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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 8th February 2021** Time: **7.00 p.m.**

Present: Councillors

C.	Lager	(Town Mayor)
A.	Kilmartin	(Deputy Town Mayor)
S.	Ager	
K.	Atwill	(arrived 7.05 p.m.)
P.	Barlow	
J.	Bayford	
J.	Goodman	
S.	Hicks	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
T.	Pleasance	
P.	Ryland	
M.	Weeks	

Also in attendance: Councillor

S.	Wilson	(Braintree District Council)
N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

257. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jay who was unwell and Williams who was working. Apologies were later received from Essex County Councillors Abbott who had a previous Meeting and Louis who was unwell. Councillor Atwill would be late as he was attending another meeting.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

258. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held 18th January 2021 be confirmed by the Town Mayor and signed in due course.

259. INTERESTS

Later in the Meeting Councillor Barlow declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 263 – Delegated Decisions, as his planning application was included on the list.

260. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

Councillor Atwill arrived at the Meeting.

261. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor Hicks explained that the flooding caused by the new development off Forest Road would be resolved by unblocking the brook and reinstating the drainage ditch.

Councillor Kilmartin said that the District Council sends daily updates on the Covid situation and she was pleased to see that potholes were being repaired.

It was thought useful if the District Council information could be shared. A discussion took place as to how up to date the information would be and if it were possible to share a link on the Town Council website.

RESOLVED That a link to the District Council information be included on the Town Council website.

Councillor Abbott later sent a report which is attached to these Minutes.

262. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

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

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the Society of Local Council Clerk's meetings had not been attended recently but all information was received via email.

RESOLVED That the report be received and information noted.

263. DELEGATED DECISIONS

Councillor Barlow declared a pecuniary interest as his planning application was included on the list of decisions.

The Delegated Decisions from 11th to 25th January 2021 were received.

RESOLVED That the Delegated Decisions be received and noted.

264. CLIMATE CHANGE

A report was received from Councillor Ager who attended the recent Essex Association of Local Council's Climate Change conference with Councillors Hicks, Jay and Weeks, and the Assistant Clerk.

She spoke of the need to declare a Climate Change Emergency and that many councils in Essex had already begun projects to help reduce carbon emissions from nine tonnes to one tonne per

person by the year 2030. She said that by declaring a climate emergency a council would admit that global warming exists and that measures currently being taken were not sufficient.

She then explained the procedure to declare a global emergency which included setting up a Working Group. She stressed the importance as if measures were not taken to reverse global warming by 2050 it may be too late to save the planet. She explained how a rise in temperature would affect people's health along with glaciers melting and sea levels rising.

The suggestion was made that the report be received, supported in principle and referred to the Environment Committee for action. It was important to engage with the community and to work closely with Essex County and Braintree District Councils.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that there was no spare capacity at the moment to have an additional Task and Finish Group but it was considered that the process should start with the appointment of a Group and setting out Terms of Reference by the Environment Committee.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

265. USE OF TITLE WHEN ADDRESSING MEMBERS

Members were asked to consider the appropriateness of the use of titles

- a) during meetings of the council
- b) on council documentation.

Members debated this item and agreed that it would be appropriate to address the Town Mayor as Mayor at Town Council Meetings and all Members as Councillor and then their surname. It was recognised there could be difficulties if two Members had the same surname. Members could be less formal at other Meetings.

It was agreed that a protocol would be written to this effect.

RESOLVED That a protocol be drafted as guidance for Members that at a Council meeting they should address each other as Councillor X and the Town Mayor as "Mr/Ms Mayor" with use of first names acceptable at Committee or other meetings.

266. 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.

267. LEGAL MATTERS

A verbal report was received from the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the Meeting at 7.55 p.m.

Councillor C. Lager
Town Mayor

NS/GK/23.2.2021

Report from Essex County Councillor James Abbott (Witham Northern)

ECC (and BDC) continue to provide timely information on Covid related information including the vaccine roll-out. The racecourse at Great Leighs has been opened as a major centre. Discussions continue about having at least one more additional local centre in Braintree District to add to the current 3 sites.

ECC Highways is continuing to work through the "Top 50" potholes that each of us as ECC Members were asked to submit, though progress has been slowed by the very wet weather. The Forest Rd potholes are on the list to be done. That wet weather has contributed to defects opening up which were not on the original list and I am concerned that despite being reported several times many of these new potholes are being left in a dangerous state, such as the one in Collingwood Rd near the Jubilee Oak.

I have written again to the Cabinet Member at ECC about the future of the Witham Recycling Centre. ECC is to review its waste service, including the RCs and has itself stated that closures are possible. I have asked that Witham RC be ruled out now from any such potential closure and have also asked again for reinstatement of the services that were reduced in October 2016.

Promoters of the Rivenhall Airfield waste site have been writing to the site Liaison Group members. Myself and Cllr Robert Mitchell chair the Liaison Group as the 2 ECC Members whose areas include the site.

The promoters say they intend to start on site within months and they have launched a new website. However, it is not clear if all the pre-commencement conditions have been covered, notably C19 which is required to set out the internal processing layout.

In addition, the website does not appear to mention any other processes than incineration and refers in places to the site as "the Rivenhall EfW" (ie an energy from waste plant). The site was only given planning permission on the basis that it was an "integrated" facility that included recycling, AD, paper pulping etc.

I have called for a meeting of the site Liaison Group (which has not met for years). Cllr Mitchell has supported this, in order to try to clarify matters.

I also Chair the Coleman's Quarry Site Liaison Group and that met recently on site (in the rain - again!). The main topics covered were the relationship between the quarry and the new A12 and junctions but also the new issue of potentially significant changes to the quarry including much higher HGV numbers. The site owners stated at the meeting they intend to submit new applications to ECC to increase HGV numbers and import and process wastes including clays, soils and construction wastes - something they ruled out doing when they originally got consent. I asked that the applications consider the impact on Witham of more HGVs coming through the town along routes such as the B1018, The Avenue and Newland Street (a route quarry lorries use now).

The ECC Full Council meets on 23rd February to set the budget. At that meeting I will be raising concerns about local surface water flooding and asking about what more can be done to improve systems, keep drains better maintained and clear, etc. Related to this I continue to discuss with both ECC and BDC the flooding related to new developments in the north of the town and into Rivenhall which would appear to be an enforcement issue.

The Braintree Local Highways Panel met on 28th January. We could not agree to any new schemes as we have no budget until the new financial year. I am continuing to work with colleagues to see if there are any options where we could increase funding to the LHP. I would though still encourage town and parish councils to submit schemes when they wish to as ECC continues to advise that LHPs are the primary route for progressing local highways and safety improvement schemes.