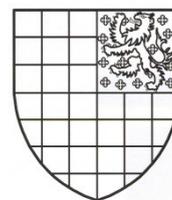


Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk

🌐 www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

To All Members of Lewes Town Council

A Meeting of **Lewes Town Council** will be held online* on **Thursday 18th June 2020**, at **7:30pm** which you are summoned to attend.

***VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE:** This meeting can be joined using computer video and audio using any suitably equipped digital device (eg laptop; tablet or smartphone) or, by audio only, using a telephone.

To join this meeting either follow this link: <https://zoom.us/j/96648124292>

Or telephone 0131 460 1196 or +44 (0)330 088 5830. Use **Meeting ID: 966 4812 4292**

***Please also see the note below regarding password-controlled access to this online meeting**

S Brigden, Town Clerk 11th June 2020

AGENDA

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION and MEETING PROTOCOL

2. QUESTION TIME

To consider any questions received regarding items on the agenda for this meeting.

3. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To note any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest in items to be considered at this meeting.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To consider apologies tendered by Members unable to attend the meeting.

5. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

6. MINUTES

To agree Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14th May 2020.

(attached page 3)

7. WORKING PARTIES & OUTSIDE BODIES

To consider matters arising from working parties; members serving on outside bodies *etc.*

a) Personnel Panel 4th June 2020

(Minutes attached page 11)

8. FINANCIAL GRANTS SCHEME

To consider resumption of the 'general' programme and amended aims

(NOM001/2020 attached page 13)

9. EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

To consider a response to proposed service changes

(NOM002/2020 attached page 13)

10. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

To consider proposals for a pilot scheme

(NOM003/2020 attached page 14)

11. SUPPORT for 'PRIDE'

To consider proposed recognition for LGBTQ+ support

(NOM004/2020 attached page 15)

12. PELL'S POOL

To consider proposed re-opening of the swimming pool

(Report FC003/2020 attached page 16)

13. UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

(oral report and documents attached page 17)

14. NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

(oral report by Town Clerk)

For further information about items on this agenda please contact the Town Clerk BYE-MAIL at the above address

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE – Covid-19 emergency arrangements:

Members of the public have the right, and are welcome, to attend* this meeting of the Council – questions regarding items on the agenda may be heard at the start of the meeting with the Mayor's consent.

Questions or requests to address the Council must be submitted by email to the Town Clerk at least 3 days in advance.

This meeting will be held online via Zoom Pro video link. To join the meeting follow the instructions above.

***Members of the public wishing to join this meeting must request a password by email at least 24 hours before the published start time. Please submit your request to townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk**

For guidance on joining online meetings please see the notes overleaf

Guidance on attending ‘virtual meetings’



Joining a meeting:

1. Invitations to COUNCILLORS and officers to join a virtual meeting of the Council; a committee, or Working Party will be included in an email accompanying the agenda, and will look similar to this (*examples only*):

Lewes Town Council is inviting you to a meeting of ??????????????????

To join the meeting, use this **link**: zoom.us/j/nnnnnnnnnnnn

Meeting ID: 123 4567 8910 (*example only*)

Password: 123456 (*example only*)

OR dial by your location

+44 (0)131 460 1196 United Kingdom or +44 (0)330 088 5830 United Kingdom

The link (but not the password) will be also repeated at the head of the Agenda and can be accessed from either. The **password** should not be shared, as **PUBLIC** attendees are asked to request a password by email at least 24hrs before the scheduled start.

2. Using a digital device with camera and microphone (*eg* laptop; tablet, smartphone), access can be gained by following the link. If audio-only is preferred (or problems interfere with video connection), telephone connection can be made using either of the numbers and following the prompts. Meeting ID and Password may be required dependent upon your chosen method.
3. If using computer audio and video a screen will open, similar to this:

Launching...

Please click **Open Zoom Meetings** if you see the system dialog.

If nothing prompts from browser, [click here](#) to launch the meeting, or [download & run Zoom](#).

If you cannot download or run the application, [join from your browser](#).

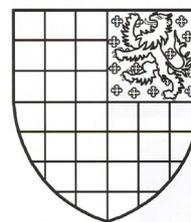
4. If you cannot download the application (or choose not to), or cannot run it, you may join from your internet browser by selecting that option.
5. On first connecting with the meeting you will be admitted to a virtual **Waiting Room**. Please follow any prompts, whether on-screen or audible. Attendees will be admitted once the meeting starts and what you see or hear after entry to the meeting may depend upon the equipment you are using.
6. To begin each meeting, the Chair will introduce some **meeting protocols** and all those attending will have live audio connections but will be asked to ‘mute’ their microphone when not speaking. Those wishing to speak will be asked to indicate by raising their hand or using the ‘hand up’ icon or sending a Chat message and they will be invited to do so by the Chair. The Chair can mute all attendees and selectively unmute individual speakers if there are interruptions or background noise issues.
7. While it is possible to use on-screen options to signify **voting** this will NOT be used. Should a vote be called during any meeting the Chair will ask Members to signify by raising their hand or, if there are any voting members attending by audio only, asking each in turn to voice their vote or abstention.
8. Attendees can send short **‘Chat’ messages** to one another privately and publicly during the meeting.
9. Meetings will be recorded, but records kept only until the Minutes have been subsequently validated.

PLEASE NOTE:

Before connecting, it is good practice to ensure that your equipment is adequately charged; that you will not be interrupted, and that your camera’s field of view or microphone do not capture anything you would prefer is not seen/heard publicly. Functions will be available once you have entered the meeting to alter the background, and your camera and microphone can be muted at will.

Please also ensure that other equipment nearby does not introduce audio ‘feedback’; that background noise is minimal, and that you select appropriate levels of microphone sensitivity and speaker volume on your device.

To learn more, a number of helpful FAQ’s and video tutorials are available at www.zoom.us



MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council**,
held on **Thursday 14th May 2020**, online via Zoom Meetings at **7:30pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs J Baah; M Bird; R Burrows; S Catlin (*Deputy Mayor*); G Earl; R Handy; O Henman; J Herbert; J Lamb (*Mayor*); I Makepeace; Dr W Maples; Dr G Mayhew; R O'Keeffe; S Sains; J Vernon; R Waring and K Wood.

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

Observing: Ms L Zeyfert (*All Saints Centre Manager*); B Courage (*Town Ranger*) and Ms F Willis (*Reception/ Admin*)

FC2020/01 QUESTION TIME: There were 2 members of the public present, representing Cycle Lewes and Lewes Living Streets, who had asked questions on the topic 'Walking and Cycling and the Reallocation of Road Space in Lewes'. The questions, together with the answers given, are appended to these minutes. Some discussion ensued, with the Mayor's consent, and it was indicated that the subject would be welcomed as a topic at a proposed 'virtual' town meeting.

FC2020/02 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS: There were none.

FC2020/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:
There were none. No message had been received from Cllr Milner.

FC2020/04 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Mayor noted that he had recently written to a range of charities, businesses and community groups in the town seeking contact to aid future collaborations.
- A virtual substitute for the annual Town Meeting was planned, and details would be released shortly.
- the annual 'Moving On' parade for schools, organized by the PATINA group, would not take place but an exciting online alternative was being prepared. The organizers would welcome Councillors engagement with this, and Members were encouraged to create avatars from cardboard tubes – Cllr Maples offered an example and could provide more information.

FC2020/05 COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES
Councillors considered report FC001/2020 (*copy in minute book*), that apprised Members of the Council's position and effects on governance with regard to emergency legislation established in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The *Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020* are emergency Regulations with effect for a temporary period up to and including 6 May 2021. They apply to meetings of specified bodies including Parish Councils and operate by temporary modification or disapplication of several statutes. The Regulations override existing Standing Orders and, as they are temporary, amendment to affected sections of adopted SO's was not required; a simple formal acknowledgement was sufficient. In summary, where applicable to parish councils, they:

- Make emergency provision allowing remote attendance by Members and clarify public and press access. (*Regulation 5*). This is the main regulation covering the holding of meetings without requiring Members to be physically present in a room. The 'place' at which the meeting is held may be a 'virtual' location (*eg* a web address or a telephone number.).

- Remove the requirement for a parish council to hold an Annual Meeting (traditionally, “Mayor-making” at Lewes TC) in May 2020. (*Regulation 6(c)*)
- Carry, by default, the current appointment of chairman on until the Annual Meeting in May 2021, although councils may elect a chairman at earlier meeting should they wish to (*Regulation 4 (2)*). This allows appointments normally made at an annual meeting to be continued until the next annual meeting or until such time as the authority determines. This covers the Chair (Mayor) as well as any Deputy (where appointed) and committee appointments *etc.*
- Modify the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 allowing for remote attendance by the press and public. (*Regulation 13*)

The relaxation, by these Regulations, of certain requirements was designed to alleviate administrative burdens on local councils and maintain continuity and consistency during the difficulties. The emerging picture nationally was one where most Councils were resolving to roll everything (Chairmanship; Committee appointments *etc.*) over for a year or until post-crisis stability can be fully assessed.

The simple options for LTC in this regard were:

- a. Hold the election for Mayor and appointment of Deputy and other business as normal.
- b. Adopt the default position created by the Regulations and continue existing elections; appointments, and duties until May 2021, by when normal rules are expected to be reinstated.

If adopted, this position may be revisited at any point during the year, as provided in Regulation 4(2). This was the recommended option.

- c. Adopt ‘option b’ (above) with a predetermined intention to review during the 2020/21 year.

Positive and negative perspectives were described and considered for each option.

Councillors and staff wished to record thanks to Cllr Lamb and his wife for the dedication and warmth exhibited in their roles as Mayor and Mayoress over the past year.

There followed some discussion and subsequently **it was resolved that:**

FC2020/05.1 Under provisions afforded by *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*, - “the Regulations” - the following matters are resolved:

FC2020/05.1.1 Council Resolution Covid-19/001/1, 24th March 2020 delegating responsibility for decisions is rescinded, in favour of meetings to be held remotely. (*standing Order 11 iro Rescission of previous resolutions, is suspended for this purpose, in accordance with SO32*)

FC2020/05.1.2 The schedule of meetings of Council published in March 2020 will be followed, so far as possible, with meetings convened online.

FC2020/05.1.3 It is recognized and acknowledged that the Regulations displace some sections of adopted Standing Orders – notably SO1; SO2; A1; A2 and Appendix 2 – where these have practical effect on meetings and public access.

FC2020/05.1.4 Current roles and duties of individual Councillors are continued unchanged until May 2021, specifically the elected Mayor; appointed Deputy Mayor; and bank signature authorities. Membership of Committees, Working Parties, and Functional Panels will continue unchanged, and those bodies will consider appointments to the Chair as usual at their first meeting in 2020/21

FC2020/06 MINUTES:

It was resolved that:

FC2020/06.1 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27th February 2020 are received and agreed as an accurate record.

FC2020/07 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) Audit Panel 11th March 2020. Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*).

Routine financial monitoring: Panel members had been furnished with detailed information following the end of the third quarter of the financial year:

Budget monitoring update – this showed actual expenditure and income values as posted to the Council's Sage accounting system for all transactions processed in the period. There had been some discussion on salient points of detail, and TC responded with reference to identified sources. Apparent variations were related to known events, such as specific payments in respect of works and purchases, or perceived 'overspend' which were attributable to Reserves when the final accounts are prepared at year-end. There were no items of concern.

There were general questions on the financial systems and accounting structure, to which TC gave detailed answers.

Oversight as required by the Governance & Accountability Code of Practice: TC had introduced the file of periodic bank reconciliations, for review of the scrutiny already conducted, and the Chairman had appended his signature to verify this.

Criteria for 'major' grant requests: The Panel considered report AP001/2019 (*copy in the Minute book*) which reminded members that Council had asked them to draft a clear set of criteria and assessment process, along similar lines to that employed by the Grants Panel, by which all applications for funding could be assessed if falling outside the established miscellaneous grants scheme. It was noted that:

The Grants Panel, when assessing smaller grants within the established Scheme, used a system whereby each panellist evaluates applications on their merits in five categories:

- i) Closeness of match to Lewes Town Council's grant scheme policy
- ii) Overall "robustness" of the proposal – *ie* general likelihood of success/sustainability
- iii) Financial planning exhibited – *ie* adequacy/prudence/appropriateness *etc.*
- iv) Scope and sustainability – *ie* beneficiaries; scale; thoroughness
- v) A personal, subjective, assessment; based upon any special insight or considerations.

Also considered were factors such as the balance or proportion of Council funding being sought, compared with other sources and the applicant's own funds, and other detail elements of a proposal.

The assessors recorded a score for each element according to their own judgement, and the resulting totals were entered into a spreadsheet which, on behalf of any absent or non-voting Panellists, applied a median average of the scores recorded by those present and aggregated the individual totals. This process was a first-stage and served to moderate any inherent 'high' or 'low' scoring tendencies among individual assessors. The final recommendations were achieved through consensus following a Panel discussion – informed by the relative 'ranking' of individual applications within the batch in terms of their total score and proportion of the theoretical maximum.

Requests to Council arose from time to time for financial support in larger sums, usually related to projects within the community that appeared to the applicant body to have some resonance with the aims of a parish council, and these were brought direct to Council or to a Committee or Working Party according to context. It was rare that these were received in batches, and so a system of comparative ranking (as described above) would be less relevant than a simple, structured, assessment that could be understood by both applicant and assessors. This could, however, follow the same principle of five equally-weighted elements and criteria ii) to v) above could be considered appropriate with no amendment; whilst criterion i) could be simply modified to assess "*closeness of match to the council's objectives*

*and underlying values**). *These are inherent in the establishment of a parish Council and enhanced by published policies in specific areas of activity.

It was suggested that a template could be used at any meeting of Council; Committee or Working party, where applicants would be asked to submit their request in whatever form is appropriate to them, as now, and Members could then apply a score, with a moderated aggregate arrived at as described above. Council could set a minimum threshold score required before a request might be eligible for further consideration (say, 65%), and the matter then concluded following scoring and discussion.

There followed a detailed discussion on these suggestions, and Members were generally in favour of this approach and keen to ensure that the first criterion – closeness of match – should be clearly related to the ‘grouped’ themes in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which Council followed. There were questions as to whether a specific budget should be identified for such purposes, but TC advised on the principles of reserves and General Funds and noted that reservation of funds with no identified specific purpose would conflict with accounting rules. The nature of the requests envisaged would always involve a report or presentation and at the appropriate time financial considerations would be highlighted.

In conclusion: Members, having considered information on the Council’s financial status and management, found no items of concern.

In accordance with the national audit and governance guidelines: where member oversight is required, the Chairman of the Panel had signed to attest the veracity of reconciliation records presented.

Principles for ‘major’ grants assessment were agreed for recommendation to Council

It was resolved that:

FC2020/07.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel (*copy in minute book*) held on 11th March 2020 are noted and;

FC2020/07.2 The proposals of the Audit Panel with regard to principles of a ‘major’ grants assessment scheme are agreed, as described in the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 11th March 2020.

b) Personnel Panel 24th April 2020 (virtual): Council were presented the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*).

The meeting had begun with a range of questions. Members had raised questions as to current staff deployment and were keen to know that staff were supported with appropriate training opportunities. TC reminded everyone that the Council had a supportive and robust policy on training and all staff were aware of how they could raise requests or take advantage of opportunities. In answer to a specific question as to progress on the District Council’s review of Member Allowances; there had been no announcement of progress since an open meeting had been held in late January.

Update on TC appraisal programme. The Council’s consultant, Richard Penn, had presented a summary of the analysis of questionnaires returned by Councillors, staff, and outside contacts. There followed a lengthy discussion on the principles of this, and Mr Penn was asked to provide some additional analysis of the distribution of ‘scores’. There was discussion on the introduction of appraisal as a contractual obligation when recruiting a successor, in advance of the retirement of TC

Matters re prospective retirement of staff. The Panel had been tasked with an assessment of impacts on the Council arising from the number of staff eligible to retire in the next 2-3 years, and their roles. This was to begin with the assessment of the option to separate the functions of TC and Responsible Finance Officer, which may offer some advantages in recruitment of a successor to TC. Some illustrative examples of job descriptions for both

models had been collected from other 'larger' parishes by the Town Clerk and would be made available to Panel Members for their next meeting.

TC advised that he had scheduled a meeting with prospective retirees, to enquire whether any had yet made firm plans for their retirement, when the Covid-19 situation disrupted this plan. He reminded Members that eligibility did not mean that individuals would necessarily choose to retire, and this could not be enforced. TC would forward current Job Descriptions which the Panel could consider further at their next meeting.

Training Whilst not normally within the remit of the Panel, members considered that with the onset of a new municipal year and compromised working conditions, a review of training to assess what was delivered and how effective it was for councillors would be helpful. The Panel considered that it should ask Council to temporarily extend its mandate to look at training needs for 2020, especially given the needs for new or upgraded skills or understanding among members. An understanding for the Panel of current staff training needs and skill sets and what was also planned for staff would also help with work on any restructuring. The Panel would meet next in approximately one month's time

It was resolved that:

FC2020/07.3 The Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Panel (*copy in minute book*) held on 24th April 2020 are noted and;

FC2020/07.4 The Personnel Panel is authorized to assess training needs for the 2020/21 year, and asked to formulate recommendations for Council, in due course.

FC2020/08

STATUTORY AUDIT Year ended 31st March 2020.

Councillors considered report FC002/2020(*copy in minute book*) regarding the statutory Audit programme for year-ended 31st March 2020.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 s5 defines Lewes Town Council as a "smaller authority", and it is governed in its audit process by *The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)*.

In response to the Coronavirus emergency, these Regulations had been amended by *The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/404)*. The overall effect of these emergency Regulations being to allow a two-month delay in the normal statutory programme of audit.

This Statutory Instrument amends the deadline by which the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts (two components of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return [AGAR]) together with any certificate or opinion issued by the 'internal' auditor (a third AGAR component) must be published; from 30th September 2020 to 30th November 2020.

Previously there was a requirement for all smaller authorities to have a common period for the exercise of public rights*; being the first 10 working days of July. Under the emergency amendments this prescription had been removed. It was still required to set a period for this purpose, but the only requirement is that the 30 working day period for the exercise of public rights should start on or before the first working day of September, *ie* on or before 1st September 2020. The latest possible dates to comply with the statutory requirements were between Tuesday 1st September – Monday 12th October 2020.

The authority itself (through its Responsible Finance Officer) informs the electorate of the inspection period by publishing the relevant (prescribed) Notice and Sections 1 & 2 of the approved AGAR at least the day before the period for public rights commences. 'Publishing' means inclusion on the website.

*Public rights, in summary are:

- o With certain exemptions for items containing personal data, any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection

by any person interested.

Local government electors and their representatives also have:

- o The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and
- o The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the authority.

The right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. They are only able to respond during the allotted period.

The effect on Lewes Town Council was explained as:

For the past 18 years Lewes Town Council has conducted its end-of-year accounting procedures and arranged a final 'internal' audit in time for presentation to Council at a meeting in June. This allowed the programme described above to be adhered-to and all submissions to externally appointed auditors to be made in good time.

For the year ended 31st March 2020 the final internal audit, building upon and completing the interim process already reported to Council at mid-year, had been provisionally arranged for early June although this would be conducted 'remotely' by the retained auditors and flexibility had been built-in to allow for any unforeseen issues or change in circumstances. It was thought that the usual report and statutory documents may be brought to Council in June but might be deferred until July (meeting scheduled for 30th).

Until the internal audit is concluded TC would reserve his position on the dates for the exercise of public rights, but these would likely fall in August.

It was **resolved that:**

FC2020/08.1 Report FC002/2020 (*copy in Minute book*) relating the effect of emergency regulations relating to the statutory audit programme for year-ended March 2020 is received and noted.

FC2020/09 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

In response to questions from Members, TC gave answers related to

- a) *Malling Community Centre* – The building contractors had begun work in early March but this had been halted within three weeks due to the Covid emergency. Following revised guidance to the industry from government, the work was restarted with only a 3-week hiatus and the contractor reported satisfaction with progress since then. The construction industry suffered major disruption in supply logistics, and social distancing requirements compromised many tasks on-site, but there was nonetheless steady progress. Regarding further discussions with Wave Leisure on future management of the Centre; this was to be considered at a meeting of the Buildings Working Party.
- b) *Town hall heating* – The consultant's supplementary report, requested by the Buildings Working Party to help refine their consideration of air-source heat pump technology, had been received just before 'Covid lockdown'. This also would be considered by the Buildings Working Party and the consultant's availability was being established.
- c) *Ash tree die-back* – Various questions arose following completion of the major tree clearance on Council land. TC would ask the District Council's Specialist Advisor (arboriculture), who had coordinated the project, for a summary report including the potential for replanting and other aspects.
- d) *Special Expenses levy* – A question arose as to whether Lewes District Council might be expected to refund Special Expenses charges, levied to cover maintenance of parks and open spaces in Lewes, should the actual cost of work be reduced due to Covid-19

restrictions. TC outlined the legislative framework which allowed and regulated Special Expenses. Special Expenses were calculated on estimated costs for a year. In the event that less cost was incurred, there was provision for the saving to be offset against the following year estimate, but current-year refunds were not made.

- e) *All Saints Centre* – A Member enquired what work was being carried out at the All Saints Centre, and TC listed a variety of tasks that had been undertaken while the building was closed to the public. It was acknowledged that staff were limited in what was possible under current circumstances, and TC noted his gratitude to those who were striving to contribute effort despite these difficulties.
- f) *Expenditure savings* – A Member asked if savings from the cancellation of the traditional Mayormaking reception could be redeployed. TC advised that there were likely to be several areas in which savings arose, but a comprehensive picture of the nett effect of lost income and savings would need to be formed and considered when setting the following year's Precept. Lost income would be significant and, whilst the Council's financial structure was robust and savings would offset losses to some degree, the environment in which future budget decisions would be taken would include many taxpayers suffering job-losses and business failures due to Covid-19. Any piecemeal redeployment of savings was inadvisable.

There were various other questions/answers on minor matters.

FC2020/10 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

Members, asked to consider items arising from this meeting worthy of a Press Release, indicated:

Continuance of Mayoralty and Deputy Mayoralty (with a note that Committees *etc* will consider the Chair role at their first meeting in the usual way).

Dates to note were given as:

- The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday 18th June 2020 at 7:30pm, with a deadline for agenda items to reach TC by noon on Monday 8th June.
- Meetings would be arranged shortly for: Personnel Panel; Buildings W/party; Landport Bottom Management C'ttee; Open Council W/party. (TC will contact Chairs to discuss.) Also; Grant Panellists would shortly be invited to discuss two recently-received support fund applications.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting; thanked everyone for their contributions and invited all present to join him in the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments

The meeting ended at 9.15pm

Signed: Date:



QUESTION RECEIVED:

From the Chair, Cycle Lewes
12th May 2020

Specifically, I'd like ask this question:

Can the Council consider holding the virtual town meeting that happens every year by Zoom and have as its topic Walking and Cycling and the Reallocation of Road Space in Lewes as per government guidelines/recommended measures - outlined on 9th May 2020. £250 million is being allocated so important Lewes Town discusses this.

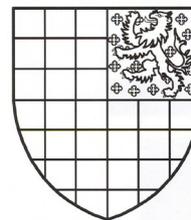
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

ANSWER:

The annual parish or town meeting for the electors of Lewes does indeed happen every year and is a legal requirement. This year, as part of the response to Covid-19, councils have been allowed to hold meetings by online videoconference and at the same time been excused from calling a parish meeting altogether. However, Lewes Town Councillors have expressed their desire to hold a virtual town meeting. As I explained on the phone, any matter may be raised, and this topic will no doubt be one of them in view of the emphasis the council is now placing on transport issues. The date and details of the meeting will be discussed with our Open Council Working Party and announced in due course.

The Government's reallocating road space initiative is to be welcomed and we would all wish that Lewes town benefits from the additional funding. The completion of the N90 cycle route, extension of the 20mph limit to Malling Hill, pop-up cycle lanes and more would all be of great benefit to the town. As a parish council we have no powers in these transport planning matters – these are issues that fall as responsibilities of the County and District Councils, who are themselves only at an early stage of responding to the government's very recent initiative. I would hope that they would seek to engage with parish councils, but it is unlikely this will be in the early stages, and there is no compulsion for them to do so. We do have some legal power to assist a Principal Council in execution of its functions, for example by financial contribution, and may have some influence by councillors making their views known.

Cllr John Lamb,
Mayor of Lewes 2019/20



MINUTES

of the **Personnel Panel** held on **Thursday 4th June 2020**, online via Zoom meetings at **11:00am**

PRESENT: Cllrs R Burrows; S Catlin; I Makepeace; Dr W Maples; Dr G Mayhew; K Wood (*Chairman*)

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*) Mrs F Garth (*Asst TC/Civic Officer*)

PersPan2020/01 ELECTION of CHAIR: Further to Council's resolution at its meeting on 14th May, regarding Covid-emergency arrangements, the Panel was expected to elect a Chair for 2020/21 in the usual way. Cllr Wood was proposed, and while there were no other nominations some Members sought assurances that Cllr Wood would be able to commit adequate time to the role. Following some discussion, in which Cllr Wood assured everyone that need have no concerns about her ability to address the responsibility, **it was resolved that:**

PersPan2020/01.1 Cllr Wood is elected Chair of the Personnel Panel for 2020/21.

PersPan2020/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none.

PersPan2020/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

PersPan2020/04 EXCLUSION of the PRESS and PUBLIC: This meeting was held online, and no press or public had been admitted.

PersPan2020/05 MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2020 were accepted as an accurate record.

PersPan2020/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

- a) *Update on TC appraisal programme.* The Council's consultant, Richard Penn, had provided some additional analysis of the distribution of questionnaire 'scores', following the previous meeting. These confirmed a principle that had been highlighted in that scores from Councillors were notably different from those of staff and external partners. This effect had been discussed with Mr Penn who confirmed that it was common across local government, where the differing expectations of Members were a significant factor. It was acknowledged that the scheme had been agreed during the previous administrative term as a specific exercise, and that project was complete. With TC due to retire in 2021 it was accepted that continuation would involve time and cost that would be better deployed in addressing the prospective retirements of TC and five of the twelve other employees. There was general agreement on the introduction of appraisal as a contractual obligation when recruiting a successor to TC and this would be included in any proposals arising from that project.
- b) *Matters re prospective retirement of staff.* The Panel had been tasked with an assessment of impacts on the Council arising from the number of staff eligible to retire in the next 2-3 years, and their roles. This was to begin with an assessment of the option to separate the functions of TC and Responsible Finance Officer, which may offer some advantages in recruitment of a successor to TC. Some illustrative examples of job descriptions for both models had been collected from comparator parishes and Members considered that a separate informal 'workshop' meeting would be the most effective way of dealing with these. It was accepted that there would probably be a need for some specialist external support as the process developed; in particular to establish appropriate salary grading for any revised roles.

TC advised that he had consulted with prospective retirees to enquire as to any firm plans for their retirement; and related the positions they had described. He reminded Members that eligibility did not mean that individuals would necessarily choose to retire, and this could not be enforced. Members had copies of current Job Descriptions and considered that these also would be best analysed in a 'workshop' meeting. To assist in this TC would provide an update to an earlier spreadsheet to show any 'known' inclinations.

- c) *Training* Council had resolved that the Panel's mandate was temporarily extended to look at training needs for 2020. There followed a general discussion on the topic. Members considered the training needs self-assessment form that was issued following election, and TC noted that this would normally be re-issued once new administrations were 'settled' and recommended that this was the most practical first-step to address the task. It was agreed that the questionnaire would be updated and issued to all Councillors and staff.

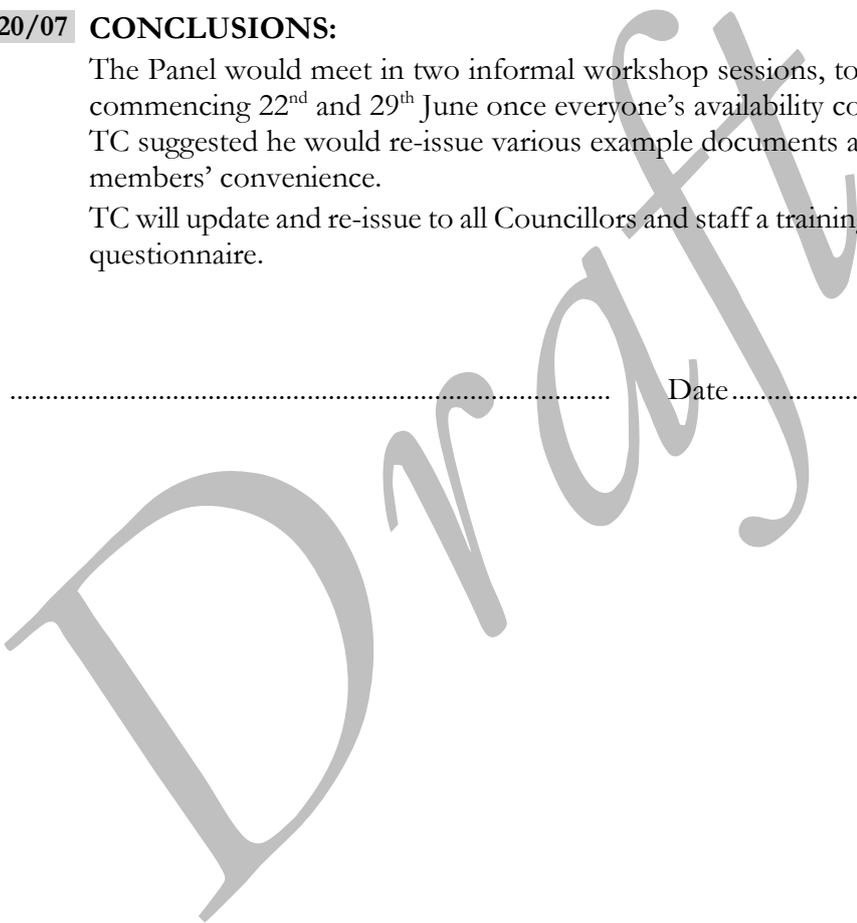
PersPan2020/07 CONCLUSIONS:

The Panel would meet in two informal workshop sessions, to be arranged for weeks commencing 22nd and 29th June once everyone's availability could be established, and TC suggested he would re-issue various example documents and working papers, for members' convenience.

TC will update and re-issue to all Councillors and staff a training needs self-assessment questionnaire.

The meeting closed at 12:40pm

Signed Date.....



NOTICE OF MOTIONS PROPOSED

Notice has been received, as described below, of motions which are proposed for consideration by Council at its meeting on Thursday 18th June 2020

NOM 001/2020 – received from Cllr Makepeace on 20th May 2020, in the following terms:

It is proposed that:

- 1 Lewes Town Council reopens its ‘normal’ miscellaneous financial grants programme (currently suspended in favour of the Emergency Fund scheme), and;
- 2 Council agrees amendments to the scheme’s aims as recommended by the Grants Panel.

Supporting Information:

Applications for small grants have been suspended during the lock-down period.

Emergency grant applications have covered specific needs arising from the extraordinary circumstances of the last few months. Communities are still in need of support for things not related to COVID19.

The **current** guidance statement for the miscellaneous grants scheme states:

Lewes Town Council values the community sector and will make financial grants available for its ongoing work. The Council’s grants programme is designed to build up the capacity of small groups in the community and to encourage the development of new groups

The background to the scheme is said to be:

The aim of our financial grants scheme is to help promote a vibrant and active local community. The Council recognises and supports the valuable contribution made by many voluntary groups and organizations (often very small) in the fields of arts; sport; culture; social care; services for children and young adults; services for the elderly and people with disabilities; and many others who contribute to the wellbeing of the local community. It will consider financial support for community organisations working for the benefit of residents, with the intention of improving the range of services and activities in the town. It will not normally aid commercial organizations.

Last year the Grants Panel discussed a fine tuning of how we wish to frame the support we offer in order to more closely align it to our stated objectives. In January 2020, after the Visioning exercise*, we had **refined our objectives** for financial support to the community to include:

- Sustainable transport related: infrastructure & signage, cycling routes, bus transport
- Openness: engagement; consultation; partnership
- Trees and biodiversity; wildlife and the environment; Open spaces
- Support for foodbanks and the disadvantaged

* The principles may be read here: <https://lewes-tc.gov.uk/your-council/public-notice/major-items-annual-plan/>

Cllr I Makepeace
20th May 2020

NOM 002/2020 – received from Cllrs Catlin and Wood on 3rd June 2020, in the following terms:

It is proposed that:

Lewes Town Council calls upon East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services not to make proposed cuts affecting Lewes. It asks our MP, Maria Caulfield, to pursue her recent public promise that she can obtain additional funds from James Brokenshire, Minister for Security at the Home Office, and therefore maintain the current level of funding of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. The Council also calls upon central Government to make no more cuts to local authority services; in the interests of doing all it can to preserve life.

Supporting Information:

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is required to conduct an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) on which it is currently running a 2020-2025 consultation. The IRMP is required under the 2004 Fire Services Act. The aim of the IRMP is to ensure that resources are properly allocated by the Fire Authority. It is primarily a safety review. However, this review will also need to take account of a 7.5% cut in the grant from central government. In addition, this year, Secretary of State for Security at the Home Office, James Brokenshire, has directed Fire Authorities to continue with their IRMPs and consultations despite the effective state of national emergency brought on by the Coronavirus crisis.

If the consultation is not carried out and an IRMP is not in place, then the fire authority will be taken into Government hands, like a failing Council, which could mean much more stringent cuts and greater risk to life.

The consultation ends on 19th June 2020. Further information on the consultation is available here: <https://www.esfrs.org/safer-future/>

Cllrs S Catlin & K Wood
3rd June 2020

NOM 003/2020 – received from **Cllrs Henman & Herbert** 8th June 2020, in the following terms:

It is proposed that:

Lewes Town Council agrees to undertake a participatory budget pilot in the coming financial year; that the budget for this be set within the annual budget cycle and that community meetings be arranged with sufficient time for broad inclusion and appropriate public awareness-raising.

Supporting Information:

Participatory Budgeting is a form of public engagement in the budget-making process that has been employed by a very wide range of Councils across the country since the mid- 2000s.

There are a wide range of examples, including two main types: a) consultation and public priority setting on the 'core services' budget, including choices on facilities, venue management and key services; b) community grant approach, which sets a specific sum of the budget to be allocated to community projects via a range of informative sessions and deliberative meetings to ensure a spectrum of residents' views are heard (including ensuring outreach according to age, gender, disability, geographic spread etc) and balanced choices are reached.

We are entering a period of significant uncertainty both economically and environmentally and this is going to have serious knock-on effects socially. We are likely to have a reduced Town Council budget in coming years and we need to think carefully about Town Council's priorities. The best way to ensure these are met is to make sure we are listening to the Town when decision-making at every reasonable opportunity.

Introducing Participatory Budgeting (PB) in to how we operate will also help materialise our collective goal (divined through the Visioning exercise) of expanding the openness of the council and reassures our communities that we, their elected Councillors, are listening and engaged. Another benefit could be that by making everyone in the town a potential stakeholder, all projects and initiatives will have their profile raised, regardless of if their application is a success, which may in turn lead them to other revenue streams (such as crowdfunding or benevolent sponsors).

As noted on the www.involve.org.uk website, the strengths of PB are:

- Involves decisions about spending.
- Devolves real power.
- Can be a very public process, which conveys legitimacy beyond the immediate participants.
- By being exposed to the tradeoffs surrounding financial decisions, participants can acquire a deeper understanding of the work of government.
- The fact that Participatory Budgeting often involves dialogue over actual resources can be a catalyst for civic mobilisation, especially in poorer areas.
- A reallocation of resources towards spending in poorer areas.

Lewes Town can go one step further; used correctly and in relation to our other goals, we could engage and specifically mobilise younger groups of the constituency by specifically allocating funding to be directed by the youth of Lewes via schools and social media apps.

Cllrs O Henman & J Herbert
8th June 2020

NOM 004/2020 – received from **Cllr Handy** on 8th June 2020, in the following terms:

It is proposed that:

Lewes Town Council will show support for its LGBTQ+ community and its allies by obtaining and flying a Pride flag on three occasions during the year: June, which is recognised as national pride month in the UK; February, which is LGBT history month; and for Brighton Pride weekend in August.

Supporting Information:

The recognized 'Pride' flag falls into a category where no specific Planning permission is required for it to be flown from a public building. A flag suitable for attachment to the Town Hall flagpole can be obtained for significantly less than £100. Other than one or two single days when national flag protocols must be observed there are no conflicting requirements.

Cllr R Handy
8th June 2020

Agenda Item No: 12 **Report No:** FC003/2020
Report Title: Pells Pool Community Association proposal to re-open Pells Pool
Report To: Council **Date:** 18th June 2020
Report By: S Brigden, Town Clerk

Purpose of Report: To apprise Members of the request, by Pells Pool Community Association, for approval to re-open the Pells Pool under restricted operational conditions.

Recommendation(s):

That approval be given.

Information:

1 *Background:* Repeated suggestions to close the Pells Pool were made during the 1980's and 1990's by Lewes District Council; then the Trustee of the Town Brook Trust (the Pells). Public reaction led to the formation of a campaign group. In May 2000 the Campaign incorporated as the 'Pells Pool Community Association,' (PPCA) a charity and not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with a constitutional remit to protect the pool, aligned to the objects of the Town Brook Trust. Lewes Town Council, assured by this evidence of strong local commitment, took over the Trusteeship and agreed to financially support the PPCA to enable them to become fully established. This was subsequently extended indefinitely in recognition of the PPCA's success, and the pool is managed on behalf of the Council each season (May – Sept) by the PPCA under an annually-renewed management agreement. The working partnership between Lewes Town Council and the PPCA has ensured the continuing success of the pool, and steady investment by both parties has allowed improvements and development as opportunities arise.

2 Whilst the pool remains closed under Covid-19 emergency rules, the PPCA have been closely following government proposals for easing of restrictions. Swim England, the national governing body, are due to release (on 15th June) detailed guidance for safe re-opening of pools, potentially from early July with other public facilities. PPCA have seen early indications of the content and are confident that they can make all the recommended changes and amend operational procedures appropriately. Further: the Royal Life Saving Society, who regulate lifeguards, last week published detailed guidance for operators and revised training plans; and these have already been built-in to a series of revised operational control plans by the PPCA. Following the opening of 'non-essential' categories of shop on 15th June, PPCA hope to re-open the kiosk for passing trade in ice creams, drinks snacks *etc* working within the appropriate guidelines with respect to social distancing and hygiene.

3 PPCA have provided copies of a range of revised operating controls, including First-aid and pool rescue protocols, and detailed assessment of infection risks associated with clothing and equipment. These are to the Association's usual professional standard and have been carefully prepared.

4 The Association seeks Council's agreement to the re-opening of the kiosk and pool (subject always to overriding government restrictions) as soon as this is permitted. In my opinion the approach to 'remobilization planning' undertaken by PPCA is thoughtful and sensible and there is no reason to withhold permission. Council may be assured that its interests are adequately protected by standard elements of the annual Agreement.

Steve Brigden
June 2020

Status update

These are in addition to various projects and initiatives itemised in the Council's budgets and accounts and represent larger-scale activities deserving special attention.

Project	description	status at January 2020	Status at June 2020	
1	Town Hall repairs & conservation	Replace boilers; Council Chamber redecoration and replace carpet; Corn Exchange and Lecture Room replace lighting; Yarrow Room replace carpet	Awaiting consultants further report on heating system options viability.	Consultants report on 'refined' options received – awaiting review by Working Party – scheduled for 23 rd June 2020
2	Pells Lake ecology project	Improvements to water quality. Introduction of aquatic plants W/Party remit to consider structural integrity of lake perimeter. partially completed – specialist report obtained	pending commencement of 3rd-party works in locality to achieve best VFM – links to item 4	pending commencement of 3rd-party works in locality to achieve best VFM – links to item 4
3	Pells Recreation Ground and kiosk/café development (with Santon Group and others)	Engagement with Santon Group and others to improve the “urban realm” in the area as an integral component of necessary flood-defence works; taking the opportunity to replace children's play equipment and introduce equipment for a wider age-range, and to provide an enhanced café facility for the swimming pool, recreation ground, and surrounding parkland.	Pending agreements with PPCA	Continuing
4	Malling (Bridgeview) Community Centre refurbishment	To carry out a comprehensive refurbishment of the community centre, with modern heating and lighting, with improved facilities for community use, including more flexible interior spaces and better integration of the sports changing-rooms with the adjoining sports pitches and recreation ground.	Borrowing approval received 20th November. Contractor agreed possession of site March 2020. works duration 20 weeks	Works commenced 16 th March 2020. Reduced programme continuing subject to Covid-19 restrictions. Discussions pending with Working Party and proposed managing agent (Wave Leisure) – Working Party scheduled for 23 rd June 2020
5	Continuing programme of environmental enhancements and specific site improvements	Engage with appropriate projects arising from third-party initiatives (eg highway safety/traffic management). Continuing improvements to own assets (eg allotment sites)	Urgent tree works update received at Council 19th December.	Continuing programme. Emergency project <i>in</i> Ash die-back concluded March 2020. Summary report considered by Council 18 th June 2020.
6	Devolution of assets & services	Provide for transfer of ownership of various assets/services from Lewes District Council. (currently subject to ongoing negotiation)	Working Party recommendations considered by Council 19th December. Next stage: further detail from LDC to inform negotiations	Continuing. Discussions pending with LDC – subject to Covid-19 restrictions
7	DECISIONS re Retirement of key staff	Prepare strategy for recruitment of Town Clerk Designate and further staff establishment changes.	Personnel Panel mandated to begin detailed examination of successor Clerk and discuss 6 other posts affected by eligibility for retirement.	Personnel Panel engaged in project. Workshops scheduled W/c 2 nd and 29 th June 2020.

Report to Lewes Town Council on conclusion of project to address Ash die-back.

Report by Daniel Wynn, Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture), Lewes District Council & Eastbourne Borough Council

The contract was formally concluded to the agreed specifications on 11 March 2020 (following completion of snags). Final total value of contract: £64,720

LDC will recharge LTC for roughly half = £32,610 apportioned as below.

	LDC	LTC
Forestry Operations & consultancy	£21,500	£22,000
Traffic management	£11,460	£11,460
Deduct value of Timber £1700	-£850	-£850
Totals excl VAT	£32,110	£32,610

This includes: consultancy fees; specialist tree felling operations; traffic control measures & men and equipment; restricted working hours (imposed by ESCC highways), negotiated additional works*, media, advertisements and letter drop campaign.

- *Additional traffic control measures and associated equipment (in accordance with requirements of the Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (as amended) and in accordance with the guidance in Chpt4 of the Traffic Signs Manual.
- * outside ecological experts were called in to conduct fingertip search of an area where tracking of plant machinery was to be undertaken.

No significant problems or complaints were reported both during and post felling operations which I consider to be a remarkable achievement. There were some complaints about traffic control and rolling adjustments were made to try and mitigate the worst of these issues as far as practicable. There was, and to a lesser degree still is, general 'chatter' on social media about the works. From what I've seen there appears to be a good level of awareness by the public of the reasons and scope of the works. I saw very little dissent or disagreement, indeed I noted that there was a degree of sympathy for the Council and its Officers.

There was a report of an unauthorised person trying to recover firewood from the Nevill/Offham Road embankment post works, which may have resulted in a stray log being left in the road – this in turn may have resulted in a road traffic accident although this has not been verified by any official source. For your information, we had undertaken a sweep of all the embankments to ensure portable logs were removed before the end of the contract (in fact this was one of the 'snags').

The clear felling of woodland will of course have a profound impact on local flora and fauna, but it must be stressed that there will be both gains as well as losses. On one hand, the loss of high canopy will result in a reduced habitat and foraging area for fauna (such as birds and insects) which might have been predominantly dependent on the woodland environments. On the upside, the newly exposed woodland floor, subsequent regrowth and associated regeneration will provide a rich and diverse environment for existing but also for an influx of new flora and associated fauna. This is a natural process known as secondary 'ecological succession'.

Ecological succession is the gradual process by which ecosystems change and develop over time. Nothing remains the same and habitats are constantly changing. There are two main types of succession, primary and secondary. Primary succession is the series of community changes which occur on an entirely new habitat which has never been colonized before such as for example, a newly quarried rock face. Secondary succession is the series of

community changes which take place on a previously colonized, but disturbed or altered habitat such as for example, after felling trees in a woodland, land clearance or a fire.

The species living in a particular place gradually change over time and each successive species is adapted to thrive and compete best against other species under a very specific set of environmental conditions. If these conditions change, then the existing species will be outcompeted by a different set of species which are better adapted to the new conditions. A change in the plant species present in an area is one of the driving forces behind changes in animal species. This is because each plant species will have associated animal species which feed on it. As plant communities change, so will the associated micro-organism, fungus and animal species. Succession involves the whole community, not just the plants.

So, for those with an interest, plotting ecological changes and monitoring species composition of the area might be a useful exercise. Noting the species and numbers of birds visiting a garden feeder may well map the successional changes over time.

The issue of replanting has generated much interest and confusion in equal measure. Despite the felling, it is still woodland and it is still populated with trees, albeit small ones at this time. We're not intending to replant the area because we want to see if any Ash, with resistance to Ash Dieback Disease, survive. Only about 5% of Ash throughout the UK are expected to have some sort of congenital resistance to the disease and it is likely that resistance to ash dieback will further evolve in the UK ash population over time through natural selection. It is important, therefore, to ensure that any potential survivors are allowed to establish and for this reason re-planting the areas of felled woodland is not recommended by the Forestry Commission. Having said that, we can review the situation again in, say, 4-5 years and decide whether there is a case for 'enrichment-planting'.

Meanwhile, we have already planted a scattering of dutch elm disease resistant Elm, a couple of Beech and Small-leaf Lime (hopefully they will survive the current dry conditions) on LDC land on the woodland margin and near to Wallands School. We had hoped to involve the school in the planting but COVID19 threw a spanner in the works, but I will actively seek to involve them in the future! I would also be quite happy for Town Council Members to become involved too.

For your information, ESCC Highways are dealing with the remainder of the trees lining the Offham Road (amongst a large number of other sites throughout the east sussex area).

Daniel Wynn

Specialist Advisor (Arboriculture)

Lewes District Council & Eastbourne Borough Council