



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

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 28th October 2019**

Present:	Councillors	Mrs	S.C.	Lager	(Town Mayor)
			K.L.	Atwill	
			J.C.	Goodman	
			S.E.	Hicks	
		Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
			M.C.M.	Lager	
			C.S.	Livermore	
			T.A.	Pleasance	
	Essex County Councillor		J.	Abbott	(Witham Northern)
	Braintree District Councillor		J.	Coleridge	(Witham South)
			J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
		Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
		Miss	N.	Smith	(Assistant RFO)

And one member of the public.

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.R. Barlow, Miss C. Jay, R.P. Ramage, P.M. Ryland, Miss M.L. Weeks and R. Williams who had previous engagements; and Mrs S. Ager and J.C. Bayford who were unwell.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

62. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 2nd September 2019 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

63. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

64. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No comment was made by the member of the public present.

65. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

County Councillor James Abbott explained that there had been a full Council Meeting on 8th October 2019. He reported that there had been some improvements to highways but more were required, this was partly due to budget and partly due to lack of administrative support. He said that there was no budget for Public Rights of Way, cycle routes or street trees. He had reminded Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, of the need for all three tiers of Councils to be directly involved in Section 106 decisions. He cited as an example the 150 houses to be built in Conrad Road yet no assessment had been made regarding the possibility that children from these new homes might attend Templars School and as a result not even a dropped kerb had been proposed. He stressed the importance of engaging with Members. He was pleased to report that at the Local Highways Panel Meeting on 25th September 2019, the pedestrian crossing in Cressing Road had been agreed and would now be going out to consultation. He complained about the junction of Newland Street and The Grove and that repairs to potholes and white lining had not been done whilst other work had been carried out. He said that it was proposed to carry out these works during the day to save costs but a permit would be required. He said that following the recent heavy rain, it was noted that the flooding issues in Guithavon Valley had been improved but there was still water running from further up the slope.

Councillor J. Abbott said that he was in principle in favour of the railway station building application but it was proposed to remove the stopping bay in Albert Road, which would be inconsiderate for the disabled, and put down double yellow lines. He believed that the multi storey car park application should have gone through the proper process. He referred to the A12 consultation and believed that the Boreham to Kelvedon section improvements should commence rather than to wait for the outcome of the section to Marks Tey.

Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin said that she had complained about the shale which falls from lorries as they turn at the Grove junction. Councillor J. Abbott said that lorries should be properly covered to prevent this happening.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillor J. Abbott for his report.

Councillor James Coleridge, Braintree District Councillor, was pleased to meet Members of the Town Council. He explained that there had not been too much at Council on Witham but he had sought an assurance that £3 million from the sale of the Lidl site had been set aside ready to be used for Witham.

Councillor S.E. Hicks spoke in his capacity as a District Councillor and mentioned the railway station application which was acceptable but he agreed that the multi storey car park should not have been allowed through permitted development.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillor J. Coleridge for his report.

66. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk said that they were no matters arising.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

67. RESOLUTION MOVED ON NOTICE

A Resolution moved on Notice in relation to Membership of the Community Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee was received.

RESOLVED That the Membership of Committees be varied as follows with immediate effect:

- (a) Councillor P.M. Ryland be no longer a Member of the Policy and Resources Committee and Councillor T.A. Pleasance be appointed in his stead;
- (b) Councillor P.M. Ryland be no longer a Member of the Community Committee and Councillor J.C. Goodman be appointed in his stead.

68. MEMBERS' SURGERIES – POP-UP EVENTS

Members considered the event had been well-worthwhile but it had been quiet with little footfall possibly because it had been wet. Special Police Sergeant Simon Jesse had been there the whole day and the public had been pleased to see him.

The Town Mayor commented that she had attended for a while but three Councillors had been too many so in future it would be left to Ward Members.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

69. MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

Armed Forces Day

A reply from Braintree District Council regarding the playing of the Nation Anthem at the Armed Forces Day was received.

It was considered that if there is a strength of feeling on this issue it should be raised through the Braintree Association of Local Councils and to see whether Parish Councils support the proposal.

It was suggested that the Town Council holds its own Armed Forces Day service.

RESOLVED That at a future Meeting consideration be given for the Town Council to hold its own Armed Forces Day service.

70. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's Engagements were received.

The Town Mayor commented that she had met lots of people doing wonderful things. She said that she had met with students of Maltings Academy at the Town Hall on 17th September 2019 and they had offered to attend the next Silver Cinema, bring cakes and show people to their seats.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

71. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) **Community Committee Meetings held 30th September and 22nd October 2019**

Minutes 36 – 59 (inclusive)

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Community Committee, Councillor M.C.M. Lager, as Leader of the Council, gave the report en bloc.

Minute 40 – Police Update

Members were informed that Spencer Clarke, Public Protection Manager at Chelmsford City Council, had been trying to resolve the issue of police being able to see images from the CCTV cameras on their hand held devices. Mr Clarke would be attending the next Community Committee Meeting on Monday, 25th November 2019.

The Town Clerk had undertaken an assessment and considered that there should not be a knife amnesty box at the Town Hall for safety reasons.

Minute 41 – Citizens Advice

The Leader of the Council asked how the Town Council could be assured that the grant of £10,000 to the Citizens Advice is specifically used for Witham's residents. The Town Council representative on Citizens Advice, Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager would make enquiries.

Minute 42 – Town Clerk's Report

In answer to a question about a suitable secure site for a police locker in Witham, Members were informed that this issue is being progressed with the assistance of Mr Les Hawkings, Specials Support Policing Co-ordinator.

Minute 45 – Bus Shelters

A recommendation was received from the Community Committee.

RESOLVED That £4,500 be vired from the Community Team budget to the Bus Shelter budget.

Minute 47 – Social Isolation

It was suggested that Community Transport could be used to assist those who would otherwise struggle to attend the Silver Cinema on a Sunday afternoon.

Minute 59 – Information Centre Refurbishment

A recommendation was received from the Community Committee.

Members had welcomed the proposals for the refurbishment and that it would be necessary to close the centre for a few weeks whilst the work was carried out.

RESOLVED That £9,000 be allocated from General Reserves to the existing £15,000 Earmarked Reserves.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Community Committee be received.

(b) **Environment Committee Meeting held 16th September 2019**

Minutes 34 – 51 (inclusive)

Councillor T.A. Pleasance, Chairman of the Environment Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

Minute 40 – Environment Budget

A recommendation was received from the Environment Committee.

RESOLVED That £2,000 be vired from the devolved services budget to the tree budget.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Environment Committee be received.

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 14th October 2019**

Minutes 39 – 56 (inclusive)

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

Minute 44 – Committees

A Recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee was received.

It was proposed that the new Committee structure would promote in-depth expertise. All Members would have a fair share of Committees and political balance would be retained. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor would no longer be ex-officio on all Committees. It was suggested that Members put forward the Committees they would wish to serve on so that they can be agreed at the Town Council Meeting on 20th January 2020.¹

RESOLVED That the report and recommendation be accepted, namely that Membership of the Policy and Resources Committee be reduced to ten, Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee be reduced to six and that the Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee be reduced to ten Members; and the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor, in their capacity as ex-officio Members, be removed from all Committees and Sub-Committees; and that the Planning Applications and Transport Sub-Committee becomes a full Committee.

RESOLVED That the Report be received.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admission 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.

72. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 14th October 2019

Minutes 57 – 60 (inclusive)

¹ New Membership of Committees will be taken to the next Town Council Meeting on Monday, 13th January 2020 as Monday, 20th January 2020 is to consider the precept.

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

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

73. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk gave a report.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

74. RIVER WALK

The Town Clerk had nothing to report.

75. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Members agreed that nothing discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That nothing discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.38 p.m.

Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager
Town Mayor

JS/GK/30.10.2019