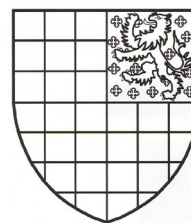


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council**,  
held on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

### **PRESENT:**

Cllrs J Baah; M Bird; R Burrows; S Catlin (Wischhusen); G Earl; R Handy; O Henman; J Lamb; I Makepeace; Dr W Maples; Dr G Mayhew; M Milner; R O'Keeffe; S Sains; J Vernon; R Waring; K Wood.

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Assistant Town Clerk & Civic Officer*) and Mrs E Tingley (*Committee Admin*)

*Observing:* Ms V McLachlan (*Finance Admin. Officer*);

**FC2019/54 QUESTION TIME:** There were none (no public present).

**FC2019/55 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS:** Cllrs O'Keeffe, Mayhew and Henman declared interests in specific applications *iro* item 6a on the agenda (*re* Grants Panel recommendations) in that they were affiliated to one of more of the applicant organisations. Cllr O'Keeffe also declared an interest *iro* item 6j on the agenda (*re* Commemorations Working Party recommendation 2 *High Street Traders Association festive lighting project*) in that she is Lewes District Council's Lead Member for Tourism and *iro* item 6k on the agenda (Citizens Advice) in that she is a Trustee of the CAB.

**FC2019/56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Herbert who had a childcare commitment.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/56.1** Reasons submitted for absence from this meeting are noted.

**FC2019/57 MAYOR's ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

a) The Mayor announced that he had been to a very well-received presentation by Sarah Bayliss of the book "The Lewes Town Hall Pictures" written by Ms Bayliss as part of the Council's 'Our Pictures' project, and everyone there had been most interested to learn more about the artworks held on behalf of the town.

b) Heritage Open Day had been a great success with so many properties in Lewes attracting visitors and the Mayor gave thanks to Mike Chartier, Cllr Dr Graham Mayhew, Philip Pople and Ashley Price for their invaluable assistance.

b) The annual Allotment Show had been much appreciated by all who attended, and the Mayor thanked everyone who had worked so hard on the organization.

d) 'Building Sustainable Lewes' had been very well attended and proved to be a very informative event.

e) The Mayor's Civic Service would be held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am at Trinity South Malling. Members were asked to let Fiona know if they would attend.

f) Collections for Poppy Day would be on 26<sup>th</sup> October from 10am to 1pm from the Town Hall. Members were asked to let Fiona know if they would like to collect for Remembrance and a hope for a peaceful future.

g) The Mayor and Mayoress would be attending the annual History Symposium in our French twin-town of Blois the following week.

h) The previously announced 'Access 4 All' assistive technology exhibition originally scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> October had unfortunately been postponed until the New Year. A date was yet to be confirmed but it was hoped that the Exhibition would be held in February 2020.

i) Congratulations were offered to Cllr Henman, who had been selected by the Liberal Democrat party as their prospective parliamentary candidate for the next general election, and to his political rivals.

j) In light of recent incidents of apparently anti-Semitic vandalism and criminal damage the Mayor proposed a Town Hall meeting for residents as an opportunity to discuss the impacts of this series of attacks; to come together to condemn such actions, and inflammatory and threatening language generally, and to discuss a way forward to protect both members of the community and to ensure free speech and political expression without threat or intimidation. The Assembly Room could be available, and Members could assist by reaching out to their local community to offer assurance that anyone with information regarding these events could come forward, and it would be passed to the Police in strictest confidence.

After a short discussion it was agreed that the meeting would run with a wider scope and that an item highlighting the problem with antisocial behaviour in general around the whole of Lewes town would also be included.

**FC2019/58 MINUTES:**

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/58.1** Minutes of the Council meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019 are received and signed as an accurate record.

**FC2019/59 WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:**

*Members are reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which has covered issues that deserve attention by the Council, should ensure that TC is aware of this before the Council's next meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Reports on all activities of the organization are not expected.*

**a) UN Sustainability Goals Working Party 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019:** Cllr Baah presented the minutes of this meeting:

1. The earlier Working Party had found that the Council had a good baseline upon which to build in most of the areas where it had influence. There was an expectation that the upcoming Mayor's event "Building a Sustainable Lewes" would identify many areas where collaborations and further developments were possible.
2. It was noted that the co-related 17 goals were often grouped as
  - > "People"
  - > "Prosperity"
  - > "Planet"
  - > "Peace and a just society"
  - > "Partnership"
3. There had followed a general discussion on various aspects of sustainability. It was suggested that Councillors might collect information to populate a directory of organizations/individuals working in the field of sustainability, who might make up a 'map' of advisers.
4. The previous identification of areas where the Council addressed aspects of the 17 goals was revisited, and ideas for further consideration and development were:
  - > Revision of the stated aims and structure of the Councils financial grants scheme to encourage sustainability.
  - > Introduction of initiatives to support composting and encourage organic practices on Council allotments (*eg* new prize categories at the annual show, and guidance leaflets).
  - > Further develop the imminent (19<sup>th</sup> September) "Building a Sustainable Lewes" event and invite stakeholders to form an extended Sustainable Goals Forum.
  - > Support Lewes FC youth outreach programme and assist promotion of club membership.
  - > Support school uniform exchange programmes.
  - > Instigate a Lewes Youth Council.

- › Encourage Lewes Bonfire Council to promote makers skills by introducing an annual award for costume-making.
- › Support a Lewes Youth Band.
- › Provide access to computer(s) for public use.
- › Promote effective sustainability features of Council buildings as encouragement to other owners of heritage-listed or unusual buildings.
- › Assist in formulation of an integrated transport policy for the town.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.1** The Minutes of the UN Sustainability Goals Working Party meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019 are noted and the Council supports the approach being taken.

**b) Members individual duties amendment:** Report FC009/2019 (*copy in minute book*). was received, regarding changes to Members' appointed individual duties.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.2** The individual responsibilities of Members for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year shall be amended as:

Cllr Burrows has stepped down from the Commemorations & Events Committee.

**c) Grants Panel Recommendations 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Members considered report FC010/2019 (*copy in minute book*) containing recommendations for payments of grants for the second cycle (of four) for the year 2019/20. Various individual interests had been declared, and Cllr Henman now added that he had been appointed to the Board of Landport Youth Centre (subsequent to the Panel meeting). **It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.3** The grant payments recommended in report FC010/2019 (as shown in column **G** of the table appended to that report) be approved.

**d) All Saints Steering Group 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Cllr Catlin presented the minutes of this meeting:

Members had welcomed the attendance of the ASC staff team and thanked them for rearrangement of rotas to facilitate this as it was acknowledged that they would not normally be on duty at the same time.

There had followed a general discussion on various topics of interest, which covered:

- › recent bookings by new drama groups;
- › the Toy Library operated by the Centre;
- › the pipe organ and its history and the potential for public performance;
- › the process of developing the monthly "What's On?" guide and principles of general publicity and that supporting the 3<sup>rd</sup> party hirers of the building;
- › film projection and the long-standing relationship with Lewes Film Club.
- › A summary analysis of the categories of use for which the Centre was hired over the past year – which demonstrated a good match with the principles of the original gift by the Church for use as a broad community; arts, and youth facility;
- › Analysis of the use of the Centre over several years, which identified that it ran at near-full capacity in terms of hired hours and that 'free' availability was very limited: most weeks only 2- or 3-hours mid-day/mid-week. Members acknowledged that development of use therefore meant greater numbers of attendees and audiences, which was a factor essentially dependent upon the efforts of individual hirers *in* their own events.
- › Typical audience numbers for events.
- › Aspects of Licensing law applicable to the operation of the centre.
- › Potential for further public open days. It was noted that the booking diary operated on a 'rolling year' basis and that an available weekend day was unlikely before February 2020.

› Members questions on general matters, such as equipment and electrical testing.

In conclusion: Members acknowledged in glowing terms the efforts of the ASC staff and the friendly and helpful service to the public for which they were well-known.

It was proposed that dates be sought for another public open day, and that whilst meetings of the Steering Group were *ad hoc* they would hold at least two each year, when they could be accommodated at the Centre, probably in January and July.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.4** The Minutes of the All Saints Steering Group meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 are noted.

**e) Buildings Working Party 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Cllr Mayhew presented the Minutes of this meeting which had considered, after exclusion of the press & public (due to confidential detail arising):

*Town Hall heating system refurbishment:*

1. The meeting had considered a report submitted by expert consultants following a survey of the council's existing heating system. The current system was at the end of its economic service life and had been configured to also serve the adjoining Lewes District Council (LDC) office building at 4 Fisher Street. That building had represented consumption of more than 60% of the heat output due to the differing occupancy levels and profile of daily use, and costs had been apportioned between the two councils accordingly. Number 4 Fisher Street had been vacant and unused for several years and was likely to be either sold or redeveloped by LDC and the heating circuit that served it had been disconnected. Replacement of the Town Hall system, therefore, would need to serve only the Town Council's premises and could be specified with a lower output capacity.

2. The report described the condition of existing pipework and control systems and advised on elements that would need to be replaced or upgraded alongside installation of a new source of heat. Systems described and evaluated for feasibility and likely effectiveness included:

- › Replacement floor-standing gas-fired boiler plant (as present system)
- › Wall-mounted gas-fired boiler plant
- › Air-source heat pumps
- › Gas absorption heat pump
- › Ground-source heat pump
- › Biomass plant
- › Combined heat & power system
- › Solar Thermal systems

3. Evaluations were offered as to efficiency; capital cost; running cost; estimated payback period, and Carbon emissions. Not all the systems described were considered viable but; for those that were, the report noted that all would represent lower running costs and (for gas-fired systems) a reduction in carbon emissions.

4. Members had discussed the report and it was noted that some cost estimates may be overstated as assumptions had been made regarding the age of pipework which was believed to be more recent than the report's author had presumed. This gave rise to a discussion regarding available funds and TC advised that Council's earmarked reserves and established budgets should be adequate to address the likely project cost.

5. It was noted that the report had been prepared at around the time that central government had announced its views on sustainability in future heating and power generation, in view of climate change considerations. That caused several members to ask if the report authors might be asked to review it and possibly revise their suggestions in light of any altered future prospects.

6. There was consensus on some practical points, such as the immediate commissioning of a test of circuit pipework to establish fitness for future adaptation or need for upgrading; and a request for the consultants to provide further detail on the options of Air-source Heat Pumps and views on any potential for a local District Heating system. It was also suggested that secondary double-glazing be investigated for the Assembly Room and that any radiators not currently controlled by thermostatic valves should be fitted with these.

It was noted that the calculations of energy efficiency that had resulted in the Town Hall's admirable 'B' rating in its statutory certification formed a helpful benchmark, to which the latest figures could be compared, and would in turn highlight any future improvements.

*Refurbishment of Malling Community Centre:*

The meeting noted that the Council's application to the government Department of Housing; Communities and Local Government for approval to borrow for part of the finance of this project was in process. It was regrettable that this was understood to have been affected by redeployment of experienced staff to work on 'Brexit' matters, and the process was slower than expected.

The preferred contractor was aware of the situation and prepared for a suggested start on-site in January, but until the financing was confirmed, no contract could be signed.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.5** The Minutes of the Buildings Working Party meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 are noted.

**FC2019/59.6** A guided tour of the Town Hall, All Saints Centre and Malling Community Centre be arranged for interested Members on a date to be confirmed in due course.

**f) Landport Bottom Management Committee 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** This meeting had been inquorate, so no business was conducted. The two Members present had taken the opportunity to learn more about the Landport Bottom land and the history of its municipal ownership since 1992.

**g) Personnel Panel 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Cllr Wood presented the Minutes of this meeting.

The Chairman had distributed copies of a message she had received from a past Councillor who was referred-to in the consultant's report considered by the Panel at its recent meetings. This questioned the source of extracts from that confidential report which had apparently been reproduced during an internal complaint review by the Green Party. The document had been held by a very small number of people, and confidentiality had been scrupulously observed during its review by the Panel and the subsequent report to Council. TC stated that he had not divulged any of its content at any time, and the Chairman had received similar assurance from serving Councillors. There was little that could be done to establish or control the actions of past Councillors and it was agreed that a brief explanation to this effect should be sent in reply.

The meeting worked-through the list of the Panel's recommendations to Council, which had been agreed, and formed initial views as:

- a) Mr Richard Penn should be asked to arrange the next appraisal round for the Town Clerk early in the New Year, as this will allow recently elected members to gain several months relevant experience. Questionnaires would go to all Members and staff, and the Panel would review the list of external contacts.
- b) There was some discussion on the members' induction experience, and the Panel would look at this in greater depth at a future meeting, informed by feedback from all Members. It was noted that the process was not yet complete, as the 'visioning' element was not concluded.
- c) With regard to stress in the workplace, the Council's staff sickness policy was briefly discussed, and this would be considered in depth at a future meeting. Current policy

centred around national conditions of employment and was described as basic, with no specific mention of mental health or wellbeing.

- d) In the matter of roles, behaviour and expectations, it was thought helpful if a meeting or training session could focus upon these issues. A later Panel meeting would explore how key aspects could be more effectively introduced in training and induction processes. As to reporting concerns, it was noted that the Council had a 'whistle-blower' policy, although acknowledged that as this formed part of the Anti-fraud and corruption policy, and was framed in that context, its broader applications may not be obvious.

Although the Panel had suggested that TC's anticipated report on succession-planning should be considered by the end of the year, TC intended that this should be drafted earlier; in time for consideration alongside the second phase of the 'visioning' exercise and the budget process during November.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.7** The Minutes of the Personnel Panel meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 are noted.

**h) 'Open Council' Working Party 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Cllr O'Keeffe presented the minutes of this meeting:

Members had discussed aspects of the Council's website, and various suggestions were made for additional content and features. TC noted that he intended, when time allowed, to modify the Grant application form to allow online completion, and it was suggested that the annual Civic Awards nominations could also benefit from this. It was suggested that grants awarded could be the subject of a routine Press Release. Community links were notably absent whereas the 'old' website had accumulated many details of organizations and groups acting within the community in Lewes. Members were asked to encourage any such groups with whom they may be familiar, to provide details for links that could be featured here. Members were encouraged also to produce individual critiques of the site to inform future improvements, and also to engage any appropriate acquaintances to offer an 'accessibility evaluation'. Members could submit feature copy for consideration; perhaps along with additional photographs. This applied equally to the Council's newsletter. Copies of past newsletters were distributed for Members' interest and the principles of publication were briefly discussed. It was acknowledged that the resources available to devote to these functions was extremely limited, and this would need to be incorporated into the upcoming Council 'visioning' exercise.

There was discussion as to the accessibility of the Town Hall, and Members were reminded that they were welcome to a guided tour of the building with the Town Hall Manager or Town Hall Keeper, by arrangement. Members were keen to introduce more young people and discussed school parties; media studies students and opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships. TC advised that the Council often hosted students for work experience placements and had already hosted three this year. School parties and other youth groups were occasionally received, under various initiatives, and it was hoped that the launch of the teachers' resource pack created as part of the 'Our Pictures' project would bring more. The annual diary already had provision for 'open'/'gallery days' when rooms were not booked by hirers, and this would be continued.

Some Councillors had recently engaged with the National Citizen Service (NCS) programme and were keen to promote opportunities such as a Youth Council. TC noted that the Council had supported a very successful Lewes Youth Council between 2002 and 2006, and this had only ended due to changing priorities in the school/parent support structure. Cllrs Maples and Waring were asked to work with TC to explore this with the NCS.

The discussion returned to the Town Hall in terms of ideas to make it more attractive to the community. It was acknowledged that many people did not understand how well-used the building actually was, and the range of activities offered or the hours it operated. A digital screen was suggested that could display to passers-by events; details of meetings,

and/or the Councils website. Ideas for a 'grand tour' of all Council properties were put forward. Webcasting of meetings and/or recording of feature interviews with the Mayor, Members and staff was briefly discussed. On a side-note, it was recognized that there were several noticeboards available for use throughout the town if required, for appropriate material.

It was felt that several interesting ideas had been covered. Members accepted that many of these should be introduced during the 'visioning' exercise, and specific proposals would always need to be researched and costed before presentation for consideration at Council. In the short term, Cllrs Maples and Waring would work with TC to explore potential for a new Youth Council with the National Citizen Service.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.8** The Minutes of the 'Open Council' Working party meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September are noted

*i) Equality; Diversity & Inclusion Working Party 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019:* Cllr Handy presented the minutes of this meeting:

Members had reviewed the history of the current Council policy, during which a misleading typographical error was recognized and noted for correction. There followed a discussion as to how this fit with other Council policies, and Members were reminded that the Statement of Community Engagement was complementary in that it defined the community in terms of "all people". Members undertook to research any prospective improvements for an updated policy and recognized this was a living document.

There was interest in any potential to engage in outreach to schools, and it was suggested that "champions" from within the Council might offer reassurance to young people who were members of groups such as BAME or LGBT. Members would also identify any diversity champions from within the wider community.

Members were interested to explore how the Working Party's work could cross-refer to other committees and working parties; the Grants Panel was offered as an example. The aims of the Council's grants scheme could be altered, but Council would need to consider the matter. It was suggested that the Working Party members could act as Champions and scrutinize minutes of other Committees and working groups to identify anything noteworthy.

An additional category was proposed for the annual Civic Awards.

The working party would look at potential supplementary conditions of hire for Council buildings, to encourage and ensure appropriate attention by hirers to EDI issues. Current conditions focussed upon necessary issues of health & safety, indemnity, and protection of the Council's assets but this was considered inadequate.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.9** The Minutes of the Equality/Diversity & Inclusion Working Party meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October are noted.

*j) Commemorations Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019:* Cllr Mayhew presented the minutes of this meeting:

The meeting had welcomed Ms Brigitte Lardinois, primary organizer of the *LightBox* project. Ms Lardinois explained that the current exhibition of lightboxes was the sixth. Each had been supported by the Council, financially and practically, and were publicized with the Council; the Reeves Archive project and the University of the Arts, London (UAL) identified as key partners. The project had been hailed as a great success, with universally positive feedback from host premises and significant national media coverage. Funding had been obtained from several sources, but hitherto each event had been arranged separately. For practicality, as there was a wealth of material available to support events for at least another five years, it was now hoped that partners would agree to commit funds and remove the burden of multiple grant applications each time. There followed a brief discussion on the cycle of exhibitions and prospective themes. Members were

interested to learn that there were 45 unpaid volunteers associated with the Lightbox initiative and a further 25 working on the Reeves photographic archive project itself, which held glass plates dating from between 1855 and 1974. UAL had already agreed a five-year commitment and the Town Council was now asked for £3,000 for each of the five years 2020 to 2024. Members were unanimous in supporting this and would recommend it to Council.

Ms King and Mr Scott of Lewes High Street Traders association (HSTA) had recounted the most recent developments in the Association's project to provide festive lighting in the town. East Sussex County Council had verbally committed to an agreement for mounting to street lighting fixtures and use of the power supply, and written confirmation had been received from Lewes District Council of a commitment of £10,000 for each of three years 2019 to 2021. The District Conservation Officer's comments were awaited regarding the fixing of attachment points to some High Street properties, but several were already agreed. Imminent building work on The Crown public house prevented the erection, this year, of the proposed canopy of lights across the streets above the War Memorial. The total cost of the project for this year was now £37,000 and HSTA members had so far pledged £8,344 with an additional £600 raised through crowdfunding. Mr Scott explained that a Community Interest Company was being set-up and contributions would be ring-fenced for the light project across its three-year initial term. Members were interested in points of detail, and it was noted that the lights would likely be in place and lit until 15<sup>th</sup> January. HSTA were encouraged to adopt the description of "festive" lighting to avoid direct connection to the religious celebration of Christmas. Committee members agreed that they would recommend to Council that the £10,000 contribution provisionally agreed at its last meeting should now be released.

Members welcomed Graham Festenstein, Director of the *Lewes Light* festival, who presented a detailed project budget for the proposed festival in February 2020. This showed that the £8,000 contribution sought from the Town Council would be applied, as in previous years, to 'core' cost elements that inevitably increased each year but were not attractive to primary funders such as the Arts Council. It was noted that the cash budget of just under £40,000 took no account of the very significant support also received in-kind from industry suppliers and volunteers. Planning for future years would include approaches to major funders for more long-term agreements, and more robust crowdfunding presentation and on-site collections. Some innovations were under consideration, such as collecting boxes incorporated into the illuminated interpretation panel for an artwork, or payment-operated elements to some installations. The application to the Council was similar to previous years, in that the sum requested was the maximum anticipated cost and the actual amount would be drawn down on the basis of paid receipts after the event. Members were agreed that Council should be recommended to approve release of the provisionally agreed payment of up to £8,000.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.10** The Minutes of the Commemorations & events Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> October are noted.

**FC2019/59.11** The Council will provide funding of £3,000 to the *Lewes Lightbox* project in each of the five financial years 2020/21 to 2024/25.

**FC2019/59.12** The Council will provide funding of £10,000 to the *Lewes High Street Traders Association festive lighting project* in each of the three financial years 2019/20\* to 2021/22.

**FC2019/59.13** The Council will provide funding of up to £8,000 to the *Lewes Light Festival 2020\**, to be paid on presentation of receipts.

\* - these costs will fall to the General Fund in the current year, with earmarked provision in future budgets.

**k) Citizens Advice:** The Mayor gave an oral report on this. The Mayor had recently met with the District Manager and the Chairman and had learned about the workings of the



organisation. CAB had 13 part-time staff in Lewes District. The majority of clients were having difficulties with housing and benefits payments. The CAB no longer gave free legal advice although they did refer clients to Solicitors who could give limited free consultancy. A large number of clients were not aware of certain benefits to which they were entitled, and this represented a large part of CAB's workload. The top-ranked benefit issue reported was that of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) which involved harsh assessment although 100% of the CAB appeals for PIP had been successful. Council Tax; water rates and credit card debts were also 'top' issues. CAB were encouraging Lewes District Council to sign up to the Council Tax Arrears Protocol. East Sussex County Council had ceased funding for small grants to those in need of domestic white goods, or travel expenses for employment interviews. Lewes Town Council contribute to funding the CAB with a yearly grant of £8,000. The Chairman asked if Council would consider a further single grant in 2020 of £3,000, to provide the 'seed' for a domestic support grant scheme to cover these essential issues since this loss of funding from ESCC.

After brief consideration **it was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.14** The oral report on the operations of the Lewes District Citizens' Advice organization is noted.

**FC2019/59.15** The request of the CAB for 'seed' funding of £3,000 for a domestic support small grants scheme be considered at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

**J) Southern Rail Community Partnership:** Members had previously been asked by Cllr Catlin for suggestions for projects to submit for £30,000 from the Network Rail Passenger Benefit Fund, earmarked for use at Lewes station. The single proposal put forward was for a water fountain to be installed within Lewes Railway Station on platforms 4 & 5 where there is currently no refreshment provision. Southern Rail claimed that there was no water supply to platforms 4 & 5, however, there is a water supply to the signal box which was being converted into an office so this could solve the problem.

Cllr Catlin also reported that a full-time passenger service would be provided from December stopping at Cooksbridge, instead of peak times only, and there would also be a Saturday service.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/59.16** The oral report on matters arising from Sussex Rail Community Partnership is noted.

**FC2019/60 LEWES FOOTBALL CLUB:**

It was proposed (*motion NOM013/2019 - copy in minute book*) proposed that Council should resolve to hold a celebratory reception for Lewes Football Club, who had recently won an important United Nations award. *HeForShe* was a campaign for the advancement of gender equality, initiated by the United Nations. It invited men to play an active part in the goal of reaching worldwide gender equality in all areas. The campaign was launched 5 years ago by UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson. The 'Inspiration Award' celebrates "extraordinary organisations who've advanced gender equality, especially by engaging men."

It was said that since announcing pay and resources parity for its women's and men's teams in 2017, Lewes FC and all its players, staff, volunteers and fans had begun a journey that no other football club in the world had ever embarked on or even considered. This award was a very welcome recognition of all the efforts made by every part of the club to embed gender equality in everything it does. The club were constantly learning how best to follow the approach they have chosen, sometimes getting it right and sometimes getting it wrong, so they hugely welcome the award. In bestowing the award, the judges had said: "Your organisation's incredible record of decisive action in the industry and beyond has been extremely inspiring".

There followed a short debate in which various views were expressed about the complexities of true gender pay equality – recognized as a global issue. It was noted that the Lewes FC model was also about equality of access to coaching and training facilities

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/60.1** Lewes Town Council will ask the Mayor to host a celebratory reception for Lewes Football Club on a mutually convenient date.

**FC2019/61**

**LEWES “POLLINATOR PATHWAY”:**

A motion (*NOM014/2019 – copy in minute book*) proposed that Lewes Town Council support Wildflower Lewes in its efforts to introduce and promote a ‘Pollinator Pathway’ through Lewes which would involve establishing wildflower stepping-stones throughout the town by:

1. Writing an open letter to both the District and County Councils supporting the strategy of cutting identified verges once only in the autumn; and
2. Supporting Wildflower Lewes in the facilitation of and by providing a venue for a ‘Biodiversity in Lewes’ Education Day where A-level students from the Lewes area would be invited to carry out an ecological survey of the wildflowers and invertebrates and learn more about the action that local groups were taking to increase biodiversity in the town.

It was stated that this proposal would support the Town Council’s work in addressing the UN sustainability goals (specifically: 3. Good health and wellbeing, 4. Quality education, 11. Sustainable Cities 14. Climate action, 15. Life on Land and 17. Partnership to achieve the goal).

ESCC would require the agreed support of Lewes Town Council before agreeing to implement a more progressive cutting schedule of the town’s grass verges.

Information from ‘Plantlife’, a national wildflower organisation, suggested that :

- › For the 23 million people commuting to work by road every day, road verges can be their only daily contact with nature.
- › With over 97% of ancient wild flower meadows destroyed since the 1930s, road verges were a vital refuge for many bees, butterflies, birds, bats and bugs – a good verge would supply a diverse source of nectar and pollen from the first Celandines in February to the last Devil’s-bit Scabious in September.
- › Bird’s-foot trefoil alone was a food plant for over 130 species of invertebrate.
- › Over 700 species of wildflowers grow on our UK verges, nearly 45% of our total flora, and were home to many familiar wildflowers that were now becoming threatened, such as Harebell, Field Scabious and Ragged-Robin. But 87 of these were threatened with extinction or heading that way, including the largest British populations of rarities such as Deptford pink, tower mustard and spiked rampion.

Specifically, in Lewes, the verges that ESCC had already agreed to cut once per year had been monitored by Wildflower Lewes for the last two years and had shown an increase in biodiversity. For example, the verge on the south of Brighton Road had shown an 81% increase in wild plant species since it had been cut only one year so there was evidence to show that not cutting in June/July allowed the presence of flowers that we may otherwise not have seen as well as giving more opportunity for flowers such as the Pyramid Orchids to have time to seed.

Wildflower Lewes would sow or plant Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) flowers where appropriate at the identified sites once they had been monitored after the first year. Yellow rattle is an attractive, semi-parasitic, grassland annual that weakens grasses and as a result, this suppression of grass growth produces a better display of wildflowers and eases the mowing required.

Wildflower Lewes acknowledged the importance of highway safety and support the fact that verge edges (one metre) and corners must be mown more than once a year to maintain sight-lines.

Lewes District Council had already agreed four of the District Council sites suggested as wildflower sites:

- Malling Hill
- Malling Close
- Winterbourne Lane, including the triangle at the bottom of the hill (which is cut as a verge)
- Jubilee Garden.

It was a long-term goal of Wildflower Lewes that all verges in the town would be mown once only in the autumn but specifically recommended the following verges for one autumn cut only, based public engagement and suitability of location in providing wildflower ‘stepping-stones’ through the town:

All the sites marked up by ESCC a couple of years ago with **yellow flower signs** as wildlife verges.

- › Verges along **Prince Edwards and King Henry’s Road**.
- › The acute triangle of verge on the **corner of Hill Road / Offham Road** (town side)
- › Verges along **Monks Way**
- › Either side of **Nevill Road** (from the school towards Spital Road)
- › **North side of Brighton Road** (provided the cycle way is not impeded).

Wildflower Lewes also wished to run a ‘Biodiversity in Lewes’ Education Day in late June 2020 (with the view to this becoming an annual event), hopefully to be hosted at the Town Hall. The aim would be to invite around 50 local A-level biology students to find out about local action that is improving biodiversity from invited speakers and undertake an ecological survey (Simpson’s biodiversity index) to compare the verges that are mown more regularly with the verges that will be mown once only in the autumn. As well as engaging young, local, environmentalists in local environmental issues; the day would support Wildflower Lewes with the important task of monitoring the sites to collect further evidence to support future recommendations for verge management.

There followed some discussion regarding the mitigation of any effects caused by cuttings arising from mowing operations – there was scientific evidence for arguments both for and against leaving cuttings to decompose, and the effect on wildflower colonization was not conclusively decided. It was remarked that the data collected as the programme developed would inform that debate in future. It was also noted that residents may need to be discouraged from mowing verges, by education as to the aims of the programme.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/61.1** Lewes Town Council supports Wildflower Lewes in its efforts to introduce and promote a ‘Pollinator Pathway’ through Lewes by establishing wildflower stepping-stones throughout the town. An open letter will be written to both District and County Councils advising them of this Council’s support for cutting highway verges only once per year, in the Autumn.

**FC2019/61.2** Lewes Town Council will support Wildflower Lewes in the facilitation of, and by providing a venue for a ‘Biodiversity in Lewes’ Education Day 2020

**FC2019/62**

**CLIMATE ACTION FUND:**

A report (*FC011/2019 – copy in minute book*) was presented to apprise Council of a proposal by the South Downs National Park Authority to benefit from a new Lottery-funded Community Climate Action Fund project.

The National Lottery Community Fund (previously the Big Lottery Fund) had announced a Climate Action Fund that would support communities in the UK to take local action on climate change. Initially, the fund was looking to support 10-15 place-based, community-driven partnerships across the UK that would work together to deliver high-impact projects that would help communities become more resilient at a local level in the face of climate change.

The 10-15 partnerships should comprise grassroots/community, statutory organizations and NGOs wanting to work together to deliver high-impact projects that would help communities become more resilient at a local level in the face of climate change. It was anticipated that if this was successful it would become a long-term funding stream. The fund would open for applications in Autumn 2019 with the aim to announce the first awards in the first half of 2020.

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) were interested to confirm whether Lewes Town Council may be interested in being one of these communities. If so: SDNPA would then work with the council to see how they may promote Lewes / Newhaven / Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO) communities for this.

The application process had not launched yet – and with only 10-15 communities being supported at this stage was expected to be very competitive - but they were “inviting conversations”. There would then follow an opportunity to apply for development funding (grants up to £250k) to put together a larger delivery project (grants up to £2.5m). These in turn would be used as models to help other communities – with the expectation that further funding rounds would follow in due course. These communities would stand as beacons of what is possible when people take the lead on climate change. With Lottery fund support, they would share their learning and engage with others to build a broader movement of change across the UK. SDNPA’s Communities Lead officer considered Lewes/the lower Ouse valley and the Havens and Petersfield as areas within the National Park that could be put forward for this scheme. They represent the communities that are most ‘ready’ in terms of existing networks and planning for climate change action. SDNPA wished to investigate this opportunity further with the National Lottery Communities Fund.

**It was resolved that:**

**FC2019/62.1** Lewes Town Council agrees to join in an expression of interest by the South Downs National Park Authority to benefit from the new Lottery Community Fund’s Climate Action Fund project.

**FC2019/63 UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS**

- a) *Annual Plan update distributed:* An update on progress with the Annual Plan was distributed (*copy in minute book*) and TC elaborated on various salient points.
- b) *Devolution* – a draft policy was to be presented to Eastbourne and Lewes District Council cabinets later in October, regarding principles applicable to the transfer or disposal of property including “community assets”, and when decisions were known it would be an appropriate time to convene the Town Council’s Devolution Working party.

**FC2019/64 NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT**

*Members were asked to consider items, arising from this meeting, worthy of a Press Release, and indicated:*

Provision of Festive Lighting in the town, the proposed reception for Lewes Football Club and support for Wildflower Lewes’s “Pollinator Pathway” proposals.

*Dates to note were given as:*

- Cllr Baah advised a Climate Change Workshop for young people was to be held at the Linklater Pavilion on 10<sup>th</sup> October between 4-6 pm.
- The Transport Committee would meet on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 3pm in the Council Chamber.
- The next Member’s Surgery would be between 10am – 12noon on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November in the Yarrow Room. Cllrs Catlin and Henman volunteered to attend.
- The next Planning Committee meeting would be at 7pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October.
- The Audit Panel would meet on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm.

- The next Council meeting would take place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November at 7:30pm, with a deadline for agenda items to reach TC by noon on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October.
- Next deadline for grant applications is 22nd November, for a Panel sitting on 4th December – Council decision 12th December. If Members know of any organization who may be planning to apply, please draw their attention to these dates (all 4 cycles are on the cover of the Application Pack, available on the website).
- The Finance Working Party would meet on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.
- Meetings to be arranged: Devolution W-pty and Pells land exchange (both pending info from LDC); Landport Bottom Management Committee (reschedule). Second phase of the Members’ ‘visioning’ exercise.

**FC2019/65**

Cllr O’Keeffe asked for opinions to assist the District Council in the disposition of ‘segregated’ waste bins around the town centre. Suggestions that would have replaced existing “heritage-style” bins in key locations had been rebuffed, but ideas for alternative placements were sought. Several suggestions were made:

- > Outside Anne of Cleves house
- > Bottom of Juggs Road
- > Nevill Recreation Ground
- > Priory grounds
- > Opposite Elephant & Castle
- > Western road
- > Malling Recreation Ground near skatepark
- > Nevill estate – o/s Harry’s Stores
- > DeMontfort estate.

Cllr O’Keeffe would pass these suggestions to the District Council.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting; thanked everyone for their contributions and invited all present to join him in the Mayor’s Parlour for refreshments.

*The meeting ended at 9.30 pm*

Signed: ..... Date: .....