Council's General Fund balance as 1st April 2016 was £238,703. Council had since resolved two unbudgeted items to be drawn from this balance in 2016: a sum total of £8,500.

Members were interested to know details of the strategic safety plan, but this was restricted to the emergency services and not publicly available. There was some discussion as to LDC's opportunities to offset costs with, for example, premium licensing charges; but many were already exploited. Members were keen to investigate the possibility of a seat on the Bonfire Safety Group which considered each year's planning, and to obtain contact details for local controllers on the night, to help avoid issues such as 2015's unplanned closure of Lansdown Place. TC would forward these requests.

After a further short debate and vote on proposed values **it was resolved that:**

FC2016/46.1 Lewes Town Council will contribute up to £6,000, with a maximum contribution of up to 50% proportionate to Lewes District Council's costs of safety stewarding for Lewes Bonfire Celebrations for the year 2016. Future years' contributions will be decided in due course.

FC2016/47

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

- a) *Assembly Room/Corn Exchange roof repairs:* stripping/recovering would begin when the scaffold was complete.
- b) *Town Hall Fire Alarm:* The fire alarm was now installed and would undergo tests for seven days, following which it would be fully-operational.
- c) *Public WiFi in the Town Hall:* Work to install access points and other infrastructure was due to start on 5th September 2016 and should take around 3 days.
- d) *Devolution of Parks & Open Spaces:* Members were reminded that Lewes District Council (LDC) had, several weeks earlier, produced revised 'heads of terms' for use in

transfers which the Council's solicitor had considered acceptable, as they broadly accommodated his original suggestions. These had been produced in connection with transfers to Newhaven Town Council, but if subsequent contract drafts accurately reflected the declared principles it would allow Lewes Town Council to ask LDC to remove its embargo on transfer of Malling Recreation ground and the LDC share of Landport Bottom. There had been no further development since the last report, and the progress on contract drafting was unknown. In anticipation of reaching a point at which the embargo may be lifted, TC asked councillors for a decision on their continued desire to complete the transfers, and their inclination to pay over to LDC all or part of the £40,000 raised by precept *in* the Malling rec site for 2016/17 to compensate them for having excluded that site from the year's Special Expenses levy. It was noted that; regardless of any eventual ownership transfer, LDC would inevitably seek to recoup its loss in this regard and the Special Expense mechanism allowed for retrospective charging.

It was resolved that:

FC2016/47.1 Lewes Town Council remains willing to accept ownership of Malling Recreation Ground and Lewes District Council's 50% share in land at Landport Bottom, subject to acceptable revision of certain clauses in formal transfer agreements; also:

FC2016/47.2 Lewes Town Council will consider transfer of up to £40,000 to Lewes District Council in respect of grounds maintenance costs for Malling Recreation Ground in 2016/17, subject to further negotiation and transfer of ownership of the site.

e) "Our Pictures" project: Permission had now been given by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project to start and half the grant awarded would be released in the next few days. A schedule was to be established with the specialist workshop in Cambridge for the conservation works to begin.

FC2016/48 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting would be held on Wednesday 31st August at 7.00pm. It was acknowledged that, although not conventionally open to the general public, there would be no objection to public observers.

b) The next Planning Committee would take place on Tues 6th September at 7:00pm.

c) The next Member's Surgery was scheduled for Tuesday 6th September 2016 – 10:00am – 12:00pm in the Corn Exchange. Cllr Catlin volunteered to attend.

d) The next Council meeting would take place on Thursday 29th September 2016, with a deadline for agenda items to reach TC by noon on Monday 19th September.

e) Meetings to be arranged were: Buildings Working Party; Homes & Workspaces W/pty; Energy efficiency W/pty; Audit Panel; Personnel Panel; Dementia Awareness group; All Saints Steering Group.

f) The next deadline for grant applications: (cycle 2 of 4 2016/17) was Fri 2nd September. The Assessment Panel would meet on Wed 14th September with recommendations being considered by Council at its meeting on 29th September 2016.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting and invited all present to join him in the Parlour for refreshments *The meeting ended at 9:00pm*

Signed:

Date:

QUESTION RECEIVED:

From: Newell Fisher **Received:** email sent Thursday 25/08/2016 01:24

“In the light of item FC2016/33 b in the draft minutes of the last full Council Meeting, local residents and members of Lewes Labour Party have told us that they are suffering very considerable damage to the quality of their family lives as a result of the appalling level of service currently being provided by Southern Rail train operator, Govia Thameslink Railway.

Last week, we spoke to a young man whilst protesting against cuts, cancellations, ticket office closures and job losses outside Lewes railway station, who told us he had lost two jobs as result of late and cancelled trains on the mainline to London.

The disregard of the franchise owner for people, in favour of profit is astounding and is damaging our local economy. What can Town Councillors pledge to do to highlight this issue with our local MP, with the train operator and with the newly appointed Minister for rail, Paul Maynard, MP?

What reply was received from the minister Claire Perry and what further action does the Town Council propose to take?”

Newell Fisher

ANSWER:

Further to Council’s resolution the following letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, and copied to Maria Caulfield MP:

Southern Rail services

I am asked by my Council to write to you expressing their extreme concern regarding the ongoing daily disruption to train services operated by Southern, part of the GTR franchise. The misery experienced by travellers attempting to use train services over past weeks has caused immense hardship for those trying to get to and from work and carry out their day to day business. Reliable operation of train services to London, Brighton and elsewhere in this region are fundamental to the economic health of not only the town, but the wider country – this area being a transport gateway to Europe and home to significant numbers of London workers who commute daily.

At their most recent meeting Councillors resolved that:

“Lewes Town Council expresses its extreme dissatisfaction with the present erratic and blighted service from this important rail hub, to Hastings, Eastbourne, Seaford, Brighton and London. The community that we represent deserves assurances of an early end to the disruption and a further assurance that plans issued by GTR, in which the blight is predicted to last until December 2016, will not be tolerated by H M Government.”

The problems which beset the current rail service are too many to list, and the underlying dispute with the RMT regarding proposed staff role-changes is considered to be only a part of the issue; albeit the part that gains the most media attention.

Councillors understand that the present arrangement between the Department of Transport and GTR is a pilot for “input standard” contracts, not a traditional franchise. In return for running the service specified in detail by the DfT, GTR receives a management fee, whilst DfT is remitted all the fare income, less delay refunds.

Councillors are also aware of calls to replace Southern management with a problem-solving team from Transport for London, and that Rail Minister Paul Maynard has publicly stated that “..*Changing the management will not help because that would not address the issues in dispute and would only cause further disruption.*”.

The DfT **must**, therefore, be involved in the solution.

This Council looks forward to learning what steps you propose to take to assist in resolving the matter.

No reply has been received to date. Council will be informed of any response as a matter of course. As a Parish Council, Lewes Town Council has no powers in this matter and can only act as representative of the town, in attempting to influence the opinions of those who do. It can only continue to bring pressure to bear by adding its voice to the overwhelming body of support for government intervention.