



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Bernard Arscott | **Vice Chairman:** Cllr Sandra McCurdy

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons PSLCC



Members of the meeting of the Community & Culture Committee Held on Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 7.00 pm. at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road SS9 1SP

Present:

Cllr Agdeve	Cllr Flewitt - presiding	
Cllr S McCurdy	Cllr B Arscott	Cllr J Lloyd
	Cllr C Lambert	

In attendance:

G Lopes (Locum Clerk & minute taker)
24 x public

1) Chairman's Welcome & Housekeeping Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2) Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from the following members:

Cllr Rosemary Arscott
Cllr C Watt
Cllr A Robinson

3) Declarations Of Members' Interests

Declarations of interest were received from the following members –

Cllr Flewitt - Agenda items 6, 7 & 8 also spouse is Southend City Councillor
(Cllr Mulronev was also in attendance and asked for her declaration of interest to be noted as a Southend City Councillor & member of Heritage Centre)

4) Change of order of agenda

On the motion of Cllr Agdeve. seconded by Cllr Lloyd, it was **RESOLVED** to move Agenda item 6 ahead of Agenda item 5.

5) Minutes of the Committee meeting 12 December 2023

On the motion of Cllr Arscott. seconded by Cllr Lloyd, it was **RESOLVED** to accept and approve the Minutes of the Community & Culture Committee meeting held 12 December 2023 as a true and accurate record.

6) Reports

a) Skate Park Inspection Report –

The inspection report was considered and recommendations noted.

On the motion of Cllr Flewitt, seconded by Cllr Arscott, it was

RESOLVED to seek quotes for the recommended repairs and return to Committee once received.

ACTION: CLERK

b) DEC 2023-24 Certificate & Recommendation Report 2023-30 Leigh Community Centre –

Noted the DEC 2023-24 Certificate confirmed the Leigh Community Centre to be a “C” rating. Briefly discussed recommendations for the building and the possibility of government grants which may be available. Agreed this report needed to be considered in light of the overall expenditure for the Centre and as part of a holistic budget going forward.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

c) Community Centre expenditure –

The Chairman of F&G Committee outlined his report and his findings regarding the significant deficit from previous years and administration. The Annual Returns to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council shows an annual deficit and a carried forward deficit at year end 2021/22 of £1,066,266.85 The current Council must now consider how to deal with this historic issue and need to review costs. It was stressed the Community Centre is an asset for the local community and it is Council’s wish for it to continue. It was queried whether the former Chairmen of the Council and the previous Councillors were aware of the huge deficit. It was suggested they may have information that could help. Committee members confirmed they had been surprised to receive these figures but also noted they had not been provided with income and expenditure reports since coming to office. Cllr Arscott advised he had discovered the figures were included in a report in October 2022 but there was concern previous Councillors seem to have been unaware. A CIC could be set up to run the Centre and the Café as an alternative. It was suggested a project development group could be formed to look at this in detail. All Councillors could be involved including former Chairmen. Suggestion to use the Centre as a banking hub. Suggestion to include hire rates within this work.

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr Lloyd, it was

RESOLVED to form a Project Development Group to consider the finances and continuation of the Community Centre and Café.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

d) Hire rates –

The report from Booking staff was noted and hire rates to be considered by the PDG as above.

7) Public Participation

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak and took questions, several had been received ahead of the meeting, points raised included the following –

- Queries regarding recently published figures relating to historic deficit at the Community Centre – Cllr Arscott confirmed the figures were taken from Southend City Council returns and provided by the Assistant Responsible Finance Officer. Additionally, figures were within a report from the Proper Officer of Leigh on Sea Town Council in October 2022. He was aware different reports had been posted on Facebook but suggested following the

proper source of the documents and stated he was happy to discuss queries with residents.

- Query regarding costs and planning for Leigh Lights and if Police had been consulted as they were involved previously – noted this is on the Agenda for discussion
- Queried when the former mosaic project at Library Gardens would be progressed and advised background had been provided – noted this is on the Agenda for discussion

8) Items for discussion

a) Strand Wharf Lighting – it was confirmed the original Electrician had been called before the Christmas break and would be attending the site this month to look at the lights.

b) Suggested Mosaic display by Leigh Library – after brief discussion it was agreed CIL funds should not be used for this project and this would be the recommendation to the F&G Committee. A children's art contest was suggested and to be progressed.

ACTION: C&C & F&G COMMITTEES

c) Bench on Strand Wharf – it was confirmed the bench is being repaired at minimal cost as the Town Council's Caretaker, Mr Paul Fitzgerald, had offered to repair and this was underway. The Committee members expressed thanks to Mr Paul Fitzgerald.

d) Over 60's computing tuition – the suggestion from Cllr Gilson to offer computing tuition for the over 60's was fully supported. Cllr Agdeve had also attended the original session and assisted with mobile phone use and was keen to be involved in any future sessions, Cllr Lloyd also expressed a desire to be involved in tuition. On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** to set up an over 60's tuition group and for the group to consider and report to the Committee and advise any necessary costs.

ACTION: CLLR AGDEVE/CLLR LLOYD

e) Allotments – A representative from the Allotments Society was present and was invited to speak and reiterate the previous requests for funding. He advised the two sites were now coming together and much work had been done over the years but the subsidy provided by the Council had not really increased. Allotment holders have raised much of the money for upkeep themselves and are now asking for £6,000. Cllr Flewitt confirmed he had been in discussion with the Society about this matter since the last meeting.

On the motion of Cllr Flewitt, seconded by Cllr Lloyd, it was

RESOLVED to provide funds of £6,000 to the Manchester Drive Allotment Society.

ACTION: CLERK/ARFO

9) Correspondence

a) Veolia and Southend CC Campaign - One Black Bag a Week Challenge – Noted the campaign was underway and Leigh on Sea Town Councillors are fully supportive and encouraged residents to participate.

b) any other urgent correspondence - none

10) Date Of Next Meeting

Date Of next Meeting is 16 April 2024

11) Exclusion of the Press & Public

On the motion of Cllr Flewitt, seconded by Cllr Arscott, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press & public (The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12) Confidential matter

On the motion of Cllr Flewitt, seconded by Cllr Arscott, it was **RESOLVED** to write off the outstanding debt.

ACTION: CLERK/ARFO

Meeting closed at 8.10pm

DRAFT