



Minutes of the meeting Lewes Town Council held on Thursday 23 June 2022 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Lewes, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor M Bird (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor R Burrows
Councillor S Catlin
Councillor G Earl
Councillor R Handy
Councillor Dr W Maples
Councillor M Milner
Councillor R O’Keeffe (arrived 20.16)
Councillor S Sains (Mayor)
Councillor J Vernon
Councillor R Waring
Councillor K Wood

In attendance:

Town Clerk
Customer Services Officer

25 Filming of Council Meetings and Mobiles Phones

The procedures were noted

26 Apologies for absence

There were apologies from Councillors Baah and Clarke who were unwell, Councillors Lamb and Herbert who had family commitments, Councillor Makepeace who had a prior engagement and Councillor Mayhew due to personal circumstances.

27 Members’ declarations of interest

Councillor Catlin as a trustee of the Priory Trust declared a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda Lewes Priory Trust major funding request, but the interest was not prejudicial as he did not stand to make any personal gain if the Priory ruins are maintained.

28 Question time

A question was received from a member of the public who was not present. A written response by the Town Clerk will be sent to the questioner. The question and answer will be shared with all Councillors.

29 Minutes

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 12 May 2022, the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 18 May and the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 26 May were all received and agreed as a true record.

30 Mayor's announcements

30.1 Councillors were asked to be succinct in their points as there was a full agenda.

31 Foodbank referral presentation

- 31.1 The Mayor welcomed Debbie Twitchen, Co-ordinator of the Landport foodbank who gave a brief presentation on the referral process for the three foodbanks in Lewes.
- 31.2 All the foodbanks used the same referral system and criteria, and the meeting was informed of the extensive list of referrers which included Town, District and County Councillors.
- 31.3 Ms Twitchen went on to explain how the referral system worked and stressed the importance of including all client information on the referral form to enable the application to proceed. A referral form would be distributed to the Town Clerk and Councillors for information.
- 31.4 Councillor Clarke and Ms Twitchen were proposing to hold a workshop that all Councillors would be welcome to attend for more information.
- 31.5 The Mayor thanked Ms Twitchen for her presentation.

32 Lewes Priory Trust

- 32.1 Council considered a report FC001/2022 – Lewes Priory Trust major funding request.
- 32.2 Councillor Catlin restated his personal but not prejudicial interest in this item.
- 32.3 The Mayor welcomed Sy Morse Brown (Chairman) and Trevor Parsons (Treasurer) of Lewes Priory Trust. Mr Morse Brown gave a presentation on the Trusts objectives and its principal activities which are to preserve the remains of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras.
- 32.4 Council was being asked to consider the presentation and the major funding request required by Lewes Priory Trust for financial support for repair and consolidation work at the Priory.
- 32.5 It was confirmed that the work to repair the stonework had already been completed as the specialist contractor had to fit in with his existing commitments.
- 32.6 Councillor O'Keeffe joined the meeting at 20:16. As a trustee of the Priory Trust Councillor O'Keeffe declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in this item stating she did not stand to make any personal gain if the Priory ruins are maintained.
- 32.7 Councillor Maples proposed, and **it was resolved that:**
The public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded from the Meeting under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

This item was confidential for members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972,

being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

- 32.8 Council discussed the funding request, the financial planning of the Trust, the need for the Trust to develop a funding strategy and explore broader funding opportunities and the need to review the formula of the Town Council's annual grant to the Trust.
- 32.9 In accordance with the major funding assessment process Council agreed the minimum threshold of 65% and councillors then provided their individual scores. Council was then asked to agree the major funding request award, taking into consideration the resulting median average of 72%.
- 32.10 Mr Morse Brown and Mr Parsons returned to the meeting.
- 32.11 **It was resolved that:**
1. The minimum threshold would be 65%.
 2. The Town Council note the report from Mr Morse Brown and agree to award £5,500 to the Lewes Priory Trust for repair and consolidation work at the Priory.
 3. Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to review the Council's formula for the annual grant to the Priority Trust.
 4. Salient points made by Council whilst considering this item, be passed on to the Priory Trust when the grant is awarded.

33 Lewes Priory Trust – World Heritage Site bid

- 33.1 Council considered a report FC002/2022 – Lewes Priory Trust – World Heritage Site bid updating Council on the Lewes Priory Trust initiative, in alliance with the International Federation of Cluniac Sites (the Federation), to register as a UNESCO World Heritage site, following a visit from the Federation in May 2022.
- 33.2 The Town Clerk summarised the report in which Council was being asked to consider the requirements of membership of the Federation and whether it wishes to become an Active Member of the First Committee.
- 33.3 The Town Clerk had raised a query with the Federation requesting clarification as to whether the Lewes Priory Trust can apply for membership of the Third Committee as the legal entity that manages and promotes the site. If so, would this satisfy the preparation of the application file. The Town Clerk did explain to the Federation that the Trust could fulfil the essential criterion of involvement in culture, tourism and European issues as outlined in the membership file for the First Committee. A request had been made for a copy of files for membership of the Third Committee to aid Council in their considerations. The Clerk reiterated to the Federation the Town Council's continued support of the Trusts involvement with the initiative. Clarification was awaited from the Federation.
- 33.4 **It was resolved that:**
1. Subject to clarification from the Federation that the Trust cannot be a member, the Town Council agree to become a member of the First Committee as the Local Authority responsible for the Cluniac site with the representative being nominated by the Town Council.
 2. Subject to 1 above, authorise the Mayor to sign and seal the membership application and agree expenditure of £1,360 from the Lewes Priory earmarked reserve and a supplementary estimate of £597 from the General Fund for the membership fee.

3. Subject to availability offer free use of meeting rooms to the Lewes Priory Trust to support work on this project.

34. Committees, working parties and outside bodies

34.1 Liaison meeting with Friends of Lewes

Council received the minutes of this meeting **and it was resolved that:**
The minutes of the Friends of Lewes liaison meeting are noted.

34.2 Liaison meeting with Pells Pool Community Association

Council received the minutes of this meeting **and it was resolved that:**
The minutes of the Pells Pool Community Association are noted.

34.3 Landport Bottom Management Committee

Council received the minutes of this meeting **and it was resolved that:**
The minutes of the Landport Bottom Management Committee are noted.

34.4 Grants panel 8 June 2022

Council considered report FC003/2022 containing recommendations for payments of grants for the first cycle (of four) for the year 2022 to 2023. An error was identified in that there was no award to the Lewes Rowing Club. **It was resolved that:**

1. Subject to correcting the error above, the grants payments recommended in report FC003/2022 as shown in column H of the table appended to the report be approved.
2. Cycle Lewes be thanked for their openness in withdrawing their grant after receiving funding from another source.

35. Officers reports

35.1 Historic Plaques

35.1.1 Council considered report FC004/2022 requesting Council's approval on the revised wording for the historic plaque at the Crown Inn and for the proposed wording for a previously agreed plaque at Keere Street. It was noted that it be suggested to Friends of Lewes that November would be a suitable time for nominations. **It was resolved that:**

1. Council agree the purchase and installation of a historic plaque at the Crown Inn, with an estimated cost of circa £400 to be met from the Town Council's Earmarked Reserve for Plaques
2. Agree the purchase and installation of a historic plaque at Keere Street, with an estimated cost of £400 to be met from the Town Council's Earmarked Reserve for Plaques.

35.2 General Data Protection Regulations Project

35.2.1 Council considered report FC005/2022 seeking to strengthen the Council's approach to GDPR and the need to complete this work urgently. **It was resolved that:**

1. Council agree to Waive Standing Orders on procurement, and under Financial Regulation 12.1 (a) and 12.1 (a) (ii) approve contracting Breakthrough Communications to undertake a GDPR project to include a data audit, impact assessment, development of related policies, training and an annual subscription to advice, support and training services.
2. Agree a supplementary estimate from the General Fund for expenditure of £3,495 for the project work.
3. Agree a supplementary estimate from the General Fund for expenditure of £1,344 for one year's subscription service to be reviewed annually.

35.3 Change to accounting software

35.3.1 Council considered report FC006/2022 that proposed changing the Town Council's accounting software to an industry specific system. **It was resolved that:**

1. The Town Council's accounting software be changed at a total cost of £3,027 to be met from the General Fund, with ongoing maintenance and support costs of £892 to be met from existing budgets.

35.4 Conclusion of external audit 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021

35.4.1 Council considered report FC007/2022 summarising the external auditor certificate and report 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021. **It was resolved that:**

1. Lewes Town Council notes the external auditor certificate and report for the 2019 to 2020 accounts and the 2020 to 2021 accounts and the sum of £5,865 for auditor's fees be met from the General Fund.

35.5 Review of South Downs National Park local plan

35.5.1 Council considered report FC008/2022 apprising Council of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) decision to review its Local Plan and to obtain a steer from Council as to whether its own Neighbourhood Plan should be reviewed.

35.5.2 There were two key areas for consideration, the first being how the Town Council might engage with evidence-based studies and the second whether the Town Council should review its own Neighbourhood Plan.

35.5.3 This item was also tabled on the Agenda for the Planning Committee to consider at its meeting on 28 June 2022.

35.5.4 Government guidance and SDNPA proformas have not yet been issued and further exploratory work would need to be carried out.

35.5.5 The Town Clerk would be attending a briefing with Councillors Catlin and Makepeace on 29 June 2022.

35.5.6 An expression of interest to review the Neighbourhood Plan was not required until 30 September 2022 with confirmation required by 31 January 2023.

35.5.7 It was noted that the Council's own neighbourhood plan provided a strong voice for the needs of Lewes and it was important to maintain this. Monitoring of the neighbourhood plan had not been carried out.

35.5.8 It was noted that collaboration with the SDNPA is essential.

35.5.9 It was resolved that:

1. Council note the three evidence-based studies and will revisit these when more information was available.
2. Council note the importance of a voice for Lewes and consider its options once further exploratory work has been undertaken and additional information is received.
3. Council work collaboratively with the SDNPA in the review of their Local Plan.

35.6 Annual Plan

35.6.1 Council considered report FC009/2022 that aims to consolidate the business plan priorities for the Town Council for the 2022 to 2023 municipal year. **It was resolved that:**

1. Council note the report.
2. Agree the Council's business plan for 2022 to 2023.

36 Audit and Annual return 2021 to 2022

36.1 Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022 (section 1 of the Annual Return)

Council considered report FC010/2022 Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022 asking Council to approve and adopt the 2021 to 2022 Annual Governance and Accountability Return which is the Statutory Statement of Accounts for the Council as at 31 March 2022. Council is also required to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022 accordingly.

It was resolved that:

1. Lewes Town Council, to the best of its knowledge and belief, with respect to the Annual Government Statement for the year ended 31 March 2022, has complied with all nine statements.
2. The Mayor, as Chair of the Council, and the Clerk be authorised to sign Section 1 of the 2021 to 222 Annual Return of behalf of the Council.
3. The Town Clerk undertake a tender process to source a new internal auditor for 2024.

36.2 Statement of Accounts – Annual Return 2021 to 2022 (Section 2 of the Annual Return)

Council considered report FC011/2022 Statement of Accounts – Annual Return 2021 to 2022. **It was resolved that:**

1. Council approve the Annual Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.
2. The Mayor, as Chair of the Council, be authorised to sign Section 2 of the 2021 to 2022 Annual Governance and Accountability Return on behalf of the Council.

The meeting closed at 21.46

Town Mayor