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MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 13th May 2019**

Present:	Councillors	T.A.	Pleasance	(Retiring Town Mayor)
	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		K.L.	Atwill	
		P.R.	Barlow	
		J.C.	Bayford	
		S.E.	Hicks	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C.M.	Lager	
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	
		C.S.	Livermore	
		R.P.	Ramage	
		P.M.	Ryland	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
		R.	Williams	
		J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
	Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
	Mrs	H.	Andrews	(Assistant Proper Officer)
	Mrs	K.	Lumb	(Community Manager)
	Mrs	N.	Smith	(Assistant Responsible Finance Officer)

And three members of the public.

The retiring Town Mayor, Councillor T.A. Pleasance, thanked Members for their support and encouragement during his year of office. He welcomed new Members to the Town Council, explaining that they had a lot to learn and would need to be patient as things do not happen overnight. He commended Councillor M.C.M. Lager as Leader of the Council. He thanked Clare, as his deputy, for her fantastic support and good company.

He also thanked the office staff, particularly his secretary, and the Outside Team. He urged new Members to get to know these willing and conscientious people. He also thanked the Town Clerk for his good advice and believed the Council would be going in a new direction.

1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Councillor T.A. Pleasance then called for nominations to serve as Town Mayor to serve for the Civic Year 2019/2020.

Members noted the tradition of the Deputy Mayor from the previous civic year assuming the position of Mayor in the next and agreed that Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager would be an eminently suitable Town Mayor and was duly nominated.

RESOLVED That Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager be elected to serve as Town Mayor for the ensuing Civic Year.

Councillor T.A. Pleasance then congratulated the new Town Mayor and placed the Chain of Office around her neck.

Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager then took the Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed by the Town Mayor.

Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager thanked Members for their confidence in electing her as Town Mayor. She said that it would be an honour to serve Witham which is a wonderful town. She had not expected to be Town Mayor and as such there had been insufficient time to fully investigate which charities to choose. She thanked Councillor Pleasance, as last year's Mayor, and recognised that he would be a hard act to follow but she would do her best.

In recognition of Councillor Pleasance and his wife Jenny's hard work in the past year, she presented them with a patio rose with the apt name 'Sunshine' as a token of appreciation. The Mayor presented Councillor Pleasance with a 'Former Mayor's' pin.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor J.C. Goodman who had a prior engagement.

4. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

5. TOWN MAYOR'S APPEAL 2018/2019

The Town Clerk explained that he was waiting for an up to date statement of account before a final figure for the Town Mayor's Appeal could be advised but believed it would be £5,700 which was a commendable amount and Councillor T.A. Pleasance was to be congratulated.

RESOLVED That authority be given to dispose of the Town Mayor's Appeal in accordance with the appointment charities.

6. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor called for nominations to serve as Deputy Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2019/2020.

Councillor R.P. Ramage with his wide local government experience was nominated.

RESOLVED That Councillor R.P. Ramage be appointed as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing Civic Year.

7. PRESENTATIONS

The Town Mayor congratulated Councillor R.P. Ramage on his appointment and presented to him the Deputy Town Mayor's collaret. She then presented the Mayoral Consort's collaret to her husband.

8. TOWN MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

Members were reminded that the Town Mayor's Allowance for the Civic Year 2019/2020 was £1,500 and it was also noted that there is a nominal allowance to reimburse the Deputy Town Mayor when undertaking duties on behalf of the Town Mayor – Minute 9 of P & R Meeting held 29.6.2015 referred.

RESOLVED That approval be given that the Town Mayor's Allowance for the Civic Year 2019/2020 be an amount no greater than £1,500.

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was noted that Councillor M.C.M. Lager will continue as Leader of the Council.

10. APPOINTMENTS

(i) A list of nominations en bloc for Members to serve on Committees was received.

RESOLVED That Members be appointed to the following Committees and Sub-Committees as per the received list of nominations –

(a) **Community Committee**

Councillors	K.L.	Atwill	
	P.R.	Barlow	
	J.C.	Bayford	(Vice Chairman)
Miss	C.	Jay	
	M.C.M.	Lager	(ex-officio)
Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(ex-officio)
	C.S.	Livermore	
	T.A.	Plesance	
	R.P.	Ramage	(Chairman) (ex-officio)
	P.M.	Ryland	
Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
	R.	Williams	
			(9 + 3 ex-officio)

(b) **Environment Committee**¹

Councillors	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		J.C.	Bayford	
		J.C.	Goodman	(Vice Chairman)
		S.E.	Hicks	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C.M	Lager	(ex-officio)
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(ex-officio)
		C.S.	Livermore	
		R.P.	Ramage	(ex-officio)
		P.M.	Ryland	
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
				(9 + 3 ex-officio)

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee**

Councillors	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		K.L.	Atwill	
		P.R.	Barlow	
		J.C.	Goodman	
		S.E.	Hicks	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman) (ex-officio)
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(ex-officio)
		T.A.	Pleasance	
		R.P.	Ramage	(ex-officio)
	Miss	M.L.	Weeks	
		R.	Williams	(Vice Chairman)
				(9 + 3 ex-officio)

- (ii) A list of nominations en bloc for Members to serve on the following Sub-Committees and Working Groups was received.

(a) **Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee**

Councillors	Mrs	S.	Ager	
		K.L.	Atwill	
		P.R.	Barlow	
		J.C.	Bayford	
		J.C.	Goodman	
		S.E.	Hicks	
	Miss	C.	Jay	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		M.C.M.	Lager	(ex-officio)
	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(ex-officio)
		C.S.	Livermore	
		T.A.	Pleasance	
		R.P.	Ramage	(ex-officio)
		P.M.	Ryland	

¹ There was an omission in the list and Councillor T.A. Pleasance's name did not appear. There will be a rescission notice moved at the next Town Council Meeting so that Councillor T.A. Pleasance can take his place on the Environment Committee as the Chairman.

Miss M.L. Weeks
R. Williams

(b) Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee

Councillors P.R. Barlow
J.C. Goodman
M.C.M.Lager (Chairman) (ex-officio)
Mrs S.C. Lager (ex-officio)
T.A. Pleasance
R.P. Ramage (ex-officio)
R. Williams
(4 + 3 ex-officio)

(c) Estimates Sub-Committee

Councillors J.C. Goodman
M.C.M.Lager (ex-officio) (Chairman)
Mrs S.C. Lager (ex-officio)
R.P. Ramage (ex-officio)
R. Williams
(2 + 3 ex-officio)

(d) Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee

Councillors J.C. Goodman
S.E. Hicks
Mrs S.C. Lager
T.A. Pleasance
R.P. Ramage

(e) Community Safety Task and Finish Group

Councillors Mrs S. Ager
K.L. Atwill
J.C. Bayford (Chairman)
J.C. Goodman
Miss C. Jay
M.C.M.Lager
T.A. Pleasance

(f) Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group

Councillors P.R. Barlow (Chairman)
J.C. Goodman
Miss C. Jay
Mrs A. Kilmartin
M.C.M.Lager
T.A. Pleasance
R.P. Ramage
Mrs S. Wilson (to be co-opted as a District Councillor)

(g) Council Events Review Group

Councillors	J.C.	Bayford	
	J.C.	Goodman	
Miss	C.	Jay	
	C.S.	Livermore	
	R.P.	Ramage	
	R.	Williams	(Chairman)

(h) Section 106 Task and Finish Group

Councillors	P.R.	Barlow	
	K.L.	Atwill	
	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
	R.P.	Ramage	

(i) Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group

Councillors	K.L.	Atwill	
	J.C.	Bayford	
	J.C.	Goodman	
	R.P.	Ramage	
Mr	J.	Palombi	(to be co-opted)

(j) Revenue and Localism Task and Finish Group

Councillors	K.L.	Atwill	
	J.C.	Goodman	
	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
	R.P.	Ramage	
	T.A.	Pleasance	

(k) Financial Scrutiny Review Group

Councillors	K.L.	Atwill
	P.R.	Barlow
	J.C.	Goodman

(l) Youth Task & Finish Group

Councillors	P.R.	Barlow
	J.C.	Bayford
Miss	C.	Jay
Mrs	A.	Kilmartin

(iii) A list of nominations en bloc for Members to serve on outside bodies was received –

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Braintree Association of Local Councils | - Councillor M.C.M. Lager (Executive Member) |
| | - Councillor R.P. Ramage |
| (b) Chamber of Commerce | - Councillor R.P. Ramage |
| (c) Citizens Advice | - Mrs J. Williams |
| (d) Essex Association of Local Councils | - Councillor M.C.M. Lager |
| | - Councillor R.P. Ramage |
| (e) Witham Carnival Association | - Councillor R. Williams |

- (f) Passenger Transport Panel - Councillor J.C. Goodman
- (g) Town Luncheon Club - Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin
- (h) Witham in Bloom (Lead Member) - Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin
- (i) Tree Wardens - To be nominated by Witham Tree Group.

- (iv) Authorised Bank Signatories - Councillors P.R. Barlow
J.C. Goodman
M.C.M Lager
P.M. Ryland
R. Williams

11. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Financial Regulations were received.

RESOLVED That the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted.

12. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 2018/19

The Internal Auditor's Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2019 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Internal Auditor had referred to the changes in the General Data Protection Regulations and this would form part of the Council's Risk Assessment in future.

RESOLVED That the Internal Auditor's Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2019 be received and noted.

13. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2018/19

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 be received and approved.

14. ANNUAL RETURN AND GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

- (i) The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) for the year ended 31st March 2019 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Governance Statement is produced every year and was Members' affirmation of what the Council has done.

RESOLVED That the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) for the year ended 31st March 2019 be received and approved and signed by the Town Mayor.

- (ii) Section 2 Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2019 was received.

RESOLVED That the Annual Governance Statement (Section 2) for the year ended 31st March 2019 be received and approved and signed by the Town Mayor.

15. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting 23rd April 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

16. STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders were received.

RESOLVED That the Standing Orders be received and approved.

17. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Members were informed the Town Council qualifies to adopt the General Power of Competence which lifts statutory restrictions in its spending. The Town Council can use this power during the term of the administration but will need annually to agree its use.

RESOLVED That the Town Council affirmed eligibility criteria and agreed to use the General Power of Competence in the forthcoming Civic Year.

18. CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were asked to receive and agree to adopt the Code of Conduct. The importance of observing the code was stressed.

RESOLVED That the Code of Conduct be received and adopted.

19. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on matters arising.

He explained that if Members wished to receive hard copies of Agendas and Minutes in their pigeon holes they should inform the Town Hall Office accordingly otherwise they would just receive the documents by email.

He said that he had made enquiries of Unity Bank regarding online banking and this seemed to be a suitable way to proceed. He would refer the matter back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

He explained that the Town Council was a pilot for Essex County Council's minor highway devolution but as no money had been received this has not yet commenced.

The Leader of the Council explained that it would be necessary to have an additional Town Council Meeting in January 2020 to discuss and approve the Town Council's budget for the next financial year.

He wanted to welcome new and re-elected Councillors and explained that the Town Council's values include respect for each other's opinions, respect to staff, courtesy to all and a willingness to listen and learn. He spoke about training which would be available particularly chairmanship training.

He said that the Council would defend residents' rights and act as an advocate. He then spoke of the mission of the three Committees – Community would seek to deliver better lives for residents, visitors and those who work in the town; Environment would safeguard and enhance the fabric of the town, natural environment as well as the built environment; and Policy and Resources would provide support and resources for the resulting projects and programmes. He then listed those items the Town Council would wish to deliver including the extension of the CCTV system, remodel the

Information Centre to be the heart of Witham, ensure young people enjoy the opportunities for good education, training, work and leisure and the use of grants to help local organisations.

RESOLVED That a Town Council Meeting be held on 13th January 2020 to discuss the budget and precept.

The Town Mayor took the opportunity to thank the Town Council staff for all they do and was impressed with their hard work and enthusiasm.

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 following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

20. LEGAL ADVICE

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.24 p.m.

Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager
Town Mayor

JS/GK/15.5.2019