



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons PSLCC



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee Held on Tuesday, 5 March 2024 at 7.30 pm. at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, SS9 1SP

Present:

	Cllr B Arscott - presiding	
Cllr J Garston	Cllr S McCurdy	Cllr Dr. A Robinson
Cllr J Lloyd	Cllr J Suttling	
In Attendance -		
	G Lopes (Locum Clerk & Minute taker)	
	35 x public	

1) Chairman's Welcome & Housekeeping Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He requested the public keep the fire exits free throughout the meeting and advised on the maximum capacity for the meeting room.

2) Apologies For Absence

Apologies For Absence were received and accepted from the following members:

Cllr R Arscott	Cllr C Lambert	Cllr O Cartey
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3) Declarations Of Members' Interests

None received.

4) Minutes of the last meeting held 12 December 2023 & outstanding Minutes

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** to accept and approve the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held 12 December 2023 and outstanding Minutes for meetings held 31 July 2023 and 10 August 2023 as true and accurate records of the meetings.

5) Public Participation

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** to invite members of the public to speak.

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak and points raised included the following –

- Concerns regarding a recent press release and wanted confirmation of who authorized the press release – The Chairman advised he would provide a written response.
- Concern regarding new staff matter, legal risk, risk assessment and risk register – The Chairman advised staff matters could not be discussed and gave assurance the Council's risk register would be updated at the end of the financial year.
- Concern regarding cost of locum cover and if correct procedures were being followed – The Chairman gave assurance all correct procedures were in place.
- Query regarding the deficit, alleged fraud and request for an audit – accounts will be audited at end of year.
- Cllr Mulroney was in attendance as a member of the public and raised queries involving staff but was advised by the Chairman not to comment on confidential staff matters or she may be personally legally liable.
- Query as to whether the Terms of reference had been read – the Chairman confirmed they had been read.
- Query regarding budget and precept figures – Advised the precept request had been resolved at the January Full Council meeting. The precept request had been submitted and accepted by Southend City Council, a breakdown had been supplied and would be available on website.
- Resident felt the Minutes were not “explicit” enough – The Chairman advised Minutes were prepared in line with proper practice.

6) Appointment of Internal Auditor

RESOLVED unanimously to continue using the services of Healys & Lodge and appoint them as Internal Auditor for the financial year 2023/24.

ACTION: CLERK

7) Menu Prices, Cup of Leigh Café

There was a brief discussion and the suggested increase to menu pricing supplied by the Café staff, was considered.

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

RESOLVED to accept and approve the increased menu prices, as presented, for Cup of Leigh Café with immediate effect.

ACTION: CLERK/CAFÉ STAFF

8) Review of Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

The Chairman advised the review of these lengthy documents was not for this meeting. It would require some time to thoroughly consider the model documents and make a comparison with the current ones in use. This needed further consideration by Councillors.

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** to form a Project Document Group to consider the current Standing Orders & Financial Regulations and to adopt the model documents for Leigh on Sea Town Council; to be presented to Full Council on 26 March 2024.

ACTION: CLERK/ALL CLLRS

9) Update on Community Centre figures

Cllr Arscott gave a brief verbal update on his findings and advised he had received further figures from the Assistant Responsible Finance Officer which confirmed the Community Centre was running at a loss.

At a recent meeting of the Community and Culture Committee it had been resolved to form a Project Development Group. This Group will consider how best to address the budget deficit going forward and to ensure the Council can keep the Centre running. All Councillors can attend the discussions and, it was emphasized, it is the wish of all current Councillors to keep the Centre open because it is recognized as a valued community asset.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

10) CIL Funded Project

The Chairman advised the Community and Culture Committee had made a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to rescind a previous resolution for a grant of £5,000. This recommendation is as a result of recently found information which confirmed, at the time of the application, no project was in place and the project only came forward on 10 May and the first meeting was 30 May. No submission had been made at 10 July and the closing date for the applications was end of June.

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** rescind the previously agreed grant funding of £5,000 for the mosaic project.

There was interruption from the public in attendance and the Chairman asked for Order.

11) Exclusion of member of the public for disorderly conduct

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr McCurdy, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude Mr Baxter from the remainder of the meeting as he would not come to order.

Mr Baxter then left the meeting.

12) Utility Aid Contract

There was a short discussion regarding the supply of utilities to the Community Centre, Skate Park and Strand Wharf. It was noted the current utility contracts had not yet ended.

On the motion of Cllr Arscott, seconded by Cllr Robinson, it was **RESOLVED** this item should be added to the work of the recently formed Project Development Group discussing the Community Centre.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

13) Date Of Next Meeting

It was noted a new schedule of meetings would be agreed at the May Full Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK/ALL CLLRS

14) Business Continuity

There was some discussion regarding the business continuity of the Council.

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

RESOLVED to continue using LGRC services as required.

ACTION: F&G COMMITTEE/STAFF COMMITTEE

Meeting closed at 8.35pm