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MINUTES

ANNUAL MEETING

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 15th May 2023**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham.**

Present: Councillors

J.	Bayford	(Retiring Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
S.	Ager	
L.	Barlow	
P.	Barlow	
J.C.	Coleman	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
P.	Heath	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	
B.	Taylor	
E.	Williams	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
S.	Smith	(PA to the Council)

And two members of the public.

1. ADDRESS FROM THE TOWN MAYOR

The former Town Mayor Jack Bayford welcomed everyone to the Meeting, congratulating new Members and thanking everyone for their support during his year in office particularly the Town Clerk and his secretary.

2. ELECTION OF WITHAM TOWN MAYOR FOR 2023/2024

The retiring Town Mayor invited nominations for Town Mayor of Witham for the Civic Year 2023/2024.

Jack was thanked for his hard work as Mayor over the past year and the challenges he had faced.

RESOLVED That Councillor S. Ager be elected to serve as Town Mayor of Witham for the Civic Year 2023/2024.

The former Town Mayor presented Councillor Ager with her Badge of Office and in return she presented Jack with his former Mayor's badge.

Councillor Ager then took the Chair.

3. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

3.1 The Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the Town Mayor was received, signed and witnessed.

RESOLVED That the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be accepted.

3.2 It was confirmed that all other Councillor Declarations of Acceptance of Office have been made.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

5. INTERESTS

Councillors L. Barlow and P. Barlow declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 17.4 – Carnival Association as they both knew members of the organising committee.

6. APPOINTMENT OF WITHAM DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR 2023/2024

The Town Mayor invited nominations for Deputy Town Mayor of Witham for the Civic Year 2023/2024.

RESOLVED That Councillor L. Barlow be elected to serve as Deputy Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2023/2024.

7. DISPOSAL OF TOWN MAYOR'S APPEAL 2022/2023

Members were asked to authorise the disposal of the Town Mayor's Appeal for the Civic Year 2022/2023 to the Royal British Legion and Witham Cricket Club.

RESOLVED That authority be given to release the sum of £808.37 from the Town Mayor's Appeal to share between his nominated beneficiaries of the Royal British Legion and Witham Cricket Club.

8. TOWN MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE CIVIC YEAR 2023/2024

Members were asked to authorise payment of the Town Mayor's Allowance set at £2,000 for Civic Year 2023/2024.

RESOLVED That the Town Mayor's Allowance of £2,000 for the Civic Year 2023/2024 be confirmed.

9. MINUTES

The Minutes of Witham Town Council Meeting held 2nd May 2023 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 2nd May 2023 be received, confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

10. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed that Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as Leader of the Council in recognition of his years of experience.

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as Leader of the Council for the civic year 2023/2024.

11. APPOINTMENT / DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEES

Members were asked to consider the amendment of the following sub-committee-

11.1) Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee

It was explained to Members that as a sub-committee it had reported through the Policy and Resources Committee whereas it should be a committee in its own right.

RESOLVED That the Staffing and Accommodation become a Committee in its own right.

Members were asked to consider the dissolution of the following advisory committees-

11.2) Gimson's Review Group

Members agreed that the Gimson's Review Group should be dissolved as it had fulfilled its remit.

RESOLVED That the Gimson's Review Group be dissolved.

11.3) Localism & Devolution Steering Group

Members agreed that the Localism & Devolution Steering Group should be dissolved.

RESOLVED That the Localism & Devolution Steering Group be dissolved.

11.4) Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group

Members had not been in agreement as to whether the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group should be dissolved. It was suggested that the District Council plans for the town centre had now been agreed and future works could be taken through another Steering Group.

RESOLVED That the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group be dissolved.

Members were asked to consider the amendment of the following advisory committee -

11.5) Delivering Developer Obligations Working Group

Members were asked to consider renaming the Group as the S106 Steering Group.

RESOLVED That the Delivering Developer Obligations Working Group be renamed as the Section 106 Steering Group.

12. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The current Scheme of Delegation and proposed amendments for adoption including terms of reference were received.

Members agreed that the Staffing and Accommodation Committee should become the Staffing Committee with the accommodation aspect being dealt with by the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED That the Staffing and Accommodation Committee should be renamed the Staffing Committee with accommodation issues coming under the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee.

It was agreed that the Staffing Committee should not be part of the Widdecombe rules on proportionate representation but Members selected on their knowledge of Human Resources matters.

RESOLVED That membership of the Staffing Committee would not follow the Widdecombe rules of proportionate representation.

RESOLVED That the Scheme of Delegation be received and the proposed amendments adopted.

13. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXISTING COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Standing Committees:

13.1) Planning & Transport Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Planning & Transport Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors E. Adelaja
P. Barlow
J.C. Coleman
J.M. Coleman
L. Headley
J. Martin
R. Ramage
A. Sloma
E. Williams
Vacancy

13.2) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Environment Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors E. Adelaja
S. Ager
J.C. Coleman
J.M. Coleman
B. Fleet
L. Headley
J. Martin
R. Ramage
A. Sloma
B. Taylor

13.3) Community Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Community Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors E. Adelaja
S. Ager
L. Barlow
J.C. Coleman
B. Fleet
L. Headley
P. Heath
R. Playle
R. Ramage
E. Williams

13.4) Policy & Resources Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Policy & Resources Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors L. Barlow
P. Barlow
J.M. Coleman
B. Fleet
P. Heath

J. Martin
R. Playle
R. Ramage
B. Taylor
Vacancy

13.5) Staffing Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Staffing Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors S. Ager
 L. Barlow
 P. Barlow
 B. Fleet
 P. Heath
 J. Martin

14. APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS/VICES

Nominations were received to appoint Chairman and Vice Chairman and make appointment of such chairs to each of the following:

14.1) Planning & Transport Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as Chairman and Councillor J.C. Coleman as Vice Chairman of the Planning & Transport Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

14.2) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Ager be appointed as Chairman and Councillor J.C. Coleman as Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

14.3) Community Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor L. Barlow be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Heath as Vice Chairman of the Community Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

14.4) Policy & Resources Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Heath as Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

14.5) Staffing Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Heath as Vice Chairman of the Staffing for the ensuing Civic Year.

15. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXISTING SUB-COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Sub-Committees:

15.1) Estimates Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Estimates Sub-Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	E.	Adelaja
	S.	Ager
	L.	Barlow
	P.	Barlow
	B.	Fleet
	P.	Heath

15.2) Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	P.	Barlow
	B.	Fleet
	P.	Heath
	R.	Ramage
		<i>Vacancy</i>

16. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Advisory Committees:

16.1) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	P.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	L.	Headley
	P.	Heath
	R.	Playle
	B.	Taylor

16.2) Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors S. Ager
P. Barlow
J.M. Coleman
L. Headley
R. Ramage
B. Taylor

16.3) S106 Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Section 106 Steering Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors L. Barlow
P. Barlow
J.C. Coleman
B. Fleet
P. Heath
R. Playle
B. Taylor

16.4) Climate Change Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Climate Change Working Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors S. Ager
L. Barlow
J.C. Coleman
J.M. Coleman
B. Fleet
L. Headley
A. Sloma
E. Williams

16.5) Cycling Development Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Cycling Development Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors L. Barlow
J.C. Coleman
P. Heath
R. Playle
Vacancy

16.6) Financial Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Financial Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors E. Adelaja
P. Barlow
B. Fleet

16.7) The Voice Editing Panel

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Voice Editing Panel for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	J.C.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	R.	Playle

17. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES & REPRESENTATIVES

Members were asked to appoint Members to the following representative positions:

17.1) Essex Association of Local Councils

Members were informed that the Essex Association of Local Councils appoints its own representatives.

17.2) Braintree Association of Local Councils

RESOLVED That Councillor Heath be appointed as the Town Council representative on Braintree Association of Local Councils.

17.3) Witham Town Luncheon Club

It was considered appropriate not to appoint a representative for the Witham Town Luncheon Club.

17.4) Witham Carnival Association

Councillors L. Barlow and P. Barlow had declared non-pecuniary interests.

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as the Town Council representative for the Witham Carnival Association.

17.5) Citizens Advice

RESOLVED That Councillor L. Barlow be appointed as the Town Council representative for Citizens Advice.

17.6) Passenger Transport Panel

Members were informed that it would be appropriate to defer appointing a representative until further information was received regarding its remit.

RESOLVED That a decision be taken not to appoint a representative on the Passenger Transport Panel until further information was received.

17.7) LGBTQ+ Ambassador

RESOLVED That Councillors L. Barlow and J.C. Coleman be appointed as the Town Council LGBTQ+ Ambassadors.

17.8) CPRE The Countryside Charity

It was agreed that further information needed to be sought before a representative was appointed.

17.9) Chamber of Commerce

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed as the Town Council representative for the Chamber of Commerce and that Councillor Ramage be appointed if a further representative was allowed.

18. ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Standing Orders were received and adopted.

RESOLVED That Standing Orders be adopted.

19. ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Financial Regulations and proposals for amendment were received.

RESOLVED That the amended Financial Regulations be adopted.

20. ADOPTION OF TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct for the Civic Year 2023/2024 and proposals for amendment were received.

RESOLVED That the amended Code of Conduct be adopted.

21. APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

It was explained that three additional Members who are readily available to authorise payments were required.

RESOLVED That Councillors Ager, Barlow and Heath continue as signatories and that J.C. Coleman, Fleet and Headley be appointed as the three additional signatories.

22. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Members reaffirmed the Council's use of the General Power of Competence for Civic Year 2023/2024 as set out in The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

RESOLVED That the Town Council uses the General Power of Competence for the Civic Year 2023/2024 as set out in The Parish

Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

23. ASSET REVIEW

The Council's assets were reviewed. The Town Clerk advised Members that a depreciation value was not recorded.

RESOLVED That the Town Council's Assets be received and noted.

24. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2023/2024

It was agreed to confirm that Heelis and Lodge would continue to provide the Council's internal audit for the financial year 2023/2024 however Members wished next year to perform a full tender exercise.

RESOLVED That Heelis and Lodge be appointed to continue as the internal auditor for the financial year 2023/2024.

25. TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS

Members were asked to adopt the updated Meeting Calendar. The District Council had still to set its calendar and therefore it might be necessary to adjust some of the Meeting dates.

RESOLVED That the Meeting Calendar for the Civic Year 2023/2024 be agreed.

26. TREASURY & INVESTMENT POLICY

Members were asked to renew the Town Council's Treasury & Investment Policy with the one amendment to include 'instant access'.

RESOLVED That the amended Town Council's Treasury & Investment Policy be agreed.

Before closing the Town Mayor took the opportunity to thank Members for the opportunity to be Town Mayor. She undertook to do the best for the town.

The Town Mayor closed the Meeting 8.50 p.m.

Councillor S. Ager
Town Mayor

NS/GK/16.5.2023