



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

## MINUTES

### WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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

Present: Councillors

A.	Kilmartin	(Town Mayor)
J.	Bayford	(Deputy Town Mayor)
S.	Ager	
P.	Barlow	
J.	Goodman	
C.	Jay	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
S.	Rajeev	
J.	Williams	
R.	Williams	
J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And two members of the public.

#### **100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Atwill who was travelling abroad, Councillors S Hicks and M Weeks who were attending a Meeting at Braintree District Council, and Councillor Pleasance due to self isolation requirements.

Essex County Councillors Louis and Playle had also sent their apologies, likewise District Councillor Wilson.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and accepted.

#### **101. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

**102. INTERESTS**

Councillors Ager, Bayford, Barlow, Goodman, Kilmartin, M. Lager, and J. Williams all declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 111 – Remembrance Sunday, as members of the Royal British Legion.

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

The Town Mayor was delighted to introduce Revd Dr Jonathan Pritchard, Team Rector at St Nicolas Church.

Jonathan was pleased to be able to introduce himself to the Town Council. He explained that he would serve the people of Witham and engage in the public space. In his 16/17 years at Keighley he had worked closely with town and parish councils. He asked that he be used to pray or bless, or to provide a positive neutral pastoral space. He looked forward to working with the Town Council.

The Town Mayor led the applause in welcoming Jonathan to Witham.

**104. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE**

Essex County Councillors D. Louis and R Playle had sent reports which were tabled.

Members appreciated reports from Essex County Councillors.

**105. TREES IN RELATION TO BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

(a) Gimsons development

Members reported that the Gimsons Review Group had a site meeting and raised questions with the construction manager regarding trees and railings on the site. A substantive reply was awaited from the developer which would be discussed at the next Review Group meeting.

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

The Town Mayor proposed that the next two items be discussed together.

(b) Trees at Lidl and Tree Applications

The suggestion was made that the Leader of the Council should contact Councillor Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council, seeking a reply from Councillor Spray in relation to the felling of the trees adjacent to the Lidl site and that the Town Clerk should send a letter to Andy Wright, CEO of Braintree District Council regarding the lack of response from Chris Paggi, Senior Planner, in relation to the apparent change in process so that tree application decisions are now taken by Essex County Council.

An amendment was put that a formal statement should be made to the press concerning the negligence at responding to the Town Council and that the MP should also be involved.

After much discussion a vote was taken.

**RESOLVED** That the Leader of the Council writes to the Leader of Braintree District Council concerning the lack of response from Councillor Spray regarding the felling of trees adjacent to Lidl.

**RESOLVED** That a copy of the letter to the Leader of the Council be sent to Priti Patel, MP.

**RESOLVED** That if the option to involve the Leader of the Council in eliciting a response fails, then the press will be informed.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Clerk writes to Essex County Council to seek information as to whether it now makes the decision on tree applications rather than Braintree District Council.

*Whilst part of the above item was discussed Councillor Livermore was absent from the Council Chamber.*

**106. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements for the period 24<sup>th</sup> August to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were received.

The Town Mayor said that Priti Patel, MP had attended the Town Hall on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> September to present her with a donation to the Mayor's Appeal and have a tour of the building. She also spoke about the successful the walk around the town and along the river walk.

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

*Whilst the above was being discussed Councillor C. Lager was absent from the Council Chamber.*

**107. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

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

The Town Clerk explained that confirmation had been received of the Quality Council accreditation and that once the three year financial forecast was completed in January, gold status would be applied for.

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

**108. WITHAM WALK AND TALK 4 MEN**

An update on event planning and preparation was received for the Walk and Talk 4 Men which would take place on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

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

**109. TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

(a) **CPRE**

Members were asked to appoint an outside representative for the Campaign to Protect Rural England. It was agreed that Councillor Ager should be appointed.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Ager be appointed to serve as the Town Council representative on the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

(b) **EWT**

Members were asked to consider renewal of the Essex Wildlife Trust membership at an increased price of £250.00 per annum.

Members noted the sharp increase but agreed membership was good value for money as help and advice had been given in the past.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council continues to be a member of the Essex Wildlife Trust.

**110. REUNIFICATION VISIT TO WALDBRÖL**

An update and correspondence was received.

In the absence of the Town Mayor being able to travel, it was agreed that the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Bayford should attend the Reunification of Germany celebrations in Waldröhl.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and the Deputy Town Mayor attend the Reunification celebrations.<sup>1</sup>

**111. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

Councillors Ager, Bayford, Barlow, Goodman, Kilmartin, M. Lager, and J. Williams had declared interests.

A report regarding the Town Council's responsibilities for Remembrance Sunday was received.

Members discussed whether it would be appropriate for the Town Council to pay the costs for the pipe band to lead the parade. Members considered that this was an important event for the town and it would therefore be appropriate to be funded by the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the Town Council take on the added responsibilities of paying for the pipe band and the PA system for the Remembrance Day parade and service at the War Memorial.

**112. PARKING ISSUES – ALLEN ROAD**

Email correspondence was received and Councillor J. Williams spoke about the problems caused by lack of parking and ownership issues of grassed areas by Allen Road.

Members recognised that parking in the town was an endemic problem and discussed whether a holistic approach might be better. It was known that Eastlight, formerly Greenfields Community Housing, did not have funds towards this type of work.

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<sup>1</sup> Councillor Bayford is unable to attend the celebrations due to employment commitments.

Members agreed that a meeting to discuss this particular problem should be organised with Eastlight, Braintree District Council's Landscape Services and residents.

**RESOLVED** That the correspondence be received and a meeting set up with Allen Road residents, Eastlight and Braintree District Council to discuss this particular problem.

**113. SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

Members were asked to consider a Scheme of Delegation Update.

**RESOLVED** That the updated Scheme of Delegation be approved.

**RESOLVED** That Councillors Barlow and R. Williams be appointed to serve on the Climate Audit Panel for the ensuing civic year.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Ager be appointed to serve on the Youth Working Group for the ensuing civic year.

**114. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) **Planning Applications and Transport Committee held 23<sup>rd</sup> August and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Minutes 81 – 107 (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.

(b) **Policy and Resources Committee held 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Minutes 19 – 30 (inclusive).

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

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received.

**115. 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.

**116. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED**

**Policy and Resources Committee held 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Minute 31.

Councillor M. Lager continued his Report.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council is still in dispute with Chelmsford City Council and a report would be made at the next Meeting. The CCTV system was still down.

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

**117. LAND TRANSACTIONS**

Correspondence and a report were received.

Members were informed a meeting with Highways England & Ringway Jacobs concerning the impending A12 reconstruction was due to be held at the Town Hall on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September to discuss the impact on Whetmead Nature Reserve.

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

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.10 p.m.

Councillor A. Kilmartin  
Town Mayor

JS/GK/22.9.2021

## **SUMMARY OF PRIVATE ITEM MINUTES**

### **117. LAND TRANSACTIONS**

An update was received concerning Shelley's Meadow. Members were informed a draft lease was now expected to be returned to the Council imminently for review and agreement. It was hoped that upon satisfactory resolution of the lease wording, possession of the land could commence.

Members were informed that the Forest Road allotment land transaction remained slow and was being overseen by the Deputy Town Clerk who continued to liaise between respective solicitors.