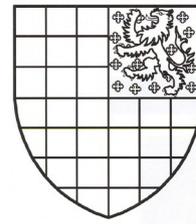


Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ info@lewes-tc.gov.uk

🌐 www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

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

PRESENT Cllrs J Baah; M Bird; R Burrows; S Catlin (*Deputy Mayor*); G Earl; O Henman; J Lamb (*Mayor*); I Makepeace; Dr W Maples; Dr G Mayhew; M Milner; 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 (*Cttee. Admin.*)

Observing: Ms L Zeyfert (*All Saints Centre Manager*); B Courage (*Town Ranger*).

Before the meeting, the Reverend Canon Judith Egar offered a few words of reflection on what she described as "Crisis fatigue" and society's increased awareness and sensitivity to fragility and vulnerability.

FC2020/24 QUESTION TIME: There were no questions.

FC2020/25 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS: There were none.

FC2020/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Handy who was on holiday and Cllr J Herbert who had a childcare commitment.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/26.1 Reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are noted.

FC2020/27 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a) The Mayor had officially re-opened the Pells Pool recently. Cllr Lamb enjoyed the 'first dip' – a long standing tradition – before the pool was opened to swimmers.
- b) The Mayor and TC had attended a 'Recovery Summit' hosted by Lewes District Council which had focused on community and how the community had joined together *eg.* Volunteering, acts of kindness etc. It was highlighted that it was important to build community wealth and a collaborative approach which would be beneficial locally.
- c) The Mayor had also attended a Lewes Walking and Cycling Forum where enthusiasts had talked about how walking and cycling could be taken forward in the District.
- d) The Mayor had corresponded with Peter McFadyen, of Frome in Somerset, the author of 'Flatpack Democracy' who would be happy to present his ideas. The Mayor would organize a Zoom meeting.

FC2020/28 MINUTES:

It was resolved that:

FC2020/28.1 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18th June 2020 were received and agreed as an accurate record.

FC2020/29 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) Buildings Working Party – 23rd June 2020. Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*)

Town Hall heating system refurbishment: The meeting had considered a second report presented by specialist consultants, providing more detail on feasible options offered by air-source heat pump (ASHP) and photovoltaic panel (PV) technologies in replacing the Town Hall's existing heating system. A system would be capable of providing 100% of heating demand within the building during mild temperatures (*eg Autumn/Spring*), but it was highlighted that the flow

temperatures which they generate is considerably lower than required (around 80°C) to adequately 'drive' the internal heating system during colder periods, when the system would need topping-up by an additional boiler. It was proposed to install a hybrid heating system, comprising an air source heat pump supplemented by boiler plant. Comparisons were shown between the capital and running costs, and emissions, of both gas and electric boilers based upon the ASHP providing approximately 75% of the heating requirements.

There were a number of variables to consider in the final selection of the equipment, including physical size, access requirements, noise break-out and system efficiency. There were also different refrigerants to consider; proposals where refrigerants have a Global Warming Potential (GWP) greater than 2500 had been dismissed on both environmental grounds but also the future availability of the refrigerant (for maintenance). Members were advised that noise generated would be a significant consideration, given the proximity of nearby homes.

When reviewing several potential locations for the outdoor equipment, three areas in and around the rear service yard, were favoured. Other options had been considered and dismissed on various grounds, such as distance and routing of pipework from the outdoor unit to the basement plant room. The meeting considered these three and accepted a recommendation which allowed a larger, more efficient, unit which was quieter and uses a more sustainable refrigerant. The location would involve the loss of 3 car parking spaces, but this was considered acceptable. Further investigation would be needed into electrical loading and pipework routing options.

The report showed estimates of capital cost and running costs, and emissions, for combinations of ASHP and boiler with any remaining subsidies or incentives factored in. The cost estimates were said to be robust but expected to prove reasonably accurate when market-tested. The capital costs ranged from £91,000 for simple replacement of gas boiler to over £240,500 for an ASHP-only design.

There was a detailed discussion as to the use and future availability of gas, and the experts recommended it as still the most viable option at present, when considered against the likely service life of a new system; said to be around 15 years, and in the context of it being needed only for topping-up during coldest periods if associated with an ASHP. After deliberation on the options presented, the Working party agreed that it would recommend the option shown in the report as "Air Source Heat Pump with Gas-fired Boiler", and accepted the suggestion that around £70,000 of the total cost could be deferred to a second year if the installation were to be planned in two stages. Members were keen to ensure that this would not involve duplication of any cost and were assured that it would not if the system is designed with this in mind.

The project was estimated to take a total of 16 weeks, technically, but would be subject to external factors such as Planning and Listed Building consents. The Working party recommended to Council an immediate start on the agreed option, with the second phase in 2021/22 committed at the outset.

Refurbishment of Mallings Community Centre: The meeting had received a briefing on progress of the building works, which were proceeding well and had suffered only a short closure due to Covid-19 although work was slowed by distancing restrictions and supply-chain disruption. Members had welcomed Duncan Kerr, Managing Director of Wave Leisure Trust; Council's preferred choice for future management of the building. Mr Kerr had related the position Wave found itself in due to lockdown restrictions and described the effects as "devastating". When the main centres of Wave's operations (indoor gymnasias and swimming pools) were eventually allowed to reopen they would face such severe limitations on customer numbers that the costs would be disproportionate to the income, and without some form of significant third-party funding Wave would be in a parlous state. Given these unknowns, Mr Kerr was unable to commit to undertaking a management agreement for Mallings Community Centre at this time, and Members were understanding and sympathetic.

The Working Party rehearsed the options for management of the Centre, as they had been originally considered by Council, and the positive and negative factors for each. The preferred option if Wave were unable to assist was direct management by Council staff. It was noted that the building work may finish in October (at present estimates) but the Centre could not

immediately reopen as there would be a period needed for final finishing and fitting-out. Given the present situation with lockdown restrictions and prospects for relaxation it was unlikely that the Centre could be operational before the New Year. Assuming that timescale to be fairly pragmatic, it was possible to defer a decision until the end of August when Mr Kerr may be in a position to give a definitive answer. This was agreed by all to be practical, and meanwhile TC would draft a plan for LTC self-management.

All Saints Centre: Members had been provided with a copy of a recently completed surveyor's report on the building. This detailed report comprehensively described various items of repair that were considered to be needed. Councillors were pleased to note the description of the Grade 2* heritage-listed building as:

"Overall, this building is in remarkably good condition considering the mixture of constructions and ages and this reflects care in the ownership, renovations and extensions through the 19th and 20th centuries until it was deconsecrated. Its condition also reflects high quality renovations during the 1980s followed by excellent care and maintenance since, together with further modernisations such as for the heating system and west end lavatories. The level of maintenance repairs currently identified is much less than would be expected for a previously-redundant building of this size and complexity and reflects well on its management."

This commendation notwithstanding; 20 areas of work and individual items identified as necessary or desirable were shown in a table with estimated costs ranging from £2,000 to £59,000 - in aggregate amounting to £450,000. It was recognized that many of these were not immediate concerns, and that the schedule would inform the drafting of a programme for future prioritized work. Several areas would require further, specialized, surveys and these would also be prioritized. Analysis would begin immediately, and the matter reviewed later in the year.

The Working Party also reviewed the proposal to install a public WiFi network at All Saints, similar to that in place at the Town Hall. This project was started at the same time but paused when other work on the building became more urgent. The cost was provided-for in the Centre's operating budget for the year and the contractor was able to install promptly as the building was closed for public use during the Covid-19 emergency. Members recognized the advantages that such a system might offer, including to several of the Centre's regular hirers when devising their post-lockdown strategies, and were pleased to agree the work.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Buildings Working Party held on 23rd June 2020 (*copy in minute book*) are received and noted, and the Panel's recommendations are supported.

b) Personnel Panel Workshops 24th June and 6th July 2020. Cllr Wood gave an oral report: The workshops had focused on the retirement of present TC and recruitment of a successor, and whether there should be separation of the roles of TC and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). A revised Job Description was currently in a long draft and would need scaling down. A Human Resources consultant was recommended to assist the Council in the next steps. It was considered that the recruitment process for a successor TC should start in December.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.2 The oral report on the Personnel Panel Workshops held on 24th June and 6th July 2020 are noted.

c) Landport Bottom Management 7th July 2020. Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*)

Members had received a brief update report on operational matters from the District Council Specialist Advisor (Downland & Reserves), who was contracted to oversee day-to-day manage the site.

Grazing: Southdown sheep had been introduced, with young lambs, as lockdown started. There had been sheep-worrying incidents and one lamb death - the shepherd considered this was due to stress. More strongly-worded notices were posted. The Southdown breed lambs were very popular. They had been weaned and replaced by Tegs (a non-Southdown breed, in their second year). A second sheep death (a Teg) due to a dog attack had occurred on 25/26 June. Plumpton College had been reimbursed for the cost of the sheep. It was acknowledged

that there had been an unusually short lead time between posting of warning notices this year and the arrival of the lambs – this would be prioritized for future occasions. The sheep had grazed the pond field and the tumuli field over the spring and summer. The orchids had flowered in the pond field, and all fields looked attractive and floristically diverse.

Infrastructure: The water supply had failed temporarily due to nearby work by Southern Water. Supply had been reinstated with a new meter. New signs to inform the public of the presence of sheep in each field had replaced those broken some months ago. Fence repairs had taken place where needed.

Community Engagement: There had been no walks or community wildlife events over the spring and summer so far, and none were planned. There had been some conflict observed between the dog walking community and those keen to allow the skylarks space to nest undisturbed. Members of the public had added their own signs to those erected by the ranger. These were left in place due to the special circumstances of Covid-19 but would be removed shortly.

“Changing Chalk project”: A consultant has been appointed by Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, for development work on this project, and it was hoped that there would be funding for a community ranger to develop community nature engagement across the Downs; based on Lewes and Eastbourne councils sites. This would include Landport Bottom and hopefully include some work on responsible dog ownership. If the final bid is successful, a 4-year post should be in place at the beginning of 2022.

Lewes District Council Staff: One of the two Specialist Advisor for Downland and Reserves (SADR) had left the LDC and is not to be replaced. Thyone Outram (SADR) remained and anticipated an increased work load, but would continue to spend the time contracted with LTC on Landport Bottom work. This may mean a slight reduction in work around volunteering or community engagement since SADR work tended to exceed the agreed monthly hours.

Stewardship agreement extension: The Rural Payments agency has advised that extensions to Higher Level Stewardship agreements were usually not offered until two or three months before the end of the agreement (current agreement ends April 2021). Government consultation on changes to the programme had been halted due to Covid-19 and, although pilot studies were in place around the country, it was thought unlikely that the scheme would change before 2024. It was also unlikely that current agreements would be extended for that long. It may be possible to apply for Countryside Stewardship (a newer scheme). Applications for Countryside Stewardship 2021 would open in February so this would be reviewed at the turn of the year to establish the situation.

Woodland: The woodland at the lower part of the slope beside the Nevill Road was mostly felled due to ash dieback. There was dying ash remaining in the upper part of the woodland. A risk assessment was needed to establish how much of this part of the woodland may need to be felled.

Update to site management plan: The committee had considered a discussion draft of an update to the Site Management Plan, which would represent the third major revision since the original Plan was adopted and was designed to cover a five-year period. There followed a lengthy discussion on various points of detail, and submissions were noted for a second draft, which would be prepared for review in Mid-September. The meeting to conduct that review would be preceded by an escorted site visit.

Ragwort: In discussion on the proposed treatment of Ragwort, Ms Outram advised that it was recommended good management to remove this, particularly when growing close to areas frequented by horses and other animals vulnerable to its toxic effect.

Bench seat: Members considered a request to install a bench seat, proposed to benefit a nonagenarian who regularly walks on the land. The applicant had been advised that as a general principle, man-made structures were only installed at Landport Bottom if essential to the management of the land eg water troughs for livestock. Such things as bench seats and litter bins were not considered in-keeping with the land's natural state and its management within environmentally sensitive land programmes. It had been agreed that the Management Committee would consider the request, nonetheless, as it may be felt appropriate to allow a suitably natural-looking bench at a particular location where the impact was minimal. Councillors discussed these principles at length and agreed that a clear policy statement might

helpfully be included in the revised Site Management Plan. The immediate request was refused, for the reasons stated, although there was interest in the possibility of an ‘invisible’ structure such as a stone-filled and grassed gabion which could be constructed so as to blend with natural contours of the land. This would be investigated.

Historic racecourse sign: Permission had previously been agreed for the Lewes Racecourse History Group to site a commemorative wrought-iron sign on Council land. The sign was understood to be awaiting some re-finishing and delivery of a new mounting post; and could then be placed as agreed with the Group.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.3 The Minutes of the meeting of the Landport Bottom Management Committee held on 7th July 2020 (*copy in minute book*) are received and noted.

d) Open Council Working Party 14th July 2020: Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*).

The matter of noticeboards in the town had been raised, and TC advised that the Council owned only the three small cases on the face of the Town Hall, and the case at the All Saints Centre. The ‘heritage-style’ street-map case in the pedestrian precinct was cited as potentially useful as a further location for Council information. TC advised that it was part of a suite of street furniture provided by the Town Council when the area was pedestrianized and dedicated to display of a town street plan for visitors, produced in partnership with the Friends of Lewes. There were potential implications to a change of use which would need to be clarified and TC undertook to investigate this possibility. It was suggested that most visitors would, these days, use digital maps on a smartphone, but other Members noted that this by no means described everyone. Cllr Herbert offered to look at other noticeboards and bring forward proposals.

There was a general discussion on the role of Facebook, and acknowledged that whilst it now appealed mainly to an older demographic, with other services more popular with younger people, it could complement the Council’s website by also carrying meeting agenda *etc.* TC noted that the planned post-Covid deployment of staff would offer more time than hitherto for an account to be administered.

The principles of Participatory Budgeting were briefly discussed, and it was noted that all Councillors had been invited to an imminent workshop which would include this topic.

The Mayor was to host an informal travel-related symposium “Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” the following evening, in response to the County Council’s Active Travel proposals, and there was much discussion as to the format of this. The Mayor had stressed the priority for elected Members to listen to the views of the various special-interest groups and individuals who were to attend. It was noted that these invitees would include representatives from outlying villages and important that their opinions were to be heard. Some Members expressed firm preferences for the form and conduct of the meeting, but it was acknowledged that the Mayor would be the Chair. There followed a general discussion and it was agreed that the Working Party would meet quarterly in future.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.4 The Minutes of the meeting of the Open Council Working Party held on 14th July 2020 (*copy in minute book*) are received and noted.

e) Equality; Diversity & Inclusion Working Party 21st July 2020: Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*).

The meeting had considered whether the prevailing policy (adopted March 2019) was still appropriate. It was noted that the title required updating (to add “Inclusion”). It was noted that all Council policies were conventionally reviewed during the last year of any administration, when all Members would have more than three years’ experience. Some policies were reviewed more often, such as to update values in financial regulations, but most would await the periodic review unless circumstances dictated otherwise. Some Members commented that there were reasons for a review, but it was generally held that the current policy was robust and appropriate.

It had been noticed that local social media posts were asking what the Council could do about contentious presentations during Bonfire. This had been the prompt at the previous meeting

to investigate the possibility of restrictive clauses in Council building hire agreements. The recent “Black Lives Matter” movement prompted further discussion and it was remarked that there were many other sections of the community who should not be overshadowed by such thinking.

Members attention returned to the existing hire agreements for the Town Hall and All Saints Centre. No examples had been found at other Parish Councils that offered the sort of wording envisaged by Members. It was understood that Lewes District Council was investigating similarly but that their legal department had not yet produced a draft. TC recounted legal advice received in 2017 on another matter that had similar context. It had been advised then that Council should be extremely careful to avoid fettering its discretion and to ensure balanced judgements taking account of the personal and commercial rights of hirers. Some Members suggested that it would be inadequate to simply wait and follow the lead of the District Council, even should that prove practical. Some also felt that previous mistakes or failings on the part of regular hirers should be sufficient to allow the imposition of restrictions on future bookings. Others asked whether written undertakings could be demanded. TC elaborated on the inadvisability of these approaches. It was claimed that the Council was not doing enough; Working Party members were reminded that they had undertaken several months earlier to research examples of solutions they might find acceptable but had not, so far, achieved this goal.

After further discussion, an interim solution was agreed: that all hirers booking Council facilities would be provided with a copy of the Council’s EDI Policy with their booking papers, accompanied by an explanatory statement drawing their attention to the Council’s position and the importance it placed upon those principles. TC would prepare a discussion draft of such a statement; for Members to consider.

Suggestions that had been made in conversation with constituents, *eg* for events or support for third parties, were described but these were considered to fall within the remit of the Commemorations & Events Committee and would be passed-on.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.5 The Minutes of the meeting of the Equality; Diversity & Inclusion Working Party held on 21st July 2020 (*copy in minute book*) are received and noted.

f) “Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” symposium 15th July 2020. Council considered the Notes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*) which described:

The Mayor had welcomed everyone to the Meeting and talked about the recent Annual Town Meeting where discussion had been about factors driving Lewes to change including: Climate Change, the Covid-19 Pandemic; Pollution and renewed emphasis on Active Travel which would look at reducing traffic in the town and more provision for cyclists and pedestrians. The Government had made money available for Highway Authorities to look at active travel. It was stressed that any changes made should still allow businesses in the town to trade effectively, to remain Covid-safe and attract as many visitors to Lewes as possible. This meeting was for all residents, groups and businesses in the town to look at improvements that might be made. It was explained that the Town Council’s ability to act in this area was limited as the responsible Highways Authority was East Sussex County Council. The Town Council, however, was a voice that could speak for the town and might provide limited funds to support projects. The Mayor thanked all who had completed the pre-meeting survey with the outcome showing that the majority would like a forum set up to develop a long-term strategy for a more sustainable town centre; to support Active Mobility such as cycling, walking or scootering around the town.

The meeting then viewed a presentation via Video by Cllrs James Herbert and Richard Waring, on related ‘shared space’ topics

‘Active Travel’: It was reported that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) would be spending just over half a million pounds in East Sussex on the first tranche of the Active Travel initiative. The Government’s Department for Transport had awarded this sum to implement measures to support safe social distancing in areas where people congregate such as town centres, high streets, transport hubs or bus stops. The funding was also aimed at encouraging more people to walk and cycle where possible. To date ESCC had installed 1300 ‘keep apart’ signs in towns and villages together with ‘keep apart’ footway markings at 200 priority bus

stops. 40 Bicycle racks were also being provided at key locations in East Sussex. In Lewes the locations for these bike racks were: the Cliffe precinct, Little East Street car park and the Needlemakers car park. A number of temporary Highway Schemes were being implemented across the County subject to legal constraints. There was a fairly tight time limit to implement these schemes. Localised footway widening in key shopping locations (through temporary suspension of parking) included School Hill/High Street, Lewes; and some temporary cycle routes. The speed at which these will be implemented will depend on the type of legal traffic order required, the level and outcome of local consultation, design and safety review; and availability of necessary temporary facilities. Tranche 2 would then follow which would involve a second round of funding, and approx.£1.96 million had been indicated for the whole of East Sussex. More information was expected to follow in August.

ESCC was working with other partners on a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure programme. This would take a strategic approach to set out the ESCC's ambitions to provide a high quality, inclusive and integrated cycling network. The consultation with key stakeholders had been completed and a public consultation would start in Autumn 2020.

The District Council had helped facilitate a District Walking and Cycling Forum. Two cycle schemes were being looked at for Peacehaven and Lewes. District Officers were working closely with the County Council.

Walking: Concern had been raised by Lewes Area Access Group (LAAG) regarding effects on disabled people in the town. One-way walking in the town would need to be advertised very clearly as would any change to the environment i.e. obstacles on footpaths. Social distancing for visually impaired would prove difficult; as would mobility for others and this would have to be considered very carefully in any overall plan. Work needed to be done with orientation *eg* guidance strips. Wheelchair users in the town struggle with narrow twittens, steep slopes, uneven pavements and street furniture and this often means that they have to use the roads which proves extremely difficult as car drivers can be aggressive, and is made more difficult where there are cobbled streets (a point also noted by cyclists). The LAAG were planning to carry out an Access Audit in Lewes. Several footpaths in the town were so narrow that social distancing would also be impossible. Last year, Lewes Living Streets and Cycle Lewes had retained a Highway Engineer to look at making Lewes streets more pedestrian friendly. The report found that streets in Lewes could be widened together with adjusting kerbs to try to slow drivers speed. This would be particularly helpful at junctions as last year a 'Speedwatch' survey was carried out in Lewes and found that 90% of car drivers in the town drive faster than 25mph.

Cycling: Cycle Lewes and Lewes Living Streets had drawn up a design for walking and cycling in Lewes and felt that cyclists and pedestrians should have equal access to streets as cars. There needed to be a reduction in speed limits in the town as well as the volume of traffic. Motorised traffic currently has the lion's share of space. It was important to develop facilities for walking and cycling into Lewes town centre to try and discourage the unnecessary use of cars in that busy area. There was a call to complete the C90 cycle route through Lewes.

Motor Vehicles: A representative from a taxi firm stressed the importance of taxis for less able persons. There was concern that if more of the town was pedestrianised their clients would not be able to access shops in pedestrian areas. It was suggested that a 10mph speed limit could be established in these areas to facilitate taxi access. The use of electric cars was suggested, with shared ownership. However, there was currently limited infrastructure, *eg* public charging points. Charging points would need to be made available in the town although not on pavements but as part of the road network. Lewes District Council (LDC) car parks could also be areas to site charging points. LDC were also looking at potential E-bike sharing. There was concern raised about residents of outlying parishes. Many of the small villages do not have a regular bus services serving them, and residents who needed to shop in Lewes had to rely upon their cars.

It was considered important to establish who the vehicle drivers were in the town for example those making deliveries, traveling from outlying areas or using the town as a short cut during a longer journey.

Parking: The issue of the Station Car Park and the Phoenix car parks potentially being multi-decked was raised. There was some progress on this although any changes to Station Car

Park were dependent on Network Rail. Other sites might also be considered for such extension of capacity. Posters were needed throughout the town to discourage motorists/delivery drivers from parking on pavements. Improved signage showing where car-parks are located in town would help visitors to the town and notices showing that County Hall car park was free after 6pm and on weekends could improve the situation and parking at the North Street Quarter should be made available before development there takes place.

Businesses: There was concern from the Lewes Chamber of Commerce and individual traders that their views were not being heard. It was stressed that views need to be sought from retailers. Several businesses in town had no rear access, and the only delivery point at their premises was the front. There was support from individual businesses for cycling and pedestrians but there was also a need to sustain a working town. Shops need provision for 'out-of-towners' who want to come and visit Lewes. For many businesses, a delivery 'hub' would not work for deliveries incoming; it could work, however, for deliveries outbound from a trader to residents.

Residents: Several residents raised concerns about walking in Lewes as due to the narrowness of pavements some people walked on the roads. This also caused problems for pedestrians at night together with some routes into town, particularly from the estates (e.g. Landport, Cabbage Walk) being poorly lit. Rural residents did not feel safe cycling into Lewes, more so at night, because of speeding traffic. Cycling was not accessible to all, nor always practical eg the less able, pregnant women, or in emergency situations. Bus services would have to be frequent. Residents from Friars Walk raised concerns about how a scheme would work, although sympathetic to the need for a change. Their concerns were:

- > Has any modelling been done?
- > Will less cars parked on streets reduce traffic speed, or increase it?
- > Will greater road width increase HGVs?
- > Will fewer parked cars increase the speed and flow of traffic on Friars Walk and Lansdown Place?

The issue of access to vehicles was also raised:

- > Young children being carried or being left at home while parents unload/load cars
- > Elderly people receiving meals
- > Unloading heavy shopping
- > Security

It was noted that Local authorities have a duty to consult with groups and/or residents before removing parking.

Public Transport: The possibility of a Park & Ride (PaR) scheme was discussed. Patrick Warner from Brighton & Hove Buses (B&Hb) had travelled to different parts of the country to see how other PaR schemes operate. The consensus was that the public like a short journey from a carpark and the service needs to be regular throughout the day. Mr Warner was asked if a Lewes 'Shoppers discounted ticket' could be considered and he said this was something that could be considered by B&Hb.

Compass buses had the same objectives as larger bus companies (improving rural services) however, these schemes need funding. Lewes Town Council already supports Compass but perhaps additional funding could be encouraged from LDC, ESCC and parishes.

Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA) also works with multiple organisations, (Chamber of Commerce, Local Councils etc.) and considered that if local authorities contributed financially, services could be improved.

In other parts of the country larger supermarkets provided bus services for their rural customers; a service wholly funded by the supermarket.

Cliffe High Street: Cliffe High St/Pedestrian Precinct: Most attendees indicated that the pedestrianisation of the Cliffe Precinct was successful from a commercial perspective. Representatives of the High Street Traders noted that there was high footfall in the Cliffe that was not replicated 'up the hill'. There was interest in the decision to move the Farmers Market (temporarily at present) to the Friars Walk car park, and in the impact a permanent move might have on both shops and the Farmers Market. There were a number of concerns raised about Cliffe High Street, including the overcrowding of street furniture, the unsatisfactory

placement of Cycle racks, the difficulty of the cobbled streets for wheelchair-users, who were also often forced off the pavement by street furniture and extension of tables and chairs in front of food premises, *etc.* Other concerns included drivers not respecting pedestrians, using the bridge as a shortcut route, driving over the 10-mph speed limit, parking on the pavement, *etc.* A proposal to reverse entry to the Cliffe for residents and delivery drivers (to come from South St rather than Friars Walk) was made.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.6 The notes of the Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” symposium held on 15th July (*copy in Minute book*) are noted.

RESPONSE to the “Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” Symposium

The Mayor agreed to bring forward item 15 on the published Agenda, and Councillors considered a motion (*NOM006/2020 copy in the Minute Book*) proposing that the Council should submit to East Sussex County Council, as the responsible authority, all the findings in respect of the verbal and written submissions received for the symposium, and comments in respect of Active Travel scheme proposals for the town of Lewes. It was noted that the meeting was attended by over 65 people representing a range of viewpoints surrounding traffic in Lewes and the better integration of motor vehicles with the needs of cyclists, pedestrians, and households.

A government fund of £250Million has been made available for the introduction of cycling and pedestrian improvements in response to trends highlighted by the national lockdown, to:

- › enable more people to walk and cycle where possible
- › support safe social distancing in areas where people congregate, such as within town centres, high streets or at transport hubs or bus stops

These funds were to be spent by Highway authorities, in collaboration with other councils and stakeholders. In Lewes this is East Sussex County Council (ESCC). Following an application submitted to the government’s Department for Transport in early June, East Sussex County Council had been allocated £535,145 for phase 1 and had been advised that a further provisional allocation of £1.96m will be available for phase 2. Work would commence on the development of a programme once more details of the funding guidance were provided by DfT; expected in August. As part of the phase 1 measures, the County Council was now ready to introduce physical distancing measures along Lewes High Street. To allow these measures to be introduced:

- › on-street parking bays would be suspended, and barriers installed to widen the footway on the south side of the High Street between Eastgate Street and the traffic lights at Westgate Street.
- › Loading bays would be retained as well as existing bus stops.
- › With the exception of one bay outside No 60, all disabled bays would remain.

These were temporary measures which were likely be introduced during August and would be in place for a period of at least three months, although it was promised that this timescale will be continually reviewed. It was anticipated that ESCC’s Lead Member for Transport would decide the first-tranche matters on 17th August. After an extensive debate;

It was resolved that:

FC2020/29.7 Lewes Town Council will submit to East Sussex County Council, as the responsible Highway authority, all findings in respect of the verbal and written submissions received for the symposium “Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” hosted online by the Mayor on 15th July 2020, and comments in respect of Active Travel scheme proposals for the town of Lewes.

FC2020/29.7.1 The Council calls upon the County Council to observe all statutory procedures; legal duties and operational guidelines and, in particular, all the necessary consultative surveys of the views and preferences of local residents and businesses in streets and roads most directly affected by current proposals.

FC2020/29.7.2 The Council urges that technical and modelling surveys are carried out in respect of the environmental and economic effects of the intended motor traffic reductions, and also in terms of the maintenance of, or adjustments to, appropriate public transport

routes and alternative cycle routes; as well as the maintenance of adequate parking facilities for local residents, with due regard to the topography of Lewes.

FC2020/29.7.3 The Council urges East Sussex County Council to:

- (a) Ensure that the transport and appropriate parking needs of elderly and disabled (including visually impaired) residents requiring access to retail, medical and other facilities are fully analysed and taken into account.
- (b) Ensure that the maintenance of efficient delivering facilities for retail and other businesses and private households is considered alongside the environmental priorities of improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- (c) Protect the retail economy of Lewes at this particularly difficult time, including due attention to the needs of visitors (including tourists) and commuters to Lewes from the surrounding area and further afield, on whom Lewes shops and businesses depend to a great extent.
- (d) Consider the establishment of delivery hubs, including the development of delivery services to such from Lewes shops and businesses as well as online deliverers and from which local shoppers can collect or receive purchased items, in order to reduce excessive motor traffic through the town.
- (e) Consider, for the longer-term, development of a park and ride scheme; with full analysis of its financial viability and public subsidy implications.
- (f) Capitalize on the opportunity to review speed limits and their enforcement throughout the town and conduct an assessment of the volume of through traffic still passing through the town and further measures to permanently reduce this.
- (g) Consider allowing members of the general public use of the car park at County Hall in Lewes for the duration of the 'Active Travel' parking suspension, with the aim of supporting visitors to the town and as additional parking for residents and businesses affected by the parking suspension.

FC2020/30

INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT:

Council received the final report from its retained Internal Auditor on the financial year ended 31st March 2020 (*copy in the Minute Book*). The audit had been conducted in accordance with current best practice and statutory guidelines. Areas covered included:

- > Review of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
- > Review of the risk assessments
- > Review of the budgeting process
- > Proper bookkeeping – review of the use of the accounts package
- > Review of salaries
- > Review of fixed asset register
- > Review of annual accounts & AGAR
- > Review of bank reconciliation
- > Review of income
- > Review of information for external auditor

It was noted that the Auditor's report forms the key element of the Council's internal control regime and the structure of this was designed to confirm that every element of the statutory audit framework was satisfied and, supported by the routine work of the Audit Panel, was to give Council the confidence that it should affirm each statement on the statutory Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).

Councillors were pleased to note the comments, made in the Auditor's introduction, that

"It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Lewes Town Council are well established and followed. The Town Clerk...ensures the council follows best practice regulations and has overseen changes to the internal procedures as regulations and technologies have changed to maintain compliance....I am of the opinion that the annual accounts and AGAR are ready to be signed off by council and the external auditor and that the AGAR is a true and fair reflection of the financial transaction of that of the council for the year

ended 31st March 2020. Accordingly, I have signed off the AGAR.”

FC2019/30.1 Lewes Town Council notes the report of Mulberry and Co on their Internal Audit work for the Council for the year ended 31st March 2020 (*a copy is included in the Minute book*).

FC2020/31

ANNUAL RETURN & ACCOUNTS year ended 31st March 2020:

Members received report FC004/2020 (*copy in minute book*) which presented the requisite accounting information and draft Annual Governance & Accountability Return for approval as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI2015/234).

The relevant pages of the return were appended to the report. It was required that Council resolve its approval of its Annual Governance Statement (section 1) prior to approval of the Accounting Statements (section 2).

The accounting statements had been certified by the Responsible Finance Officer, and the certificate by the Council’s independent Internal Auditor had been signed. He indicated that he had no concerns, and his final report had earlier been presented to the meeting. The Internal Auditor’s work; regular reports of the Audit Panel, and occasional reports from other sources, were the instruments by which the Council assured itself that all responsibilities are satisfied.

Consequently, **it was resolved that:**

FC2020/31.1 Lewes Town Council approves the Annual Governance Statement, shown at section 1 of the statutory Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2020

FC2020/31.2 Lewes Town Council approves the Accounting Statements shown at section 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020, for submission, with supporting documents as required, to Messrs PKF-Littlejohn LLP; the External auditors appointed by the national sector-led body.

FC2020/32

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT 2020/2021:

Members considered report FC005/2020 which dealt with the assessment of risks associated with the operations and functions of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year (*a copy is included in the Minute book*). The report explained the principles of the annual assessment and the concepts of tangible risk (*eg* physical risks associated with a swimming pool) and intangible risk (*eg* risks associated with publications) and summarized the annual evaluation. This year’s review had taken account of 300 risk elements within 37 functions/areas of operation. Not all were relevant to LTC, but scores had been awarded to 290 risk elements, and there were no salient points. A summary report extract was appended; the full report (159 pages) being available on request to TC if required. **It was resolved that:**

FC2019/32.1 Lewes Town Council notes the Corporate Risk Assessment report, reference FC005/2020 (*a copy is included in the Minute book*) and the summary table of assessed risks for 2020/21 appended to it.

FC2020/33

COUNCILLORS INDIVIDUAL DUTIES

Report FC006/2020 (*copy in minute book*). was received, regarding changes to Members allotted individual duties. The effects of these were shown in an appended table. Subsequently, **it was resolved that:**

FC2019/33.1 The individual responsibilities for Members for the remainder of the 2020/2021 municipal year shall be amended as:

Councillor Herbert is no longer appointed to the Planning Committee.

FC2020/34

RETENTION of INTERNAL AUDITOR:

A report (FC007/2020 – *copy in the Minute book*) proposed retention of the current Internal Auditor. It was explained that:

1. The Council is subject to a statutory audit regime defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI2015/234).

2. All local councils are required at least once a year to confirm “in accordance with proper practices”, a review of the effectiveness of their system of internal control including a review of internal audit. Since 2003, when such regulations were first extended to Parish Councils, this has been reported as part of Lewes Town Council’s published accounts booklet and consistently been remarked as good practice by internal and external auditors.
3. It was noted that the term *internal* auditor (IA) was potentially misleading, as this is an independent external consultant, commissioned direct by a Council – contrasting with the *external* audit currently carried-out by government-appointed contractors.
4. The IA had a role in reviewing the effectiveness of control measures that the council decides to put in place and Lewes Town Council has been consistently fortunate to retain the services of IA’s who were extremely experienced in high-level local government financial management.
5. Of the internal auditors operating in the sector, the prospect who best represented the experience and qualifications appropriate to the work of a larger Parish was Mark Mulberry, of Mulberry & Co; principal of a professional accountancy and auditing practice who also provided audit services to other larger councils in Surrey and Sussex, and finance training and other services to the Sussex & Surrey Associations Of Local Councils (SSALC). Mr Mulberry has acted as IA for Lewes Town Council since the 2011/12 financial year and had developed a thorough understanding of the particular operating environment (LTC being one of only around 70 [out of circa 10,000] parish councils in England with a precept of over £1million). Mr Mulberry is a Chartered Certified Accountant, Registered Tax Advisor, and Registered Auditor.
6. The practical plan for internal audit at Lewes was implemented in two parts: the first concentrating on systems and procedures and the second on financial aspects. These were carried out in the Autumn and Spring, respectively. As part of the process a written plan and other associated information was provided to ensure the council could fulfil its obligations. At the end of the process a comprehensive report was submitted to council, confirming that statutory declarations may be made with confidence.

A question had been raised as to the limit on duration of an auditor’s professional relationship, and it was noted that the professional code adhered-to by Mulberry & Co was the highest order prevailing in the industry – governed by the UK Financial Reporting Council – and this did not indicate more than a review and consideration of rotation of individual staff after 10 years.

It was resolved that:

FC2019/34.1 Mr Mark Mulberry, of Mulberry & Co., 9 Pound Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1BX be retained as Internal Auditor to Lewes Town Council for the 2020/21 financial year.

FC2020/35

REVIEW of MODEL CODE of CONDUCT for COUNCILLORS

Members considered a report (*FC008/2020 – copy in the Minute book*) for a corporate response to national consultation:

1. Eighteen months after the Committee on Standards in Public Life reported to the Prime Minister on improving ethical standards in local government, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had worked with the Local Government Association (LGA) to take forward the recommendation to develop an updated national model Code of Conduct (CoC) for all tiers of local government. This was an important measure NALC called for and proposed to the committee.
2. The LGA was now consulting on the proposed national model member code of conduct, and NALC urged all local (parish and town) councils and county associations of local councils to consider the proposed code and respond to the LGA to share their views. It had been developed in collaboration and was offered as a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. The Local Government Association (LGA) was leading on this and would undertake an annual review of the Code to ensure it continued to be fit-for-purpose, particularly with respect to advances in technology, social media and any relevant changes in legislation.
3. All councils are required to have a local Member Code of Conduct. Oversight and investigations into reported breaches of the Code are the responsibility of an appointed

Monitoring Officer who is, for Lewes, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services for Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils. For consistency across Lewes District, and administrative efficiency in this often-difficult area, parish councils in Lewes District have traditionally followed the same CoC as Lewes District Council itself.

4. The report also recognized that current sanctions available to local authorities are insufficient, and NALC was also calling on the government to take urgent action to introduce the recommendation in the report for a new power for local authorities to suspend councillors for a period of up to six months. NALC considers that failure to introduce this sanction alongside other measures will defeat the effectiveness of wider steps that are being taken to improve ethical standards. Now more than ever, high standards of conduct in government at all levels are needed to protect the integrity of decision making, maintain public confidence and to safeguard local democracy. That is why NALC was also calling for the Committee on Standards in Public Life to publish a timetable for reviewing progress on the implementation of the report's wider recommendations and best practice to ensure this important issue continues to be a priority for action.

It was resolved that:

FC2019/35.1 Individual Cllr comments on the draft national model Code of Conduct for Councillors be submitted (to TC) by 17th August 2020, for a corporate response to the consultation to be compiled by Cllr Lamb and the Town Clerk and submitted.

FC2020/36

RECOGNITION of BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Councillors considered a motion (*NOM 005/2020 copy in the Minute book*) proposing that Lewes Town Council organise an activity, annually in October, to acknowledge Black history Month and celebrate the central role Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) have played in transforming the social, political and economic spheres in the United Kingdom.

It was explained that October is set aside as "Black History Month". The national curriculum for schools excludes Black histories throughout and omits the vast contributions Black people have made to the UK. As a result, young people who learn from the national curriculum are not given a full or accurate version of British history, which limits their opportunities and futures in an increasingly diverse social landscape. Black History month was first launched in the 1980's with the view of challenging racism and educating society about the hidden Black history that was not taught in schools. Namely, recognition of black people who have excelled, overcome, and made history.

An event suitable for the activity would, it was suggested:

- > Vary, depending on a particular year;
- > Have the potential to educate community members about the BAME group;
- > Be non-political but one that celebrates the varied, but rich, legacy of BAME; while challenging the accepted narrative that limits the history of BAME people to slaves and colonial subjects.

An example of such an event this year was suggested: a talk at the Depot by David Olusoga* (depending on his availability), on the lives and experiences of migrants to and from Britain. This could be accompanied by African drumming and dancing.

It was understood that the BBC have collected films around Black History Month over the years for use as classroom resources for schools. Video clips from such a talk could be relevant for local schools to explore in a similar way.

**David Olusoga OBE is an historian, writer, broadcaster, presenter and film maker. He is Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester and has presented historical documentaries on the BBC and contributed to The One Show and The Guardian.*

After some debate **it was resolved that:**

FC2019/36.1 Lewes Town Council will organise an activity, annually in October, to acknowledge Black History Month and celebrate the central role Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) have played in transforming the social, political and economic spheres in the United Kingdom.

EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE ART FACULTY SUPPORT

Councillors considered a motion (*NOM 007/2020, copy in the Minute book*) that Lewes Town Council shows support for the Fine Art and Design Extended Diploma students of East Sussex College by:

- › Engaging with them as ‘clients’ of their final year presentation.
- › Offering exhibition space within the Town Hall building to display the work they have produced

The Senior Tutor of the Fine Arts and Design Department had invited Lewes Town Council to be the “Client” for the 20/21 cohort of students.

There were currently 14 students who had been working remotely since March, and from December would prepare for an exhibition to be displayed at the end of March or beginning of April 2021. A requirement of the qualification (the equivalent of 3 A Levels) was to plan, promote and display their own artwork. Having an opportunity to showcase their work within the community was highly significant and beneficial in their learning.

The course simulates a professional project and the students are encouraged to engage with the “Client” about the brief (set by the Course Tutor) and to consider the exhibition space itself as integral to the artwork.

The course had many successful exhibitions in the past, using venues as diverse as a derelict supermarket to Charleston farmhouse. In recent years, the students had entered a national competition for set or costume design which has resulted in awards and accolades. Their success in the Royal Opera House Design Challenge had led to the student work being displayed at the V&A and the Brazilian Embassy in London and the Charleston show was celebrated and reported on the BBC.

The structure and timescales for the proposal were described as:

- › engaging with the students between December 2020 and March 2021 – requiring 3-4 hours on three occasions.
- › Offering exhibition space within the Town Hall building to display the work they have produced – between March and April 2021
- › Exhibition involving:
 - Opening to public for viewing and comments
 - one evening, or a Saturday, a grand opening / celebration - possible awards based on public vote.
 - Once on display students could stage guided tours or even run practical workshops aimed at primary and/or secondary schools around Lewes.
 - Some costs in the form of refreshments (1.1 and 2.2) would be incurred.
 - possible additional staff hours.
 - Subsidy in the form of free venue hire.
 - The exhibition could remain in place for a month, allowing the Town Hall to benefit from increased public engagement and the interest and delight of staff and members.

The faculty leader and a colleague had visited the Town Hall to assess the spaces but had offered at this point only a broad indication of what they might wish to use.

The estimated cost of these suggestions was significant, and Councillors considered they should reserve their decision on providing exhibition space until more was known; but were happy to support the programme as ‘client’ in-principle.

It was resolved that:

FC2019/37.1. Lewes Town Council supports, in principle, the East Sussex College Fine Art and Design Extended Diploma programme 2020-21 in the role of ‘client’.

FC2019/37.2. A decision on the potential offer of exhibition space free of charge is deferred, pending reconsideration of the request once more details were known.

REMOBILIZATION of OPERATIONS

Council considered a report (*FC009/2020 copy in the Minute book*) which apprised Councillors

of planned remobilization of some Council operations:

Whilst many government restrictions on social movement and commercial operations had eased, this remained a fluid situation and many constraints still prevailed. The evolving situation was routinely monitored, and actions to remobilize operations of Council buildings and office staff would continue to be guided by the underlying principles of caution and care for the health and wellbeing of staff and visitors. There had been noticeable distance between some areas of government guidance and the actual legal position, although it appeared that much effort had been put into alignment once anomalies became obvious. Ultimately, the law prevails over any guidance.

Recent relaxation of constraints allowed the reopening of the Pells play area, and although aspects of that government guidance had been disputed by the National Association of Play Industries, the site was effectively managed within all Health & Safety requirements. Several monitoring functions were contracted-out via Lewes District Council, and this offered some reassurance as all sites in Lewes and Eastbourne were covered to a uniform standard. Field operations of the Town Ranger had continued largely unaffected throughout lockdown.

The previous meeting of Council had considered prospects for outdoor swimming pools; and subsequent relaxation of the rules had allowed this. The Council's managing agent, the Pells Pool Community Association, at time of writing planned to re-open the Pells Pool on Saturday 25th July.

Regarding the Town Hall and All Saints Centre, some events could now resume but there remained some distinction between what was allowed at events organized by the Council and those by third parties. Contact had been maintained with regular hirers, many of whom had been customers for many years, and those who may wish to make bookings that might be allowed were aware of their options. Regrettably, several patrons had already taken decisions to effectively 'write-off' the year until at least Christmas, as their individual circumstances dictated. There had been approaches by other prospective hirers, some new to the building; some of whom with proposals which were not yet allowable but others where they might be. An example was the Court & Tribunals Service who were running a national project to find spaces where they could address some of the significant case backlog that had accrued during lockdown. It was likely that the Town Hall might be helpful in that regard, and discussions had begun. There was, however, a dilemma in maintaining service to those 'regulars' who had continued throughout, such as the National Blood Service.

All Saints Centre bookings showed some tentative recovery from early September, but from January the booking diary looked almost back to normal. All Saints Centre staff had returned to a modified shift pattern to accommodate various maintenance and repair works and some returning users. Town Hall hirers were, at present, less certain about their positions.

Practical rules applied in most areas and physical measures had been implemented for offices and letting spaces, with provision of signage; segregated access and circulation routes; anti-viral cleaning products; personal protective equipment, and contactless payment facilities alongside a high-frequency cleaning programme. As hall-hire restrictions eased, regular and prospective hirers were advised as to what was allowed; and with any booking proposals were required to confirm their awareness of Council measures, and acceptance of them, and to submit their own event-specific risk-assessments for approval.

The Tuesday Market held in the Corn Exchange was able to recommence although this depended, as always, upon individual traders who may wish to hire a table. There would be a market on 4th August and a reasonable number of traders had indicated they would return. The nature of their business was such that bookings were traditionally week-by-week and heavily dependent upon adequate patronage by buyers.

Office operation was planned to remobilize at the Town Hall on 3rd August. National scientific advice underlying the 'headline' relaxations (such as shops and restaurants) remained to minimize travel to work wherever possible, but it was left to managers to assess risk and permit workers to return if recommended safety measures could be put in place. In the Town Hall office suite, achieving ideal ventilation was not easy; being configured with no opening street windows. It was possible to arrange exchange of air in satisfactory volumes

by keeping open several high-level windows in the Corn Exchange and some internal doors and small vent windows, allowing that air to flow into the office space. Priming airflow and exhausting the office air was achievable by several fitted extractor fans; an old installation unused for years but recently tested and still serviceable. Various physical measures limited face-to-face contact and there was adequate provision of anti-viral cleaning products; personal protective equipment, and contactless payment facilities alongside a high-frequency cleaning programme. Revised patterns of office attendance balanced with home working were designed to minimize the number of individuals at any point in time sharing the very compact office accommodation, kitchens and WC's, and narrow corridors. This would also maintain some of the positive effects of reduced travel and the associated benefit to the environment; and some elements would be continued in the longer-term. The reception desk would be advertised as open between 10:00am and 2:00pm initially, although staff would be available, and telephones and emails dealt with 9:00am-5:00pm. Public reception had been maintained throughout lockdown through email; telephone messaging, and website referrals and the very low number of contacts had highlighted the true nature of demand insofar as the 'traditional' visitors to Reception were most often not there for Town Council business. There had been no perceived reduction in service related to ongoing Council work or connections with local partners. All other visits would be strictly by appointment only.

It was resolved that:

FC2019/38.1 Report FC009/2020 describing planned remobilization of Council operations is received and noted.

FC2020/39

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

Annual Plan TC noted salient developments

Devolution – Lewes District Council had received enquiries from prospective hirers/tenants regarding the Market Tower and 2 Fisher Street and had asked if the Council wished to pursue the purchase of either or both properties at the values established earlier. This matter was not straightforward; as the Town Council still considered that there was a strong case for devolution without charge, and detailed discussions would be needed. Present circumstances suggested that the matter would not be resolvable in the short- to medium-term, although there remained a feeling that the buildings should be owned by the Town Council. It was **agreed** that LDC should be advised that the Council wished to keep options open for future transfer or acquisition and asked to consider this when assessing other approaches.

FC2020/40

NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

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

- Transport Symposium response
- Black History Month recognition

A question was asked as to the likelihood of a return to physical meetings or the introduction of 'hybrid' meetings with some attendees online and some physically present.

TC outlined the best-practice guidance on this question: while the emergency Regulations (valid until at least May 2021) did not preclude either physical meetings or a hybrid form, central government and all local government sector bodies continued to recommend that where meetings can take place digitally, without the need for face-to-face contact, they should do so. There were several practical and technical considerations for LTC in particular, in the areas of potential public/press attendance and the technical requirements to conduct a hybrid meeting lawfully.

Dates to note would be sent from TC to all Cllrs by email

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting; and thanked everyone for their contributions.

The meeting ended at 10.45pm

Signed: Date: