



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

### WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021**

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

Present: Councillors

A.	Kilmartin	(Town Mayor)
S.	Ager	
K.	Atwill	
J.	Goodman	
S.	Hicks	
C.	Jay	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
T.	Pleasance	
S.	Rajeev	
M.	Weeks	
J.	Williams	
R.	Williams	

Essex County Councillor

R.	Playle	(Witham Northern)
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Braintree District Councillors

P.	Horner	(Witham West)
W.	Rose	(Witham West)
S.	Wilson	(Witham Central)

J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

#### **81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barlow who had a previous meeting.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and accepted.

#### **82. DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office from Councillor S. Rajeev was received.

Members formally welcomed Sindhu Rajeev onto the Council.

**RESOLVED** That the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be received and noted.

### **83. MINUTES**

The Minutes were received and it was pointed out that at Minute 71 – Coleman’s Quarry, that the resolution stated that the application be supported when in fact at a previous Planning Applications and Transport Committee Meeting (Minute 16 of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021), it had been agreed to recommend refusal. It was suggested that the words ‘consultation noted’ be inserted.

**RESOLVED** That at Minute 71 – Coleman’s Quarry, the words ‘consultation noted’ be inserted in the resolution.

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021, with the above amendment, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **84. INTERESTS**

Councillors Hicks, Kilmartin and Weeks all declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 87 – Essex County and Braintree District Council Update, as Members of Braintree District Council.

### **85. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No comment was made by the member of public present.

### **86. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

Members agreed to the appointment of Councillor Sindhu Rajeev to the Environment and Planning Applications & Transport Committees; and to the Council Events Review Group, Social Isolation Working Group and Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Rajeev be appointed to serve on the Environment and Planning Applications & Transport Committees; and the Council Events Review Group, Social Isolation Working Group and Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group for the ensuing Civic Year.

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Hicks resigns from the Youth Working Group and Councillor Rajeev be appointed to serve on the Youth Working Group for the ensuing Civic Year.

### **87. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE**

Councillors Hicks, Kilmartin and Weeks had all declared non-pecuniary interests.

Councillor Kilmartin reported that Lawford Parish Council had offered a free Vehicle Activated Speed sign which the Town Council hoped to obtain.

Councillor Rose spoke of the Members’ Grant Scheme and that £2,700 had been given to the Witham Soccerbility scheme for young people with disabilities, £1,000 to Witham Valley Nursery for landscaping an overgrown area to make into a playground, and £1,000 to the Witham Allstars Majorettes for equipment and costumes. The District Councillors have over £5,700 available to give to Witham projects.

Councillor Playle said that a grant of £4,000 from his Locality Fund had been approved towards improvements for the Cut Throat Lane allotments. He said that Essex County Council had now finalised a new bus shelter contract and would soon start installing new shelters. He undertook to talk to County Hall about the closure of the Public Right of Way due to redevelopment at Gimsons. Cllr Playle further informed members that he would attend a site meeting with the Essex Highways Liaison Officer to highlight issues of concern. Members commented on the gravel falling from lorries at the corner of The Avenue and Collingwood Road; highway issues in Glebe Crescent and Cypress Road; that two redundant bus shelters in Gershwin Boulevard could be utilised elsewhere in the town and the drain by Glovers Motors in Newland Street was again blocked.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for their contributions.

#### **88. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for the period 28<sup>th</sup> July to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 were received.

The Town Mayor promoted her Bubbly Tea Charity Event on 5<sup>th</sup> September and a walk organised by Network Rail on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021. She thanked Councillor Hicks for hosting an evening drinks and open garden event which she had attended as Town Mayor.

It was suggested that the Policy and Resources Committee should examine local organisations events and milestones, with important anniversaries coming up so that they were not overlooked.

**RESOLVED** That the details be received and noted.

#### **89. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

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

He explained that he had been advised by the Essex Association of Local Councils that the application for Quality Council had been too detailed despite the application conforming to NALC guidance and questioned EALC's interpretation of the Quality Status award.

Councillor Goodman gave a precis of an interim reply he had received from Councillor Spray, District Council's Planning Chairman, in relation to the felling of the Willow trees adjacent to the former Bramston Sports Centre and the Town Councils investigative report into the LPA's alleged mishandling of these trees. It was agreed that if a substantive reply had not been received within four to six weeks that further Council debate would take place.

The Town Clerk reported that he had been informed by the Chelmsford City Council (CCC) CCTV Monitoring Office that there had been an apparent data breach with the past month's footage being lost. Members were informed that the Service Level Agreement ensured the camera network was managed in accordance with Home Office guidelines and a high level of service was being paid for. A report had been made to the Information Commissioners Office by Witham Town Council and urgent correspondence raised with CCC to seek accountability for the breach, as the Council's appointed Data Processor.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**90. TREES ON THE GIMSONS DEVELOPMENT SITE**

A motion was received from the Town Mayor asking that letters be sent to the Leader and Chairman of the Planning Committee of the District Council and Bellway Homes deploring the destruction of many large and old trees on the Gimsons Development site.

Members agreed the importance of ensuring that the trees at Gimsons were protected but as the Gimsons Review Group had agreed to seek an urgent meeting with the developers to discuss inter alia this issue, on balance it was agreed that the motion be withdrawn.

**RESOLVED** That the motion be withdrawn.

**91. EXPANDED MEETING SCHEDULE**

Members were asked to receive and approve the expanded Meeting Schedule which now included meetings relating to the annual business planning process in addition to all Sub-Committee meetings and scrutiny panels.

**RESOLVED** That the expanded Meeting Schedule be received and agreed.

**92. WITHAM WALK AND TALK 4 MEN**

A report was received from Councillor Jay requesting that the Town Council considers holding a Witham Walk and Talk 4 Men on World Mental Health Day, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

Members were informed about the high rate of depression, particularly amongst men, at this time and wished to be supportive. It was however recognised that staff resources could be stretched by this additional event.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the walk should proceed.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council holds a Witham Walk and Talk 4 Men on 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday 2021.

**93. ARMOND ROAD LICENCE**

The licence in respect of cycle path and vegetation management for the land on the eastern side of Armond Road was received.

Members recognised the amount of work that had been undertaken by staff in achieving this licence. It was explained that an additional parcel of land close by would be subject to a separate licence.

**RESOLVED** That the licence be received and information noted.

**94. PETITION HUB PAGE**

A report along was received.

Members discussed whether a petition page would prove value for money particularly when both Braintree District and Essex County Councils have such sites. Members agreed that it would be good to engage with the public and to interest them in local politics but were concerned that it could become difficult to control.

A motion was moved put to construct a Petition Hub Page on the Town Council website.

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was moved and subsequently:

**RESOLVED** That a recorded vote be taken.

**MEMBERS IN FAVOUR OF THE MOTION:**

S. HICKS  
C. JAY  
M. WEEKS

**MEMBERS AGAINST THE MOTION:**

J. GOODMAN  
A. KILMARTIN  
M. LAGER  
C. LIVERMORE  
T. PLEASANCE  
S. RAJEEV  
R. WILLIAMS

**MEMBERS IN ABSTENTION:**

S. AGER  
C. LAGER  
J. WILLIAMS

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council does not proceed with the construction of a Petitions Hub Page.

**95. SECURE DOG WALKING LAND PROPOSAL**

A report was received regarding secure dog walking land proposal.

Members discussed whether this issue should be taken forward particularly as land acquisition would take a long time to achieve, noting that proposal was currently unfunded.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and referred to the Corporate Strategy Setting Process to seek viability and budget for the next corporate strategy.

**96. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- (a) **Planning Applications and Transport Committee held 27<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021**  
Minutes 52 to 80 (inclusive)

Councillor Goodman, Chairman of the Planning Applications and Transport Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

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

- (b) **Community Committee held 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021**  
Minutes 16 to 29 (inclusive)

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

**RESOLVED** That the Report be received.

**97. 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.

**98. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED**

**Community Committee held 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 (continued)**

Minutes 30 to 32 (inclusive)

Councillor Ager continued her Report.

**RESOLVED** That the Report of the Community Committee be received.

**99. RIVER WALK TRANSFER**

A report was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.26 p.m.

Councillor A. Kilmartin  
Town Mayor

JS/GK/08.09.2021