

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, 16 MAY 2022 AT 7.30 PM

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

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 M Jahn, Committee Officer

Members of the Public: 7

325 ELECTION OF CHAIR (TOWN MAYOR)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor F Kharawala be re-elected Chairman (Town Mayor) of the Town Council for the municipal year 2022-2023. There were no further nominations.

The importance of the political neutrality of the Chairmanship role was raised and two Members spoke in support of not extending the current Mayor's term but giving another councillor an opportunity to take the role.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried (12 in favour, 5 against, 1 abstention).

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor F Kharawala as Chairman (Town Mayor) of Leighton-Linslade Town Council for the municipal year 2022-2023.

326 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Kharawala made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office of Town Mayor for the municipal year 2022-2023.

327 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Kharawala thanked the Council for their support over the past 18 months and for re-appointing her as Town Mayor for this year 2022-2023. She would now give consideration to which local charities to support in the coming year.

328 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR (DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Hemmings be appointed Vice Chairman (Deputy Town Mayor) of the Town Council for the municipal year 2022-2023. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried (11 in favour, 0 against, 7 abstentions).

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor S Hemmings Vice Chairman (Deputy Town Mayor) of the Leighton-Linslade Town council for the municipal year 2022-2023.

329 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor S Hemmings made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office of Deputy Town Mayor for the municipal year 2022-2023. Councillor Hemmings was duly invested with the Chain and Badge of office.

330 VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor S Jones thanked Councillor Kharawala for her hard work over the past 18 months especially during the Covid pandemic where events were held on-line which included Mindful March, Pamper Nights and the October Spooktacular event for children. It was noted that the pandemic had had a huge impact due to the lack of civic, charity and community events taking place for many months. Councillor Kharawala had also participated in Black History Month and introduced an informal event celebrating International Women's Day.

331 RESPONSE BY RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor Kharawala thanked the Council and other organisations for their support during her term of office. A total of £8,700 had been raised for her four charities, with cheque presentations having been made at the Civic Service on 15 May. The Mayor looked forward to representing Leighton Buzzard and Linslade and putting the 'unity back into community' in the coming year.

332 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Councillors Silverstone, Carberry and Spurr.

333 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made and no dispensations were requested..

334 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Jones be appointed Leader of the Town Council for the municipal year 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor S Jones Leader of the Town Council for the municipal year 2022-2023.

335 GROUP LEADERS

It was announced that Councillor S Jones would be Leader of the Conservative group and that Councillor A Dodwell would be deputy.

It was announced that Councillor R Goodchild would be Leader of the Liberal Democrats group and that Councillor S Owen would be deputy.

Councillor D Scott informed members that Councillor P Carberry would be Leader of the Labour group.

336 GROUP LEADERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Goodchild spoke of his concern that 'unity in the community' would only happen within the council if all groups worked towards the big issues like a Police Hub, Health Hub and development of Land South of the High Street.

Councillor Scott spoke on behalf of Councillor Carberry to look forward to another year of robust discussion and good decisions with the Council.

337 QUESTIONS

(a) Questions from the public

Councillor R Goodchild, speaking as a member of the public, addressed a question to the Council and asked Councillor S Owen to answer it. Councillor Goodchild referred to the amendment of a Motion at minute reference 321 (discussion of the extraordinary meeting held 4 April 2022 which had taken place at the subsequent Council meeting held 25 April 2022) and asked whether the same outcomes "could have been achieved at scheduled committee meetings in a timely manner" as had been suggested.

Councillor Owen replied referencing the seven Motions discussed on 4 April 2022. He noted that no progress had been made towards a Leighton-Linslade policing hub for many months and that the Motion had had the effect of bringing the Police and Crime Commissioner to the 4 April meeting to confirm his commitment to seeking a suitable town centre location for a hub.

Councillor Owen said that the Health Hub Motion had resulted from the lack of progress towards a Leighton-Linslade health hub and that the cost and time of the extraordinary meeting was minimal in comparison to the potential cost saving to local residents (which he quoted as £1million per annum or £20,000 per week) from being able to visit a local hub rather than travel to surrounding hospitals.

Councillor Owen said that the Motion in respect of the High Street had been necessitated by the lack of progress on promised engagement with the principal authority over future arrangements for High Street traffic and that the Motion had allowed councillors to discuss the matter and keep up pressure for that consultation. He also pointed out that the Motion relating to local schooling had enabled the first such discussion since a presentation was last made to Partnership Committee in December 2020 and that plans for local schools should be shared by the principal authority in the public interest.

Finally, Councillor Owen said that the three Motions in respect of consultation with bus users, the safety of the A505 bypass and refugees from Ukraine had allowed the Council to discuss these matters of public concern and pointed out that two of these three Motions had been tabled by the Conservative group themselves.

(b) Questions from councillors

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 27.

338 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

(a) Approval of previous minutes

Council received the draft minutes of the Council meetings held on 25 April 2022.

Minute Reference 318 (Five Year Plan and Objectives): a concern was raised that this minute was too brief and did not encapsulate the discussion leading to the resolution made. It was noted that a similar concern had been raised in the initial draft minutes in respect of 319 (Neighbourhood Plan) but this minute had been updated prior to the meeting.

A vote to approve the minutes as they stood as a correct record was not carried (6 in favour, 7 against, 5 abstentions). A proposal to revise the draft minutes to give a more full description of item 318 was then carried (11 in

favour). It was generally agreed that whilst accepting that meeting minutes could not be a verbatim record and should not be overly long, an accurate brief summary of all relevant discussion should be included.

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the previous meeting be revised at minute reference 318 and brought back to the next meeting for approval.

b) Updates arising from previous minutes

Minute ref 312 (Questions from the Public): a Councillor asked whether there had been an update regarding improved liaison between Central Bedfordshire Council and the Town Council. It was confirmed that this was being looked into.

Minute ref 319 (Neighbourhood Plan): a question was raised whether an update had been given to Council regarding the commissioning of a consultants' report to Central Bedfordshire Council on the commercial viability of land south of the High Street. It was confirmed a consultant had been appointed and would be meeting with the members of the South Side Working Party informally prior to their next meeting. A further question was asked in respect of the planning related information in the recent Queen's speech and whether this would be brought to committee. An update would be provided once a White Paper had been published by Government.

Minute ref 320 (Fuel Poverty): an email update had been circulated to all Councillors on behalf of Councillor Owen. This highlighted the work being done by Citizens Advice and the council's continuing role in supporting this service.

Minute ref 321 (Extraordinary Council Meeting held 4 April 2022): an update was given regarding the Leighton Buzzard Southern bypass to advise that the grass verges were being cut back to alleviate the possibility of flooding in the area. A further update was given that the first working party meeting regarding Ukraine was taking place later this week.

339 **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

(a) Council received the existing Committee structure and was asked to consider any changes for the municipal year 2022-2023. No changes were proposed.

RESOLVED to accept the existing Committee structure.

(b) Council considered the memberships to committees and sub-committees, for the municipal year 2022-2023. Chairs of sub committees will be elected at the first meeting.

RESOLVED to appoint Committee and Sub-Committee members for 2022-2023 as follows: -

Name of Committee	Conservative	Independent	Labour	Liberal Democrat
Policy & Finance	S Jones A Dodwell F Kharawala C Palmer R Berry T Morris G Perham	M Freeman	D Scott	R Goodchild S Owen
Planning & Transport	A Dodwell J Silverstone C Palmer D Bowater G Perham R Yates	M Freeman	P Carberry	A Gray S Owen
Cultural & Economic Services	A Dodwell S Hemmings K Cursons R Yates D Bowater G Perham	M Freeman	D Scott	R Goodchild P Snelling
Grounds & Environmental Services	R Berry S Jones T Morris C Palmer R Yates B Spurr	V Harvey	P Carberry	A Gray P Snelling
Grants & Awards	C Palmer K Cursons S Hemmings F Kharawala R Berry S Jones	M Freeman	D Scott	R Goodchild A Gray
Personnel Sub Committee	A Dodwell D Bowater K Cursons S Jones		D Scott	R Goodchild
Community Safety Sub Committee	D Bowater A Dodwell T Morris R Yates R Berry J Silverstone	V Harvey	P Carberry	R Goodchild A Gray
Market Sub	G Perham	M Freeman	P	R Goodchild

Committee	D Bowater F Kharawala A Dodwell T Morris R Berry		Carberry	P Snelling
Older Persons Sub Committee	T Morris G Perham F Kharawala	M Freeman		S Owen R Goodchild

A request was made for a list of Committee memberships to be forwarded to all Councillors after the meetings. It was confirmed that memberships were decided by the Group Leaders. No changes were made to chairmanships for the Standing Committees.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor S Jones Chair of Policy and Finance Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor R Berry Chair of Grounds & Environmental Services Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor A Dodwell Chair of the Cultural & Economic Services Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor M Freeman Chair of the Planning & Transport Committee for the municipal year 2022-2023.

(c) Council received the Terms of Reference for each of the standing Committees and was asked to consider minor amendments, including delegation of spending authority from appropriate earmarked reserves as agreed by Council at its previous meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the four Town Council standing committees.

(d) Council received the existing Scheme of Delegation and was asked to consider minor amendments, including delegation of spending authority from appropriate earmarked reserves as agreed by Council at its previous meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the Scheme of Delegation.

340 **PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Council appointed five Town Councillors to join the Partnership committee for 2022-2023. Five Central Bedfordshire Councillors would be appointed at the Central Bedfordshire Council Annual meeting.

RESOLVED to appoint Town Councillors C Palmer, T Morris, S Hemmings, F Kharawala and S Owen to the Partnership Committee for 2022-2023.

341 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council reviewed appointments to outside bodies and agreed no changes were required.

Councillors were concerned that as representatives of outside bodies they had not been contacted by the organisation they represented to attend meetings to monitor or offer support. A suggestion was also made to include a group for Senior Citizens and a group for Young People so a Council representative could offer support and advice on what their organisation may require.

RESOLVED to note the information.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 16 MAY 2022.

Chair

27 APRIL 2022