

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, 27 JUNE 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors D Bowater
 F Kharawala (Chair)
 C Palmer
 R Berry
 A Dodwell
 M Freeman
 S Jones
 T Morris
 G Perham
 P Snelling
 R Goodchild
 P Carberry

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services

Members of the Public: 0

342 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Councillors K Cursons, A Gray, V Harvey, S Hemmings, S Owen, D Scott, J Silverstone, B Spurr and R Yates.

343 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goodchild declared a personal interest in the Health Services agenda item as Chair of the Salisbury House GP Practice Patient Participation Group.

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

344 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Kharawala invited Members to attend her first charity fundraising event of the municipal year, a meal to be held on 20 July. The charities the Mayor would be supporting in the coming year were confirmed as the Leighton-Linlade Helpers and Citizens Advice Leighton-Linlade, both of which provided vital services to local residents.

345 LEADERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor S Jones, Leader of the Conservative group, advised that he understood the Police Crime Commissioner had now identified a preferred site for a local policing presence, with details yet to be announced. It was likely that the Police Crime Commissioner would be seeking a financial contribution from the Town Council. In addition, it was understood that Andrew Selous MP had met recently with the Chief Constable to press for 24/7 police presence in the town.

Councillor R Goodchild, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group, expressed his group's concern about the seeming lack of communication between the town council and councillors and officers of the principal authority, citing comparison with the Dunstable Joint Committee and advising he had written to Andrew Selous MP about this.

Councillor P Carberry, Leader of the Labour group, expressed his congratulations to Town Mayor Councillor Kharawala and Deputy Mayor Councillor Hemmings, stating that it sent a powerful and inspirational message to have two female councillors in these roles. Councillor Carberry expressed concern about the recent spate of vandalism in the parks and suggested consideration be given to how antisocial behaviour might be reduced. Councillor Carberry also made a request for the Freedom flag to be flown for the final week of Pride Month. Councillors present expressed their support for this.

346 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Councillor R Goodchild spoke as a member of the public to ask two questions relating to the Central Bedfordshire General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 June 2022 at which the Eggington/Leighton-Linslade boundary review had been discussed.

One question addressed to Councillor Berry related to the Chairman's briefing given in advance of the meeting. This was a Central Bedfordshire Council matter and deemed not appropriate to be answered at a meeting of the town council.

The second question addressed to the Leader of the Council related to why Town Councillors had not been present at the meeting to challenge the committee. Councillor Berry advised that he had been present and had spoken as a member of the public (not being able to formally participate in the committee debate due to having an interest in the agenda item).

347 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Council received the draft minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 April 2022 which had not been approved at the previous meeting. Amendments

had been made to minute reference 318.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

Council received the draft minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 May 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

348 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021-2022

Council received the Statement of Accounts for 2021-2022 with a covering report, as well as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021-2022. These documents as well as the internal auditor's report and review of the system of internal control had been reviewed by Policy and Finance Committee on 20 June 2022 and a number of recommendations had been made to Council (Minute reference 356/PF).

A question was asked about the potential for rising costs to impact on the current year revenue budget. It was noted that a number of factors could influence current and future income and expenditure so it was very much a watching brief. It was further noted that the Council might need to make some major decisions in future years with the aim of becoming net carbon neutral as previously resolved.

All recommendations put forward by the Policy and Finance Committee were unanimously approved.

RESOLVED to approve the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, noting the transfer of £281,279 into earmarked reserves (including £5,000 to I.T, £5,000 to market stall repair/replacement, £10,000 to climate emergency and £10,000 to consultation for town facilities).

RESOLVED in respect of the 2021-22 surplus of £101,389 currently in the general reserve, the following actions be undertaken:

- (i) Transfer of £26,958 into the existing Precept Support Fund earmarked reserve.**
- (ii) Transfer of £3,962 into the existing Elections earmarked reserve.**
- (iii) Transfer of £40,000 into the existing Grounds Maintenance earmarked reserve.**
- (iv) Transfer of £25,000 into a new earmarked reserve for the funding of a Community Agent in 2023-2025 (further to the recommendation made by the Cultural & Economic Committee on 13 June 2022)**
- (v) Transfer of an additional £5,000 to market stall repair and**

replacement due to increasing demand for market pitches.

RESOLVED that Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (the Annual Governance Statement) for the year ended 31 March 2022 be approved and signed.

RESOLVED that Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (the Annual Governance Statement) for the year ended 31 March 2022 be approved and signed.

349 ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Council received the draft Annual Report for 2021-2022 which had been recommended for approval by the Policy and Finance Committee.

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Report for 2021-2022.

350 TIDDENFOOT LEISURE CENTRE & ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Council received and considered a Motion submitted by Councillor C Palmer and seconded by Councillor G Perham in respect of making a nomination to Central Bedfordshire Council that Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre be included in the register of assets of community value. This followed the current consultation being undertaken by the local authority on leisure centre facilities and the wish to ensure that the building at Tiddenfoot could continue to be available for community uses in the future.

Several councillors spoke in support of the Motion, recognising the importance of the facility to residents and the need to ensure continued provision of sports courts and halls as these were not currently anticipated to be included in the specification for the new leisure centre to the east of the town.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED that Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre and the land surrounding it be nominated by Leighton-Linslade Town Council for inclusion in Central Bedfordshire's Register of Assets of Community Value.

351 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Council received and considered a Motion submitted by Councillor R Goodchild in respect of seeking legal advice following the decision by Central Bedfordshire Council's General Purposes Committee to recommend no change to the Eggington parish boundary.

In introduction, Councillor Goodchild expressed his concern that no mention or credence had been given to the Town Council's response to the stage 1 consultation in the report presented to the General Purposes Committee; nor

had the report addressed the conclusions of The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in its review of Central Bedfordshire published January 2021. The example was cited of a review of the Babraham/Sawston boundary in 2021 and the emphasis placed on the “no man’s land” factor between settlements by the LGBCE.

Several councillors spoke to express their disappointment in the boundary review process and the lack of consideration of the background to the development and the wider implications in the reports presented to General Purposes Committee. Concerns were expressed about the potential for either council having to use public money to defend its position. An amendment was proposed by Councillor R Berry and seconded by Councillor D Bowater, with a recommendation to instead seek advice from the Local Government Ombudsman. This was generally agreed to be a sensible first step but that other future options were not to be ruled out as yet.

Councillor Goodchild confirmed he was happy for his original Motion to be withdrawn and replaced with the proposed amendment. On being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that given the decision by Central Bedfordshire Council’s General Purposes Committee to recommend no change to the Eggington parish boundary, this Council instructs the Town Clerk to seek immediate advice from the office of the Local Government Ombudsman as to what steps can be taken to obtain a review of that Committee’s decision, which was made without any mention of this Council’s formal response to the stage 1 consultation process in the Committee’s report.

352 HEALTH SERVICES

Council received a report arising from the Health Services Task and Finish Group meeting held on 17 May 2022. As a result of increasing frustration regarding a lack of progress towards a health hub or a fourth GP practice, especially given the significant housing growth in and around the town, it was proposed that a formal request be made for a specific agenda item at the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and that a Town Council report be submitted along with this request.

A number of councillors spoke in support of the proposal, emphasising the need for additional doctors as well as expanded services. The report would be finalised to incorporate the comments made prior to submission to Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To endorse the recommendation for Councillor Perham as Chair of the Health Services Task and Finish Group to seek inclusion of an agenda item regarding healthcare provision in Leighton-Linslade at the Central Bedfordshire Health and**

Wellbeing Board meeting of 13 July 2022.

- (ii) To endorse the proposed wording of a report to be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council, subject to the minor amendments discussed.**

The meeting was briefly adjourned at 21:06 and reconvened at 21:11.

353 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Council received and noted the minutes of the Committee meetings held between 12 April – 20 June 2022 and gave consideration to the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED to receive and note the minutes of the following meetings:

- **Planning and Transport Committee 20 April 2022**
- **Partnership Committee 21 April 2022**
- **Planning and Transport Committee 11 May 2022**
- **Grounds and Environmental Committee 6 June 2022**
- **Planning and Transport Committee 8 June 2022**
- **Cultural and Economic Committee 13 June 2022**
- **Policy and Finance Committee 20 June 2022**
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Policy and Finance Committee minute reference 355/PF: amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations relating to public contract thresholds, expenditure authorisation and petty cash were considered. As a mandatory legal requirement, the change in public contract thresholds in Standing Orders could be approved without having to stand adjourned in accordance with Standing Order 26b.

RESOLVED to endorse minor amendments to Standing Orders in respect of public contract thresholds, as set out.

RESOLVED to endorse amendments to Financial Regulations as set out, including an increase to officer expenditure authorisation thresholds for operational reasons.

There were no updates, comments or questions relating to the minutes.

354 QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Two questions had been submitted in advance by Councillor Goodchild.

- 1) Has the Town Clerk heard further from the Police & Crime Commissioner regarding his search for premises in the Town Centre as promised at Council on 4th April 2022.

This had now been superseded by the announcement made by the Leader of the Conservative group.

- 2) Has the Town Clerk heard from the portfolio holder at Central Beds Council in respect of his promise to involve the Town Council in the new ETRO from 1st February 2022.

The Town Clerk advised he had heard from the Portfolio Holder but only in respect of the current consultation being run by Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the trial use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology in several locations to manage traffic offences.

355 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Carberry spoke regarding the Leighton-Linslade Carnival on Saturday 9 July and encouraged Members to attend this community event if possible.

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 27 JUNE 2022.

Chair

DATE