

Witham Town Council

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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Tuesday, 30th August 2016**

Present: Councillors

	P.	Horner	(Town Mayor)
	L.D.	Campbell	
	J.C.	Goodman	
Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
Mrs	J.M.	Money	
	T. A.	Pleasance	
	R.P.	Ramage	
	W.J.	Rose	
Mrs	J.	Williams	
	R.	Williams	
	M.	Squire	(Town Clerk)
Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

Witham Twinning Association

	D.	Coe	
	G.	Ellis	
Mrs	J.	Welton-Pai	(Who arrived later)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.R. Barlow, Mrs J.A. Kempf, M.C.M. Lager, Mrs S.C. Lager and P.M. Ryland.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 4th July 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

35. INTERESTS

Councillor W.J. Rose declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 41 – Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan, as a Member of Braintree District Council which had given support.

36. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

37. TOWN MAYOR'S CADET

A letter was received from the Royal Air Force, Air Cadets.

The Town Clerk explained that Flight Lieutenant RAFVR(T) had been unable to attend the Meeting to present his proposals for a Town Mayor's Cadet.

Members considered this to be an excellent idea. After debate as to whether it would be appropriate to begin the pilot scheme now or in the new Civic Year, it was agreed to leave the detail to the Air Cadets but Members were mindful that in the future the Army Cadets might also wish to supply a Town Mayor's Cadet.

RESOLVED That the Town Council endorse the proposal for a Town Mayor's Cadet.

38. WITHAM TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Town Mayor welcomed Mr George Ellis and Mr David Coe from the Witham Twinning Association to the Meeting.

A letter had been received from the Twinning Association detailing the difficulties that it is currently suffering.

Mr Coe gave the history of the Twinning Association and how a group of police and stamp collectors had become involved with the town of Waldbröl in Germany. In 1986 the Town Council formed the Twinning Association and the official partnership with the town. For the first six years the Town Council financially supported the association and had two representatives on the Committee. The association started slowly but in its hay day fifty people would annually visit Waldbröl with a number on the reserve list but gradually there has been a decline with only 21 members visiting Germany earlier this year.

Mr Ellis asked Members to consider the future as the Town Council legally formed the link and there will be a Charter to this effect. He said that visitors from Waldbröl would like to come in September 2017 for the Puppet Festival and they had booked the ferry for what could be the final trip to Germany in May 2017.

Mr Ellis then spoke of ways they had tried to attract new members. He explained that they had been into schools but without German being taught there was no interest. They had also approached U3A, advertised at the Dickensian Event and currently an article was being written for the local newspaper. Despite all their efforts there had been no offer of assistance.

Mr Ellis explained that someone is needed to take over as Chairman of the association and other committee roles. He did not expect an answer this evening but asked the Town Council to consider and make recommendations before the Extraordinary Meeting on 22nd September. He felt that one option would be to keep the formal link but to no longer have the formal visits.

Mrs Welton-Pai arrived at the Meeting and reiterated the association's thanks to the Town Council for the opportunity to raise these issues and appreciated feedback. She reported that they had indeed used social media as a marketing tool.

There was a lot of discussion and questions. Members understood the difficulties which were not limited to just the Twinning Association and that people willing to take an active role are hard to find. It was understood that the German counterparts are suffering similar problems but not to the same extent. Mrs Welton-Pai said that there would be clear role descriptions for volunteer committee members but there was also flexibility.

The suggestion was made that a stand-alone event in the town centre could be beneficial in attracting new members. Another suggestion was to produce a 'value' statement explaining what the association does and why people should get involved. Another idea was to explore the possibility of a German market in Witham.

The Town Clerk was asked to investigate the formation of the Twinning Association and Charter.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the Town Clerk looks into the formation of the Twinning Association by the Town Council in 1986.

The Town Mayor thanked Mrs Welton-Pai, Mr Coe and Mr Ellis for attending the Meeting.

39. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's Report on matters arising was received.

The Town Clerk explained that there would be a trial of a sound system in the Council Chamber for the next Town Council Meeting on 24th October 2016.

He explained that he had organised a meeting on Thursday at Chelmsford City Council in the CCTV centre to look at the new system, to try and iron out the problems including lack of communication and feedback.

RESOLVED That the Report be received and information noted.

40. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME – FOUNDATION LEVEL (formerly Quality Council)

A list of documents required for Foundation Level were received.

The Town Clerk explained that all the listed documents were on the Council website but it was necessary to confirm this by a resolution at a Town Council Meeting. Councillor M.C.M. Lager and/or one other Member of the original panel would verify this.

RESOLVED That it be confirmed that items 1 to 15 have been achieved and are on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED That the documents required for Foundation Level exist.

41. HATFIELD PEVEREL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor W.J. Rose had declared a non-pecuniary interest.

The Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan Consultation was received and Members asked to consider making a formal response.

The Town Clerk read through the comments that the Leader of the Council had made. Members agreed the importance of the prevention of coalescence and that it would be a good idea to invite members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group to attend a future Meeting to advise on what they had done, the successes and pitfalls; and the costs.

RESOLVED That the Consultation be received and the Town Council make the formal response regarding the need to ensure prevention of coalescence and to invite members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group to a future Meeting.

42. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's Engagements were received.

The Town Clerk explained that it might be prudent to address some issues regarding the visit to Aßlar that would take place early October. The Town Mayor would be attending and it was confirmed that his travel costs could be met from the Town Mayor's expenses. In addition Councillors P.R. Barlow, M.C.M. Lager, Mrs S.C. Lager and Mrs J.M. Money would be attending the Anniversary of Reunification.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

43. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) **Community Committee Meeting held 1st August 2016**

Minutes 20 – 39 (inclusive).

Councillor R. Williams, Chairman of the Community Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

Minute 25 – Community Policing

Members were asked to consider whether the Meeting with Roger Hirst, Police and Crime Commissioner, should be private or open to members of the public. It was agreed that this should be a closed meeting for Members only.

RESOLVED That the Meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner be a closed Meeting for Members only.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Community Committee be received.

(b) **Environment Committee Meeting held 18th July 2016**

Minutes 21 – 38 (inclusive).

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

RESOLVED That the Report of the Environment Committee be received.

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 15th August 2016**

Minutes 20 – 31 (inclusive), 34 and part of 37.

Councillor R. Williams, Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

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.

44. COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONT'D)

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes 32, 33, 35 – 38 (inclusive).

Councillor R. Williams, continued his Report.

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

45. PUBLIC DOMAIN

It was agreed that no item discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That no item discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.33 p.m.

Councillor P. Horner
Town Mayor

MS/GK/31.8.2016