



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council



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Chairman: Cllr Jill Healey
Vice Chairman: Cllr Vivien Rosier
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons *PSLCC*

<p>MINUTES OF A MEETING COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMITTEE TUESDAY 17th DECEMBER 2019 LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71-73 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA</p>
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Present: Cllrs: Anita Forde, Jill Healey, Caroline Parker (from minute 89 until minute 100), Vivien Rosier, Mike Wells and Andy Wilkins

In attendance: Helen Symmons (Town Clerk) and 8 allotment plot holders from Manchester Drive allotments (MDAS side)

The meeting opened at 7.31pm

86. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS INCLUDING HOUSEKEEPING

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and introduced herself to the allotment plot holders, making the appropriate housekeeping announcements

87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: Keith Evans, Alan Hart and Carole Mulroney

88. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none

89. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8TH OCTOBER 2019

The minutes of the Community & Culture Committee meeting on 8th October were **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

90. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

The Chairman permitted all the plot holders to speak should they so wish. They were all at the meeting to speak against the non-resident allotment levy of £20 per year due to take effect from October 2020 for which a petition had been presented and was to be discussed at Agenda item 11. The Chairman of MDAS said he spoke for those that had signed the petition. Points that were raised included that Council had not given notification of the matter for consideration, allotment holders had not been able to speak at the time the decision was made, they thought the charge was excessive and were extremely unhappy feeling as if they were being considered by Council as a 'cash cow'. Others who spoke did not understand why they should have to pay this additional charge, stated that it should not be retrospective, wanted to see financial figures just for their side of the allotment site, said that the Council had budgeted £16,000 for Leigh Lights and they didn't go to this, new plot holders would have to pay a lot of money when they took on a plot and many other disgruntled comments.

During the item, Councillors clarified that the charge was only for plot holders who did not reside in the Leigh Town Council area as those that did, paid a precept currently £47.70, that the levy was not retrospective as it would only come into force from October 2020, that the allotments were only available to a limited number of people rather than all Leigh Town Council residents and that

the reason for the levy was not to reduce the number of plot holders in order to sell the land for development.

The Town Clerk clarified that it would not be possible to provide just an income and expenditure statement for only the MDAS side of the allotment site as the provision of a budget is for the allotment sites and not the allotment societies.

The plot holders expressed that they would be willing to run the site completely to which the Town Clerk expressed that this would be possible to consider if full consultation was extended to all plot holders, that Manchester Drive allotments would have to be devolved completely and that the solicitor costs for Leigh Town Council in drawing up documentation would have to be paid for by the allotment society.

Those attending thanked the Committee for listening and left the meeting.

91. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk apologised as just prior to the meeting she realised the report on the agenda was incorrect. An updated copy was able to be provided and this is attached to the minutes. The Committee **NOTED** the report.

LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

92. FACILITIES REPORT **Agenda item 7**

The Committee **NOTED** and a few points were clarified. The Committee **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** that the Refurbishment budget for 2020/21 be increased to £50,000 to enable the unexpected but essential works to the basement and external staircase to proceed.

93. BOOKINGS REPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

94. LORNA & LOTTIE'S REPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

95. ARTS GROUP REPORT **Agenda item 10**

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **RESOLVED** that the present Artist in Residency be extended until 1st September 2020.

ALLOTMENTS

96. PETITION RECEIVED FROM MDAS **Agenda item 11**

The Committee **NOTED** the report which they felt was very thorough and provided many of the answers to the comments that plot holders had raised. It was clarified that the £20 annual levy equated to 38p per week. At present the current deficit on the allotment provision is a significant expenditure for a limited number of people. Council at all times should consider how many residents benefit from the provision of facilities and services for the amount it costs. The allotments belong to the Town Council as a parish resource. The introduction of a levy would only decrease any allotment provision by approximately £3,000. The Council would still be funding a shortfall of approximately £7,000 - £9,000 for the benefit of at present 375 people, whereas the expenditure of £16,000 on Leigh Lights could be enjoyed by all residents in Leigh and the surrounding areas and this is the same for many of the Council's facilities e.g. Community Centre, Skate park and Strand Wharf. If the levy did not come in to effect in 2020 then the precept for 2020/21 would increase for

residents within the Leigh Town Council area. In this respect it was noted that one of the Council's strategic objectives is to identify community facilities that would enhance the quality of life of local residents and to explore ways of securing the necessary resources with minimum impact on the precept. The introduction of the levy to non-residents only met this objective in the Committee's view.

On the basis that the levy decision had been recommended to Council who had made the final decision, the Committee **RESOLVED to refer the petition to Council.**

The Committee did speak of the devolution idea and would consider this should a full business case be provided by plot holders with full consultation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

97. SKATEPARK **Agenda item 12**

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **RESOLVED** the arrangement with a usage fee of £7 + VAT per hour.

98. STRAND WHARF

The Committee **NOTED** the report. The Town Clerk reported that the Planning Authority had confirmed that planning permission was not required but that the defibrillator was to be sited in a discreet location due to the conservation area of the Old Town. The location could be advertised by window stickers in the businesses.

HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

99. COUNCIL EVENTS **Agenda item 14**

It was noted that the Leigh Lights events should be discussed in more detail at the debriefing and any Events PDG

Whilst the Town Clerk had notified Councillors at 1.50 pm that the Carols Event due to safety had to be cancelled, some messages did not get through until just after 5 pm, although it was noted that at least one Councillor was on the Wharf at this time and could have told those that had turned up not having seen social media posts of the cancellation. The Town Clerk appreciated that with hindsight, notices could have been displayed rather than rely on Facebook and Twitter to announce the cancellation, although around 5,000 had seen those posts.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to hold an Events PDG in January

Cllr Parker left the meeting

100. COUNCIL EVENTS AT LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Committee **NOTED** the reports. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Children's holiday programme whilst showing a deficit at the present time did have a positive effect on Community Centre bookings with many childrens' parties being booked thereafter.

101. FARMERS MARKET

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

102. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

103. YOUTH GROUP REPORT

Cllr Forde reported that the second session of the youth club has recognised an age divide with the older age group 14-16 not returning, although they do still attend the Youth Forum. The sharp contrast in the behaviour of 12-13 year children was thought the factor and consideration needs to be given as to how the Council can engage with the older children.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to organise a Youth Group meeting to discuss further.

ENVIRONMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES
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104. FRIENDS OF LEIGH LIBRARY GARDENS GROUP REPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

105. SPECIAL CONSTABLES

The Committee **NOTED** the report. The Town Clerk advised that she will be attending a recruitment evening the new year to be held by Essex Police at their headquarters.

COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING

106. FIRST AID POST

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

FINANCE

107. COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT 2019/20

The Committee **NOTED** the report

CONFIDENTIAL

108. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC – The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded and instructed to withdraw – SO3d

109. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT MATTER **Agenda item 24**

The Committee fully discussed the confidential report and correspondence. It was noted that Wyvern had thanked Council originally for the excess payment of £250 and further donation of £250. Whilst there was sympathy with the situation, the Committee felt that they had made an adequate donation in the circumstances given that insurance was for these purposes. The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** that no further donation would be forthcoming.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT - COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS FOLLOW UP RECORDS 2019/20

Committee	Minute No. and Subject	Action Required	RO	Completion status	Completion Date	Outcome	Forward Action Required
C&C 08-10-19	64. Facilities Report	RESOLVED with recommendation to Council budget £9k for Fire Alarm upgrade. Vire from LCC EMR. RESOLVED to accept CCTV quote 3 from Friends budget		On F&G Agenda November 2019	12-11-19 November 2019	Installed	NFA under this minute NFA
C&C 08-10-19	65. New Partnership Working	RESOLVED to recommend proposal to Council		On Council Agenda November 2019	19-11-19		NFA under this minute
C&C 08-10-19	71. Request by MDAS re eastern hedge	RESOLVED to refuse request		Completed	14-10-19	MDAS advised	NFA
C&C 08-10-19	72. Allotments Dispute Procedure	RESOLVED to recommend new mediation procedure to Council		On Council Agenda November 2019	19-11-19		NFA under this minute
C&C 08-10-19	75. Council Events	RESOLVED VE day event to be added to 2020/21 events programme working with LRBL £1,000 budget		Will pass to Events PDG to include in event programme for 2020	04-12-19		NFA under this minute
C&C 08-10-19	85. Annual Budgeting Process 2020/21	RESOLVED with recommendation to Council via F&G the C&C Committee budget 2020/21		On F&G agenda November 2019	12-11-19		NFA under this minute