



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chair: Councillor Bernard Arscott | **Vice Chair:** Councillor Carole Mulroney

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting.

The Council met at 7.30pm on Tuesday 7th January 2025 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 Councillor K Evans to the meeting and back to the Council.

Chair: Councillor B Arscott

Present: Councillors P Barber, Dr D Bowry, K Evans, J Garston, P Gilson, 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 18 members of the public.

FC001/25. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and agreed from Cllr A Hart.

FC002/25. Declarations of Members' Interests

Cllr C Mulroney declared an other non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda 'CCLA Presentation' as she is the Chair of Trustees of the Leigh Heritage Centre who have an account with the CCLA. She also declared she was a Southend City Councillor.

Cllr O Richards declared an other non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda 'CCLA Presentation' as he is a member of the Essex Community Foundation who have an account with the CCLA.

Cllr C Willoughby declared an other non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda 'CCLA Presentation' as she is a member of the Finance Committee of St Clements Church who have a CCLA account.

There were no other declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registrable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

Cllr B Arscott proposed that item 8 on the agenda, CCLA, be moved forward. Seconded by Cllr P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

FC003/25 CCLA

The representative from the company gave a short verbal update on the CCLA, how it operates and how the money the Council has with them is invested. The representative will send to the Clerk a full presentation for distribution to the Councillors.

FC004/25. Public Participation

Six members of the public spoke. There was concern over item 10 and the motion for Councillors to supply details to the Town Clerk of any Political Party. It was public consensus that the Town Council should be free of politics, and it was felt that prior

to May 2023 this was the case. It was believed that party membership should be on Councillors Register of Interests forms anyway. There was concern that if party membership was taken into consideration when forming committees this may mean unintended prevention of the best Councillors being involved. It may also mean that the membership of committees could be seen as being undemocratic. Comment was made that it was important that the Council respect each other and the public and Council business was the only thing that mattered for the good of the community. A member of the public asked for safeguarding to be added to the risk register for the Council.

Cllr McMullan reminded the Council that they had not attended the London Southend Airport Consultative Committee meetings. He advised that he would ask them to contact the Council to register the new Council's representative, which is Cllr J Garston.

Various questions were raised about the draft budget for 2025/26 along with the Risk assessment and the Asset Register. All were being discussed that evening.

FC005/25. Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5th November 2024 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Willoughby; with 12 for and 1 abstention the motion was passed. The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting held on 19th November 2024 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr D Bowry; 12 for and 1 abstention the motion was passed. The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting on 4th December 2024 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr J Suttling; 12 for and 1 abstention the motion was passed.

FC006/25. Southend City Councillor's Reports (for information only)

Cllr S Allen gave the following update:

1. Elm Road resurfacing has commenced, parking will be limited in the area.
2. Glyphosate motion was passed at the last Full Council, the Council will now look at measures to phase-out its use on our footpaths over this next season for an eventual removal of its use.
3. Improvements have been made to the city's tree policy taking on board some of the recommendations from the Tree Motion last year.
4. Church Hill, techniques will be tried first to roughen some of the cobblestones with other repairs to follow.
5. The Leigh ward councillors visited the new sea defences and habitat creation on Two Tree Island after its recent completion.
6. The Marine Parade shelter is due to be refurbished soon. The Cinder Path shelter is still being looked at.
7. Trees on Vernon Road - have been advised they will be planted this season.
8. Please report potholes, slabs, graffiti, fly tipping at mySouthend.
9. Report any Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) via 101 or online.

Cllr S Aylen gave the following update:

1. The possible new bus route 23a (daytime only) and 23b (evening only) will be going to Cabinet in March and he hoped it would be agreed.
2. He expressed his concern over the ongoing developments in Daws Heath and possibly causing flooding in the Leigh area. He also mentioned flooding if any building works were agreed for the Salvation Army land. The Council has already

expressed their concern over this to Castle Point Borough Council.

Cllr C Mulroney gave the following update:

1. Southend City Council will be setting their budget on 13th January 2025. This is now out for consultation.
2. Devolution is being discussed by Southend City Council on 8th January 2025 and will then go to cabinet.
3. The next iteration of Castle Point's Local plan will be published later this month and will then go out for consultation again. The Town Council will hold a public meeting on this. Southend City Council have passed a motion that if the Salvation Army land is included, they will consider pursuit of their objections through the public examination to the local plan.

FC007/25. Clerk's Report

1. IT Update – All council files will go over to the cloud the weekend of the 17th January 2025. The wiring investigation will take place on Friday 31st January 2025 with upgrades being undertaken on Friday 21st February 2025.
2. Castle Point Local Plan – The Clerk has replied to Castle Point and has written to Southend City Council.

FC008/25. Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were noted.

- a) Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2024 and 10th December 2024.
- b) Planning, Highways and Licensing Committee meetings held on 12th November 2024, 26th November 2024, and 11th December 2024.
- c) Community and Culture Committee meetings held on 10th December 2024.
- d) Staffing Committee meetings held on 29th October 2024 and 20th November 2024.

FC009/25. Committee Membership

Cllr P Barber put forward the following motion: When electing Committee memberships annually in May, every Councillor shall be given the opportunity to serve on two committees before any Councillor be allowed to join a third or fourth committee. This principle must also be followed when adding new Committee members throughout the year.

Cllr C Mulroney explained how the process worked in previous years prior to May 2023. Before the Annual Council meeting the Clerk would send out a request to Councillors to advise her of their preference for which committees they would like to sit on. The Clerk would then pull together the membership list for ratification at the annual meeting. If there were any oversubscribed committees this would then be voted on at the meeting. Further discussion took place, and the following amendment was put to the original motion.

Amendment: When electing committee membership in May the Clerk shall circulate a list of committees and their numbers in advance of the meeting and members shall indicate their 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferences. Any over subscriptions shall result in a vote of all members. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr Dr D Bowry and agreed unanimously.

The motion with the amendment was then voted on. Proposed by Cllr P Barber, seconded by Cllr P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

FC010/25. Political Party Membership

This motion was rescinded by Cllr P Barber.

FC011/25. Financial Regulations

A discussion took place regarding the Clerk's request to increase the limit for the Finance and Governance Committee to £10,000. Her reasoning for this was every other month the invoices are agreed and authorised for payment by the committee and the amounts can sometimes be over £5,000. A discussion took place and Cllr K Evans felt that as large quotes would have already been discussed and agreed at a Full Council meeting there was no need to increase the limit. It was agreed to leave the amount for the Finance and Governance Committee to £5,000. The Financial Regulations were agreed. Proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr B Arscott and agreed unanimously.

FC012/25. AGAR 2023/24

Cllr C Willoughby circulated her suggested changes to the AGAR for 2023/24. A discussion took place and it was agreed to make the changes and resend to PK Littlejohn the external auditors. Proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr C Mulroney; with 7 for, 1 against and 5 abstentions the motion was passed.

FC013/25. Internal Auditor's reports

The Clerk had circulated the Internal Auditor's reports from October 2023 and June 2024. A short discussion took place and the reports were agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr J Suttling and agreed unanimously.

FC014/25. Bank Mandate

The Clerk asked Full Council to agree adding Cllrs P Barber, Dr D Bowry, C Mulroney and C Willoughby to the bank mandate. The Clerk asked Full Council to agree adding Cllr P Barber, Dr D Bowry, J Garston, C Mulroney, J Suttling and C Willoughby to the CCLA mandate. Both requests were as per the Finance and Governance committee meeting on the 3rd December 2025 recommendations. It was agreed to add all Councillors to the accounts. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr J Suttling and agreed unanimously.

FC015/25. Risk Assessment Schedule

As there were a few items that the Councillors wished to add to the schedule it was agreed they would circulate these to the Clerk and the item be deferred until the next Full Council meeting in March 2025 for agreement. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr O Richards and agreed unanimously.

FC016/25. Asset Register

The Clerk had previously circulated the undated asset register. The Clerk advised that she had not had time to walk round the centre or the other facilities but as far as she was aware the old items for the asset register had not been changed and the updated items added by the Clerk were correct. The Clerk was asked to find out if the Skate Park was insured by Southend City Council as it was their land. The register was agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

FC017/25. Financial Transactions

The Clerk had previously circulated the income and expenditure reports for the month of December 2024.

It was proposed to agree and accept the expenditure for December 2024 for paying. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Willoughby and agreed unanimously.

Cllr B Arscott proposed that the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue until 10pm. Seconded by Cllr C Mulroney and agreed unanimously.

FC018/25. Financial Review

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliations for November 2024. Bank reconciliation for December 2024 were not available and the Clerk will put these on the Finance and Governance Committee meeting February 2025. The reconciliations for November were agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Willoughby and agreed unanimously.

The Clerk had circulated the budget comparison report up to the end of December 2024. Cllr C Mulroney asked why the telephone budget code was up. The Clerk will investigate this. Cllr K Evans asked if the income from the hall hire by the Council was included in the hall income budget code. The Clerk said it wasn't but would look at this. Cllr C Willoughby asked if the Clerk was concerned that the hall hire for the year seemed to be down on the previous year. The Clerk advised she was concerned and would investigate it. It was proposed to accept the budget comparison report. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Willoughby and agreed unanimously.

FC019/25. Direct Debits

The Clerk had previously circulated a list of direct debits for the Council along with a recommendation to set up a direct debit for ICE, the new IT support company, and the information on the regular monthly payments of the salaries, HMRC and pension. All direct debits, including the new one for ICE and the monthly regular payments were agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Willoughby and agreed unanimously.

FC020/25. CIL

The Community and Culture committee recommended that the Council pay for the whole of the mosaic project with CIL money amounting to £8,000. It was agreed to allocate the whole amount. Proposed by Cllr C Mulroney, seconded by Cllr O Richards; with 11 for, 1 against and 1 abstention the motion was passed.

The Clerk had previously circulated the CIL form for Southend City Council showing what had been spent and a forecast for the future. The form was agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watts; with 12 for and 1 abstention the motion was passed.

FC021/25. Draft Budget 2025/26

The Clerk had circulated the recommended draft budget for 2025/26 by the Finance and Governance Committee. A discussion took place regarding whether the estimated CIL money for 2025/26 should be included in the draft or not. It was explained that whilst the money was ringfenced there was in the budget capital expenditure that the CIL would be spent on and therefore the amount could remain. The draft budget was agreed. The amount of precept was £484,790.13. This was an increase from 2024/25 of £18,134.50 a percentage increase of 3.886%. Based on the Council tax base amount from Southend City Council, the amount for a Band D property would be £53.25 and increase of £1.50 and a percentage increase of 2.899%. Proposed by Cllr C Willoughby, seconded by Cllr B Arscott; with 12 for and

1 abstention the motion was passed.

FC022/25. Paddling Pool

The Clerk had circulated the information she had received from Cllr C Mulroney. The Clerk asked if the pool belonged to the Town Council. She explained that if it did then as the cost of the works seemed to be in the regions of £45,000 the Council would have to go out to tender. The Clerk had tried to contact the relevant person at the City Council, but they had not replied to her. Cllr C Mulroney advised she would contact them and find out. Cllr C Mulroney also said that the City Council would be undertaking the works at the Gypsy Pool. Cllr P Gilson asked if the cost for this was included in the City Council proposal. Cllr C Mulroney said it wasn't. This item was deferred until the next Full Council meeting. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

FC023/25. Council Representatives

It was agreed that Cllr B Arscott would represent the Town Council on the Executive Board of the EALC (Essex Association of Local Councils). Proposed by Cllr O Richards seconded by Cllr P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

It was agreed Cllr P Gilson would represent the Town Council at the Water Quality Summit. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr C Watt and agreed unanimously.

FC024/25. 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 P Gilson and agreed unanimously.

Cllr B Arscott proposed extending the meeting again to accommodate the last two items on the agenda; seconded by Cllr C Mulroney and agreed unanimously.

FC025/25 Café

The information for this item was not available and therefore deferred until the next Full Council meeting.

FC026/25. Staffing Matters

The Clerk had circulated the information received from the solicitor re emails dated 23rd December 2024 and 19th December 2024. The information and the conclusions in the emails were agreed. Proposed by Cllr B Arscott, seconded by Cllr P Gilson; with 11 for and 1 abstention the motion was passed.

Cllr P Wexham left the meeting during the discussion of the staffing matters. The Clerk circulated the information from the solicitor re emails dated 18th December and 7th January 2025 for discussion. It was agreed that further information was required, the Clerk will attain this, and an extra ordinary meeting would be arranged for the 15th January 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.40pm.

Chair:

Date:.....