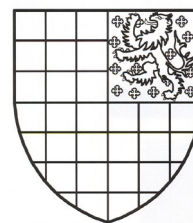


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Open Council Working Party**, held on **Monday 7th December 2020**, online via Zoom Meetings at 6:30pm.

PRESENT Cllrs Bird; Catlin; Henman; Herbert; Makepeace; Dr Maples (*Chair*); O’Keeffe; Sains and Vernon

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

OCWP2020/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr Wood, who had a work commitment. No message had been received from Cllr Waring.

OCWP2020/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

OCWP2020/10 **QUESTIONS:** A question was raised as to any follow-on after the Mayor’s symposium “Reinventing Lewes Streets & Shops” in July. Other than forwarding the record of the meeting to the District and County Councils there had been no formal activity – TC would check the record as to what was intended.

OCWP2020/11 **MINUTES: it was resolved that**

OCWP2020/11.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2020 are received and agreed as an accurate record.

OCWP2020/12 **REMIT of the WORKING PARTY**

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

To identify methods for improved public engagement and greater provision of information to residents of Lewes, to include:-

- > A review of information sharing and the methods used to share key events and policy developments
- > Consideration of good practice on methods of online deliberation and social media, such as on key town-wide issues
- > Identifying ways to provide more joined-up support for community engagement in and around Council-owned buildings

OCWP2020/13 **BUSINESS of the MEETING**

1. *Public Participatory Budget pilot:* Council had asked the Working party to consider ways to engage the public with the agreed participatory budget pilot scheme, asking the community to help prioritize the list of projects contained in s11 of the Neighbourhood Plan, all being eligible for funding from accrued Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

Cllr Henman had contacts in the *PBNetwork* organization who had indicated they could offer ½ day advice without charge. There followed a discussion on practical aspects, as the list contained 37 projects. These were under the headings:

- > Improvements for Pedestrians
- > Improvements for Cyclists
- > Road Infrastructure
- > Public Transport Infrastructure
- > Social Infrastructure
- > Improvements to the Built Environment
- > Flood & Drainage Infrastructure

The neighbourhood plan section explained that it was intended to act as a “hook” or starting point for these projects to be developed further. The projects may require further feasibility work, perhaps outside the Town Council’s remit, to

establish how they can be funded and delivered. Councillors were doubtful that they could expect the public to prioritize effectively all 37 in a survey exercise and thought it practical to seek *eg* a “top ten” indication, or rankings within a pre-selected shortlist rather than the full list.

TC suggested that he might simplify the question by estimating the order of costs for listed items; many of which would be unaffordable if Council’s CIL fund was the sole contributor. Members agreed to wait until a clearer picture was available, and meanwhile would consider methods of surveying opinion. It was suggested that local informal networks should be established before the PBNetwork was asked for advice, to allow their time to be efficiently focussed. Members agreed to submit their ideas to TC via the Chair by the following Wednesday. TC and Cllr Henman would liaise regarding an approach to the PBNetwork.

2. *Use of Facebook:* There was some discussion on the use of Facebook (FB), and suggestions for more attractive photographs for the profile page. It was held that FB should primarily be used as an interactive medium, and messages should be promptly answered. TC reminded Members that Council had previously rejected proposals for the creation of a Communications Officer post, and time was allocated when available by three members of staff who had attended social media training. He had recently advised Council that the 19hrs per week Reception/Admin Officer role that would be vacant following transfers in the New Year might be replaced with a part-time Communications & Projects Officer and would pursue this with Council in due course. Meanwhile he would establish an interim protocol that aimed to avoid delay when responding to incoming FBmessages.

3. *Noticeboards:* There was a brief discussion on the use of noticeboards, although acknowledged that the majority of those in the town were not in the Council’s ownership. Cllr Herbert was to liaise with TC on this subject.

4. *Outreach:* On the matter of community surveys and soundings, one member emphatically reminded colleagues that their role as elected representatives placed this responsibility primarily with them as individuals. It was noted that the Mayor had recently established a relationship with Lewes News that should be explored further.

5. *Increasing use of email:* A question arose regarding the use of email for correspondence with Town Council clients *eg* allotment tenants. TC advised that for many years anyone having business with the Council had been encouraged to provide an email address and accept this as the default mode of communication. All opportunities to obtain addresses were pursued, although information was not held as a single database of contacts; details were held according to context and purpose. It was suggested that this might be explored further by the prospective Communications officer discussed earlier.

OCWP2020/14

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance. *The meeting closed at 8:10pm.*

Signed date