



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
01376 520627
witham.gov.uk

MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday 27th July 2021**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors

A.	Kilmartin	(Town Mayor)
K.	Atwill	
P.	Barlow	
J.	Goodman	
S.	Hicks	(arrived at 8.14 p.m.)
C.	Jay	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
T.	Pleasance	
M.	Weeks	(arrived 8.14 p.m.)

Essex County Councillor

R.	Playle	(Witham Northern)
J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Ager, J. Williams and R. Williams who had previous engagements; and Councillors S. Hicks and M. Weeks who would be late.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes from the Town Council Meetings held 4th May and 28th June 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

64. INTERESTS

Councillor Kilmartin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 66 – Essex County and Braintree District Council Reports, as a Member of Braintree District Council.

Councillor Jay declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 78 – Petition Hub Page, as the first suggested petition would relate to the estate on which she lived.

65. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no comment from the member of the public present.

66. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS¹

Councillor Kilmartin had declared an interest.

Councillor Playle explained that he was getting to grips with highway issues after making contact with both the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Liaison Officer. He said that the long awaited improvements to Cypress Road would take place in September. He had made contact with Brice Aggregates at Colemans Quarry in relation to the ongoing spillage issues particularly at the top end of The Avenue and enforcement would be put in place. He said that all Essex County Councillors had a Locality Fund of £10,000 each and an application had been made by the Town Council for improvements at Cut Throat Lane Allotments. He explained that he had been appointed as Chairman to the Braintree Youth Strategy and on Saturday they would be holding a skate park event for 13 to 19 year olds to learn tricks from a famous skater. He had met with the Cabinet Member for Recycling and Waste and received an assurance that the Witham Centre would remain open. He would be meeting the District Council Cabinet Member for Planning to achieve a collaborate approach to planning issues.

Councillor Goodman as Chairman of the Planning Applications and Transport Committee welcomed Councillor Playle's comments and wished him to take forward the Town Council's concerns.

Councillor Kilmartin explained that she had also been trying to resolve the public safety issue of gravel at the junction of The Avenue with Collingwood Road. She had raised at the recent District Council Meeting the question of tree felling at Gimsons and hoped that all trees would be replaced. She had also asked the Cabinet Member for Health to raise with the NHS the dire lack of doctors in the town.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillor Playle for his comments and he left the Meeting.

67. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Town Mayor's engagements for period 28th June to 27th July 2021 were received.

She explained that the Scout AGM had been held by Zoom and she had been disappointed not to be invited to the wreath laying at the War Memorial to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion.

RESOLVED That the Town Mayor's engagements be received and noted.

¹ Councillor Louis, Essex County Council, Witham Southern also sent his apologies and a report which was circulated to Members.

68. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

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

Members were informed the Town Council's Quality Status application was now being submitted.

Members spoke about a proposed investigation into play equipment (*Minute COM10/17.06.2021 refers*) and the view was put that as this was the responsibility of the District Council, further enquiries should be undertaken.

Members noted that District Councillor Gabrielle Spray had not responded to correspondence raised 29th April 2021 concerning the Town Council's investigation into the felling of Willow Trees to facilitate development at the former Bramston Sports Centre site.

RESOLVED Councillor Goodman send further correspondence to the District Council Cabinet Member seeking a substantive reply.

RESOLVED Enquiries be undertaken with Braintree District Council to understand how play equipment is commissioned in Witham, and with whom the Council consults when deciding play equipment specifications.

RESOLVED That the report be received and note.

69. COUNCILLOR P.M. RYLAND MEMORIAL

A report was received and it was agreed that a memorial bench should be installed in James Cooke Wood.

It was agreed that the Tree Group could plant a tree in memory of Paul on the River Walk close to Guithavon Street where he lived.

RESOLVED That the report be received and a bench purchased in memory of Councillor Paul Ryland and installed in James Cooke Wood.

RESOLVED That permission be given to the Tree Group to plant a tree on the River Walk in memory of Councillor Paul Ryland.

70. QUEEN'S JUBILEE/40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Members were asked to consider suitable events for next year.

(a) Lighting of a Beacon on 2nd June 2022

An email was received from the Essex Association of Local Councils.

Members agreed that this would be an ideal event to mark the Queen's Jubilee and the Events Officer should create a proposal for further consideration by Members.

RESOLVED A draft event plan for the Jubilee Beacon lighting be completed and returned to Community Committee for debate.

(b) Commemorative Art Work

The Town Mayor suggested that a commemorative piece of artwork be commissioned to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.

RESOLVED That the suggestion to commission commemorative art work to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee be considered as part of the Jubilee Events proposal.

Councillors S. Hicks and M. Weeks arrived at 8:14pm.

71. COLEMAN'S FARM QUARRY

Information was received on the public consultation on Coleman's Farm Quarry.

This matter had been discussed by the Planning Applications and Transport Committee on (*Minute 16.01.06.2021 refers*) when it was agreed to recommend refusal on the grounds that the accelerated extraction is not in accordance with the Aggregate Extraction Plan. Members considered the proposed 300 HGV movements a day would be an excessive impact on the local road network.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the application be supported with the strict condition that all lorries travelling to or from the quarry should use the A12 and be suitably covered to avoid aggregate spillages.

72. REVISED MEETING SCHEDULE FOR CIVIC YEAR 2021/2022

Members were asked to endorse the Climate Audit Panel's request to increase meeting frequencies from 2 to 4 per civic year.

RESOLVED to approve the increased meeting frequency.

73. WAR MEMORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

A representation was received from a member of the public regarding the District Council's statue of the soldier commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1.

It was explained that the statue had been vandalised twice and the District Council was seeking a stronger replacement.

RESOLVED That Councillor Pleasance would ask Braintree District Council to expedite this matter.

RESOLVED That the information be received and a letter of explanation sent to the complainant.

74. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PARTNERED TOWN OF AßLAR

A letter was received from the partnered town of Aßlar.

RESOLVED That the letter be received and a response sent welcoming the opportunity for meeting.

75. TOWN HALL SITE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A short presentation was received from the Town Clerk ahead of progressing to ‘Stage 4 - Report’.

RESOLVED That the information be received, plans approved and proceed to ‘Stage 4 – Report’.

76. FREEDOM OF WITHAM POLICY

The Freedom of Witham Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the policy be renewed and strict adherence to the rules for granting the Freedom of Witham.

77. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) **Environment Committee held 12th July 2021**

Minutes 1 – 15 (inclusive)

Councillor Goodman, Chairman of the Environment Committee, gave his Report on the draft Minutes en bloc.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Environment Committee be received.

(b) **Planning Applications and Transport Committee held 28th June and 12th July 2021**

Minutes 31 – 51 (inclusive)

Councillor Goodman, Chairman of the Planning Applications and Transport Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Planning Applications and Transport Committee be received.

78. PETITION HUB PAGE

Councillor Jay had declared an interest.

A motion was received from Councillor Jay proposing that a new website section be constructed for the direct receipt of petitions by the Town Council, allowing residents to sign petitions of interest.

The Town Clerk advised that petition schemes are commonly used by local councils and are run in accordance with a locally set petitions policy. The proposed scheme would therefore require due diligence research and a draft policy returned to Council for vetting.

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk investigate the creation of a “petitions hub” page on the Town Council website and report back to Town Council.

79. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

80. LEGAL MATTERS

An update was received from the Town Clerk on outstanding legal matters and transactions.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.21 p.m.

Councillor A Kilmartin
Town Mayor

JS/GK/29.07.2021