

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors D Bowater
 F Kharawala (Chair)
 C Palmer
 R Berry
 C Chambers
 K Cursons
 A Dodwell
 M Freeman
 S Jones
 T Morris (Deputy Chair)
 G Perham
 B Spurr
 V Harvey
 S Hemmings
 D Scott
 J Silverstone
 P Snelling
 R Goodchild
 A Gray
 S Owen

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central
 Services
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services
 M Jahn, Committee Officer
 J Murphy, Administration Mayor and Cemeteries

Members of the Public: 16

127 ELECTION OF CHAIR (TOWN MAYOR)

Councillor D Bowater, Town Mayor for 2019-2020, welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited nominations for the position of Chair for 2020-2021.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor F Kharawala be appointed Chair of the Town Council for the municipal year 2020-2021. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor F Kharawala Chair of Leighton-Linslade Town Council (Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2020-2021.

Councillor F Kharawala took the Chair.**128 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Councillor F Kharawala made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office of Town Mayor for the municipal year 2020-2021, witnessed by the Town Clerk. Councillor F Kharawala was duly invested with the Chain and badge of Office.

129 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Kharawala thanked the Council for appointing her Town Mayor and advised the Council that her chosen charities for the year would include CHUMS Charity, Homestart Beds and MacMillan Cancer Support.

A representative from CHUMS Charity spoke to thank the Mayor for choosing their charity, which provided services throughout Bedfordshire to offer advice and bereavement support to young carers and families in need.

A representative of Homestart spoke to express their thanks for being chosen as a Mayoral charity. Homestart support local Leighton-Linslade families through issues within their lives especially during this difficult time with COVID-19.

A representative of Macmillan Cancer Support had technical difficulties in speaking at the meeting but had also submitted thanks for being chosen as a Mayoral charity.

130 VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor S Jones spoke to give a vote of thanks to retiring Town Mayor for 2019-2020, Councillor D Bowater. It was recognised that Councillor Bowater had hosted 8 events including Rock of Ages, carol concert and a quiz night before COVID-19 began and events then had to be cancelled. A virtual murder mystery event was held which proved successful and a Peace Marathon organised to celebrate VJ day. The title of Honorary Freeman of the Town was bestowed on Wally Randall and the award was presented to him by Councillor Bowater for his work within the community. A total of £7,170.53 was raised and divided equally among Councillor Bowater's three chosen charities. Thanks were given to Councillor Bowater and Mrs Bowater for their work and dedication throughout the past eighteen months.

131 RESPONSE BY RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor Bowater thanked the Council for its support during his time as Mayor especially in these difficult times and also expressed thanks to many others including Town Council staff especially Julie Murphy, Sarah Sandiford and Councillor Kharawala as his deputy. He gave special thanks to all the

local volunteers who provided many unseen services and organised events within Leighton-Linslade for the benefit of the town and the community.

Councillor Bowater then gave special mention to his three chosen charities Hospice at Home, Motor Neurone Disease Association Voice Banking and Yes We Can. Thanks were expressed by the charities for the support given and funds raised during Councillor Bowater's term of office.

132 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR (DEPUTY MAYOR)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor T Morris be appointed Vice Chair of the Town Council for the municipal year 2020-2021. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor T Morris Vice Chair (Deputy Mayor) of the Leighton-Linslade Town Council for the municipal year 2020-2021.

133 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor T Morris made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office of Deputy Town Mayor for the municipal year 2020-2021, witnessed by the Town Clerk. Councillor Morris was duly invested with the Chain and Badge of Office.

134 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

135 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests, and the nature of those interests, that they might have in any of the items under consideration at the meeting.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest as a volunteer with the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom. Councillor Harvey also declared an interest as a member of South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared and no dispensations were requested.

136 LEADERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor S Jones, Leader of the Conservative group, spoke to re-iterate how COVID-19 had had an impact on the progress of objectives, but the Council was now catching up with what needed to be addressed. The next important step being the setting of the budget for the following year.

Councillor Goodchild, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, spoke to give congratulations to Councillor Kharawala for her appointment as Town Mayor

and hoped she would adhere to the most important duty of strict neutrality in Council business during her term in office.

137 QUESTIONS

(a) There were no questions from the public

(b) Under standing order 1(a) the Chair moved the questions from Councillors to the end of the agenda.

138 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Council received the draft minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 August 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 August 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

(b) Minute reference 113 High Street Pedestrianisation - a question was raised regarding the installation of the bollards in the High Street and whether a consultation had taken place regarding Hockliffe Street by Leighton Linslade Town Council. It was confirmed that discussion had taken place with business owners in Hockliffe Street and Lake Street and a summary of comments would be shared.

Another question was raised regarding the temporary bus shelters in West Street and if Central Bedfordshire Council had provided an update on their installation. Officers would contact Central Bedfordshire Council and provide any update to councillors.

Other information updates would be covered as the agenda progressed.

139 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2019-2020

(a) Due to COVID-19 the External Auditors deadline had been extended and the Council expected to receive the report during the next two to three weeks. Once received the report would be circulated and published, to be formally brought to Council in January 2021.

RESOLVED to await the Auditor's Certificate and Opinion on the Annual Return for 2019-2020.

140 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME RE-ACCREDITATION

Council gave consideration to a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee on 21 September 2020 regarding re-accreditation of the Council's Quality Gold status.

Concerns were raised as to the amount of work this type of award scheme

created and the capacity of the staff in the Town Council under present circumstances. Members were assured the only extra work was the completion of the application form as the accreditation was simply a demonstration of work already being achieved by the Council and already being evidenced on the website. On voting one abstention was received from Councillor Harvey.

RESOLVED that the required documents, information and conditions were in place to seek Quality Gold re-accreditation, as set out in the application form.

141 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Council considered appointments to new Guaranteed Grant recipients: Rotary Club of Leighton Linslade (Yes We Can), Autism Bedfordshire, Freddie and Friends Sunshine Stop CIC and Keech Hospice Care.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Bowater as representative for Rotary Club of Leighton Linslade (Yes We Can), Councillor Cursons for Autism Bedfordshire, Councillor Dodwell for Freddie and Friends Sunshine Stop and Councillors Kharawala and Cursons to Keech Hospice Care.

(b) There were no other changes in appointments to outside bodies.

A concern was raised regarding Councillors not being invited to meetings for their outside organisation as they were representing the Town Council with these bodies. Reminders would be sent to organisations with details of their appointed councillors.

142 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Council received the existing Committee appointments and was asked to consider any changes for the municipal year 2020-2021. It was noted that Councillor Owen had replaced Councillor Gray on Planning and Transport Committee and Councillor Gray replaced Councillor Owen on Community Safety Sub Committee.

Councillor Chambers would be replaced by Councillor Kharawala on the Market Sub Committee.

RESOLVED to note the changes to Committee appointments.

143 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Council received the draft minutes of Committee meetings held from February to August 2020 with recommendations being dealt with in agenda items 18 – 23.

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the following meetings:

(a) Partnership Meeting 6 February 2020

Minute reference 44/LLP Enabling Delivery in Leighton-Linslade (Land South of the High Street and Westlands Care Home) – questions were raised as to whether the results of the drop-in session had been analysed and could they be presented to Committee. Also whether the public day care provision consultation had taken place and if so could the results come back to Committee. The Chair of Partnership would contact Central Bedfordshire Council to confirm this.

(b) Planning and Transport Committee meetings of 19 February, 11 March, 6 July, 22 July and 19 August.

Minute reference 87/P (19 February) Transport Matters – a question was raised regarding Central Bedfordshire policy on electric car charging points. It was confirmed that no response had been received from the local authority but the request would be re-sent.

Minute reference 93/P (11 March) Planning Applications – an error was found as the same planning application was listed in two resolutions. This would be checked and corrected.

Planning & Transport Committee 6 July 2020 – Councillor Goodchild to be added to list of attendees.

(c) Policy and Finance Committee meetings of 24 February and 20 July 2020.

Minute reference 110/PF (24 February) Committee Objectives and Work Plan – Councillor Goodchild repeated his earlier request for a staffing structure and report. This would be brought to the relevant committee at a future date.

Minute reference 126/PF (20 July) Annual Governance Statement – a question was raised whether the survey had been undertaken with elected members. This was anticipated to be done during the Autumn.

(d) Grounds & Environmental Services Committee of 2 March 2020.**(e) Cultural & Economic Services Committee of 9 March 2020.**

Minute reference 50/CE Standing Items – General Updates – a request was made to bring Pigeon Management to the December Committee meeting.

144 GREEN WHEEL MASTERPLAN

Council considered a recommendation from Partnership Committee of 6 February 2020 (minute ref 43/LLP) to endorse the revised Green Wheel document.

Members agreed this was a very informative, detailed and important document and thanked all officers and organisations involved, but concerns were raised regarding how it would be accessed and used by Central Bedfordshire Highways for planning decisions particularly at the eastern

development in Leighton-Linslade.

RESOLVED to endorse the Green Wheel Masterplan.

145 STANDING ORDERS

Council considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee of 20 July (minute ref 126/PF) to consider proposed changes to Standing Orders.

It was noted that in accordance with Standing Order 26(b), once proposed and seconded, the changes would stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor S Jones and seconded by Councillor A Dodwell that the proposed changes be accepted by Council.

146 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Council considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee of 20 July (minute ref 126/PF) for amendments to Financial Regulations. On being proposed and seconded, the amendments were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed amendments to Financial Regulations as set out.

147 RECRUITMENT POLICY

Council considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance committee of 20 July (minute ref 131/PF) to endorse the Recruitment Policy. On being proposed and seconded, the policy was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the new Recruitment Policy.

148 COMPASSIONATE AND SPECIAL LEAVE PROCEDURE

Council considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee of 20 July (minute ref 131/PF) to approve changes to the Compassionate and Special Leave Procedure in line with recent changes in legislation. On being proposed and seconded, the amendments were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the revised section 7 of the Compassionate and Special Leave Procedure as set out.

149 TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTIVES AND PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Council considered recommendations made by the Policy and Finance Committee on 20 January 2020 which were deferred at the Council meeting of 27 January 2020 due to lack of time.

Concerns were raised regarding the format and content of the five-year plan; in particular, questions were raised regarding including a date adopted or version number and how objectives were to be prioritised. It was noted that some content was now out of date due to the delay in approval from January to September.

It was confirmed the content of the plan was delivered through the various Committees and more detail was included in the work plans of each committee of timescales, urgency and proposed budgets. Each committee work plan was reviewed in March to identify priorities for the following municipal/financial year.

Members stated the Partnership Project List should be used as a point of discussion with Central Beds Council officers to set some realistic objectives, giving priority to the more urgent issues and as a living document it should be updated regularly to provide more accurate information. This could be discussed and agreed at Partnership Committee.

The recommendations were moved and seconded and on voting were carried with 14 for, 2 abstentions and 4 against.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to approve the revised wording in the Five-Year Plan for 2019-2024, to incorporate objectives agreed by Council on 30 September 2019.**
- (b) to approve the proposed Partnership Project list which incorporated aspirations agreed by Council on 30 September 2019 as well as ongoing aspirations carried forward from Big Plan II (town plan for 2011-2017).**
- (c) that where considered relevant and appropriate, to seek the support of the Partnership Committee to lobby on behalf of the Parish in raising the profile of any project(s) as set out within the Leighton Linslade Partnership Project List.**

150 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Council considered a recommendation from Grounds and Environmental Services Committee of 14 September 2020 to endorse Option 2 – the devolved model – as set out in Central Bedfordshire Council's Public Realm Position Statement and Operating Model.

Council agreed this was a scheme which would invest in the town and include outlying villages. It was hoped that Central Bedfordshire Council would set out the parameters across the hubs to ensure parishes know whom to approach. Concerns were raised that the Town Council would not take over services presently provided by Central Bedfordshire Council and that our Grounds and Environmental Services Team had capacity to deliver extra services and maintenance of the equipment. The Head of Grounds and

Environmental Services assured members there would be no need to increase staffing to cover this. On voting the recommendation was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

(i) to endorse Option 2 – the devolved model – as set out in Central Bedfordshire Council’s Public Realm Position Statement and Operating Model and to accept circa £100,000 for the purchase of the relevant and appropriate equipment, to deliver a town ranger/public realm service for Leighton Linslade and to surrounding parishes namely, Billington, Eggington, Stanbridge, Hockliffe, Heath and Reach, Battlesden, Potsgrove, Milton Bryan, Woburn, Aspley Heath, Aspley Guise, Husborne Crawley Parish Councils.

(ii) to delegate authority to the Town Clerk as the Proper Officer to sign the Terms and Conditions or the arrangement as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between Leighton-Linslade Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Chair stated the meeting should be brought to a close due to reaching the 2.5 hour time limit set out in Standing Orders.

It was proposed and seconded that Standing Order 3x be suspended for a further thirty minutes. On taking a vote, this motion was not carried with 14 against and 6 for. The Mayor closed the meeting accordingly.

151 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

152 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (moved from agenda item 11b)

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.01 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2020.

Chair

25 JANUARY 2021