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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on
Thursday 26th February 2015 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 S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; J Daly; I Eiloart; J Lamb; D Lamport; L F Li (*Deputy Mayor*); G Mayhew; M Milner; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; A Price; J Stockdale and Dr M Turner (*Mayor*)

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); M Larkin (*Mace Bearer*); Mrs J Dean (*Customer Services Officer*)

Observing: B Courage (*Town Ranger*); Ms V McLachlan (*Finance Administration Officer*)

The Mayor introduced the Council’s Chaplain, Canon Richard Moatt, who spoke for a few moments on the parallels between sacrifices made for Lent and the things that governments insisted were given-up; remarking on the need to consider consequences that inevitably arise from giving something up.

FC2014/97 **QUESTION TIME:** There were three observers present, but no questions.

FC2014/98 **MEMBERS’ DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr O’Keeffe declared interests related to applicant bodies listed as items 2; 6; 10; and 12 in the table of recommended financial grants to be considered at agenda item 6c)..

FC2014/99 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr E Allsobrook who had a family commitment, and Cllr MacCleary who had a work commitment. No message had been received from Cllr Dean

FC2014/100 **MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

a) *Upcoming events:* The Mayor noted

- Sunday 22nd March 2015 – 3.00 pm – Senior Citizen’s Tea, Town Hall
- Thursday 16th April 2015 – 7.00pm - Civic Awards prior to Town Meeting
- Thursday 30th July 2015 – 11:00am – laying of commemorative stone to note the award of the Victoria Cross to 2nd Lt S C Woodroffe VC

b) *Pre-election publicity:* All Members had been provided with guidance *re* publicity in the pre-election period, referred to as the “purdah” period. This is the time between the date the notice of an election is published and polling day. For the Parish and District elements of the 2015 elections, the notice would be published on 16th March. Therefore: the purdah period would run from 16th March to 7th May 2015. This affected Council publicity – *not* individual member or party activity.

c) *Elections 2015:* Members were provided with general information for anyone helping to promote service on the Council:

Notice of elections would be published on 16th March 2015

Deadline for nominations (delivered to Lewes District Council) was 4pm on Thursday 9th April 2015

The count of votes for the Parish elections would take place from 9:00am on Saturday 9th May – results available on the District Council website by 5pm.

Continues...

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22nd January 2015 were received and signed as an accurate record.

WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:

Members are 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] *Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 29th January 2015.* Council received the minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*), which described the consultant's (Feria Urbanism) presentation. The group then had a discussion on housing in the town covering affordable housing, designation, and the recognition that housing sites are scarce in Lewes. There was a need to find the right sites for good quality, affordable, housing.

The consultant had then moved on to talk about a three day 'Design Forum' where stakeholder groups could get more involved in real time. The forum would explore sites that could offer the opportunity to be built on, and the design qualities that local people are looking for. At the end of the forum it was hoped that a framework could be in place. This was a key point in the process for the NP to move forward and make progress.

The Group had then considered initial stages of the proposal for the preparation of the NP. The next of the 16 key tasks were:

Task 3 – Preparation of consultation material.

Task 4 – Visioning event – to introduce the consultancy (Feria Urbanism) to the community and to allow groups in Lewes to meet each other and share their ideas. To invite stakeholders to the three day Design Forum. There would need to be a four or five week gap between tasks 4 and 5.

Task 5 – Design Forum – A three day forum working with the community. The event would be by invitation to a range of participants, including developers, flood groups, the Environment Agency and others. The NP Topic groups (Tourism, Transport, Housing, Sustainability, Social/Community/Cultural and Design/Built Environment) would need to funnel their work into the same project. The consultant would work with topic groups on this. At the end of the Design Forum there should be a rough plan that sets out what Lewes could look like in 20 years and sites should be identified which are fairly well-tested. This would provide the LNPSG prospective "policy themes" for the NP which would be tested with the public and then a draft plan would be created. With regard to the draft timetable, which aimed to integrate LNPSG progress with the evolution of the SDNPA's Local Plan (expected to be made in 2017), it was hoped that a Pre-submission draft of a Lewes NP would be ready by the early Autumn 2015 for a six week consultation. Comments from the consultation would then be used to revise the Plan.

It was reported that the Council had purchased several domain names with permutations of the chosen "Lewes for All" brand and preferences had been canvassed, for the primary format to use when a website was constructed. The most favoured among the Group was "Lewes4all.uk".

Following general discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 29th January 2015 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

b] *Buildings repairs Working Party 3rd February 2015:* The Minutes of this meeting were received (*copy in minute book*). The meeting had been preceded by a visit to inspect Malling Community Centre, for Members to familiarize themselves with the

layout and condition.

There followed a review of the programme to refurbish Malling Community Centre. Preliminary costings by a professional quantity surveyor had established a likely project cost of over £440,000, but these had not arisen from a detailed design and were considered indicative only. They were described as a “basic” refurbishment to meet modern building regulation standards. Earlier consultation with current and prospective users and the wider community had produced a significant amount of material indicating the philosophy such designs should encompass. It was agreed to recommend that Council should commission an architect to prepare a design to the level of detail necessary for accurate costing, and to satisfy any third-party sources of prospective funds. It was understood that the earmarked finance reserve for this project would yield £233,000 in 2015/16 and that this was insufficient to fund the project. It was anticipated that elements of the work would attract third-party grants which were expected to make-up the difference, although this could only be established once detailed plans were agreed.

With regard to the project to refurbish the South (High Street) elevation of the Town Hall, the Order of Costs report prepared following detailed surveys was reviewed. Various details were discussed, and enhancements that might be included, *eg* making a feature of the martyrs’ steps by installation of a glazed viewing port. In the course of this discussion it was noted that the engineer advised flags should not be flown from the flagpole until repairs were completed, as there were suspicions about the integrity of some anchor fixings. The District Conservation Officer and English Heritage officers had been consulted and were reported to be happy with all the proposed works. Council had already acknowledged that the estimated cost of around £305,000 (nett) would exhaust the earmarked finance reserves for this project, which would yield £168,340 in 2015/16, and it was unlikely that the programme would qualify for third-party grants (although this would be explored). The works were unavoidable, and the General Fund would make up any shortfall. A programme was agreed which anticipated the contract would be confirmed in April, with works beginning within six weeks or so.

At their previous meeting, Members had inspected Town Hall office suite, to familiarize themselves with the layout and condition. Suggestions had been considered for refurbishment and works that would increase usable space; improve light and air circulation; mitigate tripping hazards, improve the presentation to visitors, and update and improve shabby kitchen and WC facilities. These had been accepted as sensible and beneficial, and it was recognized that the rooms were long-overdue for refurbishment. Proposed alterations had been drafted after consultation with all staff, and cost estimates sought for carrying out the work. Local firms had been approached with a draft specification and Members were presented a proposal for works in modular format, with elements prioritized and individually priced. The aggregate cost for the complete programme was £30,106. Members considered that all the works should be undertaken, and that to omit any element could be false economy. To avoid further reduction of the General Fund in a single year, it was suggested that this project be accorded a higher priority than Allotment site improvements (all sites currently being in reasonably good order) and the reserve earmarked for that purpose be appropriated (Project account P8 – £30,000 available 2015/16)

After some discussion and questions **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.2 The Minutes of the meeting of the Buildings repairs Working Party on 3rd February 2015 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

FC2014/102.3 That the Council invites architects interested in tendering for design work for refurbishment of Malling Community Centre, in accordance with the results of community consultation; to produce plans capable of detailed costing.

FC2014/102.4 That Council notes and approves the decisions taken with regard to the refurbishment of the façade of the Town Hall, noted at Minutes THRWP2014/06 - 3 and 4 of the Buildings repairs Working Party meeting on 3rd February 2015.

FC2014/102.5 Works to modernize and improve the Town Hall office suite, as described at Minute THRWP2014/06 - 5 of the Buildings repairs Working Party meeting on 3rd February 2015; are approved - appropriating the balance on project account P8 to that purpose.

c] *Grants Panel 4th February 2015:* Members considered Report FC014/2014 (*Copy in minute book*) containing the Panel's recommendations for payment of grants for the fourth and final cycle of the year. The report highlighted that recommendations exceeded the remaining amount available from the dedicated grant budget by £1,670. It was nonetheless considered that the projects had sufficient merit to be supported to the degree recommended, and Council was asked to supplement the grant budget from the General Fund balance (£377,056 b/fwd at March 2014). Following one or two questions on detail, **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.6 Grant payments recommended in Column G of the appendix to Report FC014/2014 (*Copy in minute book*) are approved; with the sum of £1,670 in excess of the agreed grants budget to be drawn from the General Fund.

d] *Commemorations Working Party 17th February 2015:* The Minutes of this meeting were received (*copy in minute book*). The meeting had considered various topics. There was general discussion on the events to-date marking 100yrs since commencement of World War One, and those in prospect. The "Winter of the World" (WoW) project had culminated in a very well-attended and well-regarded evening of music; poetry, and dramatization, performed with an emotive backdrop of contemporary WW1 photographs, at the All Saints Centre (ASC). The ASC was booked from the afternoon of Saturday 26th September through the day of Sunday 27th September 2015, to allow an event on the Saturday and a series of films on the Sunday. Titles were suggested and were listed for further research. For the Saturday evening, Members were keen to explore the availability of the Lewes; Glynde, & Beddingham Brass Band and others, with a view to staging an event along similar lines to WoW and perhaps inviting donations to benefit the project to create a Peace Garden adjacent the area popularly referred to as the "Magic Circle" (Castle Ditch Lane). Cllr O'Keeffe had volunteered to write some appropriate music for LGB Brass, and was thanked for this offer.

A meeting had recently been held with District and County Council officers tasked with arranging the local elements of the national project for local commemoration of recipients of the Victoria Cross, which provided stone tablets in memory of recipients. There were to be only two tablets in Lewes District, one in Seaford and one for Lewes; commemorating 2nd Lt. Sidney Clayton Woodroffe VC, which would be installed on 30th July 2015 as the anniversary of his brave but fatal action in battle at Hooze, Belgium. There had been some discussion on the most appropriate location for the stone tablet, and members considered various locations. The most-favoured was the terrace at the entrance to the public library in Styles' Field, with the Grange Gardens a second-choice. Members had regard to the general ambience of these areas; visibility to the public, and future availability of space should a similar project arise in any future commemoration, *eg* for WW2. A civic ceremony would be arranged for the unveiling.

Council had previously agreed that a Commonwealth flag would be flown on Commonwealth Day each year – the second Monday in March – but it was noted that the Town hall flagpole would not be usable this year, pending repairs, following an engineer's report which had identified weakness in some fixings. A promoter was suggesting a commemorative civic event for the day and Members considered details

in the draft programme but did not wish to pursue the idea in 2015.

It was understood that there was to be enhanced national recognition of VE day in 2015, although no details were known. It was agreed that the Council should take its lead from any plans being formulated by the Royal British Legion.

There was a general discussion on miscellaneous events:

It was understood that Helen Glavin would be amenable to re-presenting the Sword of Freedom at some point, related to national commemoration of Magna Carta.

It was suggested that a version of “Winter of the World” might be staged in Blois, and it was agreed that the Twinning Association should be consulted on this idea.

The Battlefields Trust (LTC is a corporate member) offered a speaker for an Autumn lecture as part of their recognition of Magna Carta. It was suggested that such a lecture might be held in the Corn Exchange, which was, appropriately, decorated with the interpretive panels from the British Library’s 2009 “Taking Liberties” exhibition on civil liberty.

The group of embroiderers who had created the battle of Lewes Tapestry were understood to be contemplating a follow-on project, working with the Sussex Archaeological Society, to create several smaller panels in a similar style, and there was the prospect of an exhibition; possibly a need for a permanent “home” for these. Members agreed that, should this proceed, the Council ought to support the project.

It was reported that the Royal British Legion were considering alternative arrangements for Remembrance Sunday. Suggestions known to be under consideration included a change of time to 11:00am (known to be problematic); a change of venue to St Michael’s church, and a change to place the civic party on the steps of the Crown Court for the parade march-past. Further information would be reported when known.

Following a round of comments and questions, **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.7 The Minutes of the meeting of the Commemorations Working Party on 17th February 2015 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

FC2014/102.8 The programme to mark events in World War One, planned for the All Saints Centre on 26th and 27th September 2015, described at Minute CmemsWP2014/20-1 of the meeting of the Commemorations Working Party on 17th February 2015 is supported.

FC2014/102.9 The proposed sites and priorities for a tablet commemorating 2nd Lt. Sidney Clayton Woodroffe VC, as suggested at Minute CmemsWP2014/20-2 of the meeting of the Commemorations Working Party on 17th February 2015 are agreed.

FC2014/102.10 The events and ideas described at Minute CmemsWP2014/20-5 of the meeting of the Commemorations Working Party on 17th February 2015 are supported in-principle.

e) *Civic Awards Panel 18th February 2015*: Members received notes of the meeting of the Civic Awards Assessment Panel on 18th February (*copy in minute book*), which cited the awardees decided-upon. The awards would be presented on 16th April 2015. **It was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.11 The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Awards Assessment Panel on 18th February 2015 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

f) *White Ribbon Initiative*: Cllr A Price, as the Council’s nominated Champion for the White Ribbon Initiative, gave a brief update on the scheme. The local group had shifted focus to concentrate on elder abuse, he said, but he and others were prepared to pursue continuation of the cross-agency work on domestic abuse. He reported statistics for the area indicating an increase in incidents reported as a crime, although it was noted that criteria for the police recording classifications had altered. “Operation Ribbon”, a police initiative to let victims know that they had raised their

alertness to incidents and were training specialist officers, had been extended to April. White Ribbon was an international campaign, addressing abuse of women by men, and the local group was affiliated to the Community Safety Partnership. A new group with a wider remit, encompassing male:female abuse in both contexts, was being planned. Cllr Price was warmly thanked for his commitment to the initiative and asked to continue his efforts. After some questions and general discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.12 The oral report by Cllr Price on developments in the White Ribbon initiative is noted, and the Council's thanks to Cllr Price for his efforts and continued commitment to this campaign are recorded.

g] *Sussex Community Rail Partnership AGM 20th February 2015*: Cllr Catlin reported on the recent Annual General Meeting of the Partnership, and it was noted that the council-supported steam event in 2014 was still receiving accolades. Various events were planned for 2015, and the Partnership wished Members to know that it continued to acknowledge and appreciate the Council's support. **It was resolved that:**

FC2014/102.13 The oral report by Cllr Catlin on the Sussex Community Rail Partnership AGM 20th February 2015 is noted.

FC2014/103

ECOSYSTEM/NATURAL CAPITAL:

Members considered a motion (*NOM010/2014 – copy in Minute book*) which promoted the value of Natural Capital to the health of Lewes' residents and in supplying multiple benefits for the Town's economy through ecosystem services. It was explained that Natural Capital was the term coined to describe the world's stocks of natural assets – things like rocks, soil, air, water and all living things that live in and on these. Ecosystems were defined as the dynamic complex of plants, animals and micro-organisms that, in combination with their non-living environment, make communities that work together as a functional unit. The main identifying feature of an ecosystem was that it is an actual 'system', with interactions between its living elements and the environment they inhabit.

Ecosystem services - basically 'what nature does for us' - provide benefits that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. Examples of ecosystem services were offered, including products such as food and water, regulation of floods, soil erosion and disease outbreaks, and non-material benefits such as recreational and spiritual benefits in natural areas and most important (but least visible) things like soil formation, nutrient cycling, the water cycle, *etc.* that maintain the conditions for life on Earth [supporting services].

It was accepted that green infrastructure in towns and cities were vital to health and wellbeing; that they also played a significant role in fundamental aspects such as air quality, and that these had quantifiable economic values.

It was resolved that:

FC2014/103.1 "Lewes Town Council notes that a thriving natural environment (natural capital) in the town of Lewes is of great value in providing

- significant health benefits to individual residents and the community as a whole
- multiple benefits through ecosystem services for example flood risk reduction, delivery of clean air, micro climate regulation, accessible nature, for the town's economy
- enjoyment for both residents and visitors to the town, helping to promote tourism and hence the local economy

The Council therefore resolves to take advantage of any appropriate opportunity within the town of Lewes to be respectful of and where possible work with others to enhance these natural systems, for example through the improvement of green

infrastructure (GI) and ecological networks in our stewardship of areas such as the Pells and other open spaces that we may have responsibility for, and the buildings that we manage.

As a Council we will look to give weight to environmental management and community aspirations in the decision making process so as to support relevant aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan for the Town.”

FC2014/104

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR 2015/16:

Members considered the proposed municipal calendar for scheduled meetings in 2015/2016 and public “drop-in” surgeries. Cllr Eiloart offered to assist with formatting a calendar for online reference.

After a brief discussion, **it was resolved that:**

FC2014/104.1 The proposed calendar for the 2015/2016 municipal year (*copy in Minute Book*) be noted.

FC2014/105

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:

- *“Our Pictures” project update* – Cllr Turner reported on the feasibility stage of this project. A Heritage Lottery case officer had been allocated and had welcomed the initial overture, and suggested one or two refinements to better align the scheme with the Fund’s aims. Work continued on drafting a submission and it was anticipated that a decision would be needed shortly as to the value of any bid, as the Lottery fund operated a tiered scheme.
- *Town Hall repairs* – The surveyors had indicated that the specification of works was near completion, and still on-programme for a tendering process during April. Ultimately, the works were expected to take between 20 and 24 weeks.
- *Baxter prints hanging* – a draft layout for the framed prints was being prepared.
- *Seating & bins – Lewes bus station* – An agreement had been signed that afternoon by the owners of the bus station, allowing the Council to site four benches and litter bins around the building.
- *Tree works* – it was understood that the last site visits by prospective contractors were imminent. Quotations for the work would follow.
- *Electronic banking* – Following the recent change in legislation the Council was now registered for online banking. Unfortunately, the bank had distributed faulty cards/card-readers, part of a national problem which they were addressing, and the service had not yet been tested.
- *Devolution of Parks & open spaces* – Lewes District Council had published the statutory public notice of their intention to transfer Malling Recreation Ground and Landport Bottom. This had been delayed, but once the requisite period for response was past, formal transfers could be concluded. The Council’s retained solicitor was engaged in examination of draft transfer documents provided recently by LDC, and would report shortly.

FC2014/106

NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:

- a) The Policies Review Working Party was to meet on 11th March at 11:00am.
- b) A Traffic Working Party meeting was scheduled for 7:00pm on Tuesday 24th March, in the Yarrow Room, Town Hall.
- c) The next Planning Committee meetings would be Tuesday 17th March & Tuesday 14th April 7:00pm.
- d) The next Council meeting (the last of this administration) would be held on Thursday 9th April at 7:30pm. The deadline for submission of agenda items to TC was noon on Monday 30th March.

e) The next deadline for grant applications was Fri 15th May. The assessment Panel would meet on 27th May, and Council would consider recommendations on 18th June.

FC2014/107

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 8:55pm

Signed:

Date: