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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 5th August 2024**

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

Present:	Councillors:	L.	Barlow	(Town Mayor)
		P.	Heath	(Deputy Town Mayor)
		E.	Adelaja	
		P.	Barlow	
		J.M.	Coleman	
		L.	Headley	
		T.	Hewitt	
		J.	Martin	
		R.	Playle	
		R.	Ramage	
		J.	Robertson	
		B.	Taylor	
		N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
		H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Coleman, Fleet, Sloma and Williams.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

57. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 8th July 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

58. INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

59. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The member of the public explained that she lived by a circular area of grass bordered by hedges which was the responsibility of Eastlight Community Homes to maintain. Unfortunately the green had not received any maintenance since April and the grass and weeds were now waist high with brambles growing out of the hedges. In answer to a complaint Eastlight explained that they had changed contractors but that all areas would be sorted by the end of July. Surrounding areas of grass had been cut but not the circle by the resident. She explained that Eastlight claimed on its website to cut the grass 16 times a year and hedges twice a year but last year the grass was only cut four times and the hedge once.

She asked why Eastlight was not answerable to anybody; why Witham Town Council could not step in and clear the back log whilst charging Eastlight for the work; why did Eastlight maintain a public open space outside her private property when her rates were paid to the District Council for that purpose; why was not all open spaces management in Witham under one authority making efficient use of resources and why did not the Town Council check these areas which are supposed to maintained by other companies?

Members thanked the member of the public for bringing this matter to the attention of the Town Council. Braintree District Council was aware of the problems and was trying to remedy the situation.

It was suggested that this matter be brought back to the next Town Council Meeting on 2nd September.

60. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

Councillor J Robertson was welcomed to the Council and his appointment to the Community and Environment Committees and Climate Change Working Group was confirmed.

RESOLVED That Councillor Robertson be confirmed as a Member of the Community and Environment Committees and Climate Change Working Group.

61. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Essex County Councillor Playle gave a report explaining that Essex County Council had an additional £25million for highway projects and enforcements. The bus shelter contract was now in place but there was a need for the Town Council to replace its ones at the railway station. He reported on the member-led pothole scheme explaining that the pavement in Easton Road had been repaired along with the potholes in Colchester Road. The next tranche of work would include Mill Lane. He said that the Community Infrastructure Fund had now opened with funding up to £10,000 for Councils and organisations to make a positive impact on the community.

Braintree District Councillor Taylor spoke of the Local Plan Review, which had been discussed earlier in the evening at the Planning and Transport Committee Meeting. He said that the District Council's annual allocation for new homes had increased from 830 homes to 1,098 and a community survey would be carried out from 16th August 2024. It was hoped that the Local Plan could go to a Regulation 18 consultation in November ready for the Draft to be in place for June 2025.

Braintree District Councillor Martin said that at a recent Council Meeting she had sought a report about its performance for the General Election with incorrect paperwork being sent to electors and inadequate polling stations.

62. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 4th to 31st July 2024 were received.

She said that she had been very busy but it had been delightful meeting the young people of Witham. She added that on Saturday she would be doing a 40 minute cross fit work out with a 10 kilo vest to represent the weight of the Town Mayor's chain and badge of office to raise funds for the Town Mayor's charity.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

63. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

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

She reminded Members of the Teddy Bears Picnic on Friday and Braintree Pride on Saturday, which Members were due to attend.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

64. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY DIVISION – ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

A report from the Local Government Boundary Division was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

65. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

An amendment to Standing Orders was received.

The Town Clerk explained that at the Annual General Meeting it had been agreed to raise the level for contracts regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 from £25,000 to £30,000 and Standing Orders needed to be amended in line with the Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED That the amendment be received and agreed.

66. CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND

A report on the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund was received.

It was explained that whilst the Town Council's Financial Regulations would require three signatures for the transfer of amounts over £5,000, only two signatures are required to operate the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the Financial Regulations amended to allow the operating of the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

67. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) **Planning and Transport Committee held 8th and 22nd July 2024**
Minutes 41 to 66 (inclusive)

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee, gave his report en bloc.

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

(b) **Environment Committee held 22nd July 2024**
Minutes 1 to 17 (inclusive)

Councillor Martin, Chairman of the Environment Committee, gave her report en bloc.

RESOLVED That the report of the Environment Committee be received.

68. 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.

69. WAYLEAVE AGREEMENT

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

70. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

71. ASSET TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

72. TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.37 p.m.

Councillor L. Barlow
Town Mayor

NS/GK/7.8.2024