

How to contact us

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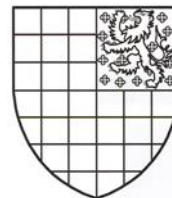
Lewes, East Sussex

BN7 2QS

Email: townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk

Call: 01273 471469

Find us online: www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes on Thursday 21 April 2022 at 7.30pm

Present:

Councillor M Bird

Councill S Catlin (Mayor)

Councillor E Clarke

Councillor R Handy

Councillor I Makepeace

Councillor M Milner

Councillor Dr W Maples

Councillor R O'Keeffe

Councillor R Waring

Councillor K Wood

12 Members of the public

In attendance:

Town Clerk

Committee Administrator

Town Hall Manager

Communications Officer

Customer Services Officer

1. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

2. Filming of Council Meetings and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

3. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25th April 2019 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

5. Welcome and Introduction by the Mayor

5.1 Councillor Catlin opened the meeting and emphasised that the Annual Town Meeting was not a meeting of the Town Council but a general forum for the town's electors. Residents were invited to ask any questions and share views they have about Lewes Town.

5.2 Commenting on a quiet start to the Mayoral year due to Covid-19, things had begun to return to a 'new normal'. The Town Hall and All Saints Centre had welcomed back

regular hirers and in June 2021 the newly renovated Malling Community centre had re-opened.

- 5.3 In September 2021 the Council welcomed a new Town Clerk and shortly after, appointed a part time communications officer which was a new post for the Council.
- 5.4 The Mayor reported many successful events held at the Town Hall. These included Covid Awards that had recognised individuals who had gone the extra mile during the Coronavirus outbreak, the first event for Black History Month, with the Mayor hosting an evening of celebration and reflection to close the month in Lewes. The Mayor also hosted the annual Allotment Show in September and the Allotment Symposium held in February. The Mayor also reported that he had hosted three receptions at the Town Hall to celebrate achievements by some of Lewes' diverse creative community.
- 5.5 In March, to mark the Queen's 70 year reign the Mayor planted a tree at the Lewes Convent Field to add to the Queen's Green Canopy, a tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.
- 5.6 The Mayor had called an extraordinary meeting of Council to consider the Town Council's response to the situation in Ukraine. The Town Council had offered its facilities free of charge for humanitarian action regarding the crisis in Ukraine and welcomes Grant applications from local community groups to our next cycle of grant funding which was now open.
- 5.7 In 2021 to 2022 the Town Council awarded small grants to 48 organisations, 1 Major Grant and eight Service Funding Agreements were awarded. Several small grant recipients were in attendance to present to the meeting on how their grants had helped their organisations.
- 5.8 The Town Council was continuing to work with the South Downs National Park Authority East, Sussex County Council and Lewes District Council regarding the continued provision for a suitably located bus interchange to support both local and through-town services.

6. Presentation from the Neighbourhood Policing Team

- 6.1 The Mayor welcomed Eva Collins who gave a presentation on work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Policing.
- 6.2 Ms Collins explained that the local Neighbourhood Policing team consists of both police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) who are dedicated to protecting the community. Local Policing is organised into three divisions, each comprising Neighbourhood Policing Teams based with district teams. The teams cover an area of 140sq miles in the district covering the coastal area of Seaford to Saltdean and inland to Burges Hill and all surrounding villages. There are currently three neighbourhood policing teams working from Lewes.
- 6.3 PCSO Collins then addressed the meeting of current operations the Policing teams were running:
 - Operation Blitz – runs every Friday and Saturday evening with officers patrolling Lewes focussing on anti-social behaviour and underage drinking.
 - Operation Signature - campaigning to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud including doorstep, romance, courier, investment, telephone and mail scamming. The Police work closely with banks and the Post Office to monitor this. Several websites are available to report crime relating to scams and nuisance calls.
 - The Police work with the Neighbourhood First Team (Lewes and Eastbourne Council) to engage with the community.

- Operation Downsway – prevention of dangerous driving, anti-social driving and abandoned vehicles.
- Operation Crackdown - a Sussex Police web reporting tool for the public to report anti-social driving and abandoned vehicles.
- Rural Crime Team – patrol rural areas covering a variety of issues.
- Operation Safety – dedicated response to reducing knife crime and serious violence in Sussex and working with young people.

The audience then asked a variety of questions regarding police work and the Mayor thanked PCSO Collins for her informative presentation.

7. Questions from the Public of which Notice has been Previously Given

- 7.1 A Nevill resident was concerned that the 128/129 bus serving the estate were going to be turned into a Dial-a-Ride service due to passenger numbers falling post-pandemic which had been proposed in the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 7.2 The Town Clerk had contacted East Sussex County Council (ESCC) who had replied that they were not proposing to replace the 128/129 with a Dial-a-Ride service.
- 7.3 Another resident asked how a deeply offensive sign had been allowed to be displayed for all to see at Brack Mount.
- 7.4 The sign was part of an exhibition by Sussex Modern and had been installed with the permission of Sussex Archaeological Society and, as a scheduled monument, with the consent of Historic England and the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.
- 7.5 A resident who was on the waiting list for an allotment at Paddock Road asked if the town council should be doing more to free up space for Lewes residents to grow food for themselves.
- 7.6 Whenever a plot becomes vacant it is assessed for resizing and may be split into smaller allotment plots which are more manageable for future tenants and provide more plots for residents, thereby reducing waiting lists. Most of the plots that have become available this last year have been split. By revising our tenancy agreement to enable improved management of allotments we are working to ensure that those plots not being worked are released to waiting applicants. From April 2021 all new lettings were restricted to Lewes residents only.
- 7.7 A resident in Nevill had noticed that the drains in the vicinity were all blocked which could make the possibility of flooding more likely.
- 7.8 Drains are maintained by ESCC Highways and problems with drains can be reported on their website here: <https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-a-problem/drainage>
- 7.9 Another resident raised four issues for discussion at the meeting. The first issue regarded reviewing local bus services. They asked if Lewes Town Council (LTC) could commission a long overdue review of local bus routes and times and with that in mind could LTC use such a review to make specific funding requests to ESCC for the town.

- 7.10 ESCC licence buses, however LTC would pass this suggestion to ESCC and work with them as far as our limited powers would allow. This could shape LTC funding, which already funds bus services in the town.
- 7.11 The second issue was regarding correcting HGV routing through the town. ESCC had documented a town cordon for HGV's in 1982 but no longer honour some parts of this. Could LTC challenge this?
- 7.12 LTC would contact Tim Slaney at the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to discuss raising it jointly with ESCC.
- 7.13 The third issue raised the possible survey of air quality monitoring in the Town which LDC would be undertaking.
- 7.14 The final issue was a request for better signposting of car parks in Lewes which LTC would raise with LDC and ESCC for were responsible for this.
- 7.15 A Nevill resident raised a couple of issues, the first being that the trees on the estate needed to be pruned as they were encroaching telephone lines and blocking light into houses. Clarification would need to be sought to identify who owns the land the trees were on, but it was likely to be ESCC and this could be reported online.
- 7.16 The other issue was signs on Landport Bottom which were not clear in relation to dogs. The Landport Bottom Management Committee had recently agreed new signage for the area and the Town Clerk and Town Ranger would be working to assess signage across the site to ensure clear and consistent messages.

8. To hear questions from the Public of which Notice has not been given

- 8.1 Councillor Dr Maples asked a question on behalf of a resident who had written to her. Has the Town Council agreed to revise the Neighbourhood Plan and what would the timetable be. The Town Clerk advised that this item would need to be discussed by Full Council.
- 8.2 Following on from this, another resident asked if the recommendations and aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan had been met. The Town Clerk advised that this would be assessed through monitoring when Council considered whether to review the plan.
- 8.3 Councillor Dr Maples raised another question on behalf of a different resident relating to the need for urgent action on biodiversity from all Councils and the Government to be independent from fossil fuels for the next few decades. The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council worked towards this within its sphere of operation through allotment policies, fair trade suppliers etc. Hirers in all Council buildings would be required to abide by our policies.

9. Reports from Representative of Local Organisations

- 9.1 A representative of the Community Transport Lewes Association (CTLA) spoke about the work of the group. CTLA is a registered charity and limited company that operates transport to help vulnerable people in the community and offer a range of services to combat isolation and loneliness. Based in the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven, they have nineteen minibuses cover the whole of the Lewes district and parts of Eastbourne, Wealden, Uckfield and Crowborough. Their specialist services include 5 Dial-a-Ride schemes and travel clubs. Their buses are available for hire by

community groups and they also run a bus service for the public in Wallands and a Sunday service in Lewes District. They also offer a home to school contract for children with special needs on behalf of ESCC.

- 9.2 A representative of the Lewes Library of Things explained to the meeting that the ethos of the service was to reduce waste. The service which is for the whole community has a large variety of items, from power tools to camping equipment available to borrow, use and return. Membership is free and all equipment is free to borrow. Grant funding from the Town Council had enabled the service to start and other funding is by way of donations.
- 9.3 Representatives spoke about the re-enactment of the Battle of Lewes 2022 event which would take place on the weekend of 14 and 15 May and thanked the Town Council for their grant funding and support. The event has attracted over 150 medieval enactors from all over the Country and Europe who would be setting up medieval camp with combat displays and activities at the Covent Field and Priory. The event was free with a variety of activities from 10am to 5pm on both days. A medieval banquet was being held at the Town Hall on 5 May.
- 9.4 A representative of Human Nature spoke about the future of the town. An exhibition at the North Street Site showing plans on the proposed development was being held on 22 April from 2 – 7pm, 23 April 10am-6pm and 24 April 10am- 6pm.
- 9.5 A representative of the Wellbeing Tree, a new social enterprise that had grown from the Oyster Project spoke about their work. The majority of the management team live with a disability, and they work within the community to improve with physical and mental health of people. Their aim is to connect with the wider community, especially those with disabilities. The Town Council grant contributed towards their Digital Inclusion Project, and it was hoped to host online wellbeing workshops in the future.
- 9.6 Councillor Clarke spoke about her volunteer role with the Lewes Uniform Bank. The bank was set up in 2017 and had received a grant from the Town Council to enable the service to continue and grow. Referrals came from CAB, Homelink, Social Services and Headteachers. 123 new or nearly new uniforms were provided for children in Lewes last year and uniforms will be provided for children arriving from the Ukraine.
- 9.7 The Mayor thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.40pm