



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Caroline Parker
Vice Chairman: Cllr Paul Lawrence
Town Clerk: Paul Beckerson



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30PM ON WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2013 AT LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71-73 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

Present: Cllrs: Caroline Parker (Chairman), Margaret Cotgrove, Geoff Crawford, Donald Fraser, Richard Herbert, Jerry Holden, Pat Holden, Paul Lawrence, Carole Mulroney, Cliff Passmore and Patsy Ryan.

Also in attendance: Paul Beckerson (Town Clerk)

Prayers were read by Rev Julia Monaghan (Wesley Methodists) prior to the meeting.

The meeting opened at 7.34pm

77. OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. She introduced members to the work of her nominated charity 'The Sycamore Fund' which supports young carers. She was in attendance at an event in the Westcliff Casino 'Alternative City of Culture' dedicated to artistic and culture activities within the Borough. Members were reminded that if they were available their help would be appreciated at the 'Carols on Strand Wharf' on Saturday. Thanks were given to all those involved in the Leigh Lights and commented that it was possibly the most successful to date.

Leigh Infant's School of which the Chairman is a Governor has been awarded the outstanding by 'OFSTED' in all categories.

78. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Mark Bromfield, Alex Coulson, Syrie Cox, David Stanley and John Wren

80. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

81. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were none.

82. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 13th November 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

83. COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Cllr Richard Herbert was elected to fill one of the vacancies on LF&E, this left 1 vacancy on LF&E, 4 on P&L and 1 on Allotments. Council agreed that those not present should be emailed to see if any of them were interested in filling any of the remaining vacancies.

84. COMMITTEES

- a) Planning Committee – The minutes of the meetings held on the 12th and 26th November 2013 were **noted**.

Council **agreed** that the last line in Minute 232 should refer to the whole Committee, not just Cllrs Margaret Cotgrove and Donald Fraser.

- b) Allotments Committee – The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2013 were **noted**.
- c) Leisure, Foreshore & Environment Committee – The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st November 2013 were **noted**.
- d) Finance & General Purposes Committee – The minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd December 2013 were **noted** except for the recommendations in Minutes 99(a), 99(c), 104, 106, and 109.

Cllr Jerry Holden asked the Chairman of F&GPC the following questions relating to the budget:

Could I ask the Chairman of F&GP to circulate a report to all Members to explain why another £50,000 (General Purposes Budget) levy on the residents of Leigh is necessary next year, particularly as none of this year's £50,000 has been allocated to anything at all yet?

Could the Chairman of F&GP please send round a note to all Members explaining the financial risk assessments undertaken and the reasons why the General Reserve has increased by £20,000?

I ask these questions because I believe that, in the interests of transparency and accountability, information should be publicly available which explains in detail why such significant increases in taxation are being proposed."

The Chairman of F&GPC answered by saying that:

All these topics were debated at some length at meetings open to the public and anybody was able to attend, therefore she would not be providing any additional reports.

Minute 99 - MOTIONS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS

a) Legal Advice to Council.

That when legal advice is presented to a Committee by either the Town Clerk or an individual Councillor as being legal advice to the Council from a third party, rather than private advice to an individual Councillor and that advice is likely or intended to influence the decisions of that Committee then that advice must be presented in writing, with provenance, on the agenda or as a confidential appendix, if necessary.

Council **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendation.

c) Agenda items, motions and reports

- 1) That all agenda items be accompanied by a short report (up to one page of A4) with sufficient information so that Committee members can prepare adequately for meetings, with recommendations if appropriate.

An amendment was moved to replace 'a short report (up to one page of A4)' with 'an officer report' Proposed Cllr Richard Herbert, as there was no seconder the proposal was not taken.

An amendment was put to replace 'a short report (up to one page of A4)' with 'a report'. Proposed Cllr Jerry Holden; Seconded Cllr Paul Lawrence.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment.

A further amendment was tabled to add two new sentences at the end 'All reports must be circulated along with the agenda unless there are exceptional circumstances. Additional or new information may be added subsequently'. Proposed Cllr Jerry Holden; Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment.

The motion as amended was then put to the vote:

That all agenda items be accompanied by a report with sufficient information so that Committee members can prepare adequately for meetings, with recommendations if appropriate. All reports must be circulated along with the agenda unless there are exceptional circumstances. Additional or new information may be added subsequently.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amended motion.

- 2) That all motions are accompanied by a short (up to one page of A4) discussion document with sufficient information that members can prepare adequately for meetings. If the motion or discussion paper contains errors of fact the Town Clerk should give a correcting report.

An amendment was put to alter the motion to:

That all motions are accompanied by a discussion document with sufficient information that members can prepare adequately for meetings and if the motion or discussion paper contains errors of fact the Town Clerk should give a correcting report.

The discussion document and any correcting reports must be circulated along with the agenda otherwise it will be withdrawn unless there are any exceptional circumstances. Additional or new information may be added subsequently.

Proposed Cllr Jerry Holden; Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amended motion.

Minute 104 - SOCIAL MEDIA, INTERNET AND EMAIL POLICY - Report 2293A/TC

Council discussed the scope of the policy and if it applied to public use of the Wi-Fi system. The F&GPC Chairman clarified that it related only to internal use of the Council's domain and applied to staff and members who used the domain network and servers.

It was **agreed** that all users will be given unique logins, staff being subject to the normal disciplinary procedures and members the Code of Conduct. Control and supervision will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk and will be applied on a reactive basis.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.

Minute 106 – REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Leisure, Foreshore and Environment 21st November 2013 – Minute 53

F&GPC **RECOMMENDED** to Council that £5,625 be taken from reserves to cover this overspend and requested that the convenor of the Leigh Lights Working Party produce a report to the next F&GP meeting to recommend actions to be taken to prevent an overspend on this budget line next year.

Council **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendation.

- d) Leigh Community Centre Committee – The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2013 were **noted** with the exception of the recommendations in Minutes 72 and 77.

Members discussed Minute 75 – Council Chamber at some length and in detail. Members were reminded this was not at this stage a recommendation and that when the proposals were finalised and costed it would be a recommendation to F&GPC as there was no budget for the proposals.

Minute 72 – LCC CAFETERIA – REPORT 2297/TC

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Council that it would support the establishment of a company as outlined in the Report 2297/TC to continue the café operation while investigating alternative expressions of interest.

An amendment was put to delete the words ‘while investigating alternative expressions of interest,’ Proposed Cllr Richard Herbert; Seconded Cllr Jerry Holden.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment.

A second amendment was moved to delete the words ‘as outlined in Report 2297/TC’ and add at end ‘subject to the signing of an agreement and licence’. Proposed Cllr Patsy Ryan; Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment.

A third amendment was proposed to add additional paragraph at the end ‘That the Council loans the company £1,700 for immediate costs to be taken from reserves.’ Proposed Cllr Jerry Holden; Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney.

A recorded vote was requested:

For the amendment: Cllrs Margaret Cotgrove, Geoff Crawford, Donald Fraser, Richard Herbert, Jerry Holden, Pat Holden, Carole Mulroney, Cliff Passmore and Patsy Ryan. **9**

Against the amendment: Cllr Paul Lawrence. **1**

The Council therefore **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment.

The amended motion was then put to the vote.

That Council would support the establishment of a company to continue the café operation subject to the signing of an agreement and licence.

That the Council loans the company £1,700 for immediate costs to be taken from reserves.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the amended motion.

Minute 77 – VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE – Report 2286/RH

That Leigh Town Council:

- **establishes a vision for the future of the Community Centre;**

and that Officers and Councillors

- **create a new business plan including:-**
 1. identification of current and future uses
 2. establishment of required changes / improvements to the existing building
 3. a financial viability study (operational/capital)

4. identification of sources of finance (grant/donation/s106/precept)
5. an assessment of the social impact of the project
6. consultation and assessment of the continuing support for the project if the original consultation becomes invalid
7. establishment of a time scale

and that the council

- **liaises with SBC and other community groups;**
- **Prepares a strategy for securing the long term future of the building as a Community Centre for the people of Leigh with options as to how this would be achieved**

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

75. FINANCIAL REPORT

Income & Expenditure Report 2294/I&E

A recorded vote was requested after a query was raised regarding cheque payment 100806:

To approve the payments: Cllrs Geoff Crawford, Donald Fraser, Richard Herbert, Carole Mulroney, Cliff Passmore and Patsy Ryan. **6**

Against the amendment: Cllrs Margaret Cotgrove, Jerry Holden, Pat Holden and Paul Lawrence.
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Therefore the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the payments.

The meeting closed at 9.58pm