

Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ info@lewes-tc.gov.uk
www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on
Thursday, 13th June 2013, 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; I Eiloart; P Kingham; D Lamport; L F Li; J MacCleary; M Milner; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe (*Mayor*); A Price; J Stockdale and Dr M Turner (*Deputy Mayor*).

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer and Asst. Town Clerk*) M Larkin (*Mace Bearer*); Ms E Martin (*C’tee Administration*)

Observing: Mrs V McLachlan (*Finance Administration Officer*); Ms J Dean (*Customer Services Officer*)

Before sitting, those present paused in remembrance of Doreen Ford; a past Councillor and Deputy Mayor who had passed away on Monday 3rd Jun, after a short illness. Members joined with the Mayor and staff in recording their deepest sympathy to Mrs Ford’s family, and their fond recollections of her as a lively character and committed Councillor.

FC2013/14 QUESTION TIME: There were no questions.

FC2013/15 MEMBERS’ DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllrs S Murray; R Murray; O’Keeffe; Price and Stockdale declared interests *iro* agenda item 6e) (Grants Panel recommendations) as they were influential members of applicant bodies.

FC2013/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Cllrs M Chartier and A Dean who were on holiday and Cllrs M Kent and R Rudkin who were both working.

FC2013/17 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor welcomed back Cllr Dr Turner who had been unwell. Cllr Turner had been elected as Deputy Mayor in his absence, at the Annual Meeting on 23rd May 2013, and he now made his declaration of acceptance of the office of Deputy Mayor and signed a deed to that effect.

Members were informed that the funeral of Doreen Ford would be at 2.15pm on Wednesday 19th June at the Downs Crematorium, Brighton. The Mayor, TC and Mrs Garth planned to attend.

A former Lewes soldier, Tom Freret, was organising a tribute to his comrade and friend, Drummer Lee Rigby of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who had recently been murdered on a London Street. Mr Freret had launched an appeal for funds, some of which would be used for a wreath which he hoped to display temporarily at Lewes War Memorial, with any surplus going to services charities. Councillors were pleased to agree that this tribute could be placed at the War Memorial.

FC2013/18 MINUTES:

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23rd May 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record.

FC2013/19 WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:

Members were reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized

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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] *Liaison meeting with Friends of Lewes 16th May 2013*. The notes of this meeting were received, and **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.1 Minutes of the meeting with representatives of The Friends of Lewes, on 16th May 2013 (*copy in minute book*) are noted, and recommendations approved.

b] *Pells Pool Community Association liaison Panel 21st May 2013*. The notes of this meeting were received, and **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.2 Minutes of the meeting with representatives of the Pells Pool Community Association on 21st May 2013 (*copy in minute book*) are noted and recommendations approved.

c] *Neighbourhood Plan update*. Cllr S Murray updated colleagues on recent deliberations of the Planning Committee. A draft list had been prepared (*copy in minute book*) of representative elements in the town, whom it was proposed should be invited to attend an initial meeting to formally designate a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Murray related concerns that younger people had not attended the NP workshops that had been held in the Town Hall and All Saints Centre. Coincidentally, Action in Rural Sussex had invited the council to engage with a “digital citizenship” initiative they were running in partnership with Brighton University, involving work with young people to encourage them to show an interest in what is happening in their communities. Cllr Murray had attended a first workshop at Priory School and reported that feedback had been very positive. TC advised that comments made to him suggested that the project was already considered to be extremely successful, with great enthusiasm being shown by the students.

After a short debate, **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.3 The update on progress towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Lewes be noted and the draft list (*copy in minute book*) of representative elements in the town be agreed and these invited to attend an initial meeting to formally designate a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. This list to be extended by the addition of: registered social landlords; the Tenants Of Lewes District group (*TOLD*) and the Kingston Road & Cranedown Residents’ Association.

d] *Commemorations Working Party 29th May 2013*. The Minutes of this meeting were received. Cllr Stockdale declared an interest as he was a personal friend of the musical composer being proposed. **It was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.4 Minutes of the Commemorations Working Party of 29th May 2013 (*copy in minute book*) are noted.

FC2013/19.5 The recommendation of the Commemorations Working Party of 29th May 2013 described at minute CmemsWP2013/07:1 (*copy in minute book*) is agreed - costs of the production of a play to be performed during commemoration of the Battle of Lewes in 2014 will be supported up to maximum of £1,500 to be drawn from the financial reserve established for this purpose (designated R7 in the Council’s published accounts).

e] *Grants Panel 29th May 2013*. Members considered report FC001/2013 (*copy in minute book*) which contained the panellists’ recommendations and **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.6 The grant payments recommended in column E of report FC001/2013 be approved, with the sum of £5,000 in respect of the grant to Wave Leisure being paid from the General Fund *ie* outside the approved grants budget..

e] *Audit and Governance Panel 11th June 2013*. Members received and noted the minutes of the Panel (*copy in minute book*) and **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/19.7 Minutes of the Audit & Governance Panel meeting of 11th June 2013 are noted

FC2013/20 COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT:

Members considered a draft Annual Report on the activities of the Council in the 2012/2013 year (*a copy of which is included in the Minute book*).

Following consideration **it was resolved that:**

FC/2013/20.1 Publication of the report on the Council's activities during the 2012/13 year, as presented to the meeting of 13th June 2013, be approved (*copy in the Minute book*).

FC2013/21 ANNUAL REPORT & DRAFT ACCOUNTS Year Ended 31st March 2013:

Members considered report FC002/2013 (*a copy of which is included in the Minute book*); the draft annual accounts statements; the statutory annual return to the Audit Commission; and the final report for the year by the internal auditor and **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/21.1 Lewes Town Council approves the statutory annual return and supporting documentation as required for the year 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, for submission to the Audit Commission's appointed external auditor (*a copy is included in the Minute book*).

FC2013/21.2 Lewes Town Council approves the financial accounts statements for the year 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, as provided with report FC002/2013 and subject to audit (*a copy is included in the Minute book*).

FC2013/22 TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE & REPAIR:

Members considered report FC003/2013 (*a copy of which is included in the Minute book*) which presented the implications of a recent survey of the South elevation of the Town Hall (high Street façade). This had been conducted by a specialist surveyor, at close-quarters with the aid of a mobile elevating work platform and had identified and prioritized over eighty items of work required. Other items had been recorded as deserving further investigation and it was accepted that there could be further latent or concealed defects such as problems with hidden ferrous metalwork. Costs were estimated for the items identified, and it was reported that previous experience with works of this nature suggested that the necessary additional costs of traffic-control and scaffolding would represent a significant expense that would be most efficiently disbursed if other works were carried out at the same time *eg* window replacement and slate roof repairs. Total costs were estimated at £139,150, and the Council held earmarked financial reserves for the purpose with a current aggregate balance available of £111,118.

After discussion, **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/22.1 Lewes Town Council establishes a Working Party comprising Cllrs Catlin, Chartier, Daly, Milner, S Murray, R Murray and O'Keefe to oversee the commencement of an integrated programme of repairs to the South elevation (High Street façade) of the Town Hall, as described in report FC003/2013, and funded initially by the established reserves shown in R1 and P6 in the Council's accounts with any balance required to complete the work being drawn from the General Fund, and

FC2013.22.2 That the balance available for 2013/14 in project reserve P6 (labelled "Town Hall Access") is appropriated to augment the repairs reserve R1 for this purpose.

FC2013/23 MEMBERS' ABSENCE:

Members considered report FC004/2013 (*a copy of which is included in the Minute book*) regarding the prolonged absence of Cllr R Rudkin, which was expected to continue in the immediate future as he had been forced by personal circumstances to accept work in the Netherlands on short-term monthly-renewable contracts. The report explained the statutory position and options open to Council.

After discussion, **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/23.1 In accordance with provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (s85) Lewes Town Council approves the absence from meetings of Cllr R Rudkin since 13th December 2012, for which apologies to date had been submitted and recorded.

FC2013/23.2 In accordance with provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (s85) Lewes Town Council approves the absence of Cllr R Rudkin from future meetings due to present circumstances leading him to work abroad, and will review this decision after six months, at the Council meeting scheduled for 12th December 2013.

FC2013/24

ANNUAL PLAN:

Members considered a motion (*NOM 006/13 copy in minute book*) proposing that the Council should formalize an annual plan for its projects and activities, which would then inform the budget process. It was suggested that progress against the plan could then be monitored in a similar way to the “traffic-light” system employed by the District and County Councils. There was some discussion during which it was noted that the Council’s current budgeting process already took full account of all known and anticipated projects and demands upon resources, and it simply stopped-short of publishing a separate listing in the form of a plan. Progress on all activities was reported to Council as appropriate at every meeting. There was some resistance to the idea of introducing additional bureaucracy in the Council’s working practices, and systems better-suited to the larger organizations of the principal councils, and members recognized the extra burden on resources that this would represent. An amendment was proposed, which was accepted and **it was resolved:**

FC2013/24.1 Lewes Town Council asks its Finance Work Party to discuss the creation of an annual Council Plan starting with one for 2014-15 which would be presented as a draft to the Council Meeting in October.

FC2013/25

CIVIC HANDBOOK:

The Council meeting on 4th April 2013 had deferred consideration of a proposed handbook on Mayoral and Civic matters. This was primarily intended to support serving Mayors and prospective Mayors, although it contained much information that would be of general interest to Councillors and others. The content was an amalgamation of current practice; tradition; convention and best-practice guidance from the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO). The initiative to codify such matters was an administrative one, but Members had been asked to note and agree some elements such as the traditional events programme that Council would expect any Mayor to support. Indicative costs were given based upon experience in recent years. Members had been asked to pass any comments on the draft to Mrs Garth – some questions had been asked, but no amendments proposed. Members considered the Civic Handbook an informative guidebook which would offer a handy reference point on several aspects of civic activity.

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

FC2013/25.1 Lewes Town Council adopts the Civic Handbook on Mayoral and Civic matters, originally presented to Council on the 4th April 2013 (*a copy of which is in the Minute book*), and records thanks to Mrs Fiona Garth for her efforts in compiling the handbook.

FC2013/26

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:

a) *Pedestrian crossing at Malling* – Cllr Milner reported on developments on the proposed crossing. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) had presented a breakdown of costs for the project and were asking Lewes Town Council for a contribution of over £24,000 rather than the £15,000 which had been offered. It was acknowledged that some increase in cost was inevitable since the original informal estimates had been provided in 2009, although no warning had been given by ESCC that the sum offered would fall so far short of that required. It was suggested that the contingency element (roughly £4,000) could be

discounted with some confidence that it would not be needed, as the design was straightforward and the location presented no obstacles. It was considered reasonable to increase the Council's contribution to the revised total of £20,000 by "meeting half-way" at £17,500 and consequently **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/26.1 Lewes Town Council will increase its contribution to East Sussex County Council in respect of the installation of a pedestrian crossing in Church Lane, Malling, to a total of £17,500.

b) *Malling Community Centre* - Building work to the old Bridgeview Social Club premises had been completed, with the new ESCC Children's Centre currently being fitted-out and expected to open mid-Summer. TC noted that once the new facility was completed it would be practical to "re-start" the Council's own project to refurbish the remainder of the building; once architects or builders could gain unfettered access to all parts, and could benefit from the experience of the ESCC contractors who had recently dealt-with matters such as asbestos removal; utility supply and drainage complications.

FC2013/27 **NOTICE OF ITEMS IN PROSPECT:** Members were advised of the following events:-

- a) Meetings would be arranged of the Devolution Liaison Group and All Saints Centre Steering Group.
- b) A local site meeting regarding the area adjoining Malling Community Centre was to be arranged. The clearance was complete, except for relocation of the pre-school group's kitchen garden, and the grass seed was establishing itself well.
- c) Presentations would be invited from architects who had responded to the Pells Pool Community Association approach (previously discussed) about redevelopment of the kiosk building.
- d) The Planning Committee would meet on Tuesday, 25th June and Tuesday 16th July at 7:00pm in the Yarrow Room.
- f) The next meeting of Council was scheduled for Thursday, 25th July 2013 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, with the deadline for submission to the Town Clerk of proposed items for the agenda being 12 noon on Monday 15th July.
- g) Cllr Daly offered his apologies for absence from any Council activities between 25th June and 3rd September, as he would be visiting his family in Israel.

FC2013/28 There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed, and invited those present to join her in the Parlour for refreshments.

The meeting ended at 9:05pm

Signed:

Date: