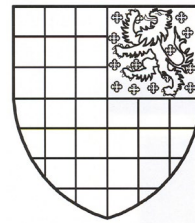


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to assess proposals for an exchange of land at The Pells held on **Tuesday 25th February 2020** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**

PRESENT Cllrs Catlin; Dr Mayhew; O'Keeffe; Sains and Wood.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

PellsXchWP2019/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN: Cllr Catlin was elected as Chairman of the working party for the 2019/20 year

PellsXchWP2019/02 QUESTIONS: There were none.

PellsXchWP2019/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies had been received from Cllr Henman who was working abroad.

PellsXchWP2019/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none
TC advised on the principles of Members sitting as Trustees of the Town Brook Trust.

PellsXchWP2019/05 MINUTES: it was resolved that

PellsXchWP2019/05.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2019 are received and signed as an accurate record.

PellsXchWP2019/06 REMIT of the WORKING PARTY: Members noted the remit of the Working Party, set by Council at its meeting on 21st June 2018
(*Minute FC2018/28 refers*):

a) A land-swap proposal had been made by Lewes District Council (LDC) in respect of land held by the Town Brook Trust, to better-align boundaries with the proposed North Street Quarter development. It was proposed that a Working Party be set up to consider the matter in detail, and;

it was resolved that:

FC2018/28.1 A Working Party be formed, comprising Cllrs Chartier; Catlin; Murray (R); Murray (S); O'Keeffe and Renton to consider proposals made by Lewes District Council in respect of land held by the Town Brook Trust, and to bring recommendations to Council in due course.

PellsXchWP2019/07 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 Members were reminded that Council had previously acknowledged that (with reference to the suggested exchange areas A; B and C) the area designated 'A' (170sq m) would be of benefit as it would allow improvements to changing rooms and other facilities of the swimming pool, and provide an ideal location for the installation of solar panels – a long-held aspiration of both the Town Council and the Pells Pool Community Association. The area designated 'B' was understood to include the vestigial Town Brook watercourse and a question had been raised as to the prudence of incorporating a potential water hazard within the recreation ground. This was a concern, although the ditch had been almost dry for many years and it was thought that this risk could be minimized by culverting, or a similar engineering solution. The area shown as 'C' was seen as simply a 'tidying-up' of eventual boundary demarcation, which offered no other particular benefit. It was noted that there would need to be agreement on responsibilities for the necessary removal of residual footings/service connections, and other structures at this location and a general agreement on legal costs and costs of final boundary structures (*eg* fencing).

2 Overall, the Working Party had confirmed its view regarding the overall potential increase in land area; the inherent benefits of some of the land, and the

opportunity to tidy boundary lines. There were, however, residual concerns over aspects such as the vestigial watercourse and questions to be answered regarding costs and responsibilities.

3 The meeting noted that: having considered the Working Party's recommendations in June 2019, Council had not agreed them all and had proposed acceptance of only two of the areas offered as an exchange – areas 'A' and 'C' – given concerns regarding the vestigial watercourse in Area 'B'.

4 Lewes District Council had been advised of this decision and, in response to the concerns described, commissioned an exercise by specialist landscape architects Macgregor Smith to assess the technical position: reasoning that the Council may wish to reconsider if assurance could be offered with regard to Area 'B'. The Working Party was furnished with copies of the resulting report (*copy attached*) and welcomed the clearly-drafted information.

5 During lengthy re-consideration of the issue, Members reviewed aspects such as surface water run-off currently accumulating in the area and noted the planned engineering measures within the adjoining North Street development which were expected to ameliorate this in future. There was interest in retaining the last vestige of the historic Town Brook and *not* re-profiling the land as suggested in the report. On balance, Members favoured ownership and attendant control of future treatment of the land, rather than exclusion and potential loss of the feature within a bland boundary zone incorporated into the proposed adjacent car parking. It was felt that risk was manageable by judicious placement and maintenance of fencing and signage, and the option to re-profile; culvert, or otherwise

PellsXchWP2019/08 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Council (as Town Brook Trust) agree to exchange the three land areas proposed, subject to agreement with Lewes District Council that:

- > All associated costs of valuation; technical assessment; legal transfer, and boundary relocation (enclosure) costs shall be met by Lewes District Council, and no cost shall fall to the Town Council
- > Independent valuation of the land areas concerned is undertaken by an independent specialist.
- > 'Area B', containing the historic Town Brook, shall be cleared of existing industrial debris and general detritus and the profile of the vestigial watercourse retained, with fencing to both boundaries retained (as now) including reinstatement when development (North Street Quarter) adjacent to the area's Eastern boundary is completed.

PellsXchWP2019/09 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 11:45am

Signed: Date:

Appended: Report 1088-2-536-A Macgregor Smith Landscape Architecture October 2019