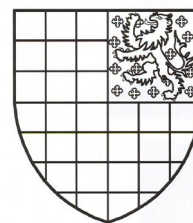


Town Hall  
High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ [info@lewes-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@lewes-tc.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.lewes-tc.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk)



**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **Open Council Working Party**, held on **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021**, online via Zoom Meetings at 3:00pm.

**PRESENT** Cllrs Catlin; Makepeace; Dr Maples (*Chair*); O’Keeffe; Sains; Vernon and Waring

**In attendance:** S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*) Mrs F Garth (*Assistant Town Clerk & Civic Officer*).

**OCWP2020/15** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr Wood, who had a work commitment. No message had been received from Cllrs Bird; Henman, or Herbert.

**OCWP2020/16** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**OCWP2020/17** **QUESTIONS:** There were no questions.

**OCWP2020/18** **MINUTES:** Cllr Dr Maples contended that the draft minutes did not reflect the fact that estimated costs for items on the agreed list for funding by Community Infrastructure Levy were awaited. TC held that the phrase “*TC suggested that he might simplify the question by estimating the order of costs for listed items...*” at OCWP2020/13 s1 reflected the events accurately and he was not prepared to alter the text. Cllr Dr Maples maintained her dissatisfaction with this point.

**It was resolved that:**

**OCWP2020/18.1** The Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 are received and agreed as an accurate record, with the caveat that the Chair had expressed dissatisfaction with the description of a particular event.

**OCWP2020/19** **REMIT of the WORKING PARTY**

Members noted the remit of the Working Party, which is:

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.

**OCWP2020/20** **BUSINESS of the MEETING**

**1 Public Participatory Budget pilot:** Council had asked the Working party to consider ways to engage the public with the agreed participatory budget pilot scheme, asking the community to help prioritize the list of projects contained in s11 of the Neighbourhood Plan; all being eligible for funding from accrued Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

TC had attempted to estimate the likely costs for the items/projects listed and presented some preliminary evaluations but advised that it had soon become apparent that there were too many variable factors affecting the majority of the items to allow estimating in any meaningful way. Most were outside the direct control of the Town Council, and several were dependent upon, or involved integration with, much broader issues or projects. There followed a general discussion on these aspects. TC submitted that these complexities served to defeat the original intention to present to the public a simple list that could be prioritized.

Members contributed a number of suggestions to engage the public’s interest, including a pre-selected list; ‘top-ten’ or ‘top five’ ranking or similar. It was

recognized that any pre-selection could be seen as counter to the basic principle of public participation. For practicality, however, it was thought that the list would need to be reduced to show only those projects which might realistically be expected to begin if funding were available (eg physical features for traffic calming). A question arose as to how other councils conducted public participatory budgeting exercises, but these were relatively rare. Suggestions for engagement included 'World cafe' format events, and/or online surveys, and a particularly well-received idea for an event with a theme based upon the *Top Trumps Cards* concept. It had been recognized that the *PBNetwork* organization might offer some early advice free of charge, but their main services were chargeable and it was sensible to ensure ideas were 'crystallized' into succinct plans before engaging. Discussion ranged widely on various aspects and implications of the matter. It was agreed that a sub-group consisting of Cllrs Catlin, Vernon, and Dr Maples would meet to develop outline proposals along the lines of these discussions.

2 *Candidates for nomination as Mayor/Deputy:* The meeting considered a note prepared by Cllr Makepeace regarding the roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. This described a perspective on the process by which candidates were presented for the roles and extended into the nature of the roles themselves. A number of the underlying assumptions were examined, and some misunderstandings were corrected. There were certain fundamental aspects of the roles which are governed by statute, but the extended roles at a 'ceremonial' Council such as Lewes were, broadly, a product of custom and practice although much was based upon nationally-recognized conventions and protocols. It was acknowledged that Council could consider and control broader aspects of the roles. A concern was recognized as to the process by which candidates were presented and voted-for in a Council meeting, and further consideration could be given to that process. It was suggested that all candidates should be subject to a standard process with 'manifesto' aspects (eg proposed charities to be supported) declared in advance and open to questioning at the meeting. Further, nominations should be controlled eg to avoid individuals serving multiple times. As some Members had to leave the meeting and the subject was actually outside the remit of the Working party, it was agreed that this matter would be left at this point, and it was accepted that debate in this regard should, properly, be proposed to a meeting of Council.

3 *Other matters:* There followed a general discussion on subjects including *Freegle*; a proposed Communication officer; email contact with customers and allotment tenants; parish meeting; a Lewes News survey on the Connecting Lewes digital inclusion initiative. It was expected that the Town Hall weekly market would re-open on 13<sup>th</sup> April and Cllr Dr Maples and Cllr Sains would attend a Councillor's Surgery desk.

OCWP2020/21

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance. *The meeting closed at 5:00pm.*

Signed ..... date .....