



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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

Town Clerk: Clare Milligan



Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Culture Committee

The Committee met at 8.30pm on Tuesday 29th October 2024 in the Council Chamber (Room 8), Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-On- Sea, Essex, SS9 1SP.

Councillor C Mulroney was nominated to Chair the meeting as the Chair and Vice Chair were absent.

Present: Councillors Dr D Bowry and J Suttling.

In attendance: The Town Clerk – Clare Milligan, Cllrs P Wexham and P Barber and fifteen members of the public.

CC24-044 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and agreed unanimously from Cllrs P Gilson and A Hart who were both unwell and Cllr J Lloyd who had a prior personal commitment.

CC24-045 Declarations of Members' Interests

Cllr C Mulroney declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 Memorial Plaques as she was the owner of a plaque already in situ. The Clerk declared that a dispensation would be given for the item so that it could be discussed. There were no other declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registrable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

CC24-046 Public Participation

Various members of the public spoke. The questions asked included the following:

Who was the music person?

How would the event be advertised and will other music people get an opportunity to do it?

Who are the elderly? What ages does it relate to? Consideration needs to be thought about re security, DBS checks, caretakers time etc.

Why do the Councillors seem to be focused on one kind of art? Why is the Council not looking at a wider genre?

Cllr Mulroney advised that nothing was set in stone and that the item would be discussed later in the meeting. She also agreed that art comes in all sorts of shapes and forms.

A member of Manchester Drive Allotment Society read out the comments re item 8:

MDAS would like to make it perfectly clear that we will fully support the idea of a plot specifically set aside for the use of disabled people. We would however want to establish certain protocols that we feel would be essential for the successful setting up and management of this project.

- 1. That we {MDAS} are fully consulted at all stages of the process.*
- 2. That we are made aware of the limitations of the disabled persons in order that we can effectively plan for and assist where possible.*
- 3. We are assuming that the intention is for this plot to be available for a group of persons rather than for just one individual.*
- 4. That any helpers/organisers coming onto site must comply with past and present council decisions and regulations as discussed and agreed at the previous C&C meeting.*

5. That any preferences deemed to be applicable for the users of this plot are accorded to all other plotholders who are registered as disabled.

6. That the usual processes and procedures for acquiring a plot are followed, so as not to set dangerous precedents.

Could the Community Fridge not be looked after by the Café?

Cllr C Mulroney advised that this was something that she was going to suggest when the item was being discussed.

Looking at CCTV could the Council look at hiring rather than purchase to see if it works first. There is far more involved when putting in CCTV such as policies, Data Protection etc and it doesn't always work as a deterrent.

Cllr C Mulroney said these were good points and everything would be looked into.

A comment was made that working groups didn't seem to have met for a long time. Cllr C Mulroney said some had taken place such as the Christmas Lights working group.

It was asked as to what kind of lighting and specification was being suggested for room 4.

CC24-047 Minutes

The minutes of the Community and Culture Committee meeting held on 20th August 2024 and the Extra Ordinary Community and Culture Committee meeting held on 30th September 2024 were signed and unanimously agreed as a true record.

CC24-048 Clerk's Report

- 1) Safety testing on columns – The Clerk confirmed that this has been completed and in place until October 2025.
- 2) PA System – The Clerk engaged a company to come in and look at the system and give a quote for updating it. The Clerk reported at the meeting she had met with a company that day and was now awaiting a quote which she hoped to take to the Full Council meeting the following week.
- 3) Bookings – A weekly meeting is now in place for a Monday between the staff and the café.
- 4) New paperwork for allotments – This has all gone to full council and been agreed.
- 5) Artist in Residence – The Clerk met with the artists in residence and those that maintain the art walls in the community centre. It was a very positive meeting and they were keen to work more closely with the Council and to have the working group meetings brought back on a regular basis. The Clerk will organise this.
- 6) Skatepark – The Clerk arranged for a company to visit the park and look at the electrics. She has been advised that the actual supply has been cut off and this is something that she now has to investigate. Once this has been looked into this will be brought back to a future meeting.
- 7) Paddling Pool – Cllr C Mulroney has been in contact with the SCC officer regarding the mending of the paddling pool who has advised that they are happy to meet with members to discuss the problem. The Council has some funding in reserves to help pay for the repairs, but SCC have advised that the cost could be in the region of £46,000. It was noted as well that any repairs needed to be agreed by the Marine Management Organisation and the Natural England.

CC24/049 Christmas Lights Switch On

The Clerk had circulated the report and suggested program from the working group for the event. The question was asked as to whether there were feature lights in the library gardens as well as the tree but there are not. It was also suggested that carols would be

sung in the library gardens. The Events Officer advised she had been approached by 4 and 20 Blackbirds to perform and it was agreed that they should be asked to lead the carols. The church were happy to have everyone back to them for refreshments and the Council could look into a rota for locking the library gardens is needed¹. It was proposed to agree the suggested program of the working group. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24-050 Memorial Plaques

The Clerk had received requests for further memorial plaques on Strand Wharf. A discussion took place and Cllr C Mulroney explained that each planter had space for 4 plaques. It was looked at whether further plaques would be appropriate for the area as there were concerns it could become a memorial which was not what the wharf is intended for. It was also noted that SCC had stopped agreeing to have memorial benches put in old Leigh. It was agreed unanimously not to have any additional plaques. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24-051 Disability Project at Manchester Drive Allotments

The Clerk had circulated an email received regarding the setting up of a Disability Project. Questions were raised about what kind of insurance would be needed. Who would be supporting the project and who would be funding it. It was noted that Trust Links had the resources already available for this kind of project and whether this had been considered. The Committee felt there was a lot more information required before any kind of decision could be made and the Clerk was asked to organise a meeting with the Council, MDAS and the person involved in the project. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24-052 Music Event Proposal

The Clerk had circulated the report in regard to a possible music event at the centre. A discussion took place, and a proposal was put forward: That the music event be not agreed. That the Council carries out a strategic review of its events and entertainment offer with the new events officer on their starting and plan events on a yearly basis to ensure all aspects of events are dealt with in an orderly and regulated fashion, fully costed, and prepare an entertainments plan for the town and community centre which is run by the Council. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24-053 Community Fridge

A short discussion took place around who could take on the responsibility of looking after the community fridge in the centre. It was agreed that this should be negotiated as part of the new contract for the Café. This would entail checking the dates on food items weekly, along with cleaning and clearing it out. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24/054 Allotment Associations

The Clerk had circulated the accounts received from the Marshall Close allotment association. She had recommended that MDAS should also send accounts to the Council as the Council were accountable for the spending of all public money. MDAS advised that although they had not sent accounts recently, they had in the past and said they would send the latest accounts to the Clerk the next day.

¹ Subsequent to the meeting this was not deemed necessary as there would be no specific displays other than in the trees

A discussion took place regarding the request from Marshall Close for an increase in their association fees for the year. They asked for them to be increased from £500 to £700 a year, fixed for 3 years. It was agreed to increase the funding. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr J Suttling and agreed unanimously.

A discussion took place regarding the request from MDAS to install CCTV at the entrance to the allotments and at the Randolph Close entrance to deter thefts from the site. Cllr C Mulroney wondered if South Essex Homes who had houses in Randolph Close would be able to assist at all. It was agreed the Clerk would look further into this.

CC24/055 Cooker for Café

The Clerk had circulated three quotes for a replacement cooker for the Café. It was agreed to proceed with the quote from Nisbets, Lincat Opus 800 Electric Oven Range OE8016 at a cost of £3,719.99 plus VAT. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24/056 Lighting in Room 4

The Clerk had circulated the quote for replacing the lights in room 4. A discussion took place and it was agreed to replace the lights needed and for the Clerk to gain two more quotes. Cllr C Mulroney asked the member of the public who had made comment about the types of lights to email the Clerk so that she could utilise this information when seeking quotes. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

CC24/057 Shelter near Gypsie Bridge

Cllr C Mulroney explained that the shelter did not belong to the Town Council and was not their responsibility to repair. She explained that it belonged to Southend City Council (SCC) and they did start work a couple of years ago. However, the company involved went into liquidation and works came to a halt. SCC are in the process of going out to tender again.

CC24/058 Community and Culture Draft Budget 2025/26

The Clerk circulated the first draft of the expenses for the budget for 2025/26 and a short discussion took place. It was agreed that a working party would be set up of all the Community and Culture Committee members to go through the Clerk's budget and to bring back to the next meeting in December 2024. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr J Suttling and agreed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.33pm.