

## Witham Town Council

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## MINUTES

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

Present:	Councillors	P.	Horner	(Town Mayor)
		P.R.	Barlow	
		J.C.	Bayford	
		L.D.	Campbell	
		J.C.	Goodman	
	Mrs.	J.A.	Kempf	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C. M	Lager	
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	
	Mrs	J.M.	Money	
		T. A.	Pleasance	
		W.J.	Rose	
		P.M.	Ryland	
	Mrs	J.	Williams	
		R.	Williams	
	Councillor	Mrs	S.	Wilson (Braintree D.C.)
			M.	Squire (Town Clerk)
			J.	Sheehy (Dep. Town Clerk)
	Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
	Ms	S.	Reichert	

And one member of the public.

### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R.P. Ramage and Councillor Mrs J. Williams who would have to leave the Meeting early.

**46. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**47. INTERESTS**

No interests were declared at this time.

**48. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mr James Green took the opportunity to wish Ms Reichert, Information Centre Manager, the best for the future. He said that she had always been very approachable and helpful.

**49. TO INTRODUCE THE NEW DEPUTY TOWN CLERK – JAMES SHEEHY**

The Town Clerk introduced James Sheehy, the new Deputy Town Clerk, who had started work that morning. He said that Brent Smith had started as the new Customer Services Manager in the Information Centre.

Members welcomed James to the Town Council.

**50. ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (EALC) - COUNCIL OF THE YEAR AWARD - ESSEX – SPONORED BY VAUGHTONS.**

A report was received along with letters of congratulations from Priti Patel, MP and Councillor Frankie Ricci, Chairman of Braintree District Council.

The Town Clerk said that he had attached the background papers for applying for the Award so that Members could see the number of projects and services undertaken by the Town Council.

Members recognised the bedrock on which the Town Council had been formed and developed upon. It was explained that the Town Council had won because of the diversity of projects and the accolade of being Best Council in Essex is a credit to both Members and staff. It was considered that the success needed to be built upon and the breadth of activities expanded.

It was agreed that the Certificate should be put up in the Council Chamber, with a copy in the Information Centre, and the Silver Salver put in the Display Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and information noted.

**51. PRESENTATION TO SUE REICHERT – INFORMATION CENTRE MANAGER**

Members welcomed Sue Reichert to the Meeting and thanked her for the invaluable service to the Town Council and the Witham Community in general.

The Town Mayor read out the letter of congratulations from Priti Patel, MP.

It was recognised that Ms Reichert was the face of the Town Council, giving advice and exemplary service to the public. She was very professional with extensive skills and creatively developed a turn-over of £100,000 per annum in the Information Centre.

Members gave their best wishes for a happy life in north Norfolk and the Town Mayor presented her with vouchers and flowers.

The Town Clerk also added his thanks for her exemplary service and commitment.

Ms Reichert thanked Members for the gifts and explained that she had enjoyed her sixteen years at Town Council and enjoyed helping everyone in the town.

Councillor Mrs J. Williams then left the Meeting.

**52. RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR C. J. BAILEY**

Members formally received the letter of resignation from Councillor C.J. Bailey and welcomed Jack Bayford to the Town Council as a newly elected member.

The Town Clerk explained that Councillor J.C. Bayford had signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

It was agreed that Councillor J.C. Bayford would be a Member of the Community and Environment Committees.

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs J. Williams would be the Town Council representative on the Town Team.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor J.C. Bayford be a Member of the Community and Environment Committees.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Mrs J. Williams be the Town Council Representative on the Town Team.

**53. SOUND SYSTEM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Members were informed that the effectiveness and cost implications of the Sound System will be evaluated and discussed at the end of the Meeting.

**54. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk had nothing to report.

**55. PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE**

A report was received concerning proposals from the Leader of the Council regarding the future Meetings of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager put forward his proposals to save Members' and Officers' time and wondered if there would be a simpler way rather than formal Meetings.

Members were mindful that as elected Town Councillors they were privileged to safeguard Witham from adverse planning applications and that it would not be wise to agree to this proposal. Consulting the public is key for a Quality Council. It was suggested that the Town Council should have more influence in planning applications rather than less and that discussions with Braintree District Council should be held to seek delegated powers on small applications.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the proposal rejected.

**RESOLVED** That an approach be made to Braintree District Council seeking agreement that the Town Council's recommendations on more minor routine planning applications could be delegated to Town Council for approval.

**56. WITHAM TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

A report was received regarding the declining number of members of the Twinning Association.

Members agreed that whilst they would not wish to see the demise of the Twinning Association, it is difficult to get new, younger members. It was considered that if the academies taught German it would be easier to attract younger membership.

Members then considered the request from the Association of use of the Town Hall to promote the Twinning Association and the idea was mooted to include other community groups which might attract more attention. Members were conscious that a Saturday morning would involve caretaker cover and additional costs. It was thought that a week-day, manned exhibition in the Information Centre, after Christmas, for the Twinning Association first could be a fair compromise as in the past there is little footfall on a Saturday.

**RESOLVED** That the Twinning Association be offered a week, free of charge, in the Information Centre in 2017 to promote the Twinning Association.

**RESOLVED** That consideration be given to organising a Local Community promotional event.

Councillor P.M. Ryland asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

**57. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements were received.

Members were grateful for Mr Kempf's interpretation skills regarding the arrangements for the recent trip to Aßlar. It was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to him.

**RESOLVED** That the details be received and noted.

**58. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) **Community Committee Meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

Minutes 40 – 51 (inclusive).

Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin, Vice Chairman of the Community Committee, gave her Report en bloc.

**RESOLVED** That the Report of the Community Committee be received.

(b) **Environment Committee Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

Minutes 39 – 52 (inclusive).

Councillor J.C. Goodman, Chairman of the Environment Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received.

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

Minutes 39 – 54 (inclusive) and parts of 56 taken into Open Session.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager explained that he would be asking Committees to update the business plan to consider priorities and budgets.

**Minute 46 – Annual Returns**

A Recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that the Annual Return and External Auditors Certificate be received and duly approved was received.

**RESOLVED** That the Annual Return and External Auditors Certificate be received and duly approved.

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received.

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

**59. COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONT'D)**

(a) **Environment Committee Meeting**

Minutes 53 and 54.

Councillor J.C. Goodman, Chairman of the Environment Committee, continued his Report en bloc.

**RESOLVED** That the Report of the Environment Committee be received.

(b) **Policy and Resources Committee Meeting**

Minutes 55 – 57 (inclusive).

Councillor M.C.M. Lager, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, continued his Report.

**RESOLVED** That the Report of the Policy and Resources Committee be received.

**60. SOUND SYSTEM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER (CONT'D)**

Members were asked to evaluate the trial sound system.

Members agreed that there was no necessity to have a sound system in the Council Chamber but it had been useful to trial.

**RESOLVED** That no further action be taken with regard to a sound system in the Council Chamber.

**61. PUBLIC DOMAIN**

It was agreed to move Minute 60 – Sound System in the Council Chamber into the Public Domain.

**RESOLVED** That Minute 60 – Sound System in the Council Chamber be moved into the Public Domain.

Members congratulated Councillor P.R. Barlow for being elected as a District Councillor for North Ward.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.57 p.m.

Councillor P. Horner  
Town Mayor

GK/2.11.2016