



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Jill Healey
Vice Chairman: Cllr Vivien Rosier
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons *PSLCC*

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF THE LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY 2020
LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71-73 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

Present: Cllrs: Vinice Cowell (from minute 105), Doug Cracknell, Keith Evans, Anita Forde, Paul Gilson, Jill Healey, Caroline Parker (until minute 112), Vivien Rosier, Emma Smith, Mike Wells and Andy Wilkins

Also in attendance: Helen Symmons (Town Clerk) and 17 members of public with another member of public arriving at minute 108b

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 7.31 pm

100. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS INCLUDING HOUSEKEEPING

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and made a presentation to the runners-up of the Leigh Lights Parade competition, Princess Gatherings. The competition was sponsored by Stibbards Funeral directors who were present to make the presentation. Southend Gang Show were awarded first prize but were unable to attend the presentation.

4 members of the public then left and the Chairman made the appropriate housekeeping announcements to those remaining. The Chairman felt that Leigh Lights had been a great success with new features and positive feedback. The Carols on Strand Wharf Event sadly was cancelled due to health and safety reasons which always have to be put first. An oversight was provided of the Community Safety partnership day that both herself and other Councillors had attended and finally the Chairman advised Council that she had represented Council at the Southend Mayor's Civic Carol Service at St Margaret's Church.

101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: Mark Bromfield, Alan Hart, Carole Mulroney, Declan Mulroney and Damian O'Boyle.

102. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

103. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING 19TH NOVEMBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting 19th November 2019 were agreed to have been an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

104. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

The Chairman advised those present of the Council's Standing Orders with regard to public representation.

A member of public, an allotment holder introduced himself and informed Council that he had been a plot holder since the late 1970's and gave his personal precis of allotment management since Leigh Town Council took over from the Borough Council as owners of the land since 1997. He felt that the 4% year on year increase to rents was too high, did not understand why Leigh Town Council made a user charge to Manchester Drive Allotment Society for their clubhouse buildings and stated that it was financial apartheid to charge the non-resident allotment levy.

A member of the public, an allotment holder stated he had spoken to the National Allotment Society and asked various questions regarding the implementation of the levy. The Town Clerk made reference to the fact that Town and Parish Councils had different systems with regard to non-residents having allotment plots, some not permitting it, some have different rental prices and others implementing a similar levy system to that which Council had resolved in March 2019. The Town Clerk advised that there was no mention of allotments in the news flash article published that day in the Leigh Times due to limited space. She pointed out that the Allotment Societies are invited every time the full magazine editions are planned to write a piece on their societies and the allotment site. The member of public stated that it was a disproportionate levy in their view.

A member of the public, a Leigh Town Council resident, informed Council that she had an allotment in Castle Point where they received no service unlike the allotment sites in Leigh. She pays £37.25 for a half plot with no concessions for being a pensioner unlike Leigh plot holders. She stated that she did not think it fair that precept payers in Leigh subsidise the allotments.

A member of public, an allotment holder stated it was 'out of order' to charge the non-resident allotment levy when they had been asked to take on a plot in the 1980's.

Cllr Cowell arrived

5 members of the public left the meeting.

105. SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllr Evans was invited to speak but stated he had nothing to report.

106. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were none.

107. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The report was **NOTED**.

COMMITTEES

108. COMMITTEES – **Agenda item 9**

- a) Cllr Healey presented the minutes of the Planning, Licensing & Highways Committee as per the Agenda. There were no recommendation.
- b) Cllr C Forde presented the minutes of the Community & Culture Committee as per the Agenda. There were two recommendations:

Minute 92 - Council **RESOLVED** to increase the Refurbishment budget for 2020/21 to £50,000 to ensure that the essential works to the basement and external staircase could be undertaken.

A further member of the public joined the meeting.

Minute 96 – the petition was referred to Council and the Town Clerk read correspondence from an allotment holder residing in Westcliff who felt that 'all Leigh people should pay towards the allotments instead of an unfairly selected few'. The non-resident allotment levy due to apply in September 2020 was discussed by Councillors in great depth. The Town Clerk was requested

to confirm the number of allotment holders who had signed the petition and she referred to Report 2732b. Of the current 150 non-residents who had allotment plots, 66 plots had signed the petition. Of the current 255 residents with allotment plots, 11 had signed the petition. All who had signed the petition were members of Manchester Drive Allotment Society. Nothing had been received from Marshall Close or Leigh Allotment Society. The Town Clerk was requested to confirm the allotment budget deficit for 2020/21 and she referred to Report 2732b. If the non-resident allotment levy was not implemented, then the allotments budget would be £15,850. With the allotment levy the Council would still be subsidising the allotments but for the lesser amount of £12,850. All Leigh Town Council residents through their precept payment contribute already to this subsidy.

Council recognised the efforts that all the Societies put in at the allotments but no motion was put forward to rescind the decision in March 2019 and withdraw the non-resident allotment levy due to be implemented in September 2020. The non-resident allotment levy will therefore be charged to any allotment holder who does not live in the Leigh Town Council area and who therefore does not pay the Leigh Town Council precept. This in addition to the rent and water charge payable.

8 members of the public left the meeting

109. REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Cllrs Cowell, Cracknell, Evans and Wilkins attended the Southend Borough Council New Local Plan workshop and gave an overview of the presentation. At the end of Summer 2020 further consultation is expected on the Local Plan.

Cllrs Cracknell, Evans, Healey, Rosier and Smith attended Op Leigh the Community Safety Day and spoke to residents and business owners. There was a sense of community in the town and Cllrs Rosier and Smith will follow up the key issues that arose from the day and keep the community informed. Many were not aware of the local community police meetings. The Town Clerk advised that these are on the Council website and advertised when possible. The next meeting is Monday 3rd February at Belfairs Woodland Centre. Cllr Cracknell advised that he would be unable to attend due to the Community Infrastructure workshop at Southend Borough Council which all Councillors had been invited to.

DECISION ITEMS

110. TO NOTE INTERNAL ACCOUNT TRANSFERS AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE - **Agenda item 11**

Council **NOTED** the transfers and **RESOLVED** the expenditure

111. SPATIAL PLAN PDG – **Agenda item 12**

Background was given to newer Councillors regarding the Spatial Plan and some discussion on the four proposed working groups took place with Cllrs Rosier and Smith expressing an interest in being part of the walking route working group.

Council **RESOLVED** that four groups be formed with 4 councillors in each group. The Town Clerk will email Councillors to obtain their preference for which working group they would like to be involved in.

Cllr Parker left the meeting

112. COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21 – **Agenda item 13**

Council discussed the options in detail and recognised that the Council must ensure that it informs residents continually of the work being undertaken by Council for the Town.

Following a proposal (Cllr Gilson, seconded Cllr Wells) Council **RESOLVED** that the 2020/21 budget be £447,000 with a Band D precept of £50.58, an increase of £2.88 (6%). Based on this precept, Council will receive £447,392.24

113. SALARY BUDGET – **Agenda item 14**

The review of the salary budget was signed by the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Council.

FOR NOTING / CONSIDERATION

114. SOUTHEND 2050 AMBITION

Councillors **NOTED** the report and were keen on the milestone over the next five years that no cars are permitted to park on pavements and verges

115. SOUTHEND STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Council **NOTED** the report and had nothing to add

116. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- a) Council **NOTED** the report.
- b) Cllr Rosier agreed to email Councillors with prospective dates. It was felt an evening would be better rather than a Saturday morning.

117. COUNCIL BUDGET 2019/20

Council **NOTED** the budget

118. COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES

Council **NOTED** the balances

119. INTERNAL AUDIT

Council **NOTED** the report and congratulated the Town Clerk and her team for their hard work.

CONFIDENTIAL

120. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC – The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded and instructed to withdraw – SO3d other special reason and legal

The remaining member of the public left the meeting.

121. ALLOTMENTS RIGHT OF WAY

Council **NOTED** the report.

122. LEIGH LIGHTS SECURITY MATTER

Council **NOTED** the report and accompanying statements. Council was in agreement with the Police view in that the resident should either report it to the police or contact the security firm direct.

123. GOOD FOR LEIGH AWARDS & VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Council **NOTED** that the Volunteer of the Year nomination was being advertised.

Council **RESOLVED** 6 nominations for Good for Leigh Awards which will be presented at the Annual Community Meeting in April.

The meeting closed at 9.46 pm