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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Tuesday, 28th November 2023**

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

Present: Councillors:

S.	Ager	(Town Mayor)
P.	Barlow	(arrived at 7.50 p.m.)
J.C.	Coleman	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
P.	Heath	
T.	Hewitt	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	(arrived at 8.15 p.m.)
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	
B.	Taylor	
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adelaja, L. Barlow and Williams, and Councillor P. Barlow and Playle would be late.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

134. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 30th October 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Later in the Meeting when Councillor Playle arrived he asked for an amendment to the Minutes (see Minute 146).

135. INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

136. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

137. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Members were informed that four Councillors had attended a meeting of the Templars Association regarding concerns over housing repair problems. Two 3G (third generation) artificial pitches would be installed at Spinks Lane and New Rickstones Academy subject to planning consent. Members then spoke about devolution and the proposed changes to Essex. It was understood that the County Council had launched Essex Transformation with Councillor Derrick Louis being the lead member. Comment was made that £108 million budget cuts would be necessary in the next three years and it was hoped that Braintree District Council would be a ‘model’ council.

This item continued at Minute 146 to allow the Essex County Councillor to give a report.

138. TOWN MAYOR’S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor’s engagements for period 23rd October to 21st November 2023 were received.

Comment was made that the Remembrance Day Parade had been well organised and supported.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

139. CLERK’S REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that on Saturday it would be the Christmas Market and she asked for volunteers for the Mulled Wine stall.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

140. WITHAM INDUSTRIAL WATCH REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

A request was received from Witham Industrial Watch (WIW) for support with its Business Improvement District (BID).

Members were happy to support and work in partnership with the Witham Industrial Watch.

RESOLVED That the Town Council supports the WIW in its BID and would provide a statement for inclusion in their brochure and a photograph of the Town Mayor.

The Deputy Town Clerk said that, out of courtesy, Community Sergeant Simon Jesse had informed the Town Council that he had also been asked to support the BID.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

141. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) **Planning and Transport Committee held 30th October and 13th November 2023**
Minutes 131 to 150 (inclusive).

Councillor J.C. Coleman, Vice Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee gave a report of the Meetings.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Planning and Transport Committee be received.

- (b) **Community Committee held 13th November 2023**
Minutes 41 to 58 (inclusive).

Councillor Heath, Vice Chairman of the Community Committee, gave a report of the Meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

142. 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 (S3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

143. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED

- Community Committee held 13th November 2023**
Minutes 59 to 61 (inclusive).

Councillor Heath continued his report of the Community Committee.

Minute 59 – Charter Market

A report was received.

During the discussion, Councillor P. Barlow arrived at the Meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Community Committee be received.

144. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

During the discussion Councillor Playle arrived at the Meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

145. FUNDING REPORT

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

146. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE (continued)

It was agreed to continue the Essex County and Braintree District Council Update.

Councillor Playle, as Essex County Councillor, asked if the Minutes of the last Meeting could be corrected as Minute 122 should have read adult educational services rather than adult social care. Members agreed with the amendment.

RESOLVED That the amendment be made to the Minutes and the Town Mayor initial the correction.

The Essex County Councillor explained that he had complained about the road closures in the north of the town and this had been exacerbated by rail replacement coaches. He said that potholes in the town centre and Cressing Road were scheduled to be repaired shortly. He spoke about cuts to services which would be required but there would be a redistribution of grants from the government over the next ten years. He suggested that Members might wish to take part in the precept surveys currently running. He said that there was also an on-line survey on County Council's divisions which would run until February 2024. He reiterated that more information was needed about devolution.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.30 p.m.

Councillor S. Ager
Town Mayor

HA/GK/29.11.2023