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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on

Thursday 3rd October 2013, 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); J Daly; I Eiloart; L F Li; J MacCleary; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe (*Mayor*); A Price; R Rudkin; J Stockdale and M Turner (*Deputy Mayor*)

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); M Larkin (*Mace Bearer*); Ms E. Martin (*C’tee Administration*)

Observing: none

FC2013/52

QUESTION TIME: One member of the public was present; Mr L Russell-Moyle, a candidate in the imminent by-election for Bridge Ward. No questions had been received in advance, although Cllr Stockdale asked to present three questions. The Mayor reminded Members that Standing Orders required questions to be notified three clear days in advance of a meeting, but allowed the presentation:

Q1: “Why was a Bridge Ward Member not invited to be present at a recent meeting in connection with the Mallong Food Bank when members from Priory and Castle were in attendance?” *Answer:* The Mayor and other Members connected with this event explained that the informal meeting had been convened to discuss operational matters and that those present had attended in their various capacities in connection with local Food Banks, not as Councillors.

Q2: “Why has a Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Plan not been called and what is the timescale for that?” *Answer:* This matter was to be addressed during the meeting, under the agenda heading “Update on matters in progress”, when Cllr S Murray would provide a detailed statement on the current position.

Q3: “Why was the District Council’s consultation on Special Expenses not on the Agenda?” *Answer:* This was a public consultation; a link to which had been distributed to all Members for individual responses, and those responses would be in addition to any views expressed once the Town Council’s negotiating team had reported following their imminent meeting with the District Council. That direct relationship between the two Councils over the matter served to make the public deadline superfluous.

Mr Russell-Moyle had posed questions earlier that afternoon which he had discussed with the Town Clerk and had been satisfied; but now suggested that he should be allowed to present these as latitude had already been given in the case of a Member.

Q: Would a written report on the matter of Special Expenses be presented, and if so: when? *Answer:* A full report would be brought to Council, probably at it’s next meeting; following the scheduled meeting between the Town and District Councils.

FC2013/53

MEMBERS’ DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr J Stockdale declared an interest *iro* item 6b (*Grants Panel*) in that he is a member of the Mallong Food Bank committee.

Cllr A Price declared an interest *iro* item 6b (*Grants Panel*) in that he is a patron of Lewes Operatic Society .

Cllr R O’Keeffe declared an interest *iro* item 6b (*Grants Panel*) in that she is closely

Continues...

involved with 3 of the applicant bodies where a recommendation to award grant was being made.

FC2013/54

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Cllr M Chartier who was on holiday; Cllr D Lamport who had an academic engagement, and Cllr Mr Milner who had a work commitment. There was no word from Cllr A Dean.

FC2013/55

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

a) On Friday 4th October at 7.30 there was to be a music concert at the All Saints Centre. The Ouse Valley Collective, who were very popular in Lewes and who had been an enormous hit in Germany last October, would be playing, as would "Der Joshi und Seine Crew" from Waldshut-Tiengen.

b) On Saturday 5th October *WTpur: Die Show* would be presented at the All Saints Centre starting at 7:00pm. Both the events at the Centre were generously supported by Harveys Brewery and Miles Jenner would feature in the show. These events coincided with the Annual Twinning Summit being hosted in Lewes that weekend and they were part of the 40th/50th anniversary year celebrations. Delegations from Blois and Waldshut-Tiengen would be there, including Oberburgermeister Martin Albers.

c) The Mayor reminded Members that the Lewes Concert Orchestra would be giving a concert in the Assembly Room on Sunday 13th October at 2.30pm in aid of the Mayor's Charities. Tickets were available from Mrs Garth.

d) The Mayor informed members on the success of the recent Art Auction, Allotment Show and Mayor's Tea Party. The Mayor thanked Members who had helped with these events.

e) The next scheduled Members "drop-in" surgery would be on 5th October from 10 – 12pm in the Yarrow Room. Cllr J Daly volunteered to attend.

FC2013/56

MINUTES:

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 29th August 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record with two amendments to correct minor typographical errors.

FC2013/57

WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:

***NB** Members are reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which had covered issues that deserved attention by the Council, should ensure that TC is aware of this before the meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Brief written reports should be submitted wherever practical. Reports on all activities of the organization are not expected.*

a] *Seaford-Lewes Community Rail Partnership:* Cllr S Catlin reported that Network Rail would extend the rail platform at Falmer by December, to support eight carriage trains.

Cllr Catlin also reported on the 150th Anniversary, on 7th June 2014, of the Lewes-Seaford rail link, and hoped that this event would be supported by the Mayor and Council.

Cllr Catlin went on to remind Members of the forthcoming annual meeting of Lewes Town Partnership, and of the imminent deadline (4th October) to provide him with any comments related to the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) consultation regarding the future of services at the Phoenix Centre.

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

FC2013/57.1 The report on the recent meeting of Seaford-Lewes Community Rail Partnership be noted.

A question was raised as to the appropriateness of raising matters at Council meetings without prior notification, and clarification was offered: there was no

absolute prohibition on offering information or raising a matter that did not require a decision, but there should be a notification to the Chairman or the Town Clerk before commencement of the meeting. A member repeated an earlier request for reports to be in writing wherever possible, as it could be difficult to formulate opinions or articulate questions without prior warning. This was acknowledged as desirable although accepted as not always practical. Members were asked to write reports wherever possible on any aspects of meetings they may have attended, in good time for publication with the Council's agenda.

b) *Grants Panel 25th September 2013 recommendations:* Members considered Report FC007/2013 (*Copy in Minute Book*) containing the recommendations for payment of grants for the second (of four) cycle of the year. It was noted that the report of the meeting contained an error in that it listed Cllr Kingham as present when she was not. A question as to the value of grants over £2,000 being recommended was answered: there was no technical limit, although applicants were encouraged to limit their requests to lesser sums. Questions as to the reasons for specific recommendations were answered by panellists. There was some discussion as to the principle of entrusting the Panel with the detailed analysis, and the balance to be struck between accepting their recommendations and having adequate detail at Council to allow informed scrutiny. This gave rise to requests for greater detail in the reports and it was agreed that a different format would be offered in future, carrying more detailed information of applicant bodies, application detail, and panellists' remarks or considerations.

Cllr Stockdale, having declared his interest as a member of Malling Food Bank committee, enquired as to the reasons why the full amount applied-for had not been recommended. He described the background to the application and his own role in assessing the value to be requested; expressing the opinion that the full amount should have been recommended by the Panel and challenging their reasoning. With continued questioning, a debate arose as to the ethics of allowing the Councillor to pursue this point, given the matter of interests and the privileged opportunity unavailable to other applicants. Various opinions were expressed, and councillors connected with other food bank operations in the town offered further information and insights. A proposal was made to amend the recommendation to grant the element of the application related to hire costs of the Malling Community Centre, subject to a maximum of the £860 originally requested*, and a recorded vote was requested (*results appended to these minutes*).

It was resolved that:

FC2013/57.2 Grants payments recommended and shown in column E in the appendix for Report FC007/2013 be approved, with the amendment that item 14 *iro* Malling Food Bank be paid a grant covering the cost of venue hire, subject to a minimum of £500 and a maximum of £860.

* *NOTE for information: Subsequent to the meeting, it was confirmed that this would give rise to a grant of £860; being the full sum applied-for.*

c) *Vacancy on approved Outside Body – Lewes District Association of Local Councils:*

It was resolved that:

FC2013/57.3 Cllr S Murray is appointed to serve on Lewes District Association of Local Councils for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

d) *Vacancy on approved Outside Body – Lewes & Seaford Citizens Advice Bureau:*

It was resolved that:

FC2013/57.4 Cllr S Catlin is appointed to serve on Lewes & Seaford Citizens Advice Bureau for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

e) *Pells recreation ground play equipment:* Members were reminded of the presentation

made to their previous meeting, on the imminent development of the “urban realm” at the Pells and improvements to landscaping; play and adult leisure facilities, agreed to be developed with the Santon Group alongside their flood-defence works. Replacement of outdated and damaged children’s play equipment had been deferred for a number of years in anticipation of these discussions; related to the need to provide flood-defences in the area of The Pells before proceeding with development of the North Street site). This was now an agreed priority, and work could begin on design and selection; allowing the replacement to start once the Santon application for outline planning consent was approved. This was expected by the end of 2013. It was reported that Lewes District Council (LDC) held a “Section 106” payment in the sum of £23,000 following the building of the North Street Police Station and that this had been earmarked for a nearby recreational area – now scheduled as The Pells. Further; LDC continued to account for a reserved sum of just over £28,000 which they had held-back on the transfer of the Town Brooks Trust in 2001, for release to support a sufficiently-important project at the site. It was understood that this would be made available for a substantial project with broad scope such as that now agreed. Members were informed that safety-surfacing and landscaping *etc* must also be brought up to the latest standards, and that this would all represent a first-phase to (and overlap with) the overall project to improve and enhance the swimming-pool kiosk building, and create a park café terrace or similar. It was proposed that a small Working party be formed to agree design principles; selection of equipment; and budgeting, for recommendation to Council. LDC’s Parks Department were willing to provide assistance with specifications and design advice based upon their extensive experience; which was gratefully acknowledged.

It was resolved that:

FC2013/57.5. A Working Party consisting of Cllrs R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; J Stockdale and Dr M Turner be set up to produce recommendations for the replacement of children’s play equipment at the Pells recreation ground, and enhancements to the facility, such as adult fitness equipment.

FC2013/58

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:

a) Cllr S Murray reported that a meeting had recently been held with advisors from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and a date for an inaugural meeting of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had been set for 26th November 2013. Those organisations in the town which Council had previously agreed, would be invited to nominate a person to attend that meeting, which would be asked to set the framework for the development of the Plan and the structure and scope of the project. A provisional timetable would flow from that, and it was anticipated that the Plan should be capable of submission for adoption by Spring 2015. Cllr Murray also alluded to the success of the “youth strand”; where the Council had engaged with Action in Rural Sussex and Brighton University to work with local schools in promoting the *Community 21; digital citizenship* initiative.

b) The Council’s 2012-13 accounts and Annual Return had been received from the External Auditors with no concerns expressed. Messrs PKF Littlejohn LLP, auditing the Council for the first time since winning the Audit Commission contract for the next five years, had commented that papers had been returned to them later than their requested date. This comment had been recorded on the face of the Annual Return, and TC had therefore responded formally to state that the requested date had been set in contradiction of the statutory timetable applicable to Parish Councils and was unworkable. This point was understood to have also been made at National level as every Council audited by Littlejohn had argued from the same standpoint. The returned documents had been accompanied by a letter setting out the auditor’s timetable for the 2013-14 audit and the same error had been repeated. The matter

would be discussed with the auditors in good time for the actual audit.

c) The ESCC local consultation had ended for the agreed Malling pedestrian crossing on 30th August. Construction was scheduled for the end of October.

d) The Sussex Archaeological Society had been paid the second instalment (50%) *in* hire of the agreed ice rink. Lewes Town Council, Sussex Archaeological Society and Chamber of Commerce joint publicity would start nearer the planned installation date

e) The selected items from the Council's collections of Baxter prints, which Council had earlier agreed to mount as a permanent exhibition within the Town Hall, would be placed within the next two months.

f) The Employment Tribunal service had advised that the complaint registered by a former member of staff would be subject to a case management review on the 17th October 2013.

g) Detailed planning for the Pells Lake habitat improvements was in hand with the contractor, and wire "cages" would probably be installed during the winter, with plant stocks introduced in Spring 2014.

h) The proposed Pells "urban realm" joint working party to be held with Santon would be discussed with Santon at the next opportunity.

FC2013/59

NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:

a) Town Hall Repairs Working Party would be held on Tuesday 12th November at 11.00am.

b) The Finance Working Party would hold a meeting to discuss the suggested Council Plan on Monday 28th October at 6.30pm in the Yarrow Room.

c) A Traffic Working Party was to be arranged, with the possibility of Norman Baker MP attending. A date would be advised in due course.

d) The inaugural Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group Meeting would be held on Tuesday 26th November at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

e) The deadline for Grant applications was Friday 8th November with the Panel meeting on 20th November.

f) The next Planning Committees would be on Tuesday 8th October and Tuesday 29th October.

g) The next Council Meeting was scheduled for Thursday 7th November at 7.30pm with the deadline for submissions to the Town Clerk of proposed items for the agenda being 12 noon on Monday 28th October.

FC2013/60

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

The meeting ended at 9:05pm

Signed:

Date:

