



**Lewes  
Town  
Council**

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**Minutes** of the meeting of Lewes Town Council held on Thursday 23 February 2023 at 7.30 in the Council Chamber, Lewes Town Hall.

**Present:**

Councillor Baah  
Councillor Bird  
Councillor Burrows  
Councillor Catlin (left at 8:50pm)  
Councillor Clarke  
Councillor Handy  
Councillor Lamb  
Councillor Makepeace  
Councillor Dr Maples  
Councillor Dr Mayhew (left at 8:50pm)  
Councillor Milner  
Councillor O’Keeffe (arrived 20.03pm)  
Councillor Sains (Mayor)  
Councillor Vernon  
Councillor Waring  
Councillor Wood

**In attendance**

Town Clerk  
Committee Administrator  
Town Ranger  
Mayor’s Chaplain

**104. Filming of council meetings and mobile phones**

104.1. The procedures were noted.

**105. Apologies for absence**

105.1. There were apologies from Councillor Earl who was unwell and Councillor Herbert due to a personal commitment.

**106. Members’ declarations of interests**

106.1. There were none.

**107. Question time**

107.1. There were none.

**108. Minutes**

108.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were received and agreed as a true record.

108.2. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 7 February 2023 were received and agreed as a true record.

### **109. Mayor's announcements and urgent items**

109.1. The Mayor informed council of attendance at the funeral of past Mayor Jim Daly, who had been Mayor four times.

109.2. The Civic Awards would be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 16 March 2023.

109.3. There was due to be a vigil at Cliffe bridge the following evening marking a year since the invasion of Ukraine.

### **110. Committees, Working parties and outside bodies**

110.1. Audit and Governance Panel 25 October 2022

110.1.1. Council received the minutes of this meeting and it was resolved that:

110.1.2. The minutes of the Audit and Governance Panel meeting held on 25 October 2022 are noted.

110.2. Planning and Conservation Committee 10 January 2023

110.2.1. Council received the minutes of this meeting and it was resolved that:

110.2.2. The minutes of the Planning and Conservation Committee held on 10 January 2023 are noted.

110.3. Grants Panel 8 February 2023

110.3.1. Council considered report FC029/2023 containing recommendations for payments of grants of the fourth and final cycle for the year 2022 to 2023.

110.3.2. It was resolved that:

- 1 The grants payments recommended in report FC029/2023 in column H of the table appended to the report be approved.

### **111. Summer Road Safety briefing**

111.1. Council was asked to nominate one representative to attend the Sussex Police Summer Road Safety virtual briefing event on Monday 13 March 2023 6pm to 7pm on Microsoft Teams. It was resolved that Councillor Lamb attend.

### **112. Officer's reports**

112.1. Proposed Town Council activities for the King's Coronation

112.2. Council considered report FC030/2023 that proposed a range of activities that had been considered by the Commemorations and Events Committee at their meeting on 9 February 2023.

112.3. It was resolved that:

112.4. The proposed activities outlined in report FC030/2023 be agreed with the costs being met from the King's Coronation budget of £2,500 and the Seniors Tea Party budget of £1,500.

112.5. Verge cutting tender

112.6. Council considered report FC031/2023 which detailed the tender process undertaken to secure a contractor to undertake the work for the Town Council's self-delivery of cutting wildlife and meadow urban verges.

112.7. It was noted that due to an amendment in the area to be cut East Sussex County Council (ESCC) had reduced the payment to the Town Council from £1,392 to £1,304.

112.8. It was confirmed that safety visibility cuts would be required on some verges and this would be an additional cost, although these costs were unknown.

112.9. Council discussed the quotes and the option to select a contractor who did not use leaf blowers to remove arisings from the road and pavements. This option cost significantly more but was in accordance with Council's previous resolution to encourage using environmentally friendly tools, procedures, equipment and methods that don't produce noise pollution.

112.10. It was resolved that:

The contractor offering to use operatives to sweep and rake arisings to clear them from pavements and the road be agreed and up to £8,031 be spent from the Environment Enhancement Fund in earmarked reserves to cover the additional costs over the income received from ESCC.

112.11. Rural verges as wildlife corridors

112.12. Council considered report FC032/2023 which outlined the reduced Rural Grass Cutting option from East Sussex County Council.

112.13. It was resolved that:

Lewes Town Council wished to continue to be involved in the reduced rural grass cutting trial to aid biodiversity and would notify residents of participation in the trial through social media, minutes from meetings and on the Council's website.

112.14. IT support contract tender

112.15. Council considered report FC033/2023 which explained the Town Council had been with its current IT support provider for over 10 years and a tender process had been undertaken for the provision of IT support to the organisation.

112.16. It was resolved that:

The change to the Council's IT support provider following a tender process be noted with a saving of £898.05 per annum on basic support.

112.17. Insurance policy tender

112.18. Council considered report FC034/2023 which explained the need to extend the Council's current insurance for one year without seeking quotes to enable a comprehensive review of its insurance requirements. Historic non-compliance with statutory health and safety requirements had resulted in the policy being at risk of cancellation. Work had been done to demonstrate a more robust approach to risk and safety management and the insurance has remained in place. Further work is required on this as well as the comprehensive review to enable adequate insurance needs to be defined ahead of any tender process.

112.19. Council was advised that the renewal cost quoted in the report would increase as it had been identified that some contents insurance cover was absent. A revised price had not yet been received but it was expected to be within budget.

112.20. It was resolved that:

The Council's insurance policy is extended for one year the cost of which can be met from the Insurance budget.

112.21. Conclusion of external audit 2021 to 2022  
112.22. Council considered report FC035/2023 which explained the external auditor had given a clear certificate.

112.23. It was resolved that:

The External Auditor certificate and report for 2021 to 2022 be noted.

112.24. Authorisation of purchase orders

112.25. Council considered report FC036/2023 which outlined which officers could authorise purchase orders and proposed a change to those.

112.26. It was resolved that:

1 The interim Deputy Town Clerk be authorised to sign purchase orders.

2 The Town Ranger be authorised to sign purchase orders up to the value of £250 but only to facilitate small purchases for day to day work that the Town Ranger progresses.

### **113. Exempt business**

113.1. The Mayor 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 is a confidential report for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

### **114. Officers exempt reports**

114.1. Governance and probity

114.2. At the extraordinary meeting of the Council on 7 February 2023 there was recognition that Council had embarked on a modernisation agenda, and following the resignation of the Town Clerk, it was agreed that Council would discuss different options to progress that modernisation agenda.

114.3. It was noted that Council needs to address the culture, governance and development needs of the organisation. It is the corporate body responsibility of Council to set the tone and culture of the organisation, so it is important to empower the new administration to be able to do that. Therefore, a robust induction process for Councillors was required with annual refresher training to support culture change.

114.4. As discussed earlier in the meeting when the need for a Whistleblowing Policy was raised, there was a need to empower councillors to call out inappropriate conduct by creating an environment of trust, confidence, openness, and reassurance.

114.5. It was noted that concerns regarding the behaviour of councillors where this relates to the Code of Conduct can be raised with the Monitoring Officer. Details of how to do this are on the Lewes District Council website.

114.6. It was noted that an equality of connection and interaction can be achieved by having those frameworks whilst maintaining openness and transparency.

114.7. A variety of options were discussed, and it was resolved that:

- 1 Standing Orders are amended so that civility and respect training and chair and vice chair training is mandatory for all councillors.
- 2 A councillor cannot be a Chair or Vice Chair without having attended a relevant training course, including the Mayor as Chair of Council.
- 3 All members of the Personnel Panel must undertake employer role training and no councillor may sit on a hearing or appeal panel without having undertaken employer role training.
- 4 All councillors to attend induction training to include role of a councillor, finance, data protection, civility and respect, communications and social media.
- 5 Councillors induction would include a visit to the Council's assets.
- 6 The Town Council work with Lewes District Council's Monitoring Officer on induction, with the Monitoring Officer focussing on governance and probity, expectations of members under the Code of Conduct and the seven Nolan Principles.
- 7 Training on the Council's principles and policies should be delivered.
- 8 A member and officer protocol be implemented.

114.8. Staffing matters

114.9. It was drawn to members attention that it is vital there is no discussion with anybody on this matter outside of this Council meeting and therefore councillors are required to observe absolute confidentiality and sign a statement to confirm they understand this.

114.10. The Town Clerk made councillors aware of a staffing matter that had arisen.

114.11. Councillors Mayhew and Catlin withdrew from the meeting at 8:50pm.

114.12. The matter of confidentiality was discussed at length.

114.13. It was resolved that authority be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Personnel Panel to deal with the administration of the staffing matter.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed..... Dated.....