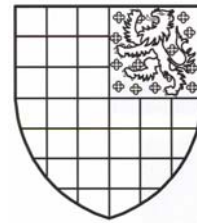


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## *MINUTES*

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

*NB if a record of voting was requested, this is shown in a table appended to these Minutes.*

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors S Catlin (Wischusen); J. Daly; A Dean; I Eiloart; M Kent; P Kingham; D Lamport; L F Li; M. Milner; R Murray; S Murray; R O'Keeffe (*Deputy Mayor*); A Price; R Rudkin; J Stockdale and Dr M Turner.

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer and Asst. Town Clerk*) L Symons (*Mace Bearer*); Ms E. Martin (*C'ttee Administration*)

*Observing:* Ms V McLachlan (*Finance Administration Officer*)

In the absence of the Mayor and Chaplain, Cllr O'Keeffe welcomed everyone present and invited a short pause for quiet reflection.

### **FC2012/69 QUESTION TIME:**

One question had been received, from Cllr J Stockdale. This was presented to Council and a comprehensive reply given. (*A copy of the question and the answer thereto are appended to these minutes.*)

**FC2012/70** In the absence of the Mayor, Cllr O'Keeffe took the chair as Deputy Mayor, and opened the meeting.

### **FC2012/71 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr J Stockdale declared an interest *in* agenda item 7 b) (Lewes Town Partnership) in that he was the representative on that body for Lewes District Council. Cllr R O'Keeffe declared an interest in *in* agenda item 7 b) (Lewes Town Partnership) as she is a director of the Partnership.

### **FC2012/72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Chartier (*Mayor*) who was on holiday and Cllr. J. MacCleary, due to illness.

### **FC2012/73 PRESENTATION:**

There was a short presentation by Mr Norman Bennett of the charity Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA). Mr Bennett explained that the CTLA was a registered charity providing affordable, accessible transport for people in East Sussex. Their fleet of 22 buses, based in Newhaven, were used for students at schools in East Sussex following a successful bid for a contract with East Sussex County Council.

Their Dial-a-Ride service was a door to door transport service for people living in the Lewes area who found it difficult to use ordinary bus services. The service operated on Tuesdays and Fridays, and could be used by anybody who had difficulty in accessing public transport. Holders of a Bus Pass were eligible to use the service.

Mr Bennett asked Lewes Town Council Members to promote the service in the town to their constituents.

Members raised the question as to whether the service could provide bus services between Lewes and Sussex University and Ringmer and the Amex Stadium as there was no current

*Continues...*

public transport provision to and from these areas at present. Mr Bennett noted these comments. The Deputy Mayor thanked Mr Bennett for his presentation.

**FC2012/74**

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a) The Mayor's Coffee Morning in aid of HOMELINK would be on the 19th October in the Council Chamber from 10.00 – 12.00 for tea, coffee and homemade cakes
- b) The traditional Poppy Appeal collection by Members was arranged for the 3<sup>rd</sup> November – collection of poppy trays would be from Reception in the Town Hall and Members who had volunteered had been allocated time-slots between 10.00am and 1.00pm.
- c) Invitations had been despatched for the Mayor's Bonfire Supper on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November – Members were asked to reply to Mrs Garth by Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October.
- d) A Bonfire "Thank you!" Breakfast for the District street cleaners would be held at the Town Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> November
- e) On Remembrance Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> November, there would be an "informal" two-minute silence at 11.00am at the War Memorial for anyone who wished to participate (civic robes would not be worn), then the civic participation in the Royal British Legion's Remembrance Parade at 2.30 pm (for which full civic regalia *would* be worn) traditionally accompanied by various local dignitaries; followed by a service at the church of St John sub-Castro. Members were asked to arrive at the Town Hall no later than 2:10pm
- f) A letter had been received from a United States-based writer who sought to interview a resident of Keere Street, and asked for any assistance that members could offer. Cllr Dean stated that she knew someone in Keere Street who might be prepared to assist, and undertook to pass-on contact details.

**FC2012/75**

**MINUTES:**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012 were received and signed as an accurate record.

**FC2012/76**

**WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:**

Members were reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which had covered issues that deserved attention by the Council, should ensure that TC was aware of this before the meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Reports on all activities of the organization were not expected.

a] *Domestic Abuse Champions:* Cllr Price gave an oral report explaining that Domestic Champions raise awareness of domestic abuse in the Community. The local Champions groups had met for the first time and it was interesting to note that Lewes was one of only 20 towns in England accredited to hold events to raise awareness. Examples given of some ideas included the planting of white flower bulbs in public areas, and so-called "flashmob" events coordinated by electronic social media. A White Ribbon Day would be held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2012 with events taking place in the two week period either side of that date.

After a brief discussion **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/76.1** Cllr Price's report be noted.

b] *Lewes Town Partnership – review of funding:* Members considered Report FC009/2012 (*copy in minute book*) reminding Members of their decision in 2011 to review financial support for Lewes Town Partnership (LTP). There was a lengthy discussion on this matter, and various suggestions put forward including a reduction in the amount given. It was acknowledged that the LTP was originally set up in response to government requirements for a popular forum in every locality, empowered to refer to statutory bodies the opinions and aspirations *etc* of their community. There was general support, but several Members felt that the Council's Finance Working Party should review the funding.

After some debate **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/76.2** The Chairman of Lewes Town Partnership should be asked to present their case for continued funding to the Finance Working Party, who will consider this matter and report to Council.

**FC2012/77 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE:**

The Chairman of the Council's Planning Committee, Cllr S Murray, gave an oral report on the issue of assets of community value, as raised by the Localism Act 2011, and presented a working draft copy of the list prepared recently by that Committee. It was explained that Lewes District Council would be the body responsible for interpretation of criteria described in the Act, and that they were understood to be still in early stages of preparation. The District Council was acknowledged to be the owner of several buildings on the draft list, and it was noted that it had only recently commenced a comprehensive property review. A lengthy debate ensued, during which it was agreed that; although public speculation was growing as to the intentions of the District Council, and other major landowners, premature submission of a list without careful consideration would be ill-advised. It was suggested and agreed that the Turkish Baths in Friar's Walk should be added to the working draft.

After a long debate **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/77.1** The Town Clerk will write to Lewes District Council informing them that Lewes Town Council was preparing a list of assets of community value, under provisions of the Localism Act 2011, and meanwhile the Planning Committee will refine the draft list for final agreement by Council as soon as practicable.

**FC2012/78 PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING:**

Members considered a motion (*NOM014/2012, copy in the minute book*) proposing that, following the presentation to the last Council meeting on the subject of Public Participatory Budgeting (PPB), the Council should allocate some funds for this purpose. It was recognized that PPB could play an important role in empowering people to get involved in decision making in their local area. The Council had already taken steps in this direction when it set aside funds for the Lewes YouthBank scheme, whereby young people proposed projects and decisions were made by peer-groups of young people about allocation of the money. There was some discussion around the practicalities, or otherwise, of several ideas; one being co-option to the Council's Grants Assessment Panel. It was generally agreed that the existing framework for miscellaneous grants should not be altered in such a way. Rather; options could be explored as to any areas of expenditure where public involvement could be encouraged.

Following a debate **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/78.1** The Finance Working Party is asked to consider either identification of a budget-head, or allocation of a sum of money, in the 2013/14 budget; to be spent with the involvement of local people.

**FC2012/78.2** A working party comprising Cllrs I Eiloart, R Murray, S Murray, R O'Keeffe and Dr M Turner be set up to decide how a Public Participatory Budgeting system might best be organised and report back to Council.

**FC2012/79 VACANT SHOP PREMISES:**

Members considered motion (*NOM015/2012, copy in the minute book*) proposing that the Council should express its concern about the number of empty shops in the main shopping areas of Lewes. This was said to detract from the general appearance of the conservation area, making it less attractive to visitors. It also affected the viability of other retail businesses as people began to find Lewes less appealing as a shopping destination.

Council noted that a number of local organisations had expressed interest in using empty

shop windows *eg* to promote their activities or display art works. This, it was believed, would add to the interest and vibrancy of the High Street.

It was also noted that there may be charities – and others - wishing to rent shops for a limited period at a reduced rate.

It was agreed that Council should express its dismay in writing to the owners of premises, and estate agents responsible for letting, that to date have not engaged with councillors and organisations trying to bring these properties back into some limited use, rather than just leaving them empty (for over 18 months to date, in some cases).

It was further agreed to invite all relevant parties to a meeting to see what could be arranged with a view to improving the appearance of all these empty premises, particularly in the commercially-vital run up to Christmas.

Following a debate **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/79.1** Cllrs A Price and P Kingham are asked to work with the Town Clerk to pursue further the Council's interest in the matter of appropriate temporary uses for vacant retail premises.

**FC2012/80 LEWES IN BLOOM COMPETITION:**

Members considered report FC010/2012 (*a copy of which is in the Minute Book*) which apprised Members of the background to the Lewes in Bloom competition, following a request from Lewes & District Garden Society that the competition be reinstated. The public support for this competition had been traditionally meagre, and there had been no support for its organization from local bodies. After 2005 it had been decided to apply the Council's limited resources to reinstating the annual Allotments Show, for which there was significant, identifiable, support and this had remained popular in the years since then. References were made, in the request, to Seaford and Newhaven competitions, although neither of these were Council-run: being independently-organized and benefiting from some Council funding and attendance of nominated Councillors at meetings. There was general support for the nomination of a Councillor to serve on an outside body, and it was suggested that an application for funds from an appropriate third-party organizer would be considered appropriate for consideration within the Council's grants scheme.

Following a short discussion **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/80.1** Lewes Town Council will respond to the request from Lewes & District Garden Society regarding reinstatement of a Lewes in Bloom competition; encouraging them to take ownership of the scheme, and expressing the Council's support for such an arrangement.

**FC2012/80.2** Cllrs J Stockdale and D Lamport were nominated to serve on any body which the Lewes & District Garden Society might set up to deliberate upon the reinstatement of a Lewes in Bloom competition; if acceptable to the Society.

**FC2012/81 ALL SAINTS CENTRE STAFF ESTABLISHMENT:**

Members considered report FC008/2012 (*a copy of which is in the Minute Book*) which presented options, bearing upon the service provided to customers of the All Saints Centre (ASC). The current Caretaker, who was contracted to work 25hrs per week and whose duties were performed outside "customer-facing" hours, was to retire shortly. The report explained the shortfall in staff hours available to service customers, who could potentially occupy the Centre for more than 104 hours per week, and offered options for the amendment of the staff establishment to address this, taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the imminent vacancy. It was proposed to adjust the focus of the post and extend the hours; all of which would be worked during operational customer-facing times of day. The financial implications, ancillary benefits, and practicalities of these options were presented and discussion centred upon these aspects. Various views were expressed, and a question posed as to the acceptability of increasing staff costs in the current economic climate. The general consensus was that the costs were modest,

especially compared with the benefits to the many users of the Centre, and that a very positive argument could be mounted for the offer of a full-time local job at the present time. Three options were debated: the status quo; an increase to 30 hrs per week, and an increase to 35hrs per week. These options were each put to the vote and this was recorded by request (*recorded votes, where requested, are appended to these minutes*).

Following extensive debate **it was resolved that:**

**FC2012/81.1** Lewes Town Council's staff establishment be amended to include the post of Caretaker/venue assistant for the All Saints Centre on the basis of a 35 hr week, with other terms and conditions unchanged, in line with the option described in report FC008/2012 (*copy in the minute book*), considered by Council on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

#### **FC2012/82 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:**

*Pedestrian crossings* – The two crossings that Council had agreed to fund in Malling had now been designed, and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) were consulting emergency services and other statutory consultees, as they were required to do. ESCC officers proposed a local consultation; informing parents at the nearby school; posting notices in the vicinity *etc*, and asked if Town Councillors had any preferences in this regard. Members suggested a localized letter-drop to households, and some form of display in the Town Hall foyer. These suggestions would be passed-on to ESCC. Construction would take place in school holidays, to minimize disruption, and this was likely to be during the Easter 2013 break.

*20mph speed limit for Lewes Town Centre* – An ESCC Lead Member meeting was scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> October, at which it was expected to be recommended that Traffic orders would be published in November. If no objections arose from the community, works would start in March 2013. Members welcomed the information that the originally-proposed boundary for the zone had been extended in the areas of Western Road and South Street.

*20mph speed limit for Landport* - Council had earlier agreed to offer £2,000 to ESCC to fund a 20mph zone in Landport. ESCC had since advised that it was shortly to conduct a town-wide survey using funds recently won from the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund. It was anticipated that results would be available in Spring 2013, which would inform the planning of a single coherent scheme for Lewes in 2014/15. This was influenced by a requirement to utilize the government funding within a time limit. As the Landport estate would be included within this planning there would be no immediate action. Members understood that this would lead to better value-for-money and requested that East Sussex County Council officers be invited to the next Town Council Traffic Working Party to discuss details of the likely scheme.

*Malling Community Centre* – With regard to the proposed use of part of the building by ESCC as a children's centre, their officers reported that their plans were going through the final stages of approval. TC reported that he had briefed Mr Ian Davison, of Hedley's Solicitors LLP – the partnership retained by the Sussex Association of Local Councils – who would act for the Council in the preparation and execution of a suitable lease.

#### **FC2012/83 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:**

- a) The next Planning Committee meetings would be – Tuesdays 16<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm.
- b) The Planning Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> November would be attended by officers of the South Downs National Park Authority who specialize in Neighbourhood Planning.
- c) The Planning Committee meeting to on 27<sup>th</sup> November would be an extended meeting to discuss the issue of empty shops and Officers Lewes District Council's Planning department would attend regarding the Local Plan Policy.
- d) A meeting between Town Council lead Members and Lewes District Council regarding devolution of assets and services would be held on 18<sup>th</sup> October.
- e) The next All Saints Centre Steering Group meeting would be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>

October at 6.30pm.

f) Meetings of the Finance Working Party (Budget 2013/14), Personnel Panel (*re* pension discretionary policies), Audit Panel and Pells Pool Community Association Liaison Panel were to be arranged.

f) The next Council Meeting was scheduled for Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm with the deadline for submissions to the Town Clerk of proposed items for the agenda being 12 noon on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October.

**FC2012/84**

There being no further business the Deputy Mayor declared the meeting closed, and invited those present to join her in the Parlour for refreshments.

*The meeting ended at 9:45pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## Questions received for Council meeting

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012



LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL

### QUESTION RECEIVED:

-----Original Message----- **From:** Cllr J Stockdale.

**Sent:** 03 November 2010 13:44 **To:** Town Clerk

**Cc:** Cllr R O'Keeffe; Cllr Dr M Turner

**Subject:** Question for Town Council Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Town Clerk; Cc Deputy Mayor and Lead Member for Finance

With the permission of the Chair of the Meeting, I wish to ask the following question at the Full Council Meeting on Thursday:

What arrangements is the Finance Working Party making for formulating a budget for 2013-14 given that

- at our training day in the spring we were advised that all budgets should be 'zero-based' that is the need for each of the Council's services should be established before they are selected to continue and the method of delivering these should be reviewed to see if there are more cost efficient ways of doing so

and what target are the Finance Working Party setting for the level of the precept given that

- the Government have announced that they are subsidising principal councils top set a 0% rise again this year, and
- the District Council has announced a policy of setting a 0% rise in Council Tax, and
- people of working age on benefits in the Town will be hit by an average 20% reduction in their Council Tax Benefit?

Regards

Cllr John Stockdale

Lewes District and Town Councils - Bridge Ward

*This question is submitted in accordance with Standing Order 8*

**ANSWER:** By Cllr Dr M Turner, Lead Member for Finance & Policy:

1. The definition of "Zero-based" budgeting suggested in this question is not accurate. A larger parish such as Lewes Town Council will inevitably have significant past investment in services, assets and resources, and the continuing need for each service is a deeper issue than just the calculation of its funding. To radically alter a service is a policy matter for decision by Council outside the budget process. Council policies and any recent directives are understood and allowed-for by the Finance Working Party when addressing the budget for any year. The Council follows standard practice and statutory guidelines when budgeting.
2. The full Council is required to set the Council Tax precept (which arises directly from the budgeting process), and cannot delegate this responsibility; it therefore considers the Working Party's recommendations very carefully. The Working Party does not normally have a "target" in view, and various alternatives will be considered. The Town Clerk prepares draft budgets, and the Working Party will adjust these as appropriate, considering all factors known to it at the time it meets.
3. It should be remembered that Lewes Town Council has held its precept growth to zero% for the past two financial years, without the benefit of government grant as provided to principal councils. It is the only one of the larger towns in Lewes District to have done so, with Seaford and Newhaven precepts each increasing last year by over 9%. In view of continuing price inflation in the national economy, this will be a matter for careful consideration for 2013/14.
4. The statement regarding the impact upon recipients of benefit is misleading, and unnecessarily alarming. Lewes District Council has several options in this regard, and the public consultation on the subject does not end until 29<sup>th</sup> October. Of the three options that are being considered, a direct impact on benefit recipients is only one.

**VOTING RECORD SHEET**

**MEETING of: Council**

**date: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012**



**LEWES  
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Please note: this is a record of voting *where this has been requested* under Standing Order 1(s) [following provisions of Local Government Act 1972 Sch12 p13 (2)]

Agenda item	MOTION or AMENDMENT VOTED UPON	Ind	LD	Ind	LD	LD	Ind	LD	LD	LD	LD	LD	Green	Green	Ind	Green	Green	LD	LD	No. FOR	No. AGAINST	Carried ? Y/N		
		CATLIN (Wischhusen)	CHARTIER	DALY	DEAN	EILOART	KENT	KINGHAM	LAMPORT	LI	MacCLEARY	MILNER	MURRAY R	MURRAY S	O'KEEFFE	PRICE	RUDKIN	STOCKDALE	TURNER					
11	Replacement staff at All Saints Centre: "Option Status Quo" – 25hrs/wk	*	NP	✓	✓	✓	*	*	*	*	NP	*	*	*	*	*	*	✓	*	4	12	N		
	Replacement staff at All Saints Centre: "Option One" – 30 hrs/wk	*	NP	*	✓	✓	*	*	*	*	NP	*	*	*	*	*	*	✓	*	3	13	N		
	Replacement staff at All Saints Centre: "Option Two" - 35hrs/wk	✓	NP	✓	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	NP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	13	0	Y		