



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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



MINUTES of the Annual Council Meeting Leigh on Sea Town Council
held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 7.30pm
at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road SS9 1SP
Formal acceptance to take place at the next Council meeting

Present:

Chairman: Councillor B Arscott

Councillor R Arscott

Councillor P Gilson

Councillor S McCurdy

Councillor J Suttling

Councillor Dr D Bowry

Councillor A Hart

Councillor C Mulroney

Councillor C Watt

Councillor J Garston

Councillor J Lloyd

Councillor Dr A Robinson

Clerk of the meeting:

Mrs T Melhuish

Public:

Approximately 100

168 Election of the Chair of the Town Council for 2024/25

Nominations were invited for the Chairman of the Council for 2024/25

Councillor B Arscott was nominated as Chairman.

There were no other nominations.

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

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

Against the proposal: Councillors Bowry, Hart and Mulroney

Abstentions: Councillors Robinson and Suttling

RESOLVED that Councillor B Arscott be the Chair of the Town Council for 2024/25.

169 Declaration of acceptance of Office by the Chair for 2024/25

Councillor B Arscott made his declaration of acceptance of office.

170 Election of Vice Chair of the Town Council 2024/25

Nominations were invited for the Vice Chair of the Town Council for 2024/25

Councillor McCurdy was nominated as Vice Chair.

There were no other nominations.

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

For the proposal: Councillors B Arscott, R Arscott, Garston, Gilson, Lloyd, McCurdy, Robinson, Suttling, Watt.

Against the proposal: Councillors Bowry, Hart and Mulroney

Abstentions: none

RESOLVED that Councillor McCurdy be the Vice Chair of the Town Council for 2024/25.

171 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Agdeve, Cartey, Flewitt, Lambert

RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted.

172 Declarations of Members' Interest

a. Current Meeting

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.

b. Registration of Member's Interests

Members were reminded to ensure their Declaration of Interest forms were up to date.
New forms to be issued as the current ones being used since 2022 are an old format.

173 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.

174 Confirmation of Minutes

a. **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 March 2024 be approved.
b. The following amendments to the Minutes 9 April 2024 were made by Councillor Mulroney:

- Correct spelling of Councillor J Suttling
- Item 161 Planning Applications

Amend the wording to read '*There were no current planning applications relating to Leigh-on-Sea considered*'

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 April 2024 be approved.

175 Terms of Reference

Members reviewed the current Terms of Reference:

- a. Community and Culture Committee
- b. Finance and Governance Committee
- c. Planning, Licensing and Highways Committee
- d. Staffing Committee

RESOLVED that the amendments to the above Terms of Reference be approved.

176 Appointment of Members to Committees and Sub Committees

Members considered appointments to the following Committees:

a. Community and Culture Committee (7)

i **RESOLVED** the membership of the Community and Culture Committee be:
Councillors Bowry, Gilson, Hart, Lambert, Lloyd, Mulroney, Robinson

ii Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Community and Culture Committee for 2024/25

Councillor Gilson was nominated as Chair.

There were no other nominations

RESOLVED that Councillor Gilson be the Chair of the Community and Culture Committee for 2024/25.

Councillor Lloyd was nominated as Vice Chair.

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED that Councillor Lloyd be the Vice Chair of the Community and Culture Committee for 2024/25.

b. Finance and Governance Committee (7)

i **RESOLVED** the membership of the Finance and Governance Committee be:
Councillors B Arscott, Bowry, Lloyd, McCurdy, Mulroney, Suttling, Watt

ii Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee for 2024/25

Councillor B Arscott was nominated as Chair.

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED that Councillor B Arscott be the Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee for 2024/25.

Councillor McCurdy was nominated as Vice Chair.

Councillor Mulroney was nominated as Vice Chair.

Upon a vote being taken, Councillor McCurdy received the majority vote.

RESOLVED that Councillor McCurdy be the Vice Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee for 2024/25.

- c. **Planning, Licensing and Highways Committee (7)**
 - i. **RESOLVED** the membership of the Planning, Licensing and Highways Committee be:
Councillors Bowry, Garston, Gilson, Hart
 - ii. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning, Licensing and Highways Committee for 2024/25
RESOLVED that the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair be deferred to the next Council meeting.
 - d. **Staffing Committee (5)**
 - i. **RESOLVED** the membership of the Staffing Committee be:
Councillors B Arcscott, Bowry, Lloyd, McCurdy, Mulroney, Watt
RESOLVED that the membership of the Staffing Committee be increased to 6
 - ii. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2024/25
Councillor McCurdy was nominated as Chair.
There were no other nominations.
RESOLVED that Councillor McCurdy be the Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2024/25.
Councillor Watt was nominated as Vice Chair.
There were no other nominations.
RESOLVED that Councillor Watt be the Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2024/25.
- 177 Working Parties**
Members considered appointments of any new Committees, Sub Committees or Working Parties.
RESOLVED that the following Working Parties be established and the membership be considered by the responsible Committee:
- i. Youth Club
 - ii. LTC News
 - iii. Arts Group
 - iv. Strategic Plan
- 178 Appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies**
Members considered nominations for the following groups:
- a. Public & Passenger Transport Group
 - b. Leigh Port Partnership
 - c. Southend Airport Consultative Committee
 - d. Southend Standards Committee
 - e. SAVS
 - f. Leigh Coastal Communities Team - remove
 - g. Veolia Community Group – remove
 - h. Local Community Police Meeting
- RESOLVED** that this item be deferred to the next Council meeting.
- 179 Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)**
RESOLVED that Councillor Lloyd be appointed as the Temporary Responsible Finance Officer.
- 180 Financial Regulations**
RESOLVED that due to the issuing of new Financial Regulations by NALC, this item be deferred to the next Finance and Governance meeting.
- 181 Assets Register**
A copy of the Town Council's Assets Register up to 31 March 2024 was provided to all Members at the meeting.
RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 5.j.xiii. Members approved the Council's asset register for 2023-24.

At 9pm, the meeting was paused.

Councillor Gilson and Watt left the meeting.

At 9.15pm, the meeting was reconvened.

182 Insurance

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next Council meeting.

183 Subscriptions to other bodies

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next Council meeting.

184 Town Council Policies

Members reviewed the following Policies:

- a. Complaints Procedure
- b. Freedom of Information (Publication Scheme)
- c. Press and Media Policy

Members noted the Council's employment policies and procedures are being reviewed by the Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the above Policies be approved.

185 Scheme of Delegation

Members considered the Town Council's Scheme of Delegation as provided.

RESOLVED that this item be deferred to the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

186 Meetings Schedule 2024/25

Members considered the Meetings Schedule 2024/25 as provided.

RESOLVED that the Meetings Schedule 2024/25 be approved with the exception of the Planning, Licensing and Highways Committee meetings.

RESOLVED that consideration is given and a decision made to hold these meetings every 3 weeks.

Councillor Gilson rejoined the meeting.

187 Annual Town Meeting 2024

Members noted that in line with the Local Government Act 1972, schedule 12, para 15 (1)(d) six electors of Leigh-on-Sea called the Annual Town Meeting which was held on Friday 17 May 2024 at Leigh Community Centre.

This was called before the Town Council arranged for the meeting to be held.

Councillor Mulroney provided the draft Minutes of the meeting and the invoice for room hire which was expected the Town Council to pay.

RESOLVED that a list of questions provided by Councillor Mulroney from the Annual Town Meeting be answered by 7 June 2024.

Councillor Bowry submitted a petition from residents asking for the conservative Town Councillors to resign. This was accepted but no further action to be taken.

188 IT Contract

Councillor B Arscott reported that a temporary IT contract had been set up.

RESOLVED that the contract is reviewed by the Finance and Governance Committee.

189 Community Centre Cafe

Further to Minute ref 167c. Members received an update from Councillor McCurdy on the current situation with the Community Centre café.

New equipment had been purchased with a cost of approximately £2,000, the full expenditure will be provided at the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting.

Discussions took place regarding other potential companies to oversee the running of the café. The contract to be reviewed in six months' time.

Councillor McCurdy informed Members of the recent online boycott of the café.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3x. for the meeting to continue beyond the 2 hour limit.

190 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 9.45pm the members of the public left the meeting.

191 Staffing Matters

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee, Councillor McCurdy provided a verbal report on the following:

Appendix A – Confidential Report for Members only

- a. Sick absences of current Town Council staff
- b. Staff Review
- c. Recruitment of new Town Clerk and RFO

As advised by the Town Council’s solicitor and HR consultant an advert had been placed for the Town Clerk vacancy.

As agreed by the Staffing Committee the advert was placed with the EALC, Town Council website, Facebook page and noticeboards. The deadline for applications set as 31 May 2024.

Shortlisting will take place with an Interview Panel agreed as Councillors B Arscott, Bowry and McCurdy. The final decision to be reported to Council.

- d. Previous Town Clerk appeal

An appeal against the decision to terminate the Town Clerk’s contract has been received and is being actioned in line with the Town Council’s Disciplinary Procedure 10.10. The Right of Appeal.

Advice had also been sought from the Town Council’s solicitor and HR consultants.

The membership of the Appeal Committee to hear the appeal to be 3 who had no previous involvement in the matter, assisted by an independent advisor.

In line with 10.12, the 3 members will be different members who are not on the Staffing Committee.

Due to Town Councillor limitations, the Appeal Committee will be:

Town Councillor Agdeve, Southend City Councillor Tony Cox and Southend City Council Ayles.

However, due to availability, Members were informed that this might change and suggested Southend City Councillors were provided:

Councillor Buck, Councillor Robinson or Councillor Longstaff

with Town Councillor Suttling as a potential substitute for Councillor Agdeve.

192 Community Centre Cafe

Further to Minute 167c. Members received an update from Councillor McCurdy regarding the contract with a local company for the running of the café.

The contract to be circulated to Councillor Mulroney and Watt.

There being no further public business to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.20 pm.

Signed Chairman

Date: 25 June 2024