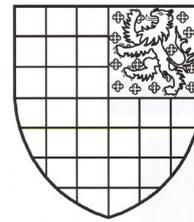


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council**,
held on **Thursday 8th October 2020**, online via Zoom Meetings at **7:30pm**.

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

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

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

FC2020/55 **QUESTION TIME:** One question had been submitted, on behalf of Lewes Living Streets and regarding Agenda item 9 – Report FC013/2020. The question, and the answer given, are appended to these Minutes.

FC2020/56 **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS:** There were none.

FC2020/57 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Herbert who was unwell and Cllr J Vernon who was working. No message had been received from Cllr M Milner.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/57.1 Reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are noted.

FC2020/58 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a) Cllr Lamb advised the launch of a 'Mayor's Covid Hero Award' – an initiative for the community to recognise individuals who have "gone above and beyond" to help others during the pandemic. The closing date for nomination was 30th November with winners being announced in January 2021 and a ceremony to be held to award winners when the current situation allows. The Awards had been advertised on the Town Council website and with local press.
- b) The Mayor had recently attended a Forum organized by the Surrey & Sussex Associations of Local Councils for Chairs and had found it most helpful.
- c) The talk "Flatpack Democracy" given by Peter McFadyen on 24th September was considered a success and positive feedback had been received.
- d) The Mayor reminded Council that TC had sent a 'scoring sheet' for Members to complete prior to consideration of the request for major funding at item 9 on the agenda.

FC2020/59 **MINUTES:**

It was resolved that:

FC2020/59.1 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 3rd September 2020 were received and agreed as an accurate record.

FC2020/60 **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) Personnel Panel workshops 8th & 23rd September 2020. Workshop notes were attached to the published agenda, with recommended job descriptions for a successor to the Town Clerk following his retirement and a separate Responsible Finance Officer ('s151 officer'). The Chair of the Panel proposed that these should be considered in the absence of any press and public, alongside the confidential report scheduled at item 14 on the agenda, as she considered

this was justified. TC advised that, as these related to prospective employees, there was no lawful justification to exclude as there should be no likelihood of disclosure of confidential information. This advice was abruptly contradicted; the Member quoting an enquiry made independently to the Local Government Association (LGA) who had referred her to the Local Government Act 1972. TC rebutted this argument: advising that the LGA is the representative body for Principal councils and not generally familiar with the many fundamental distinctions in parish legislation; parish councils being represented by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Further: the legislation applicable in this context to a parish council meeting was the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and not the statute quoted. He advised that the press and public were entitled to be present and the statutory test presumed in favour of openness and transparency. Nonetheless, a vote was called-for and, subsequently

It was resolved that:

FC2020/60.1 The consideration of Job Descriptions recommended by the Personnel Panel will be deferred to the end of the agenda, pending exclusion of any members of the press or public present, due to the potential for disclosure of information personal to staff.

b) Commemorations Committee 8th September 2020. Council considered the Minutes of this meeting (*copy in Minute book*).

Black History Month: The meeting had welcomed Cllr Baah, who had proposed the recognition of Black History Month (BHM). It had recently been agreed that the Council will organise an activity annually, in October, to acknowledge BHM 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. Members were reminded that October was first designated as Black History Month in the 1980's, with the intention of challenging racism and educating society about the 'hidden' history that was not taught in schools, namely: recognition of black people who have excelled, overcome, and made history. It was stated that the national curriculum for schools still 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. Any event should have the potential to educate about the BAME group. It should be non-political and 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 for 2020 that had been suggested was a talk at the Depot by David Olusoga* (dependent upon his availability), on the lives and experiences of migrants to and from Britain; perhaps accompanied by African drumming and dancing. Cllr Baah reported that Mr Olusoga's agent had responded with a price for an online 'appearance' that was considered too high for the Council. A personal approach was being made direct to Mr Olusoga by a mutual acquaintance, and this may be helpful, although, due to the short time available and the restrictions of the Covid emergency, Cllr Baah proposed that this might be better reserved for a future year, when a live appearance may be possible. She suggested that, for 2020, some publicity and the flying of a Black History Month flag may be adequate recognition and effort might best be directed toward 2021. There followed a long debate around various possibilities as some members felt that 'something' should still be introduced this year. A range of suggestions were made and tested, and it was eventually agreed that a BHM resource pack and flag would be obtained, and Cllrs Baah and Vernon should liaise with The Civic Officer and Town Clerk to produce a proposal.

**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.*

Thomas Paine Day: The meeting then welcomed Cllr Milner, recently appointed to the Committee. Council had agreed the principle of an annual Thomas Paine day in Lewes. Also welcomed was Paul Myles – a local authority on Paine – who offered context to the suggestion and presented a version of an illustrated lecture he had given on Paine in Lewes.

2021 would be the 230th anniversary of Thomas Paine's famous book the Rights of Man.

Paine lived in Lewes from 1768 to 1774. Paine joined Excise officers asking Parliament for better pay and working conditions, publishing, in summer of 1772, *The Case of the Officers of Excise* - his first political work, spending the London winter distributing the 4,000 copies printed to the Parliament and others. His seminal book, *The Rights Of Man*, was one of the most widely read books of its time. 8th June is the day of Tom Paine's death and Council had agreed in-principle to co-organise a street party on Sunday 6th June 2021; asking the Commemorations Committee to test viability and develop a proposal (Minutes FC2020/48.1 and 48.2 refer.); working on the detail with Lewes societies, businesses and residents, and. Further: Lewes Thomas Paine day would be a permanent annual fixture in Lewes, with events and parties held on the nearest Sunday to 8th June. There followed a debate in which several points were argued, and each element of the proposal tested. It was agreed that Cllr Milner should gather ideas from appropriate bodies and individuals and present final suggestions to a future meeting. Members thanked Mr Myles for his extremely informative presentation.

'Vote 100' Booklet: In 2018, the Council had supported a Reeves Archive exhibition on the centenary of woman's right to vote. To accompany the exhibition, a group of local women developed a website to highlight the commemorative events and women's history in the town <http://www.vote100lewes.com/> . The group now intended to publish a booklet containing articles from the website to distribute to local schools and libraries - providing a tangible legacy from the suffrage events. It was said to be an appropriate time to do so, since this year is the centenary of the first woman becoming a Borough councillor in Lewes and also a hundred years since American women gained the vote. The draft booklet covered local women's history with a series of articles on '100 Lewes Women' past and present, and would include a write up of the event Girls for Change led by former Mayor, Janet Baah. The Council was asked whether it would be willing to support the booklet and pay for printing costs. The group proposed to print 200 copies of a soft-cover booklet (88 pages) describing local women's history, the suffrage centenary events and the mayor's 'Girls for Change Day'. Quotes from printers had been obtained which compared favourably with similar projects by other history groups, and Council was asked for up to £1,400. It was proposed to distribute around 30 complimentary copies of the booklet to local schools, libraries and contributors. The rest would sell at about £8-£9 to offset some of the costs of printing and potentially raise a modest sum for a local charity (unspecified). Councillors considered this request, having been furnished with a copy of the draft booklet provided as a courtesy 'publisher's preview'. The matter was discussed at some length, and there was a general feeling that this was a very worthwhile idea and that such a book would serve as an appropriate legacy of the very well regarded event at the Town Hall. There were, however, many concerns voiced regarding the content and the consensus was that they would prefer not to associate Council with the present form. This was felt to be a matter of editing; not a criticism of the concept or obvious hard work that had gone into it so far. Councillors were very engaged with this discussion; some of whom have academic; publishing, and local history backgrounds which they hoped set their comments in context as constructive criticism. These centred-upon a perceived inconsistent quality of content; and the use of Wikipedia as a primary source. This, it was felt, compromised the underlying quality of the book and its potential for use as an educational tool. Salient examples were discussed of what was described as an 'idiosyncratic' choice of featured individuals. The high number of female footballers featured was described as disproportionate. Consideration was given to making the group an offer for a much lower sum as a contribution towards comprehensively re-editing, but the amount Members would be prepared to recommend was recognized as inadequate. There was a shared view that the document would work as, perhaps, a website or 'print-on-demand' online item, but there was little confidence that it could be marketed as a printed book at the price indicated. There was also a comment that the beneficiary charity should be declared. Committee members were generally in favour of the concept, and keen to indicate that if they could help with further development they would be pleased to do so. It was agreed that these responses would be conveyed to the applicants.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/60.2 The Minutes of the meeting of the Commemorations Committee held on 8th

September 2020 are received and noted.

c) Buildings Working Party 10th September 2020. Council considered the notes of this meeting (*copy in the Minute book*).

Town Hall heating system refurbishment: The meeting had considered a submission by Delta Green Environmental Design (DG), further to earlier reports and Council's subsequent agreement to commission them to design and implement a system of air-source heat pump (ASHP); gas-fired boiler and photovoltaic panel (PV) technologies in replacing the Town Hall's existing heating system.

The fee proposal was for DG to manage a traditional process of procurement for Mechanical & Electrical services, developing a specification and detailed design for a specialist contractor to price. Subsequently the role of DG would be to monitor the sub-contractor's installation works. These roles would be carried out and governed by the industry-standard Royal Institute of British Architects codes of practice (Stages 4 -7), which were detailed in the submission.

Various points were discussed. With a minor clarification outstanding, regarding the responsibility to commission a benchmark acoustic survey (required due to the proximity of nearby houses), Members were satisfied that the proposal was appropriate. It was agreed to accept the proposal, and that DG should be asked to include the arrangement of the acoustic survey and to commence work as soon as practical.

Malling Community Centre: The meeting received a briefing on progress of the building works, which were proceeding well and expected to be completed in October or early November.

The Managing Director of Wave Leisure Trust; Council's preferred choice for future management of the building, had confirmed with regret that, despite some easing of Covid restrictions in their industry and some recent additional funding, Wave would be unable to proceed with undertaking a management agreement for Malling Community Centre.

TC 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. Members were reminded that whenever the building work may finish, the Centre could not immediately reopen as there would be a period needed for final finishing and fitting-out. It was considered unlikely that the Centre would be operational before the New Year, given the present situation with lockdown restrictions and uncertainties over prospects for relaxation or, in contrast, increased constraints should infection risks worsen in the Autumn.

Assuming that timescale to be fairly pragmatic, TC had prepared a plan for LTC self-management involving the promotion and redeployment of existing staff which he described to Members and with which they were in general agreement. As individual staff were identified, the proposal would be reported to Council in October, as a confidential item.

All Saints Centre: There was a brief discussion regarding a long-standing suggestion to install illuminated signage at All Saints, to mark the building as being no longer a place of worship. Suggestions had included illumination of existing signs or the introduction of bold modern additions to the tower. These were being discussed with lighting specialists, and any ideas would be brought forward at a future meeting.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/60.3 The notes of the Buildings Working Party held on 10th September 2020 (*copy in Minute book*) are received and noted, and actions approved.

d) Grant Panel 16th September 2020. Council considered report FC012/2020 (*copy in Minute book*) containing recommendations for payments of grants for the second cycle (of four) for the year 2020/21.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/60.4 The grant payments recommended in report FC012/2020 (*copy in minute book*) (as shown in column G of the table appended to that report) be approved.

FC2020/61

COUNCIL 'VISIONING':

Council discussed a proposal (*NOM008/2020 Copy in the Minute book*) that Council review its

Visioning exercise. It was proposed that there should be review of the accomplishments of the current Council that have been a clear result of Visioning priorities; identification of any necessary re-structuring of current priorities; identification of three to four projects, programmes or specific actions, that align with the stated priorities. It was described as standard good practice to review collective priorities and to ensure that those agreed-to were accounted for in decisions and actions. It was recognized that a year and five months had passed since this Administration was elected and nearly 10 months since it agreed a collective 'Vision'. Since then there had been significant disruption due to Covid-19 but decision-making had continued online. It was suggested that priorities may have changed. A review of Visioning would be beneficial.

A debate followed in which it was argued that this was a worthy proposal but that no separate project should be needed; that the aim could be achieved at a Council meeting if informed by a simple table of resolutions passed and the status of each decision. It was recognized that progress had been made despite difficulties and a simple review was adequate. There was already in place a robust and conventional system of feedback to every Council meeting *via* Minutes of Working parties and committees, written and oral reports, and routine review of the Major Items list. TC agreed that he would produce a similar table detailing Resolutions of Council to form part of this process at Council meetings. There was discussion over amended wording to the Motion, and subsequently

It was resolved that:

FC2020/61.1 Lewes Town Council will review its visioning objectives to account for the achievements/actions to date and agree priority objectives for the forthcoming 12 months.

FC2020/62

C7 project PARISHES of the LOWER OUSE:

Council considered a report (*FC013/2020 Copy in the Minute book*) presenting a request by the Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO) group regarding the C7 road between Lewes and Newhaven.

The group, comprising communities situated along the C7 road between Lewes and Newhaven – Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO) - has devised a project to undertake a review of the C7 and provide recommendations for improvements to reduce speed, respond to potential safety issues and retain the rural nature of the road. They wished to commission a specialist consultant to undertake a feasibility study. The cost of the project was estimated at £25,000 and POLO were in the process of drafting funding applications for submission to two road safety organizations, with deadlines of the 21st October and the 13th November respectively.

POLO, with which the Council has collaborated in the past on matters of mutual interest such as this, asked that Lewes Town Council consider contributing up to £5,000 toward this project.

A project description for a “whole road strategy” has been provided, which highlighted that the C7 was a rural road passing through seven historic villages in its seven mile route through the Lower Ouse River Valley, within the South Downs National Park. It retained many of its rural features despite becoming crowded by the expansion of traffic, with a current average volume of 10,000 vehicles/day. The bulk of the traffic is generated by vehicles using the C7 to cut between the A259 South Coast Road and the A27 highway from Eastbourne to Brighton and beyond, connecting to the M23 to London.

A public consultation exercise had been conducted and the results shared with East Sussex Highways who, whilst sympathetic, provided no viable options for delivering reduced speed or traffic flow schemes and the road was not featured on any priority list for future funding. Concerns voiced by cycling and equestrian groups, as well as local residents, had made the communities along the route of the C7 join together to seek to develop a strategy to reduce speeds, retain its rural nature and, if possible, to divert traffic onto the parallel A26 trunk road, which had been designed for the purpose.

The starting point for POLO's strategy was the South Downs National Park study 'Roads in the South Downs – Enhancing the safety and quality of roads and places in the National Park' (June 2015). This document, produced in 2015 by Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd, offered a systematic method for helping to establish preferred speeds over rural roads, thereby making

them safe for all road users while conserving and enhancing the local landscape. They wished to investigate feasibility into a scheme which would conform to the standards presented in this study and which will be viewed as a best-practice example of how traffic calming schemes can be undertaken in full harmony with their environment.

There followed a lengthy debate, during which Councillors were asked to refer to the Council's recently-adopted protocol for assessing requests for significant funding and provide an individual 'score' which would aid in establishing the project's perceived value to the community. As this discussion developed, various remarks prompted an agreement to refer the protocol back to the Audit panel, who devised it, for refinement. This exercise identified significant support for the principle (73% of the maximum possible score) and Member then debated an appropriate amount to grant. A vote was called and, consequently

It was resolved that:

FC2020/62.1 Lewes Town Council will contribute £3000 to the Parishes of the Lower Ouse project to undertake a review of the C7 road between Lewes and Newhaven.

FC2020/63

EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE ART FACULTY SUPPORT:

Members considered a report (*FC014/2020 Copy in the Minute book*) to finalize a decision on the level of support for East Sussex College Fine Art and Design Extended Diploma programme.

At its last meeting, Council had considered a second report on the matter, having earlier agreed 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 of this year and would prepare for an exhibition to be displayed at the end of March or beginning of April 2021. It is a requirement of the qualification (the equivalent of 3 'A' Levels) 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 runs as if it were a professional project and students are encouraged to engage with the "client" about the brief (which will be set by the Course Tutor) and to consider the exhibition space itself as integral to the artwork.

Initially, it was not known what the actual space requirements might be for an exhibition, and some very rough estimates of the value of likely spaces within the Town Hall were indicated. Accordingly, Council resolved that it would engage as 'client' but reserved its decision as to exhibition space. The course tutor subsequently confirmed the ideal requirements, which would involve exhibition of work in the Foyer; Baxter corridor; Yarrow Room; Council Chamber and Corn Exchange during the period 22nd March - 20th April 2021, during the Easter period/term holiday. Allowance was made for days to install the work and to strike the exhibition, and public opening hours were proposed. The use of a display board system belonging to the Reeves Archive Project would also be required, and permission had been sought. On that basis the hire charges that would normally apply (discounted for a 'not-for-profit' hirer), and estimated staff cost (presuming no concurrent hires) had been calculated and resulted in an aggregate notional sum of £51,936. The Senior Tutor agreed that he could plan for a shorter and less extensive exhibition, and Council had deferred the decision once more until a meeting could be held to develop a detailed proposal for a more modest plan. This had now taken place, and a revised scheme was suggested as:

PROPOSED EXHIBITION

- a) It was proposed that the exhibition is set up on 22nd & 23rd March 2021 in the Town Hall Foyer and Baxter Corridor, using display plinths (College equipment) and the Reeves Archive display panel system (loan agreed).
- b) Public access would run during the hours 10:00am to 4:00pm from Weds 24th to Fri 26th March, and Mon 29th to Tues 30th
- c) Students families and friends would have special access on Saturday 27th, when the Town Hall was scheduled to be in use and no additional staff cost would be incurred.
- d) The exhibition would be taken down on 31st March and 1st April
- e) Preliminary access for students and tutors could be arranged in the weeks prior to set up, by arrangement, for preparation of equipment and early photography of 'posed' artworks.

f) The notional cost of this arrangement was in the order of £2,400.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/63.1 Lewes Town Council will support an exhibition of work by students on the East Sussex College Fine Art and Design Extended Diploma programme, as detailed in report FC014/2020 (*Copy in the Minute book*), considered by Council on 8th October 2020.

FC2020/64

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

Annual Plan - TC noted salient developments in items within the Major Items plan, which was included in the Agenda:

Town Hall Heating – the specialist work had been commissioned, and the first element would be a ‘benchmarking’ survey of ambient noise levels, which would establish the range of acceptable output for selection of the external Air-source heat pump equipment, which would be sited relatively close to nearby houses.

Malling Community Centre – TC had recently ‘met’ (online) with the contractor’s team. Work had slowed slightly, due to Covid-19 effects on the supply-chain for materials needed in the late stages of the work. It was likely that the major works would be complete by the end of November.

Pells – a typographical error was noticed in the table, and a question arose regarding the relationship of projects tabled as 2 and 3 to the anticipated North Street Quarter development (NSQ). It was understood that Lewes District and North St Qtr Ltd were nearing conclusion of legal negotiations before entering a contract with a ‘development partner’, who would then commence the NSQ construction *etc.* TC explained that the project to address Pells Lake stonework and ecology improvements would be significantly affected by the flood-defence works which should be a precursor to any NSQ site work. It was hoped that the works could be integrated in some way with that necessary engineering programme, to achieve economy of scale. Similarly: the wall of the Pells Pool enclosure was scheduled to be substantially altered as part of the creation of the flood defences, which would involve the relocation of well-head pumping equipment and thus impact the design of an improved café/kiosk; planned as a joint project with the Pells Pool Community Association.

FC2020/65

NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

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

- C7 project Parishes and the Lower Ouse
- East Sussex College Art Faculty Support

Dates to note etc for forthcoming meetings and events would be sent by TC to all by email, due to the lateness of the hour.

FC2020/66

EXCLUSION of the PRESS and PUBLIC

The Town Clerk elaborated upon the principles of professional advice, and the legitimate approach to either questioning it, or seeking supplementary or independent alternative sources. He stressed the importance of Councils being aware of the risks of legal challenge over seemingly innocuous things and cited two landmark High Court cases in recent years involving relatively small parish councils and apparently mundane issues (*Bideford, and Ledbury*). The Mayor proposed, and **it was resolved that:**

FC2020/66.1 In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted during the remainder of the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 etc. any members of the press and public present be excluded and instructed to withdraw. The nature of that business is to consider personal staff matters.

FC2020/67

PERSONNEL PANEL workshops 8th & 23rd September 2020

Council considered the notes of these workshops.

Town Clerk successor Job Description: Work had continued in analysis of the working document and various elements were extracted from this ‘long-form’ to be used as either elements of the eventual Contract of Employment or an Applicant Information Pack.

Members had considered the resulting document and held a detailed discussion regarding further editing and elements required. Agreement was reached on various textual amendments to produce a final draft for recommendation to Council (*attached to the Agenda*).

Responsible Finance Officer (RFO – s151 Officer) Job Description: Members had considered a draft and there was a detailed discussion regarding editing required. Agreement was reached on amendments to produce a final draft for recommendation to Council (*attached to the Agenda*). The advisability or otherwise of separating the RFO function from that of Town Clerk, was questioned by one Member, who expressed concerns that this might inflate costs. The background to the proposal was rehearsed, and it was noted that Council had already accepted this recommendation. Separation was likely to attract a greater number of TC candidates, as Finance was a technical subject many otherwise very able people avoided. It was expected that the RFO role could be adequately addressed with a part-time post based on a notional one day per week – allowing flexibility to attend for more hours at ‘peak times’ *eg* annual budgeting cycle.

Council would be recommended to adopt the JD’s drafted at this meeting, and it had been agreed that further work would benefit from the input of a practising Human Resources consultant, to ensure contract conditions *etc* were aligned with latest legislation, and up-to-date specialist advice was available.

None of the HR specialists approached had yet offered details of any recommended programme and associated costs, although had commented that they would advise commencement in the New Year – they felt that the Christmas period originally considered was inadvisable. The Panel were nonetheless confirmed in their wish to begin the process before Christmas, as they had concerns over potential problems and the possible need to re-advertise or a long notice requirement for a successful candidate.

Council would be asked to authorize the commissioning of a specialist adviser, to be engaged once details were available upon which to base a selection.

It was resolved that:

FC2020/67.1 Lewes Town Council agrees the draft Job Descriptions for a successor Town Clerk and a Responsible Finance Officer (*s151 LGA1972*) as recommended by its Personnel Panel and considered by Council on 8th October 2020 (*copies in the Minute book*).

FC2020/67.2 Lewes Town Council agrees the commissioning of a specialist Human Resources professional to advise the Personnel Panel on the recruitment of a successor to the Town Clerk and a successor as Responsible Finance Officer (*s151 LGA 1972*). The Personnel Panel is authorized to select a suitably qualified consultant.

FC2020/68

MALLING COMMUNITY CENTRE

Council considered a confidential report (*FCO15/ER/2020*) which recommended a structure for the Council’s self-management of Malling Community Centre.

Council had earlier considered options for the future management of Malling Community Centre (MCC) following the major refurbishment currently underway. Key considerations were seen as:

- Redesigned building will introduce new, more flexible, facilities such as café/bar and terrace and two multi-purpose rooms which are attractive for a wider range of users (*eg* business seminars), and will evolve a different, extended, user-profile over time.
- Adjacent play-area and recreation ground improvements, arising from a major share of >£1million s106 agreement *in* North Street Quarter (NSQ) development, will increase casual use; especially likely demand for café/bar with terrace and WC’s, accessible for users of play area and sports spectators.
- Local catchment will increase when North Street Quarter is occupied and accessible via proposed new footbridge.
- Expenditure of the magnitude applied means that Council will wish to ensure careful control of the building and proper maintenance of equipment; facilities, décor *etc.* to sustain the benefits for the community over several decades. Some equipment, such as the ground-source heat pump system and café facilities, will not be suitable for unsupervised operation (as was ‘traditional’ when the Centre was tenanted/managed by a third party)

- o Despite the decision by Lewes District Council to withdraw from devolution of the Recreation Ground to the Town Council, this transfer remains in prospect once NSQ is underway or completed.

Options considered in detail, with a lengthy assessment of *pro* and *con* perspectives, were

- a) Lease to a tenant
- b) Management agreement/license/shared responsibility
- c) Direct Management

Each option had very different implications, and there were many non-financial aspects to be considered which would affect the Centre and its likely user-profile, both in the foreseeable future and longer-term.

Option b) had been explored in some detail with Wave Leisure; the charitable Trust that had evolved from the original Lewes District Council direct service organization, now an award-winning charity, and in March 2019 the Buildings Working Party was asked to pursue Heads of Terms with Wave Leisure Trust, for a partnership agreement.

Regrettably, despite some easing of Covid restrictions in their industry and some recent additional funding, the Managing Director of Wave had confirmed that they were unable to proceed.

Council's preferred option if Wave were unable to assist was direct management by Council staff. TC had prepared a plan for LTC self-management involving the promotion and redeployment of existing staff and recommended this to Council. It was believed that Members would recognize this rare opportunity to promote existing experienced staff, given the small size and structure of the staff establishment.

Staff establishment changes were detailed in the report, which would promote two staff to key positions at Malling Community Centre with the question of a third team-member left undecided pending future consideration of options. A vacancy in the Town Hall office team would not be immediately filled, pending review once the 'post-Covid' demands could be assessed, but a vacancy in the team at All Saints would be filled by a new recruit. Incidentally: also proposed was an independent re-assessment of the salary scale for a post which had evolved appreciably since a corporate job-evaluation exercise in 2017

The building work at MCC was expected to finish in November, but the Centre would not immediately reopen as there would be a period needed for final finishing and fitting-out. It was considered unlikely that the Centre would be operational before the New Year, given the present situation with lockdown restrictions and uncertainties over prospects for increased constraints should infection risks worsen. The operating model envisaged was based upon that of the All Saints Centre, where three staff cover the total opening-hours of the building, being on duty one-at-a-time. The changes described in the report would provide two key officers and given the anticipated level of need in the near future it was not proposed to immediately recruit a third. It was considered that the café/bar function may benefit from contracting-out which would require more detailed investigation and modelling but could offer a stable level of income representing a significant contribution to overheads. It was possible that an operating model may be devised in collaboration with a suitable contractor that could obviate the need for a third direct employee.

There followed a robust debate, in which some Members voiced concerns over the lack of external selection, some going so far as to insist that "due process", as they understood it, was being ignored and claiming that this would be unlawful. One member vehemently decried the lack of external competition for posts, going so far as to declare a willingness to resort to judicial review. There were comments criticizing the suggestion of using the staffing model of All Saints as a template. TC repeated the positive aspects outlined in the report, and again advised Council that there was no legal imperative to recruit externally. He reminded Councillors that his principal role was to ensure lawful conduct of the Council's business, and it was "disappointing" that any Member should suggest he was promoting inappropriate or unlawful decisions; there being no legitimate basis for such assumptions or claims. He cautioned Councillors on the pernicious effects on any Council of such intemperate reactions and failure to discuss concerns in good time before meetings.

It was agreed that TC would include on the agenda for the next Council meeting an item noting the proposal to establish a Malling Community Centre Steering Group for the long term, along the lines of the All Saints Steering Group.

A Motion was proposed: that the recommendations in the report be agreed. A recorded vote was requested (*Standing Order 1(s) [following provisions of Local Government Act 1972 Sch12 p13 (2)]*) and the motion was carried: 8 For; 4 Against; 3 Abstentions; 3 Not present. The record of votes cast is appended to these Minutes.

It was resolved that

FC2020/68.1 Staff promotions; deployments, and other recommendations contained in confidential report FCO15/ER/2020 (*copy available from the Town Clerk to authorized individuals*) are agreed.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting; and thanked everyone for their contributions.
The meeting ended at 10.10pm

Signed: Date:

Draft

Public questions received for Council meeting

Thursday 8th October 2020



LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL

QUESTION RECEIVED:

From Kevin Moore on behalf of Lewes Living Streets

Re. Agenda item 9 Report FC013/2020: “How can the Town Council ensure that a similar or proportionate amount of money is made available for a study of streets in Lewes town itself on how to reduce through traffic and reduce traffic speeds and generally make the town more attractive to walkers and cyclists”

ANSWER:

“Thank you for coming along this evening Kevin. The short answer to your question is we would happily consider a proposal from Lewes Living Streets and Cycle Lewes to fund a study. We have not yet decided whether, or how much, we will give to the C7 project but that doesn't preclude us from considering applications from others. You are probably aware that there are 19 projects listed in our Neighbourhood plan relating to improvements for pedestrians and cyclists which are waiting for Community Infrastructure Levy money or funding from our own rather 'strapped' resources to proceed. Indeed, I think that Lewes Living Streets and Cycle Lewes proposed many of them.”

Cllr John Lamb,
Mayor of Lewes 2020/21

VOTING RECORD SHEET

MEETING of: Council

date: 8th October 2020



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Please note: this is a record of voting *where this has been requested* under Standing Order 1(s) [following provisions of Local Government Act 1972 Sch12 p13 (2)]

✓ = Indicated "For" ✗ = Indicated "Against" C = Chairman's casting (supplementary) vote A = Abstained NP = Not Present NV = not voting		Lib Dem	Green	Lib Dem	Ind	Lib Dem	Green	Lib Dem	Green	Lib Dem	Green	Green	Ind	Lib Dem	Ind	Lib Dem	Green	Green	Lib Dem						
Agenda item	MOTION or AMENDMENT VOTED UPON	BAAH	BIRD	BURROWS	CATLIN	EARL	HANDY	HENMAN	HERBERT	LAMB	MAKEPEACE	MAPLES	MAYHEW	MILNER	O' KEEFFE	SAINS	VERNON	WARING	WOOD	No. FOR	No. AGAINST	No. Abstentions	Not Present or Not Voting	CARRIED ? Yes/No	
14	That the Council agrees staff promotions; deployments, and other recommendations contained in Report FC/ER/015/2020	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	A	✗	N	✓	✗	✗	✓	N	A	✓	N	✓	A	8	4	3	3	Yes	