

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

**25 JANUARY 2021 AT 1930 HOURS**

Present: Councillors

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

Also in attendance:

- M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
- S Sandiford (Head of Democratic and Central Services/Deputy Town Clerk)
- Ian Haynes, (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services)
- M Jahn (Committee Officer)
- C Cummins (Finance Officer)

Members of the Public: 4

**162 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence had been received.

**163 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.

It was noted that several councillors were personal acquaintances of Community Volunteer Award nominees.

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

#### **164 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor F Kharawala informed members that during these difficult times fundraising events had been held on-line to raise money for the Mayor's chosen charities. She had attended events meeting other Mayors, sharing ideas and representing the Parish. So far £1,700 had been raised by successfully holding an online Paint a Mug event and an online pamper night. It was hoped to hold some future online events which would focus on emotional and mental well-being. The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended her online events and looked forward to more events in the coming months.

The Civic Service would still go ahead on Sunday 28 February at 3.00 pm followed by the Parish Meeting on 15 March, both events to be held remotely.

#### **165 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor S Jones, Leader of the Conservative Group, spoke to give thanks to members and officers for their work over the past year in difficult times enabling the Council to remain in a strong financial position and continue their work in the community.

Councillor R Goodchild, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, agreed with Councillor Jones and gave thanks to officers for their work over the past months. A request was made for a response to questions asked at two previous meetings. Councillor Goodchild was asked to put his questions in writing to the Town Clerk and the Town Mayor.

#### **166 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A member of the public welcomed the Equality and Diversity Statement and enquired what the next steps would be for the Council. It was suggested that links could be provided for Black History Month and climate change to the public via Town Council social media platforms.

Thanks were given to the speaker for work undertaken on Equality and Diversity and that Leighton-Linslade Town Council was supportive of this work.

#### **167 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

(a) Council received the draft minutes of the Council meetings held on 28 September 2020 and 23 November 2020.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 28 September and 23 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date when safe to do so.**

(a) Minute ref 139 (End of Year Accounts 2019-2020) minutes dated 28 September – the Auditors Report had now been received and distributed to members. Two minor points raised would be taken into account for next year's return.

A request was made by Councillor Owen for written clarification from the Town Clerk on two points in the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20:

- (i) The table titled Internal Control Objective, item L
- (ii) Letter from Mazars, section Action you are required to take, the second and third underlined bullet points.

(b) Minute ref 159 (Canal Bridge Pedestrian Crossing) Council Meeting on 23 November 2020 – a question was raised whether the request to install a barrier on Billington Road outside Pages Park had been followed up. This was requested at the last Council meeting but not minuted. The Town Clerk confirmed the matter had been raised with Central Bedfordshire Highways Department and would be followed up.

## **168 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

Council considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee of 21 September (minute ref 193/PF) to consider approval of an Equality and Diversity Statement. On being proposed and seconded, the Statement was approved unanimously.

Councillor Harvey requested that this statement be taken forward to Cultural & Economic Services Committee for further discussion at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED to approve the Equality and Diversity Statement as set out.**

## **169 VOLUNTEER POLICY**

Council considered a recommendation by the Policy and Finance Committee of 16 November 2020 (minute ref 165/PF) to consider approval of an updated Volunteer Policy. On being proposed and seconded the policy was approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED to approve the amendments to the Volunteer Policy.**

## **170 2021-2022 RISK REGISTER AND ACTION PLAN**

Further to the recommendation made by the Policy and Finance Committee on 18 January 2021, Council received and was asked to consider endorsing the Risk Register Action Plan for 2021-2022. A Pandemic Risk had been added to the risk

register in a number of service areas which would be reviewed and brought back to Policy & Finance Committee in September 2021.

Council agreed the formatting of the document was not ideal and this was attributed to the software used to produce the report which would be reviewed in the coming year as part of the anticipated software review.

**RESOLVED to endorse the Risk Register Action Plan for 2021-2022, to be signed by the Town Mayor and the Responsible Finance Officer.**

#### **171 STANDING ORDER CHANGES**

Council considered proposed minor amendments to Standing Orders in accordance with guidance from the National Association of Local Councils, as recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee on 20 July 2020 and proposed by Councillor S Jones and seconded by Councillor A Dodwell at Council on 28 September 2020.

**RESOLVED to endorse the minor amendments to Standing Orders in accordance with guidance from the National Association of Local Councils.**

#### **172 2021 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER NOMINATIONS**

Council received and considered three nominations for the 2021 Community Volunteer Award, as recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee on 18 January 2021. On being put to the vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously. Council agreed the nominations were excellent and there were no hesitations in recommending them for their awards.

**RESOLVED to present Community Volunteer Awards for 2021 to Katrina Boyce, Rose Gunter and Stuart Clarke.**

#### **173 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2021-2022**

Council received a report and a proposed budget and precept for the financial year 2021-2022. It was noted that the proposed revenue budget had been reviewed and recommended for approval by all Town Council standing committees.

Councillor Goodchild asked if the funding required for the elderly and young people had been agreed and budgeted for to provide services over the next year. It was confirmed that money had been identified not in the annual revenue budget but within the Future Projects funding as set out in the five year financial plan. The revised plan would be given consideration by Policy and Finance Committee on 22 February. On this basis the Liberal Democrat group would support the proposed budget and precept for the financial year 2021-22.

Councillor Harvey spoke of her concerns for future financial hardships caused by the pandemic and if the Council would have the reserves to provide help to organisations in cases of extreme difficulties.

The recommendations made by Policy and Finance on 18 January 2021 were then proposed, seconded, and voted on with 18 for and 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED to approve the budget for 2021-22 and that -**

**(a) in accordance with the recommendation made by the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held 16 November 2020, that the anticipated budgetary shortfall of £74,431 for the financial period 2021-22 be met from the Covid-19 Earmarked Reserve which presently stands at £128,010.**

**(b) that the Council Tax remain unchanged at £155.50 (Band D equivalent) for the financial year 2021-22.**

**(c) the approval of the precepting amount of £2,271,388 which Central Bedfordshire Council would collect on behalf of the Town Council for the Financial Year 2021-22.**

**(d) To recognise and endorse that in accordance with paragraph 2.11 of the budget report, that certain budget lines be omitted from the 2021-22 revenue budget but be returned the following financial year 2022-23.**

#### **174 TOWN COUNCIL VACANCY**

(a) Council received and formally noted the vacancy on the Town Council in Grovebury Ward, following the resignation of Carol Chambers on 28 October 2020.

Council gave their thanks for the hard work Councillor Chambers had done in Grovebury Ward and requested a letter of thanks be written to her from the Town Council.

(b) Council agreed unanimously to hold an extraordinary Council meeting on Monday 1 February for the consideration of 9 nominees for the co-option to the vacancy in Grovebury Ward.

**RESOLVED to hold an extraordinary Council meeting on Monday 1 February 2021 for the co-option to the vacancy in Grovebury Ward.**

#### **175 POLICING**

Council received a report from Councillor S Owen to consider a motion in respect of Policing proposed by Councillor S Jones and seconded by Councillor R Goodchild.

Members agreed that there were and had been for some time concerns regarding local policing in the area with inadequate local accommodation for officers and response times being highlighted. It was agreed the Community Policing Team had improved policing in the daytime but concerns were still felt for the night time economy and not relying on responsive policing with the police having a new suitable premises where the public could have access to report crime.

Councillor K Cursons declared a personal interest in this item and Councillor A Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Beds Police and Crime Panel. The motion was proposed, seconded and on voting was unanimously carried.

**RESOLVED that this Council seeks the assistance of our MP for a deputation of up to three councillors, led by the MP, to seek a meeting with the Minister of State for Policing and Fire Service to represent our concerns over the current Policing in Leighton-Linslade and to press for:**

- (a) A policing plan for the town with local consultation.**
- (b) New increased space for a policing base close to the town centre to provide a facility for contact with the public and an adequate base for officers.**
- (c) An adequate allocation of Leighton Buzzard based officers to produce improved police response times, commencing with an increase in dedicated Policing of four hours in respect of the night time economy on Friday and Saturday nights.**

**AND**

**The Town Clerk be instructed to formally convey, as a matter of courtesy, the outcome of this business item to Councillor Ian Dalgarno, Portfolio Holder responsible for Community Safety, Councillor David McVicar, Chairman of Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Richard Wenham, Leader of the Council at Central Bedfordshire Council.**

#### **176 LAND REGISTRY APPLICATION**

Council considered a request to apply for land registry of a parcel of land between Pages Park and Billington Road. The Town Clerk had spoken to Steve Lakin of Central Bedfordshire Council who had agreed to clear the land in the first instance and once registered the Town Council could continue with the maintenance and planting.

**RESOLVED in accordance with Standing Orders to make an application to land registry for a parcel of land between Pages Park and Billington Road.**

#### **177 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE TREE PLANTING GRANT**

Council received a proposal to approve the submission of an application for funding from Central Bedfordshire Tree Planting Grant Scheme.

**RESOLVED to submit an application for funding from Central Bedfordshire Tree Planting Grant Scheme.**

#### **178 ASSET DISPOSAL**

In accordance with Standing Orders, Council considered accepting £1,000 for the disposal of a Town Council asset which was now uneconomical to retain.

**RESOLVED to accept £1,000 for the disposal of a Town Council asset (a mower).**

## **179 GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Council considered a motion proposed by Councillor S Jones and seconded by Councillor R Goodchild regarding the Governance Review on the area currently in Eggington Parish to be included in the proposed CBC ward of Leighton-Linslade North. Members strongly agreed this should be pushed forward as soon as possible.

A request was made that the Town Clerk formally write to both LGBCE and CBC requesting this be undertaken forthwith and seeks support from Eggington Parish in carrying out the review.

### **RESOLVED**

**(a) that the Town Clerk formally writes to both LGBCE and CBC requesting that an early Governance Review on the area currently in Eggington Parish scheduled to be included in the proposed CBC ward of Leighton-Linslade North be undertaken forthwith.**

**(b) that the Town Clerk seeks the support of Eggington Parish council carrying out this review.**

## **180 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(i) Council received the minutes of all committee meetings held since September 2020.

**RESOLVED to receive the minutes of Committee meetings held between 3 September 2020 – 18 January 2021.**

- (a) Partnership Committee 3 September 2020**
- (b) Cultural & Economic Services 7 September 2020**
- (c) Planning & Transport Committee 9 September 2020**
- (d) Grounds & Environmental Services Committee 14 September 2020**
- (e) Policy & Finance Committee 21 September**
- (f) Planning & Transport Committee 30 September 2020**
- (g) Planning & Transport Committee 21 October 2020**
- (h) Policy & Finance Committee 29 October 2020**
- (i) Grounds & Environmental Services Committee 29 October 2020**
- (j) Planning & Transport Committee 11 November 2020**
- (k) Policy & Finance Committee 16 November 2020**
- (l) Cultural & Economic Services Committee 7 December 2020**
- (m) Planning & Transport Committee 9 December 2020**
- (n) Partnership Committee 10 December 2020**
- (o) Grounds & Environmental Services Committee 14 December 2020**
- (p) Planning & Transport Committee 06 January 2021**
- (q) Policy & Finance Committee 18 January 2021**

(ii) Council gave consideration to the recommendations contained within committee minutes, which had not already been dealt with as specific agenda items.

Policy & Finance Committee, 21 September 2020: Minute reference 150/PF.

A comment was made that the Partnership Project List, last updated in January 2020, was not representative of current objectives and should be reviewed. On being put to the vote the recommendations (as made at the Policy and Finance Committee) were carried (16 for, 3 abstentions).

**RESOLVED:**

**(a) that through the Partnership Committee the Town Council continues working collaboratively with Central Bedfordshire Council (as the plan making authority) in the review of the Development Brief for the site known as Land South of the High Street, Leighton Buzzard, considering and taking into account the potential uses of other town centre sites such as Bridge Meadow and existing community facilities available in the town, to ensure that the benefits obtained for Leighton-Linslade from the Land South of the High Street site are maximised.**

**(b) that the merits or otherwise in the creation of a neighbourhood plan for the Town Centre and its hinterland be considered in 6 months' time.**

**(c) that material consideration be afforded to the Partnership Project List by the Partnership Committee when considering any development proposals that come forward within the parish or its hinterland.**

**(d) that the Town Clerk writes to Central Bedfordshire Council (Development Management) to express the Town Council's on-going need to continue to be involved in the identification of appropriate projects which qualify for S106 spend by providing development management and economic regeneration colleagues with the Partnership Project List once endorsed by Council.**

Cultural & Economic Services Committee, 7 December 2020:  
Minute reference 70/CE:

**RESOLVED that £5,000 underspend from 2020-21 Christmas budgets (£2,500, 101/4511 & £2500 101/4408) be carried forward into Community Projects earmarked reserve (970/9057) for the trial of recorded music in the High Street during an appropriate period in 2021.**

Minute reference 71/CE:

**RESOLVED:**

**(a) To carry forward unused funds from budget line 104/4100 (maintenance) into the TACTIC earmarked reserve (970/9020) to facilitate future building repairs and maintenance.**

**(b) To carry forward unused funds from budget line 104/4014 (projects) into the TACTIC earmarked reserve (970/9020) to assist with project work delivery in 2021/22.**

Minute reference 73/CE:

**RESOLVED:**

**(a) To carry forward unspent funds from the 2021-21 Community Access Defibrillator budget (101/4554) into the Defibrillators earmarked reserve (970/9022) for on-going maintenance and kit replenishments for community defibrillators.**

**(b) To carry forward unspent funds from the 2020-21 Public Conveniences Repairs & Maintenance budget (413/4100) into the Public Conveniences earmarked reserve (970/9055) for on-going maintenance of the Public Conveniences.**

Partnership Committee, 10 December 2020: Minute Reference 82/LLP.

**RESOLVED:**

**(a) The retaining of an annual budget for the Community Forum activities at £500 per annum for the financial year 2021/22.**

**(b) To carry forward unused funds from budget year 2020/21 into the earmarked reserves code (960/9034) to assist in the delivery of future Community Forum activities.**

Planning & Transport Committee, 6 January 2021: Minute reference 161/P.

**RESOLVED that £30,000 of allocated expenditure from the Highways Schemes earmarked reserve, dating back to commitments made in 2013 and thus subject to the statute of limitations now be released to become available for future expenditure from that earmarked reserve (9056/920)**

Policy & Finance Committee, 18 January 2021: Minute reference 177/PF.

**RESOLVED to approve that any underspend from the 2020-21 Community Safety Revenue Budget be carried into the Community Safety Earmarked reserve at year end.**

(iii) The inclusion of an agenda item enabling councillors to comment or ask questions on committee minutes was welcomed. A minor typographical error was highlighted which needed correcting.

**182 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

No official questions had been received from Councillors.

The meeting closed 2111 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021.

Chair

26 APRIL 2021

DRAFT