



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 Council Meeting Leigh on Sea Town Council
held on Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 7.30pm
at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road SS9 1SP

Present:

Chairman: Councillor B Arscott

Councillor Dr D Bowry
Councillor J Lloyd
Councillor J Suttlings

Councillor J Garston
Councillor S McCurdy
Councillor C Watt

Councillor A Hart
Councillor C Mulronev

Clerk of the meeting: Mrs T Melhuish
Public: Approximately 100

154 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Agdeve, R Arscott, Flewitt, Gilson, Lambert, Dr Robinson

RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted.
Councillor Cartey was absent.

155 Declarations of Members' Interest

Councillor Mulronev declared an other registerable interest in any items on the Agenda relating to her position as a Southend City Councillor.

Councillor Garston declared a non-registerable interest in any items on the Agenda relating to Southend City Council as he is a relative of a Southend City Councillor.

156 Public Participation

RESOLVED that the period of time designated for public participation in Standing Order 3f be extended to 30 minutes.

A number of members of the public addressed the Council.

157 Minutes of previous Council meetings

a) 31 July 2023

RESOLVED that the wording for Minute ref 66. Confidential Item No 1 HR Matters be amended to read:

*Council **RESOLVED** the recommendation in the report from the Finance & Governance Committee.*

Following the request for a recorded vote:

For: Councillors B Arscott, R Arscott, Cartey, Flewitt, Garston, Gilson, Lambert, Lloyd, McCurdy and Watt

Against: Councillor Bowry and Mulronev

RESOLVED that the amended Minutes of the Council meeting held on 31 July 2023 be approved.

b) 10 August 2023

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 August 2023 be approved.

c) 16 January 2024

RESOLVED that the wording for Minute ref 139a) Hire Charges be amended to read: On the motion by Cllr Mulroney, seconded by Cllrs Hart and Bowry, it was

RESOLVED that hire rates be considered by the Community & Culture Committee as part of their consideration of matters relating to the Community Centre and shall include consideration of the motion contained in item 13a)

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMUNITY

RESOLVED that the wording for Minute ref 139b) Future of the Community Centre be amended to read:

MOTION:

1. *That this council recognises that no authority had been given by the Council for any discussions to take place with Southend City Council regarding the future of the Community Centre, or any other of the Town Council's assets or activities, to any member of this Council*
2. *That the Chairman apologises for the breach of Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and undertakes that in future no such discussions will be held, with any outside party, unless the need for, content and remit have been discussed in Council and authorised by full Council.*
3. *That this Council resolves that in future any decisions affecting the future of the Community Centre or other council assets, or any activities of a significant nature which affect Leigh generally across the parish, shall be the subject of a public consultation with residents before any irrevocable actions, negotiations or decisions are made*

Upon the vote being taken, the Motion was lost.

RESOLVED that the wording for Minute ref 139c) Standards of behaviour be amended to read:

MOTION:

1. *That this Council and all councillors individually wholeheartedly reaffirm a commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life and to that end resolves that this Council adopt the best practice for Governance, Training and the Public Face of the Council as outlined in the report provided to Members prior to the meeting.*

Upon the vote being taken, the Motion was lost.

RESOLVED that the amended Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 January 2024 be approved.

d) 21 February 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 February 2024 be approved.

158 Appointment of Temporary Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Members considered the appointment of a Temporary Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer.

Councillor Lloyd provided a statement to Members regarding the role of the Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer.

In line with Standing Order 3s, Councillor Mulroney requested a recorded vote.

For the proposal: Councillors B Arscott, Garston, Lloyd, McCurdy, Watt

Against the proposal: Councillors Bowry, Hart, Mulroney

Abstention: Councillor Sutting

RESOLVED that Councillor B Arscott be appointed as the Temporary Proper Officer.

The appointment of a Temporary Responsible Finance Officer was deferred to the next Council meeting.

159 Southend City Councillors' Reports (for information only)

Members received verbal reports from the following Southend City Councillors on matters relating to Leigh on Sea:

Councillor Longstaff (Leigh Ward) – sewerage discharge, environmental working party, Strand Wharf lights, flooding, waste collections

Councillor Burton (Blenheim Park Ward) – anti-social behaviour, parks consultation, children and learning, recruitment of foster carers

Councillor Mulroney (Leigh Ward) – environmental working party, anti-social behaviour, drains, speed checks, Leigh port redevelopment.

160 Financial Matters

Members received a verbal report Councillor B Arscott, Chairman of the Finance and Governance Committee.

The end of year reports will be circulated to all Members once they are ready. The end of year process has been booked with the Town Council's finance company.

The expenditure of the HR consultant costs will be available to Members in due course.

The contract with the HR consultant has been retained at 10 hours per month, which will be reviewed.

161 Planning Applications

There were no current planning applications relating to Leigh on Sea considered.

The Chairman of the Planning, Highways and Licensing Committee, Councillor Garston reported that a number of Committee meetings had been cancelled due to staff sickness and it is hoped that meetings will resume shortly.

RESOLVED that the Planning, Highways and Licensing Committee meetings to be resumed at the earliest opportunity and a report on all recent planning applications validated, granted and refused to be prepared by the Committee Chairman.

162 Committee and Working Party Meetings

Members noted the following meetings have been held:

a) Staffing Committee 15 March 2024

b) Project Development Group 14 March 2024

163 Reports from Representatives from Outside Bodies

There were no reports given.

164 Standing Orders

Members reviewed the Town Council's current Standing Orders

A proposal by Councillor B Arscott, seconded by Councillor Watt to adopt the NALC

Standing Orders with quorum numbers to be retained from the current Town Council's

Standing Orders was amended by Councillor Mulroney, seconded by Councillor Dr Bowry

to retain the current Standing Orders 4 and 5, and to adopt the same Standing Order as

Southend City Council for public participation time.

Upon a vote being taken the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED that the Town Council adopts the NALC Standing Orders with the quorum numbers being retained from the current Standing Orders.

165 Date of the next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting, Annual Council Meeting be held on Tuesday 21 May 2024.

166 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public (The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

At 9.25pm the members of the public left the meeting.

167 Staffing Matters

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee, Councillor McCurdy provided the following:

- a) A confidential report on the Town Council's current IT system was circulated at the meeting. This followed an external company being engaged to carry out the review.
RESOLVED that Ice Connect be contracted to carry out and solve urgent security issues with the current IT system. The cost to be circulated. Quotations for further work required to be provided.
- b) Staffing
Members were provided with an update on the current staffing situation within the Leigh on Sea Town Council office and what action is being taken as agreed at the Staffing Committee meeting held on 15 March 2024.
Advice had been sought from the legal advisor at the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC).
RESOLVED that the Town Council employs temporary staff to cover some required administration work in the Town Council office to allow for the business activity to continue.
- c) Community Centre cafe
An inspection had taken place by Southend City Council and the café's food hygiene level had been reduced from 5 to 4 mainly due to the cleanliness of the kitchen.
A deep clean of the area had been carried out and a re-inspection is due to take place.
New equipment has been purchased including a fly zapper, commercial microwave, commercial toaster and panini maker, new workstation.
Funded from the Community Centre equipment reserve as emergency purchases.
It is suggested that the running of the café is handed over to a local company who will also take on the current staff.
RESOLVED that a small group is set up and given delegated power to review and agree the Business Plan from the company, to be implemented from 1 May.
The membership of the group is: Councillor B Arscott, McCurdy, Mulroney and Watt.

The Meeting closed at 10.30pm.

Signed Chairman

Date: 21 May 2024