



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chair: Councillor Bernard Arscott | **Vice Chair:** Vacant

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting.

The Council met at 7.31pm on Tuesday 5th November 2024 in the Cafe, Leigh-On-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-On-Sea, Essex, SS9 1SP.

The Chair, Cllr B Arscott, welcomed the new Councillors P Barber, O Richards and C Willoughby to the meeting and the Council, saying he looked forward to working with them all.

Chair: Councillor B Arscott

Present: Councillors R Arscott, P Barber, Dr D Bowry, J Garston, P Gilson, A Hart, J Lloyd, C Mulroney, O Richards, J Suttling, C Watt, P Wexham and C Willoughby.

In Attendance: The Town Clerk, Clare Milligan, Southend City Councillors Cllr S Allen and S Aylen and 36 members of the public.

247/24. Apologies for Absence

Cllr B Arscott advised the Council that Cllr S McCurdy had resigned with immediate effect. The Clerk will notify Southend City Council (SCC) of the vacancy. The Clerk, at the time of the meeting, thought she had not received apologies from Cllr C Lambert. However, after investigation after the meeting the Clerk found that the email had gone into spam. Cllr C Watt did, at the meeting, give Cllr C Lambert's apologies.

248/24. Declarations of Members' Interests

Cllr C Mulroney declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 18 on the agenda 'Leigh Heritage Centre Pipe Laying Works' as she is the Chair of Trustees of the Heritage Centre Committee. She also declared she was a Southend City Councillor. Cllr J Garston declared that his relative was a Southend City Councillor. There were no other declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registrable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

249/24. Public Participation

Two members of the public spoke.

The first resident congratulated the new Councillors on their appointments and hoped they would prove both valuable and valued members of the Council. He also wished former Cllr S McCurdy well after hearing of her resignation. He expressed how heartened he was to see so many Councillors at the meeting and hoped that those who had not been able to attend regularly would now be able to. He hoped that item 14 on the agenda 'Agreeing of Councillor Absences' would be given due consideration. He acknowledged that public questions are now being included in minutes but asked who decides on which ones are included as his question from the Full Council meeting in September was omitted. The Clerk replied that she did not

pick and choose she tried to give a summary of all comments and questions from the public. She apologised for omitting the specific member of the public's question. The second member of public was from the Southend, Hadleigh and Leigh on Sea Farm group. They handed in a petition from residents regarding their objection to the Castle Point Borough Council's Local Plan consultation calling for development plots, and particularly the areas owned by the Salvation Army. He explained that they had raised over 650 signatures and thanked the Town Council for having the forms in the centre and promoting them. He asked the Town Council to again write to Castle Point Borough Council, the local MP's, Southend City Council and Essex County Council on the matter highlighting the petition and the objection to any building works taking place on any of the Salvation Army land.

250/24. Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17th September 2024 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr J Garston; with 12 for, 1 abstention and one non-vote the motion was passed. The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting held on 30th September 2024 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watt; 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

251/24. Southend City Councillor's Reports (for information only)

Cllr C Mulroney gave the following update:

1. Cliff Parade – works have started as no badgers seem to have been found. All works are proceeding in conjunction with English Nature and having Ecologists present.
2. The disabled bay in Rectory Grove had been moved to make it more accessible.
3. Work is ongoing with Officers of SCC on improvements to the safety and cleanliness of Church Hill
4. To try to avoid commuter parking extra patrols for Canvey Road are being looked into.
5. Planning application and other requirements will be submitted for the Leigh Port works this November.
6. Southend's joint administration has put in place help for those affected by the removal of the winter fuel allowance with a £250,000 support fund. There is a dedicated SCC web page (just type in 'Household Support Fund') where those eligible to apply for support can get full details of how to apply and the criteria. Information will also be available at GP surgeries, family hubs, libraries and community centres.

Cllr S Allen gave the following update:

1. ASB and the use of Nitrous Oxide canisters in areas where the Councillor has been working with the police has reduced and residents were encouraged to report these issues to the police via 101 so that a full picture of the problem can be formed.
2. Reporting of speeding along Station Rd/Marine Parade/New Rd via 101 needs to continue.
3. A meeting with Officers, Cllr Mulroney and himself to discuss repairs to the Church Hill area and general maintenance took place. Veolia are being chased to carry out gully cleaning and weed clearing.
4. Drain cleaning will continue in Leigh, but leaf fall clearing will be a priority.
5. A request to the Leader of the Council to commit to having public charging points installed in Leigh Ward by the end of 2025 has been submitted.
6. A motion for phasing out glyphosate by trying alternative methods will be

proposed at the next SCC Full Council. It is hoped it will receive cross party support.
7. Some businesses have been approached to ensure they store their commercial bins on their own land rather than on the public highway after complaints from residents.

8. At the last People Scrutiny Committee meeting it was proposed the Neonatal unit at Southend Hospital would be downgraded from a Level 2 to a Level 1. This was voted down unanimously by Councillors.

9. Extra 'dogs on leads' signs for Leigh Library Gardens have been asked for.

Cllr S Aylen gave the following update:

1. There is a new bus route which will go through Bonchurch ward along with some new bus shelters.

2. Requests for the 20mp speed limit to be extended within the Councillor's ward are being considered.

3. The Council was asked if they could put up a new basketball net in Bonchurch Park.

4. In the West Leigh ward a bridge is being put in over the brook.

252/24. Clerk's Report

1. Castle Point Borough Council (CP) Local Plan – The Clerk sent a letter to CP and the Salvation Army but has not received any direct response. The Clerk contacted CP to arrange a meeting with their Members and the Town Council. She will chase this again.

2. Poppy Wreaths – These were purchased.

3. Christmas Lights Working Party – The group met, and Community and Culture Committee agreed the program for the day. Publications of the event are on the Council's website and Facebook page.

4. Memorial Bench – The bench is due to be installed on Saturday 9th November 2024.

5. IT Update – The laptop has arrived. Files are yet to be transferred to the cloud.

6. ICE Report -The Clerk advised that Cllr C Willoughby had received the report and had asked the Clerk to clarify one more question. The Clerk will undertake this. The Clerk also acknowledged that the emails in question from Cllr M Agdeve categorically did not come from Cllr C Willoughby.

7. Finances – The Clerk advised she was working on the budget for 2025/26 and the current finances and will be reporting everything back at the Finance Meeting in December including some figures for 2023/24.

253/24. Committee Terms of Reference - looking at the responsibilities, Committee size, and Committee Vacancies

Cllr C Willoughby spoke about her first motion to increase the membership of the Staffing Committee from six to seven members. Explaining it would bring the membership of the Staffing Committee in line with the other committees and with an odd number would possibly stop the need for a casting vote. Cllr P Barber asked if it was just a motion suggested on a numbers basis or does the committee feel there is need for another member? Even if there is an odd number it doesn't always guarantee not having a split vote as not all Councillors may attend the meeting. Cllr C Willoughby advised it wasn't just based on numbers and acknowledged the split vote comment. Cllr J Garston asked if substitutions were allowed for the Staffing Committee. The Clerk advised they were. Cllr O Richards asked the Council to be mindful there was a sufficient number of Councillors available with no knowledge of staffing matters if there was ever a need for a hearing. It was agreed to increase the

number for the staffing committee from six to seven. Proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed. The terms of reference will be amended accordingly.

Cllr C Willoughby spoke about her second motion to expand the remit of the Planning, Highways and Licensing Committee to include environmental issues and to rename the committee to Planning and Environment. She felt that the built environment wasn't simply limited to planning and highways but also the management of parks, open spaces, treescape and the need for residents to have a voice to feed into environmental matters.

The Terms of Reference should have the following added:

To make observations on any tree removal and replacement notices, on the management and care of open spaces within the council jurisdiction and on relevant consultations that pertain to residents within the Town Council's jurisdiction.

Cllr C Mulroney proposed an amendment to the motion which was the Terms of Reference give delegated authority that if objections are to be lodged against a licence application that the Chair of the Committee or a committee member be authorised to appear at any hearing to state the Council's case.

Cllr J Garston felt licensing was a very important part of the committee and it should remain in the title of the committee. Cllr C Willoughby was happy to keep the word licensing in the committee name.

Cllr A Hart said that planning meetings could be very heavy due to the number of applications. He proposed that a separate environment committee was set up.

Further discussion took place.

Cllr C Mulroney's amendment to Cllr C Willoughby's motion that the Terms of Reference give delegated authority, if objections are to be lodged against a licence application, to the Chair of the Committee or a committee member to appear at any hearing to state the Council's case. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed.

Cllr J Garston's amendment to have the word licensing kept in the committee's name was proposed by Cllr J Garston, seconded by Cllr P Gilson; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed.

Cllr C Willoughby amended her original proposal to add that the changes be trialed for 3 months. Proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr P Gilson; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed

Cllr C Willoughby's original motion to change the name of the committee to Planning and Environment Committee which now included changing it to Planning, Licensing and Environment Committee to be trialed for three months including the amendments to the Terms of Reference as follows:

- make observations on any tree removal and replacement notices, on the management and care of open spaces within the council jurisdiction and on relevant consultations that pertain to residents within the Town Council's jurisdiction.

- That if objections are to be lodged against a licence application the Chair of the Committee or a committee member be authorised to appear at any hearing to state the Council's case.

was proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

Vacancies for the Staffing Committee and the Planning, Licensing and Environment committee were discussed.

Cllr O Richards and Cllr P Barber put themselves forward for the Planning, Licensing and Environment Committee. On being put to the vote Cllr P Barber and Cllr O Richards were appointed, with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

Cllr J Suttling and Cllr C Willoughby were nominated to sit on the Staffing Committee. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr C Watt; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

254/24. Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were noted.

- a) Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 1st October 2024.
- b) Planning, Highways and Licensing Committee meetings held on 1st October 2024, 15th October 2024, and 29th October 2024.
- c) Community and Culture Committee meetings held on 30th September 2024 and 29th October 2024.
- d) Staffing Committee meetings held on 24th September 2024 and the 8th October 2024. The minutes for the meeting on the 29th October 2024 were not available.

255/24. Working Group for Café

Cllr C Mulroney asked when current agreement was due to end and when the Council would be going out to tender for the running of the café. Cllr B Arscott advised that the six-month agreement would end at the end of November 2024 and that the working group would look at the next steps. The working group to consist of Cllr C Mulroney, B Arscott, P Gilson, C Willoughby and P Barber. Agreed unanimously. The Clerk will organise a meeting for the group as soon as possible.

256/24. Grant Applications

The Clerk had previously circulated the grant application from Southend Area Bus User Group. Cllr J Suttling asked what the grant was going to be used for. The Clerk read out the information from the application form. A discussion took place, and it was agreed to award the £224 grant. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watt; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

257/24. Financial Transactions

The Clerk had previously circulated the income and expenditure reports for the month of October 2024. Cllr C Mulroney asked what the expenditure for Mashfords £940 was for and noted that there were a few invoices for Leigh News and when would the Council be reinstating their own publication.

Cllr C Willoughby enquired about the Mashfords contract and the Worknest contract. The Clerk advised that all contracts were being looked into and a list will be brought to the Finance and Governance Committee meeting in December 2024 for discussion.

Cllr O Richards asked if the Council had a policy regarding using local businesses?

The Clerk said she was not aware of one but was something that the Council could look at.

It was proposed to agree and accept the expenditure for October 2024 for paying. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watt; with 11 for, 2 abstaining and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

258/24. Financial Review

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliations for September 2024. The reconciliations were discussed and Cllr C Willoughby asked if the CCLA could be asked to attend a meeting to go through how they invest Council funds. Bank reconciliation for October 2024 were not available and the Clerk will put these on the Finance and Governance Committee meeting in December 2024. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding was also asked about. The Clerk advised that this had been looked at by the Clerk and Cllr C Mulroney and a report on this would be going to the Finance and Governance Committee in December 2024.

The Clerk had circulated the budget comparison report up to the end of October 2024.

Both the bank reconciliations and the budget comparison report were agreed.

259/24. Agenda, agenda papers and publication

Cllr C Mulroney advised that her motion was self-explanatory and asked the Council to consider them and agree them. The motions were as follows:

1. Henceforth this Council, in the preparation of agenda shall include a written report in relation to items for decision, and others, if helpful, setting out the subject matter, relevant information and research, costings and budgetary implications as necessary and the view and recommendations of the clerk together with justification and reasoning.

2. That all such papers form part of the agenda and are published with it on the website for the benefit of residents.

3. That if a report originates from a Councillor, they will seek the advice of the Clerk on the information required for good decision making and to ensure there are no legal or financial impediments to what is recommended in the report.

Cllr O Richards put forward an amendment to the above motions:

That in addition to papers being available for all that a coversheet for the papers be produced showing any previous minutes, actions arising, financial implications and the governance route of the item. Whether it had been to committee and if not why.

The purpose giving a full audit trail. This is to start in the New Year. Proposed by Cllr O Richards, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney. Cllr C Willoughby asked the Clerk what it would mean to her workload. Cllr O Richards said that he did not want it to be onerous.

A discussion took place, and it was proposed to accept the amendment. Proposed by Cllr O Richards, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed.

Cllr C Willoughby put forward a second amendment that when a motion/agenda item is brought forward a Councillor would need to state if the person involved in any proposal is known to them or not and this is to be included in the paperwork. A discussion took place, and it was proposed to accept the amendment. Proposed by

Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed.

The above amended original motions were proposed and agreed. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr A Hart; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motions were passed.

260/24. Agreeing of Councillor Absences

Cllr C Mulroney expressed that her motions were self-explanatory and asked the Council to discuss and agree. The motions were as follows:

1. All apologies must be voted on individually.
2. Apologies must be given directly to the Town Clerk, in writing, not to another Councillor, before the meeting.
3. If two is not possible verbal apologies must be provided directly to the Town Clerk before the meeting.

Cllr J Garston asked for an explanation to how the voting on individual Councillors would work. The Clerk explained that agreeing Councillors singularly was the correct process and that if an absence was not agreed for an individual Councillor, it just meant that this would be noted on the minutes and the six-month rule would start.

Cllr O Richards proposed an amendment to the motions that a record of Councillor attendance be produced at the end of each year. Seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the amendment was passed.

The original motions with the amendment were proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr A Hart; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motions were passed.

261/24. Payroll Provider

The Clerk had circulated the information comparing the current payroll provider (James Todd) £7.25 per pay slip a total of £72.50 per month with a quote for J M Payroll £65 per month. The Clerk asked the Council to consider changing provider ready for December 2024 payroll. The change was agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

262/24 Christmas Tree's for the Community Centre

The Clerk explained that she was told the centre used to have 2 Christmas trees each year. One in the Foyer and one on the balcony on the outside of the front of the centre. She explained the trees were rented and would be replanted in January 2025. The cost would be approximately £50 for the trees and some new decorations. It was agreed to rent the trees and purchase the decorations. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr P Gilson; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

263/24. Annual Pay Increase

The Clerk had circulated the Local Government Pay Agreement for 2024/25. She asked the Council to agree backpay to April 2024 for the current staff and ex-staff who left within the financial year. It was agreed to accept the increase and the backpay. Proposed by Cllr P Barber, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

264/24. Leigh Heritage Centre Pipe Laying Works

The Clerk had handed out copies of the plan for replacing the lead water piping at the Leigh Heritage centre. The pipe work runs at the edge of Strand Wharf which

would mean some minor trenchwork in the area up. The Council was asked to agree to the work being undertaken. The works were agreed. Proposed by Cllr P Gilson, seconded by Cllr P Barber; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

265/24. Consultation on Ward Boundaries for Southend City Council

The Clerk had circulated the link to the consultation. Cllr C Mulroney explained how the consultation was looking at the wards within Southend City regarding City Councillors and that although it did not affect the boundaries/wards of the Town Council she felt it would be beneficial for the consultation to be looked at by the Council to make comment. She felt that it was inevitable that wards would change and possibly reduce. Cllr C Willoughby asked for the item to be added to the Extra Ordinary meeting. It was agreed to add to the agenda. The Clerk advised that a briefing had been organised by SCC and was due to take place virtually on 19th November 2024 at 6.30pm. This will be posted on the website and Facebook page.

266/24. Extension of Artist in Residence

The Clerk had circulated details about the current Artists in Residence and asked the Council to consider allowing them to stay on for another year. It was proposed to extend the current Artists in Residence residency for another year until March 2026. Proposed by Cllr P Gilson, seconded by Cllr C Watt; with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

267/24. Updates from Councillors and Matters for Information

Cllr C Mulroney Mentioned the three Remembrance Services taking place on Sunday 10th November 2024. The first is at the Cenotaph in Southend at 11am, the second is the Royal British Legion service at St Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea at 3pm and the third is the service at Eastwood at 2pm. All were welcome to attend. Cllr P Gilson advised he had attended the Water Summit and was discussing the situation with the storm drains within Leigh-on-Sea. After discussing the matter with SCC, they have advised they will investigate the issue. Cllr B Arscott advised that he had attended the EALC (Essex Association Local Council) AGM which had been informative and beneficial. There have been various updates including information on Employment Law changes.

268/24. Private and Confidential

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public and press were excluded from the following item of business due to the confidential nature. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watt, with 13 for and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

269/24. Staffing Matters

The Clerk advised the solicitors had met with the members of the Staffing Committee to give an update on the progress of all staffing matters in relation to ex-employees. A discussion took place, and an agreement was made by Full Council on financial matters relating to individual ex-employees that were to be relayed to the Council's solicitor, Backhouse Solicitors. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr P Barber; with 7 for, 5 abstentions and 1 non-vote the motion was passed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.45pm