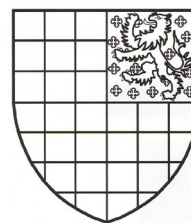


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Party**, held on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020**, online via Zoom Meetings at 7:00pm.

**PRESENT** Cllrs Baah; Bird; Catlin; Handy and Dr Maples. Also (*not appointed to the Working party*) Cllr O’Keeffe

**In attendance:** S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Asst TC and Civic Officer*); Ms L Zeyfert (*Manager; All Saints Centre*)

**EDIWP2020/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Handy was elected to chair the committee for the 2020/21 year.

**EDIWP2020/02 QUESTIONS:** There were none.

**EDIWP2020/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received as the meeting progressed from Cllr Herbert, who had a work commitment.

**EDIWP2020/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**EDIWP2020/05 MINUTES: it was resolved that**

**EDIWP2020/05.1** The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 are received and signed as an accurate record.

**EDIWP2020/06 REMIT of the WORKING PARTY**

Members noted the remit of the Working Party, which is:

- > identify and catalogue [over the forthcoming year] improvements and moderations to the current policy
- > meet annually to update and refresh council principles.
- > demonstrate to the public that the Council is fully committed in developing Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

**EDIWP2020/07 BUSINESS of the MEETING**

1. The meeting considered whether the prevailing policy (adopted March 2019) was still appropriate. It was noted that the title required updating (to add “Inclusion”). TC advised that all Council policies were conventionally reviewed during the last year of any administration, when all Members would have more than three years’ experience. Some policies were reviewed more often, such as to update values in financial regulations, but most would await the periodic review unless circumstances dictated otherwise. Some Members commented that there were reasons for a review, but it was generally held that the current policy was robust and appropriate.

2. It had been noticed that local social media posts were asking what the Council could do about contentious presentations during Bonfire. This had been the prompt at the previous meeting to investigate the possibility of restrictive clauses in Council building hire agreements. The recent “Black Lives Matter” movement prompted further discussion and it was remarked that there were many other sections of the community (*eg the Jewish community*) who should not be overshadowed by such thinking.

3. Members attention returned to the existing hire agreements for the Town Hall and All Saints Centre. No examples had been found at other Parish Councils that offered the sort of wording envisaged by Members. It was understood that Lewes District Council was investigating similarly but that their legal department had not yet produced a draft. TC recounted legal advice received in 2017 on another matter that had similar context. It had been advised then that Council should be extremely careful to avoid fettering its discretion and to ensure balanced judgements taking

account of the personal and commercial rights of hirers. Some Members suggested that it would be inadequate to simply wait and follow the lead of the District Council, even should that prove practical. Some also felt that previous mistakes or failings on the part of regular hirers should be sufficient to allow the imposition of restrictions on future bookings. Others asked whether written undertakings could be demanded. TC elaborated on the inadvisability of these approaches. It was claimed that the Council was not doing enough; but Working Party members were reminded that they had undertaken several months earlier to research examples of solutions they might find acceptable but had not, so far, achieved this goal.

4. After further discussion, an interim solution was agreed: that all hirers booking Council facilities would be provided with a copy of the Council's EDI Policy with their booking papers, accompanied by an explanatory statement drawing their attention to the Council's position and the importance it placed upon those principles. TC would prepare a discussion draft of such a statement; for Members to consider.

5. Suggestions that had been made in conversation with constituents, *eg* for events or support for third parties, were described but these were considered to fall within the remit of the Commemorations & Events Committee and would be passed-on.

**EDIWP2020/08**

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance. *The meeting closed at 8:05pm.*

Signed ..... date .....

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