



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

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Tuesday, 21st February 2023**

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

Present:	Councillors	J.	Bayford	(Town Mayor)
		J.	Goodman	(Deputy Town Mayor)
		S.	Ager	
		K.	Atwill	
		P.	Barlow	
		S.	Hicks	
		A.	Kilmartin	
		C.	Lager	
		M.	Lager	
		S.	Rajeev	
M.	Weeks			
Essex County Councillor	R.	Playle	(Witham Northern)	
Temporary Chief Inspector	M.	Richards	(Essex Police)	
	S.	Jesse	(Essex Police)	
Community Special Sergeant	N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)	
	H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)	
	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)	

175. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heath, Jay, Pleasance, J Williams and R Williams.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

176. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 23rd January 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

177. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

178. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

179. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor Playle explained that the County Council budget had been agreed with an increase in its share of 3.5% of which 2% increase would be for the social care levy. He said that the change to LED bulbs was being completed and whilst at present they are extra bright, within eight weeks they would dim down. There would be no change to the hours of operation. £9m extra would be put into the highways programme which would include the Councillors' pothole scheme again and this time repairs to footpaths would be included.

Councillor Playle then spoke about the booking trial to use Civic Amenity sites throughout Essex which would begin on 1st March 2023. He said that this would give a greater transparency as to who was using the sites particularly on Essex borders. It would be possible to book several visits a day and you would not be turned away if late. He acknowledged that an improvement to the publicity of the trial was needed. Councillor Playle believed that there should be no increase in fly tipping. He said that bus fares limited to £2 per trip would be carried forward to the end of June.

A long discussion then took place about fly tipping and Members considered whether the restrictions in place at the sites relating to vans caused this.

Councillor Hicks, Braintree District Council – North Ward, reported that the issue of fly tipping had been heavily debated at the previous evening's Council Meeting. He added that within two years the District Council proposed to charge for the collection of green bins.

RESOLVED That the reports be received and noted.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillor Playle for his report.

180. ESSEX POLICE

The Town Mayor welcomed Temporary Chief Inspector Martin Richards and Community Special Sergeant Simon Jesse to the Meeting.

C/Insp Richards explained that he had left the District in 2016 and had now returned as the District Commander for Braintree and Uttlesford. He said that he was passionate about community policing and councils are part of the safety narrative. He spoke about the challenges in policing and the need to deliver as part of the force plan to combat human slavery, anti-social behaviour, robberies/fraud and violence towards women and girls. He said that policing had to be by consent and the public need to feel valued. He spoke about the requirement to improve communication with the public and considered that the Council was in a good position to do this. He said that he would be meeting with the member of parliament and other tiers of Council to discuss priorities and deliveries. He then congratulated Witham's Community Specials on the fantastic service they give.

Members then had an opportunity to ask questions which included police priorities in dealing with certain issues such as fly tipping, jumping red lights, electric scooters and violence towards men and boys. C/Insp Richards said that if an officer saw a crime being committed

they would act accordingly but it was important for Councillors to talk to the community about unacceptable behaviour.

The Town Mayor thanked C/Insp Richards and Community Special Sergeant Jesse for attending.

181. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 17th January to 15th February 2023 were received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

182. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that an invitation had been received for the Mayor to attend the Aþlar City Festival on 17th and 18th June 2023. She explained that they had been advised that a new Town Mayor would be elected on 15th May 2023 and the invitation extended accordingly.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

183. CUT THROAT LANE ALLOTMENTS

Members were asked to consider asking Braintree District Council to reinstate the Cut Throat Lane allotments as an Asset of Community Value.

RESOLVED That an application be made to Braintree District Council to reinstate the Cut Throat Lane allotments as an Asset of Community Value.

184. ACTION FOR FAMILY CARERS

A grant aid request was received from Action for Family Carers.

Members were informed that all the children who would benefit from the grant would be from Witham and part of the money would be used to provide a meal for them.

A long discussion took place with Members raising a number of issues which required clarity before proceeding and agreed that the best approach would be to contact the referees.

RESOLVED That before a decision was taken, contact be made with the referees to seek information on the project.

185. SECTION 106 – BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER BRAIN

A report was received from Braintree District Council detailing two options for a potential bridge across the River Brain. It was explained that the Section 106 money was required to be spent by September 2024 and would probably be insufficient for a bridge.

Members preferred the second option which would extend the Blackwater Rail Trail and negate the need to walk over Saul's bridge. It was suggested that A12 designated funding could be used for this project.

RESOLVED That the report be received and option 2 agreed.

186. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) **Planning and Transport Committee held 23rd January and 6th February 2023**
Minutes 210 to 235 (inclusive).

Councillor Goodman, Chairman of the Planning Committee, gave his report en bloc.

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

- (b) **Community Committee held 6th February 2023**
Minutes 57 to 71 (inclusive).

Councillor Ager, Chairman of the Community Committee, gave her report en bloc.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

187. 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.

188. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED

Community Committee held 6th February 2023
Minute 72.

Councillor Ager continued her report.

RESOLVED That the report of the Community Committee be received.

189. ALLOTMENTS

The transfer documentation was considered.

RESOLVED That the documentation to take ownership of the new allotments off Fleming Way be received, signed and sealed.

190. FUNDING REPORT

The Funding Report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

191. LAND TRANSFER UPDATE

The Land Transfer Update was received.

Whilst this item was being discussed Councillor Ager left the Council Chamber.

In view of the time it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders.

RESOLVED That Standing Order 3x be suspended so that business could be concluded.

RESOLVED That the Land Transfer Update be received and noted.

192. SAFER STREETS INITIATIVE

Members agreed to seal the Safer Streets Initiative funding agreement.

RESOLVED That the funding agreement be signed and sealed.

193. RIVER WALK EASEMENTS

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.35 p.m.

Councillor J. Bayford
Town Mayor

NS/GK/24.2.2023