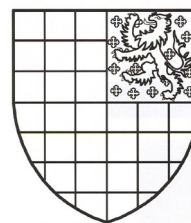


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **'Open Council'** Working party, held on **Thursday 26th September 2019** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes at 7:00pm.**

PRESENT Cllrs Bird; Catlin; Herbert; Makepeace; Dr Maples; O'Keeffe; Sains; Vernon; Waring
In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*).

OCWP2019/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN

Cllr Herbert was elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 year. There followed a brief discussion as to the principles of committee structure, and Cllr O'Keeffe was appointed to act as Vice-chair.

OCWP2019/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies had been received from Cllr Henman, who was attending the UN Climate summit in New York; and Cllr Wood, who was unwell.

OCWP2019/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

OCWP2019/04 QUESTIONS: There were none. One member of the public was present.

OCWP2019/05 REMIT of the COMMITTEE

Members noted the remit of the committee, which is set up to identify methods for improved public engagement and greater provision of information to residents of Lewes, to include:-

- › A review of information sharing and the methods used to share key events and policy developments
- › Consideration of good practice on methods of online deliberation and social media, such as on key town-wide issues
- › Identifying ways to provide more joined-up support for community engagement in and around Council-owned buildings

OCWP2019/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 Members discussed aspects of the Council's website, and various suggestions were made for additional content and features. TC noted that he intended, when time allowed, to modify the Grant application form to allow online completion, and it was suggested that the annual Civic Awards nominations could also benefit from this. It was suggested that grants awarded could be the subject of a routine Press Release. Community links were notably absent whereas the 'old' website had accumulated many details of organizations and groups acting within the community in Lewes. Members were asked to encourage any such groups with whom they may be familiar, to provide details for links that could be featured here. Members were encouraged also to produce individual critiques of the site to inform future improvements, and also to engage any appropriate acquaintances to offer an 'accessibility evaluation'. Members could submit feature copy for consideration; perhaps along with additional photographs. This applied equally to the Council's newsletter. Copies of past newsletters were distributed for Members' interest and the principles of publication were briefly discussed. It was acknowledged that the resources available to devote to these functions was extremely limited, and this would need to be incorporated into the upcoming Council 'visioning' exercise.

2 There was discussion as to the accessibility of the Town Hall, and Members were reminded that they were welcome to a guided tour of the building with the Town Hall Manager or Town Hall Keeper, by arrangement. Members were keen to introduce more young people and discussed school parties; media studies students and opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships. TC advised that the Council often hosted students for work experience placements and had already hosted three this year. School parties and other youth groups were occasionally received, under various initiatives, and it was hoped that the launch of the teachers' resource pack created as part of the 'Our Pictures' project would bring more. The annual diary already had provision for 'open' days/'gallery days' when rooms were not booked by hirers, and this would be continued.

3 Some Councillors had recently engaged with the National Citizen Service (NCS) programme and were keen to promote opportunities such as a Youth Council. TC noted that the Council had supported a very successful Lewes Youth Council between 2002 and 2006, and this had only ended due to changing priorities in the school/parent support structure. Cllrs Maples and Waring were asked to work with TC to explore this with the NCS.

4 The discussion returned to the Town Hall in terms of ideas to make it more attractive to the community. It was acknowledged that many people did not understand how well-used the building actually was, and the range of activities offered or the hours it operated. A digital screen was suggested that could display to passers-by events; details of meetings, and/or the Councils website. Ideas for a 'grand tour' of all Council properties were put forward. Webcasting of meetings and/or recording of feature interviews with the Mayor, Members and staff was briefly discussed. On a side-note, it was recognized that there were several noticeboards available for use throughout the town if required, for appropriate material.

OCWP2019/07

CONCLUSIONS:

It was felt that several interesting ideas had been covered. Members accepted that many of these should be introduced during the 'visioning' exercise, and specific proposals would always need to be researched and costed before presentation for consideration at Council. In the short term, Cllrs Maples and Waring would work with TC to explore potential for a new Youth Council with the National Citizen Service.

OCWP2019/08

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm

Signed.....

Date