

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors D Bowater (Chair)
 F Kharawala (Vice-Chair)
 C Palmer
 R Berry
 K Cursons
 A Dodwell
 M Freeman
 S Jones
 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
 V Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic
 Services
 S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central
 Services.
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services
 M Jahn, Committee Officer
 S Lakin, Strategic Transport Manager, Central
 Bedfordshire Council

Members of the Public: 10

107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor T Morris and Councillor C Chambers.

108 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.

Councillors Bowater, Harvey, Cursons and Jones declared a personal interest due to involvement with the COVID-19 Task Force/Leighton Linslade Helpers.

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.

Councillor K Cursons declared a personal interest as a member of All Saints Church and Councillor Freeman as President of the Leighton Buzzard Branch of the British Legion. Councillor R Goodchild declared a personal interest as a member of the British Legion. Councillor A Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Police and Crime Panel.

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.

109 **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bowater thanked all who participated and supported the VJ Day Peace Marathon, it was an excellent day and raised funds for various charities including the Mayor's charities.

110 **LEADERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor S Jones, Leader of the Conservative group, spoke about how much the town had grown in the last thirty years and how the Town Council had grown alongside it, from a handful of staff to the current team of around 40. From a time when all decisions were made by the Council, the volume of business to be transacted now saw a committee structure in place with associated delegated powers and supported by Heads of Service. The committee structure enabled the detailed discussion to take place and in most cases, decisions to be taken at that level, whilst any recommendations outside the scheme of delegation would come to full Council to determine. Councillor Jones asked Members to please remember this to avoid unnecessary duplication of debate on matters already debated or decided and encouraged Members with questions to direct them through the appropriate committee and Head of Service. This would allow the Council to focus on delivery of projects and services within its direct control, whilst continuing to work in partnership with other bodies through the appropriate committee to aim towards delivery of larger projects.

Councillor Goodchild, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, acknowledged Councillor Jones' comments but wanted to re-iterate his plea from an earlier meeting regarding the need to improve the behaviour demonstrated at meetings.

111 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- (a) Council received the draft minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July 2020.

Minute reference 95 (Leaders' Announcements) – a question was raised regarding the use of the title Leader of the Conservative Group and should this not be Leader of the Council. It was confirmed that "Leader of the Council" was an honorary title which the Leader of the majority group was entitled to use but that in the context of Group Leaders' announcements, use of "Leader of the Conservative group" was correct.

Also Councillor Goodchild confirmed his group agreed with a thanksgiving service to honour NHS staff, key workers, volunteers and those affected by COVID-19 but wanted it noted the idea originated from him.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

(b) It was confirmed that all updates on matters arising from the previous meeting would be discussed as dedicated agenda items later in the meeting.

112 QUESTIONS

(a) Questions from the public

A member of the public raised a question to ask if the Town Council would issue a public statement making its position clear on racism in the light of recent events around the world. It was confirmed this would be considered and brought back to Policy and Finance Committee for discussion.

A member of All Saints Church spoke to request assistance from the Town Council with funding towards purchasing equipment for streaming services and events from the Church. It was confirmed this would be discussed later as an item listed on the agenda.

Another question was raised by three separate members of the public regarding cycling within the town after the Gear Change initiative introduced by the Government, which provided a great opportunity to improve and include better and safer cycling and walking routes in Leighton-Linslade. It was confirmed this would be discussed later as an item listed on the agenda.

(b) Questions from Councillors

Councillor Owen had submitted three questions in advance of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 27:

Q1. Does the Town Clerk agree that certain beneficial changes to Standing Orders may be needed and will he bring a brief introductory report on this to Policy & Finance Committee on 21 September?

Q2: will the Town Clerk please convey to our staff our appreciation for their

efforts for the Council and the Town during the past difficult six months, hoping that the autumn does not bring a further pandemic surge for them to cope with.

Q3: Will the Town Clerk please arrange for the public Q relating to Black Lives Matter to be placed on the agenda for Policy and Finance Committee on 21 September along with the LGA policy statement.

The Town Clerk answered all three questions in the affirmative, unless there was any dissent from Council on the proposed actions. No dissent was expressed.

113 **HIGH STREET TEMPORARY PEDESTRIANISATION**

(a) By invitation Mr S Lakin, Strategic Transport Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council attended the meeting to answer questions regarding the trial pedestrianisation of the High Street. Mr Lakin reiterated the three main objectives of the trial pedestrianisation: to support the Town Council in bringing the market back into the High Street, to allow for safe social distancing and to re-start the High Street by providing businesses with additional space in which to expand their offer. This was an experimental order for 18 months and any changes being made to the High Street such as changes to road markings, provision of additional street furniture and planters were temporary. The Town Council was thanked for its encouragement of use of the new pedestrianised space in providing the new additional Thursday market.

Some concerns were raised regarding public perception of changes as a permanent decision. Mr Lakin confirmed that no permanent decisions would be made without full consultation with all stakeholders (residents, businesses) as well as full consideration of all the implications to town centre users, including bus users and Blue Badge drivers. Central Bedfordshire Council was mindful of the issues being faced by some High Street users (e.g. cyclists) and was reviewing the question of disabled car parking as well as considering provision of additional, temporary seating to help bus users rest on their journey to and from the temporary bus stops on West Street.

In respect of the temporary bus stops on West Street, Central Bedfordshire officers were looking at provision of additional seating as well as the feasibility of installing suitable temporary shelters. Again, no permanent changes would be made. Funding for any shelters was a question yet to be addressed.

It was noted that some minor amendments needed to be made to the TTRO in order to address matters such as delivery times to local businesses. It was requested that a copy of this be sent to the Town Clerk for circulation.

Mr Lakin encouraged Members to forward any further questions through the Town Clerk or Head of Service and reiterated that all feedback would be stored by Central Bedfordshire Council until such time as any permanent

decision was made on the experimental Order. It was also reiterated that any future permanent changes would be subject to a new and substantive round of consultation.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) Council received a motion proposed by Councillor S Owen and seconded by Councillor R Goodchild: "That the Town Clerk be instructed to discuss with Central Bedfordshire Council to secure the provision of additional seating and bad-weather shelters (of a temporary and portable nature) at the two bus-stops on either side of West Street, Leighton Buzzard, with urgency in view of the approach of adverse autumn and winter weather, and to report to Policy & Finance Committee on 21 September whether any contribution by this Council to the cost of such work might be helpful or appropriate."

Councillor Owen introduced the Motion and advised Council that despite the announcement that Central Bedfordshire Council was considering provision of seating and shelters, that a formal resolution should still be made. Councillor Goodchild seconded the Motion and reiterated the need for seating as well as shelter, given that the temporary TRO would see bus users using the temporary stops during the winter.

An amendment was proposed to the original motion by Councillor Jones and it was further proposed that a vote be taken. This was seconded by Councillor Dodwell.

Two points of order were raised by Councillor Owen. The Chair ruled that a vote would be taken on the proposed amendment. A recorded vote was requested (see Appendix A).

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried (11 for, 7 against). It was clarified that this was now the substantive motion and no further vote was required.

RESOLVED that this Council welcomes the announcement made by Central Bedfordshire Council on Monday 17 August 2020 that temporary shelters and additional seating are being investigated at the bus stops in West Street (occasioned by the TRO on the High Street pedestrianisation) and would ask that this Council be kept informed on the timescale for completion and the progress.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:50 and recommenced at 20:55 hours.

114 **CYCLING**

Council received and considered a motion proposed by Councillor S Owen and seconded by Councillor R Goodchild that "this Council welcomes the publication on 27 July 2020 of the Government's "Gear Change" cycling strategy for a radical shift towards encouraging cycling, supports the health

and environmental drivers of this strategy, notes the accompanying announcement of substantial funding, and asks the Town Clerk speedily to undertake discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council and with BuzzCycles with the aim, through partnership, of securing identified cycling improvements for Leighton Buzzard and Linslade”.

Councillor Owen introduced the Motion and noted that objective number 34 on the Town Council’s emerging Partnership Project List was in support of continued investment in the cycling network and encouragement of increased cycling. The existing Buzzcycles plan had been captured within the revised Green Wheel Masterplan, with the aim of providing safer accessible routes to the town centre, across rivers and canals, and additional cycle storage in the town centre. The motion was seconded by Councillor R Goodchild.

Councillor S Jones expressed support for the principles outlined and noted that cycling improvements were already due to be discussed and progressed through the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group, at which representatives of both councils would be present as well as other stakeholders, with all matters relating to the Green Wheel Masterplan already agreed to be reported back through the Partnership Committee. An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded whereby this matter would be progressed through the two bodies stated above.

A point of order was raised in respect of the proposed amendment, which was overruled. The view was expressed that this represented duplication of work which was already in progress through the appropriate bodies. Another view was expressed that despite the clear support of both councils for improved cycling, which was to be welcomed, it was important to continue to state that support and seek to progress matters.

Councillor Owen spoke in his right of reply to underline that this was a newly announced Government initiative which had not been discussed in any Town Council forum prior to the meeting.

The amendment was put to the vote (see Appendix B) and carried (11 for, 6 against and 1 abstention).

RESOLVED this Council welcomes the publication on 27 July 2020 of the Government's "Gear Change" cycling strategy for a radical shift towards encouraging cycling, supports the health and environmental drivers of this strategy, notes the accompanying announcement of substantial funding and notes that as previously agreed, matters relating to cycling be dealt with by the Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group through its work towards the Green Wheel Masterplan and that this be reported back to Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee.

115 COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Further to discussion at the previous meeting of 27 July 2020, Council

received a further report regarding future support of the constituent parts of the COVID-19 Task Force and considered the recommendations contained therein. The recommendations were agreed with one abstention.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Town Council continues to provide ad-hoc support to all constituent groups that form part of the Covid-19 Task Force in accordance with the resolution made at Extraordinary Council Meeting held 20th March 2020 and that this be reviewed by Council at its meeting to be held 25th January 2021.**
- (b) To make all the constituent groups that form the Covid-19 Task Force aware that Town Council funding mechanisms are available (subject to meeting town criteria) should they decide to apply for direct funding or grant funding.**

116 **DEED OF EASEMENT**

Council received and considered a report to seek endorsement to grant a deed of easement for the installation of a new gas main across Lovent Drive public open space.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to grant Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) the right to lay and thereafter maintain a pipeline and ancillary apparatus through parts of the Lovent drive public open space.**
- (b) to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to deal with all the matters involved in checking the engrossment of said deed of easement.**
- (c) in accordance with standing order 23(b), to nominate Councillor R Berry and Councillor S Jones to sign, on behalf of the Council, any document required by law and the Proper Officer would witness their signatures.**

117 **MARKET FEES**

(a) Council received and considered a report regarding the new 'Thursday eXtra' market, recommending a reduced pitch fee of £15 to keep in line with the principle of charging casual and speciality market traders.

RESOLVED to endorse a £15 pitch fee for the 'Thursday eXtra' market attendance but only on 3rd Thursday of the month for casual and speciality traders.

(b) At its meeting held on 27 July 2020, Council had agreed to review again in one month the question of permanent trader pitch fees. A motion was proposed by Councillor Perham and seconded by Councillor Hemmings regarding market rents for permanent traders. After discussion, the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED that market rents for permanent market traders should be waived until the end of November 2020, returning to full rents for December 2020.

118 **OPERATION DODFORD**

Council received and considered a recommendation from the Community Safety Sub-Committee of 13 July 2020 to approve Operation Dodford Section 92 Grant Agreement for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

RESOLVED to approve the Operation Dodford Section 92 Grant Agreement for 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 with the two signatories being agreed as Councillor D Bowater and Councillor S Jones.

119 **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

Council received and considered a report regarding the status of Remembrance Sunday as a civic event.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to reaffirm the status of Remembrance Sunday as a civic function thereby allowing the chains of office to be worn by both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.**
- (b) That responsibility for arranging the civic event rests with the Democratic Services Team who will as part of their responsibilities liaise with the Royal British Legion and Churches to ensure the continuing smooth running of the event.**
- (c) That a budget line be created in order to meet anticipated costs (circa £2,500) for running the event.**

120 **ALL SAINTS CHURCH**

Council received and considered correspondence from All Saints Church to consider a Town Council contribution to fund a system to enable live streaming to be continued to a high standard. With attendance numbers at church limited due to COVID-19, streaming of services would allow a greater number of residents to participate.

Concerns were raised that this maybe setting a precedent with other Churches in the town to ask for equivalent funding. Any further such applications would be considered on their merits. It was noted that All Saints was the primary Church in Leighton Buzzard and the church most often used for significant civic events, as well as religious services. This was the reason for bringing the request direct to Council rather than through committee; the Church hoped to install the system during October, which might then enable broadcasting of the Remembrance Sunday service and it was therefore timely to consider the request as soon as possible.

Councillor Freeman proposed that 50% of the cost be met, up to a maximum

of £6,000, on the basis that the church was used for civic functions and by community groups, and on the stipulation that whilst COVID-19 restrictions remained in place, no cost would be made for any live streaming of services to/for residents (e.g. weddings), so that not only congregations and community groups benefit from the project but also that the wider town community would benefit. This was seconded by Councillor Palmer.

Councillor Goodchild proposed an amendment to move this agenda item to the Policy and Finance on 21 September for more in-depth discussion. A recorded vote was taken with 13 against, 3 for and one abstention (see Appendix C). A vote was then taken on the original substantive motion, which was carried with two abstentions from Councillors Goodchild and Owen.

RESOLVED to provide funding to All Saints Church for 50% cost of the project, up to a maximum of £6,000.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 3(x) until conclusion of agenda item 15 (Boundary Commission Consultation).

121 **BOUNDARY COMMISSION CONSULTATION**

Council received a report and considered recommendations arising from the Boundary Review Working Party held on 5 August 2020. Councillor P Snelling declared an interest as a member of Central Bedfordshire Working Party and would abstain from the vote.

A proposal was put forward by Councillor Jones and minor amendments were suggested and agreed by Councillors Goodchild and Freeman.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk submit a response to the Boundary Commission consultation on proposed ward changes based on the points below and including more background detail, including the need for parity in ward numbers:

- (a) that the Town Council supports the inclusion of the new housing at Clipstone Park into Leighton Buzzard wards and recognises that this will require changes to existing warding to balance electorate numbers**
- (b) that the Town Council strongly supports Central Bedfordshire Council's request to undertake a Community Governance Review on Leighton-Linslade parish wards as soon as practicable, due to the natural and already existing community cohesion between that development and the settlement of the town, with residents of that area already using town facilities including schools, doctors, dentists, arts and leisure facilities and children's groups and activities.**
- (c) that the Council agrees with the proposals for the three Central Bedfordshire Wards. Due to the inclusion of part of Leighton Buzzard North into Linslade Ward it would suggest that the three**

**Wards be renamed Leighton-Linslade West, Leighton-Linslade North and Leighton- Linslade South respectively
(d) with regards to the Town Council:**

- (i) The current Southcott 4 division be moved into Barnabas Ward giving natural boundaries of Soulbury Road and the Railway and producing two three member wards. The existing Plantation 3 division be created as a single member ward dur to its community identity being separate from the current Linslade Ward.**
- (ii) In the North, Planets Ward, be increased to three members to reflect the planned adjacent developments and a possible Governance Review. That the existing Plantation and St Georges wards each be represented by two members.**
- (iii) The Southern Wards to remain unchanged at present.**

(e) That political groups and/or individual Councillors be encouraged to submit their own comments to the consultation.

122 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

123 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

124 COMMITTEE MINUTES

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

125 TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTIVES AND PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

126 REPORT FROM CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

This agenda item would be deferred until a later meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.31 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2020.

Chair

28 SEPTEMBER 2020

Appendix A.

Minute reference 113 (b) (High Street Pedestrianisation) – recorded vote on proposed amendment:

BERRY, R	FOR
BOWATER, D	FOR
CURSONS, K	FOR
DODWELL, A	FOR
FREEMAN, J M	AGAINST
GOODCHILD, R	AGAINST
GRAY, A	AGAINST
HARVEY, V	AGAINST
HEMMINGS, S	FOR
JONES, S	FOR
KHARAWALA, F	FOR
OWEN, S	AGAINST
PALMER, C	FOR
PERHAM, G	FOR
SCOTT, D	AGAINST
SILVERSTONE, J	FOR
SNELLING, P	AGAINST
SPURR, B	FOR

Appendix B.

Minute reference 115 (Cycling) – recorded vote on proposed amendment:

BERRY, R	FOR
BOWATER, D	FOR
CURSONS, K	FOR
DODWELL, A	FOR
FREEMAN, J M	ABSTAIN
GOODCHILD, R	AGAINST
GRAY, A	AGAINST
HARVEY, V	AGAINST
HEMMINGS, S	FOR
JONES, S	FOR
KHARAWALA, F	FOR
OWEN, S	AGAINST
PALMER, C	FOR
PERHAM, G	FOR
SCOTT, D	AGAINST
SILVERSTONE, J	FOR
SNELLING, P	AGAINST

SPURR, B	FOR
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Appendix C.

Minute reference 120 (All Saints Church) – recorded vote on proposed amendment:

BERRY, R	AGAINST
BOWATER, D	AGAINST
CURSONS, K	AGAINST
DODWELL, A	AGAINST
FREEMAN, J M	AGAINST
GOODCHILD, R	FOR
GRAY, A	FOR
HARVEY, V	AGAINST
HEMMINGS, S	AGAINST
JONES, S	AGAINST
KHARAWALA, F	AGAINST
OWEN, S	FOR
PALMER, C	AGAINST
PERHAM, G	AGAINST
SCOTT, D	AGAINST
SILVERSTONE, J	NOT PRESENT
SPELLING, P	ABSTAIN
SPURR, B	AGAINST