



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 14th December**

Present:	Councillors	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(Town Mayor)
		Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	(Deputy Town Mayor)
		Mrs	S.	Ager	
			K.L.	Atwill	
			P.R.	Barlow	
			J.C.	Goodman	
			S.E.	Hicks	(arrived 7.05 p.m.)
	Miss		C.	Jay	(arrived 7.10 p.m.)
			M.C.M.	Lager	
			C.S.	Livermore	
			P.M.	Ryland	
	Miss		M.L.	Weeks	
			R.	Williams	
			J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
	Miss		N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
	Mrs		H.	Andrews	(Assistant Proper Officer)
	Miss		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

225. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Bayford and T.A. Pleasance who had previous engagements. Apologies were also received from Essex County Councillors J. Abbott and D. Louis.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

226. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 23rd November 2020 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor in due course.

227. INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

228. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the member of the public present.

229. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Apologies had been received from both Essex County Councillors J. Abbott and D. Louis.

A report had been tabled from Councillor Louis and a report from Councillor J. Abbott was later sent to Members.

Members commented on the Member Locality Fund and how a list should be drawn up to ensure that it would be correctly spent on amenities for residents.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

230. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that he had nothing to report.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted

231. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The Delegated Decisions for the period 30th November to 4th December 2020 were received.

RESOLVED That the Delegated Decisions for the period 30th November to 4th December 2020 be received and endorsed.

232. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of Town Mayor's Engagements to 13th December 2020 were received.

The Town Mayor considered the new Christmas Lights to be wonderful and asked that her thanks to the Events' Organiser be minuted.

RESOLVED That the details be received and the Town Mayor's thanks to the Events' Organiser for the new Christmas Lights be noted.

233. TREES

This matter was discussed later in the Meeting.

234. CLIMATE CHANGE

A report was received from Councillor Mrs S. Ager regarding the Town Council's role in climate change.

Councillor Mrs S. Ager said that this was the second highest priority for the Council and would encourage both the Community and Environment Committees to take this forward.

Members were supportive of the idea and gave suggestions of what could be achieved from electric car charging points and switching central heating systems.

Councillor Mrs S. Ager explained that she and the Assistant Proper Officer would be attending an Essex Association of Local Councils' Climate Change Conference and they would draft a policy for discussion.

RESOLVED That following the Climate Change Conference a draft policy be brought back to Town Council for discussion.

235. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Town Council's interim internal audit report for the financial year 2020-2021 was received.

Members considered this to be an excellent report on the Town Council's finances. The recommendation to review the level of Fidelity cover was discussed. Whilst it was understood that the strict procedures in place would not allow for fraudulent activities the fidelity guarantee should cover the maximum amount in the Council's bank accounts.

RESOLVED That the interim internal audit report for the financial year 2020 – 2021 be received and its recommendations accepted.

236. TREES

An email had been received from Councillor P.M. Ryland seeking action regarding trees in Witham.

Councillor P.M. Ryland reiterated his concerns regarding the group of willow trees adjacent to the old Bramston Sports Centre site that had apparently been cut down due to an infestation of honey fungus. He had referred the matter to the Forestry Commission who had said that the work was inappropriate as the willows should have been pollarded and that the trees should have been replaced by the District Council.

Members were supportive of Councillor Ryland's comments that trees should not be felled unnecessarily and agreed that mature trees should be planted in their place. It was agreed that evidence should be sought regarding the need to fell these trees.

RESOLVED That an independent opinion be sought in the first instance as to whether the trees would have been subject to honey fungus.

237. 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.

238. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Notes from the Meeting held 25th November 2020 were received and Members asked to discuss the District Council's proposals regarding the regeneration of the Town Centre.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received.

RESOLVED That support be given to the District Council’s plans for maintenance work in the Town Centre but the proposal WP 1 be conditional on a no right turn into Maldon Road at Newland Street as the road is too narrow at that point.

RESOLVED That Councillor K.L. Atwill, as the Chairman of the Town Centre Regeneration Group, should be a representative on the Project Board.

239. LEGAL MATTERS

The Town Clerk had nothing substantial to report.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

240. UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.35 p.m.

Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager
Town Mayor
JS/GK/17.12.2020