



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

## MINUTES

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

Present: Councillors M.C. M Lager (Chairman)  
R. Williams (Vice Chairman)  
Mrs S. Ager  
K.L. Atwill  
P.R. Barlow  
S.E. Hicks  
Mrs A. Kilmartin  
Mrs S.C. Lager  
R.P. Ramage  
Miss M.L. Weeks  
  
J. Sheehy (Town Clerk)  
Mrs G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)  
Miss N. Smith (Assistant R.F.O.)

### 21. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Goodman and P.M. Ryland who had previous engagements.

### 22. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 23. INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

### 24. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

**25. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

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

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

**26. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Details of Members' Attendance at Meetings were received.

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

**27. CLARIFICATION OF NON-MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION RIGHTS DURING MEETINGS**

Members recognised that it had always been practice in the past for non-Members to attend Meetings but it was perhaps not the best way to run Committees by allowing them to participate and that in future they should make representations at Questions and Statements from the Public.

The Town Clerk explained that he had sought extensive advice on this matter and, as the Town Council ensures political balance on all Committees, this would be undermined if there was a blanket permission for a Councillor to take part in the debate or make a proposal. It would also be unclear to members of the public as to who was a Member of the Committee.

Following discussion, it was agreed to receive and note.

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

**28. GOVERNANCE**

a) Standing Orders

Model Standing Orders from the National Association of Local Councils were received.

The Leader of the Council had identified areas which would need amendment and detailed these changes. Members discussed these changes and identified paragraphs that were not relevant to the Town Council. It was agreed that Standing Orders, incorporating these changes, be referred to Town Council for adoption.

Members agreed that it would be useful to have a Scheme of Delegation and this should be produced for the next Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

**RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL** That the Standing Orders, as agreed at this Meeting, be adopted.

b) Model Code of Conduct

Model Code of Conduct from the National Association of Local Councils were received.

The Leader of the Council explained that the existing Code of Conduct had been adopted in 2011 and recommended this simplified version.

**RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL** That the Model Code of Conduct be adopted.

c) Members' Gift Protocol

The Town Clerk advised that it would be beneficial to have a Town Council policy but Members should report all gifts over the value of £50 to the District Council's Monitoring Officer.

**RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL** That the three sentences be adopted into the Model Code of Conduct.

**29. DOG BIN SPONSORSHIP REPORT**

A report was received concerning possible sponsorship of dog bins along the River Walk.

Members considered this to be an excellent idea and delegated the Office to take it forward.

**RESOLVED** That a Dog Bin sponsorship scheme be implemented by the Office.

**30. CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Members were asked to discuss whether the Town Council should be celebrating 125 years of local government.

Members agreed that it would not be appropriate.

**RESOLVED** That Essex Association of Local Councils be informed that the Town Council would not be celebrating 125 years of local government.

**31. CONSIDERATION OF PRIVATE EMAIL ATTACHMENTS**

Councillor Mrs S. Ager suggested that separate email attachments should be sent for private items.

The Town Clerk said that this was a valid point and confidential attachments would be sent separately. Agendas would be split into the public and private segments.

**RESOLVED** That confidential items be sent in a separate email.

**32. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**(a) BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Bank Reconciliations to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Bank Reconciliations to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

**(b) BUDGET STATEMENTS AND EARMARKED RESERVES**

The up to date Budget Statement and Earmarked Reserves were received.

Members recognised that these figures would identify prospective over or underspend budget lines.

The Town Clerk said that there would be additional funding required for the audit and legal budget and suggested that money be vired.

**RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL** That £1,000 be vired from the photocopying budget, £1,000 from insurance, £2,000 from community safety and the remainder from general reserves to augment the audit and legal budget.

**RESOLVED** That the Budget Statements and Earmarked Reserves be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

**(c) SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS**

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Schedule of Receipts to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and totalling £326,723.39 and the Schedule of Payments to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and totalling £144,714.67 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

**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 due to the confidential nature, legal proceedings and commercial sensitivity.

**33. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

A report was received regarding the Mill Lane Bowls Club and the difficulties they were suffering in running the club.

Members agreed that the Town Clerk should contact the Chairman to discuss whether the Town Council might be able to offer assistance.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the Town Clerk meet with the Chairman of the Mill Lane Bowls Club to discuss whether assistance could be offered.

**34. THE VOICE**

A report was received about the publication and distribution of The Voice newsletter.

The Town Clerk explained that a review of The Voice had been undertaken and it was recommended that to ensure a better delivery to all addresses in Witham it would be more cost effective to use the Royal Mail. They would however deliver to all addresses in the CM8 post code and therefore additional copies would be required.

Members agreed that to ensure better delivery Royal Mail should be used and those residents outside Witham might appreciate the opportunity to read The Voice but, out of courtesy, the Parish Clerks should be informed accordingly.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the Town Clerk's recommendation to use Royal Mail to distribute The Voice be accepted.

**35. PERIOD GARDEN**

The Town Clerk explained that he had taken advice from Planning Officers at Braintree District Council regarding the Period Garden which had been subject to serious anti-social behaviour which deterred use by members of the public. Members had taken the reluctant decision that it would need to close permanently because of this abuse. The Planning Officers were satisfied in principle that the garden could be closed permanently and used to create secure storage for the Town Council's equipment which had been stolen on two occasions. He recommended that a planning consultant be employed to assist with the application.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and the Town Clerk make enquiries regarding employment of a planning consultant.

**36. STAFFING**

The Town Clerk gave a resume of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Minutes held 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

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

**37. LEGAL ADVICE**

The Town Clerk gave advice.

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

**38. PUBLIC DOMAIN**

Members agreed that Minutes 33, 34 and 35 discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

**RESOLVED** That Minutes 33 – Community Facilities, 34 – The Voice and 35 Period Garden, be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.25 p.m.

Councillor \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

JS/GK/22.8.2019